



**Coastal Program
2007-2011
Alaska Region Step-down Plan**

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Alaska's Coastal Resources

Millions of seabirds, ducks and geese, thousands of salmon streams, hundreds of thousands of marine mammals, and more than 25,000 brown bears.... visitors and residents alike marvel at these and other wildlife spectacles along much of Alaska's 34,000 mile-long coastline. Alaska's coastal zone appears virtually pristine to the casual observer. However, the activities of Alaska's growing human population and its tourism- and resource-based economy pose ever-increasing threats to the region's wildlife, land, and water resources. More than three quarters of the state's population lives near the coast – the Anchorage metropolitan area alone has a population of 265,000 (2001 estimate) with projected growth to 300,000 by 2020. Over 80% of the state's economic activity – including the majority of its fishing, tourism, logging, and oil and gas development, – occurs near the coast. With these activities comes urbanization and rural subdivision, loss of coastal wetlands, increased potential for non-point source water pollution and oil and fuel spills, and the spread of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species.

Overview of the Coastal Program in Alaska

There are seven staffers in the Region's Conservation Partnerships Program, which includes the Coastal, Partners for Fish and Wildlife, Fish Passage, and National Fish Habitat Action Plan programs. Since its establishment in 2000, the Alaska Coastal Program, with offices in Anchorage and Juneau, has worked with partners to protect, restore and identify nationally important fish and wildlife habitats in the 49th state. Operating within a system of 22 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal programs nationwide, the Alaska program provides support for coastal conservation efforts throughout Southwestern, Southcentral, and Southeast Alaska. Only two field office biologists have primary responsibility for the Coastal Program (in addition to the other restoration programs), with support one Regional Office staff. The Coastal Program focuses on implementation of a streamlined, customer-friendly, direct federal assistance program, allowing us to catalyze innovative conservation partnerships between the Service and non-governmental organizations, private landowners, local governments, state agencies and Native Alaskan organizations.

With more than 170 projects completed or underway, the Coastal Program has invested approximately \$2.1 million in Alaska's coastal resources since 2000. These funds have leveraged \$41 million in total funding directed toward coastal conservation. The Coastal Program has extended the Service's reach beyond our Refuge land base and traditional regulatory functions into a range of voluntary habitat protection and restoration arenas throughout southern coastal Alaska. In addition to the tangible conservation accomplishments highlighted below, we are helping redefine the Service's role in Alaska in a new, more positive light with a growing list of nontraditional allies.

Approximately 25 Coastal projects were undertaken in 2006, resulting in restoration of 20 miles of instream, estuarine, and riparian habitat, permanent protection of 4,000 acres of coastal wetlands and associated uplands, and removal of 2 fish passage barriers. In total, the program and its partners have restored or protected more than 100,000 acres of coastal fish and wildlife habitat since 2000.

Examples of recent Coastal projects in Alaska can be viewed on the Alaska Coastal website at <http://alaska.fws.gov/fisheries/restoration/coastal.htm>. Information on the program nationally can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/coastal>.

The Strategic Planning Process

In early 2004, Alaska Region staff hosted meetings with our partners in Anchorage and Juneau to help us initiate this planning process. A total of 26 Federal, State, and local agencies, community groups, Native groups, and non-governmental organizations sent representatives, as well as several individual private landowners. Upon completion of Part 1 (Vision Document) of the Coastal Program's National Strategic Plan in 2006, we drafted this Alaska Regional step-down plan and provided it to our original stakeholders for further input. This step-down plan integrates those stakeholder comments and focuses and guides our activities for the next 5 years.

Summary of Stakeholder Input

At the time of the 2004 stakeholder meetings, the Coastal Program was already well established in Alaska, with reasonably high visibility among potential partners. The program already had a clear track record of accomplishments. We heard from our stakeholders that the program had been flexible and responsive to their needs, and that we had done a generally good job of minimizing our partner's administrative workload associated with participating in the program. The primary concerns that our stakeholders voiced were in regard to funding limitations and perceived paperwork burdens for assistance recipients. Stakeholders also recommended identification of program focus areas, both geographic and issue-based, a need addressed by this step-down plan. Finally, stakeholders expressed concern that site-specific restoration projects may achieve limited success in the face of broad-scale environmental threats, such as rapid urban development, climate change and the spread of invasive species. These concerns remain valid for the Coastal Program, as well as all Service programs.

Participating Agencies and Organizations Assisting with Strategic Planning

Environmental Protection Agency
National Park Service, Rivers, Trails, and
Conservation Assistance
Natural Resource Conservation Service
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
NOAA Fisheries, Office of Habitat
Conservation
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Alaska Department of Natural Resources
Alaska DNR Division of Parks and Outdoor
Recreation
Alaska Natural Heritage Program

Center for Alaska Coastal Studies
Anchorage Division of Community Planning
and Development
Anchorage Waterways Council
Kenai Peninsula Borough
Kenai Watershed Forum
Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Municipality of Anchorage, Watershed
Management Services
Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District
City & Borough of Juneau

Anchorage Soil & Water Conservation
District
Chickaloon Village Traditional Council
Audubon Alaska
Great Land Trust
The Nature Conservancy
Southeast Alaska Land Trust
Mendenhall Watershed Partnership
Discovery Southeast

GOAL 1: Conserving Habitat

The mission of the USFWS Alaska Coastal Program is to conserve healthy coastal ecosystems for the benefit of fish, wildlife, and people. We accomplish our goals through cooperative partnerships that identify, restore, and protect habitat in priority coastal areas. Our strategic goals are to:

- ▶ Protect Coastal Habitats
- ▶ Restore Coastal Habitats
- ▶ Serve as an Information Center for Habitat Conservation Funding from Multiple Federal Programs
- ▶ Serve as a Catalyst for Watershed Conservation
- ▶ Support Coastal Species and Ecosystem Planning and Assessment

Supporting Actions:

We pursue our goals through voluntary partnerships that assess, restore, protect, and inform the public about wetland, riparian, and upland coastal habitats. The Coastal Program supports projects on both private and public lands and encourages broad partnerships with other Federal, State, Native, and local government agencies, conservation organizations, businesses, and private landowners. The Alaska Program provides partners with both technical and financial assistance for on-the-ground fish and wildlife projects, leverages Service funds with partner funds and in-kind services to increase our ability to conserve important habitats, and assists partners in applying for National Coastal Wetlands Conservation grants, North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants, Private Stewardship Grants, and Tribal Wildlife Grants, as well as grants from other Federal agencies such as National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, and Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Focus Areas

We have identified the following geographic focus areas where most of the Alaska Coastal Program's financial and human resources will be strategically targeted during the next 5 years. These focus areas represent a subset of Region 7's entire area of jurisdiction.



Anchorage Bowl: This focus area, located on the shores of Cook Inlet, is home to more than half the state's population. This urban area provides unparalleled educational opportunities to both the young and old. Ecosystems within the focus area include nearshore marine habitats, extensive estuarine mudflats and salt marsh, freshwater streams and lakes, evergreen needle leaf forest, successional stands of birch and aspen, subalpine shrub thickets, and coastal alpine tundra. Land ownership consists of a matrix of private and public lands, with an extensive system of municipal parklands, military lands, and State lands. Land use patterns are diverse, with both commercial and residential lands, surrounded by salt water to the west, and public lands to the north, east, and south. The area's streams and wetlands are important habitats for trust species, including five species of Pacific salmon and a variety of plant and animal species of conservation concern. High priority habitats to be targeted for restoration and protection efforts include anadromous fish streams, wetlands, riparian habitats, and increasingly tenuous aquatic and terrestrial wildlife corridors.

Our most significant **challenges** to successful restoration and protection of fish and wildlife habitat in this focus area are continued habitat loss and fragmentation stemming from increasing urbanization and development, and from increasing impacts of recreational use on streams and in remaining open spaces. Partnership **opportunities** include numerous State and local government agencies, and the State's largest cadre of nonprofits, including the Anchorage Waterways Council, the Anchorage Parks Foundation, the Anchorage Soil and Water Conservation District, and The Great Land Trust. **Strategies** for the program within this focus area include riparian and in-stream habitat restoration, largely in an urban, highly impacted environment; fish passage assessment and restoration, including dam removal; technical support for improved watershed

planning; capacity building within the nonprofit community; and increased outreach and education. Our efforts will address conservation needs in several *existing conservation plans*, including the State of Alaska's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, the Municipality of Anchorage's Salmon in the City Action Plan, the Anchorage 2020 Comprehensive Plan, the Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan, the Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan, Anchorage Coastal Management Plan, The Nature Conservancy's Cook Inlet Ecoregional Assessment, and ADFG's Living with Wildlife in Anchorage Plan.



Kenai Peninsula: Located south of Anchorage, this focus area includes the Kenai River, one of the most ecologically productive and economically important rivers in the State. Trust species on the Peninsula include the at-risk population of Kenai brown bears, five species of Pacific salmon, anadromous trout and char, and a diversity of migratory birds. Diverse ecosystems in this focus area range from glaciers, tundra, and stunted boreal forests in headwater areas to salt marshes, muskegs (thick water-saturated accumulations of peat produced by bog succession in glaciated regions), sedge meadows, and numerous forest and shrub communities in lower watersheds. Land ownership in this focus area is primarily State and Federal, including the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, Kenai Fjords National Park, and the Chugach National Forest. Private land use patterns are residential, with numerous recreational cabins and second homes along the popular fishing streams and rural/wilderness interface. Commercial use is limited primarily to areas adjacent to local communities such as Kenai, Soldotna, Nikiski, and Homer.

Oil and gas and hard rock mining have long been important components of the local economy. Development in this focus area's lower watersheds is occurring rapidly, with new roads crossing salmon streams and subdivisions encroaching on important wetland habitats. High priority habitats targeted for restoration and protection in this focus area include anadromous streams, riparian zones, and wetlands.

With a rapidly growing population, our most important *challenges* to the successful restoration and protection of fish and wildlife habitat in this focus area are increasing road and subdivision development, increasing recreational use, and limited public understanding of the value of intact habitat. Partnership *opportunities* include State and local government, including ADFG, ADNR, and the Kenai Peninsula Borough. Local nonprofit partners include the Kenai Watershed Forum, the Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, the Homer and Kenai Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Cook Inlet Keeper, the Center for Alaska Coastal Studies, the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council, and the Pratt Museum. Past and potential future Native partnerships include the Two Rivers Resource Trust, the Ninilchik Traditional Council, and the Seldovia Native Association. Our *strategies* will include planning and implementing riparian and instream restoration and protection projects in critical areas, working with partners to prioritize and remediate fish barriers, and providing education opportunities to the public on the importance of maintaining and restoring important riparian habitat. Our efforts will address conservation needs in several *existing conservation plans*, including the State of Alaska's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, the Kenai Peninsula Brown Bear Conservation Strategy, the Alaska Landscape Cumulative Effects Model, the Kenai Spruce Bark Beetle Interagency Mitigation Plan, and the Kenai Peninsula Borough Coastal Management Plan.



Kodiak Island Archipelago: This focus area consists of a large group of islands off the south coast of Alaska in the Gulf of Alaska. The 3 primary islands in the archipelago - Kodiak, Afognak, and Shuyak - comprise approximately 5,000 square miles. The shores of these islands are considered the most biologically significant areas in the Gulf of Alaska, providing habitat to federally listed species as well as breeding, nesting, feeding and rearing habitat for a diverse array of other wildlife species, a number of which were injured by the Exxon Valdez oil spill. The islands provide feeding, pupping and calving habitats to 14 species of marine mammals, including sea otters, seals, harbor porpoises, sea lions and 8 species of whales. Some 160 species of birds are common to the area, including bald eagles, pigeon guillemots, marbled murrelets, glaucous-winged gulls, mew gulls, horned puffins, black-legged kittiwakes, arctic terns, black oystercatchers, harlequin ducks and cormorants. The islands' healthy habitats support a vibrant economy based primarily on recreational and commercial fishing and tourism.

Ecosystems within the focus area include nearshore marine habitats, extensive estuarine mudflats and salt marsh, freshwater streams and lakes, evergreen needle leaf forest, subalpine shrub thickets, and coastal alpine tundra. Lower elevations on the northeastern portion of the island chain are dominated by large stands of Sitka spruce, while the vegetation of the southern portion of the islands consists of maritime tundra. The drainages located on the southwest portion of Kodiak Island comprise the Kodiak Late Glacial Refugium, an area that was ice-free during much of the Pleistocene. This area provides one of the highest diversities of freshwater habitat and species abundance per-unit-area found anywhere in Alaska or the Pacific Northwest.

The USFWS is the largest single land owner in the archipelago, with Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge comprising some 1.8 million acres. State lands include the islands' extensive tidelands, plus almost all of Shuyak Island's 47,000 acres, managed as Shuyak Island State Park. The Kodiak Island Borough owns roughly 56,500 acres. Approximately 20% of archipelago lands are in private hands, owned and managed primarily by Koniag Alaska Regional Native Corporation and associated village corporations. Much of this land is actively managed for timber production, particularly on the southern half of Afognak Island. High priority habitats to be targeted for restoration and protection efforts include anadromous fish streams, wetlands, riparian habitats, and wildlife corridors in both wetland and upland habitats.

The most significant *challenges* to the successful protection of fish and wildlife habitat on the Kodiak archipelago is continued habitat loss and fragmentation as a result of continuing harvest of old growth coastal rainforest and its associated infrastructure. Additional threats consist of the potential for inappropriate development on private inholdings within the islands' State and Federal conservation units. Existing and future partnership *opportunities* include those with the Kodiak Island Borough, Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the American Land Conservancy, the Kodiak Brown Bear Trust, Koniag, Inc., and Afognak Joint Venture. Key *strategies* include continuation of our participation in the Afognak Coastal Protection Project, a collaborative effort of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, American Lands Conservancy, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and the Service, which has to date protected and restored more than 8,000 acres of coastal fish and wildlife habitat through habitat acquisition and forest road reclamation. Our efforts will address conservation needs in several *existing conservation plans*, including the State of Alaska's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources Kodiak Area Plan, ADFG's Kodiak Archipelago Bear Conservation and Management Plan, the Kodiak Island Borough's Comprehensive Plan, and the Kodiak Island Borough's Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan.



Matanuska - Susitna Valley: This focus area, home to more than 60,000 people, is encompassed by the Alaska Range to the north, the Talkeetna and Chugach Mountains to the east, the Cook Inlet to the south, and the Aleutian Range to the west. Trust species include five species of Pacific salmon, anadromous trout and char, and a diversity of migratory birds, including at-risk Tule white-fronted geese. This focus area was chosen because it contains the fastest growing communities in the state, including Palmer and Wasilla. This rapid and extensive urban development threatens diverse riparian and in-stream habitats needed by the fish and wildlife resources. Additionally, because it is so close to Anchorage, the largest population center in the State, it receives heavy recreational use, which impacts every type of habitat. This focus area consists of rolling lowlands featuring hundreds of small lakes, bogs, and clear water streams. Large rivers, including the Susitna, Matanuska, and Knik, drain glaciers in the surrounding mountains. Mixed forests of white and Sitka spruce, aspen, and birch dominate the area. Black spruce stands occur in lowland wet soils, ericaceous (woody, often evergreen) shrubs are dominant in open bogs, and tall scrub plant communities, consisting primarily of willow and alder, occur in floodplains. High priority habitats to be targeted for restoration and protection efforts include anadromous fish streams, wetlands, riparian habitats, and wildlife corridors in both wetland and upland habitats.

Land use includes tourism and recreation, gravel extraction, agricultural farming, expanding subdivisions and large retail establishments. Our most important *challenges* to the successful

restoration and protection of fish and wildlife habitat in this focus area are continued, minimally-planned rural development, habitat fragmentation along the area's numerous streams through improperly designed road-stream crossings, and limited public understanding of the value of intact habitat. Existing and future partnership *opportunities* are with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the Chickaloon Village Traditional Council, private land owners, local businesses, and non-profit organizations. The Coastal Program is already collaborating with local efforts to assess, restore, and protect key fish and wildlife habitat in the focus area, with numerous projects completed. The Service is taking a leadership role in the development of the Matanuska-Susitna Salmon Conservation Partnership, recognized in 2006 as one of five pilot partnerships under the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. *Strategies* for a successful habitat restoration and protection program within the focus area target riparian and in-stream habitat restoration and protection. Activities include fish passage assessment, improved watershed planning, the development of increased capacity within the nonprofit community, increased outreach and education, and a close working relationship with local government staff. Our efforts will address conservation needs in several *existing conservation plans*, including the State of Alaska's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, the Alaska DNR's Susitna Area Plan and Willow Sub-Basin Area Plan, the Mat-Su Borough's Lake Management Plans, and the City of Palmer's 2006 Comprehensive Plan.



Southeast Alaska: This focus area features the nation's largest remaining tracts of coastal rainforest and its adjacent estuarine, intertidal, and freshwater habitats. Southeast hosts five species of Pacific salmon, approximately 15,000 bald eagles, and some of the highest densities of

brown bears in the world. Riverine wetlands such as those at the mouths of the Stikine and Mendenhall Rivers are major migratory bird stopovers, providing estuarine habitat for juvenile salmon, and resting sites for waterfowl.

Conservation issues in Southeast Alaska differ substantially from the remainder of the 49th state due to geographic, climatic, and physical distinctions. Our most important *challenge* to the successful restoration and protection of fish and wildlife habitat in this focus area is the fact that Southeast Alaska's most productive habitats – its narrow coastal plains and forelands – are also the most developable lands in the region. As communities expand, native wetlands become scarce, and urban development impacts to streams and riparian corridors similar to those in the Pacific Northwest states are often repeated. Years of road building during the pioneering days of the timber industry also have left a legacy of fish-bearing streams bisected by inadequately sized culverts. Our *opportunities* include maintaining existing partnerships and developing new projects with locally-based watershed councils in Yakutat, Haines, Skagway, Juneau, Kasaan, and Klawock. These communities contain a larger proportion of municipal, State, Native Corporation, and private lands than other Southeast communities, which are largely enveloped by the Tongass National Forest. Program *strategies* include habitat protection and restoration/rehabilitation, technical assistance to non-profit partners, and assessment and remediation of fish passage impediments in mixed-ownership watersheds. Our efforts, in part, address or complement conservation needs in several *existing conservation plans*, including the State of Alaska's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, Southeast Sustainable Salmon Strategy, ACWA Program Stewardship Actions, TNC/Audubon Alaska's Southeast Alaska Conservation Assessment, and local watershed management plans.



Southwest Alaska: This focus area contains some of the richest assemblages of fish and wildlife resources in the Nation, including caribou, moose, brown bears, a diversity of marine mammals, and an abundance of migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, and songbirds. Terrestrial and marine ecosystems are bridged by millions of Pacific salmon that return to the region's rivers and lakes each year. Subsistence and commercial uses of wildlife resources are central to the economic and cultural life of the region's human communities. Southwest Alaska includes hundreds of miles of diverse coastal habitats, including Bristol Bay and the Alaska Peninsula. The terrain includes coastal mountains, large lakes, and extensive lowland coastal wetlands. Coastal vegetation includes highly productive brackish marshes and wet meadows important to waterfowl and anadromous fish and rocky beaches with great numbers of walruses, sea lions, and sea birds. Lowlands are home to large concentrations of lakes, ponds, meandering rivers, and wetlands that serve as important staging and migration areas for an abundance of waterfowl. These habitats support the largest run of sockeye salmon in the world, which, in turn, sustains large populations of brown bears, eagles, and osprey. High priority habitats to be targeted for restoration and protection efforts include anadromous fish streams, wetlands, riparian habitats, and wildlife corridors in both wetland and upland habitats. Land tenure in this focus area includes National Wildlife Refuges, National Parks and the largest State park in the United States. Approximately 10% of the region is in private ownership, including significant acreages of Alaska Native-owned lands. The land is largely undeveloped, with vast tracts of intact

wilderness. The area is also home to numerous small communities, with a population of less than 20,000, the majority of which is Alaska Native.

Our most important *challenges* to the successful restoration and protection of fish and wildlife habitat in this focus area are habitat fragmentation from development of private inholdings within broader State and Federal conservation units caused by economic downturns in the region, as well as the proposed offshore oil and gas development and large-scale hard rock mining projects within the region. Existing and future partnership *opportunities* include the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Works, Bristol Bay Native Corporation, Chevak Traditional Council, Conoco Phillips Alaska, Environmental Protection Agency, Lodge owners and local businesses, Lower Kuskokwim Economic Development Council, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Park Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Nushagak-Mulchatna/Wood-Tikchik Land Trust, Pilot Point Tribal Council, Southwest Alaska Conservation Coalition, Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference, The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy of Alaska, Ugashik Watershed Council, and a number of village and regional Native Corporations. *Strategies* for a successful habitat restoration and protection program within the focus area include technical and financial support for locally-driven, landscape-scale, habitat assessment, prioritization, and protection to benefit the area's subsistence, commercial, and recreational fish and wildlife users. Our efforts will address conservation needs in several *existing conservation plans*, including the State of Alaska's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, Alaska DNR's Bristol Bay Area Plan, and The Nature Conservancy's Nushagak Watershed Conservation Action Plan.

Performance Measures:

Performance Measures are a list of accomplishment measures that are reported by the Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Information Tracking System (HabITS), which tracks and reports accomplishment information at national, regional, and local levels. At the national level, performance measures chosen include habitat restoration that can be quantified, such as wetland acres or linear length of river/stream miles restored, enhanced, established, and/or protected. Field and Regional office staff enter performance measure data throughout the year, which is used by the Washington Office in end-of-year reporting to determine whether targets have been met.

However, the Coastal Program plays an equally important role in habitat protection by actions that are less easily measured, such as habitat assessment, project coordination, program/policy coordination, landowner consultation, outreach, and grant writing. The strength of the Coastal Program in Alaska lies in its ability to conserve coastal habitats through synergy with numerous and diverse partners, and to build a foundation for new initiatives. For example, we serve as a catalyst for watershed conservation by working with local groups who want to broaden the scope of habitat protection and restoration efforts. Cooperating with watershed groups has allowed us to focus on ecosystem planning and assessment rather than on a project-by-project basis.

Conservation targets for the Coastal Program in Alaska that are currently quantified as Performance Measures include acres of priority habitats protected and restored, miles of instream and associated riparian habitats improved and restored, and number of fish passage barriers removed. Our 5-year habitat conservation targets are listed in the table below. Other measures of conservation outcomes relevant to the Coastal Program workload have not yet been selected at the National or Regional levels for accountability purposes.

5-Year Habitat Conservation Targets by Geographic Focus Area

Focus Area	Wetlands Protected	Wetlands Restored	Uplands Protected	Uplands Restored	Riparian/Instream Restored/Improved	Barriers Removed
Anchorage Bowl	5 Acres	0	15 Acres	0	2 Miles	0
Kenai Peninsula	10 Acres	5 Acres	10 Acres	0	2 Miles	1
Kodiak Island Archipelago	2000 Acres	5 Acres	1500 Acres	5 Acres	0	0
Matanuska - Susitna Valley	25 Acres	5 Acres	200 Acres	0	1 Mile	1
Southwest Alaska	2000 Acres	0	1000 Acres	0	0	0
Southeast Alaska	200 Acres	5 Acres	150 Acres	5 Acres	0.5 Miles	1
TOTAL	4,240 Acres	20 Acres	2,875 Acres	10 Acres	5.5 Miles	3

GOAL 2: Broaden and Strengthen Partnerships

Since establishment in 2000, the Service’s Alaska Coastal Program has cooperated on approximately 170 projects with over 70 partners, often in collaboration with other Service programs. As part of our program outreach, we maintain an up-to-date list of more than 800 organizations and individuals, whom we notify when Alaska Coastal Conservation Federal Assistance Proposals are being accepted. We will continue to serve as a grants and coastal resource clearinghouse to our partners in Federal, State, local, and Alaska Native governments, as well as to non-governmental organizations and private landowners. We will work with existing partners while proactively reaching out to new partners in the coming years. However, annual increases in new partnerships will be constrained by current, fully-engaged, staff levels, as well as the limited scope of governmental and non-governmental partners in some of our more remote focus areas.

Focus Area	Number of New Partnerships Annually	Number of Partners Adopting Recommendations Annually	Cash and in-Kind Services leveraged Annually
Anchorage Bowl	3	5	\$300,000
Kenai Peninsula	3	5	\$300,000
Kodiak Island Archipelago	1	2	\$300,000
Matanuska – Susitna Valley	2	4	\$200,000
Southwest Alaska	1	2	\$200,000
Southeast Alaska	2	7	\$200,000
TOTAL	12	25	\$1,500,000

GOAL 3: Improve Information Sharing and Communication

Information sharing and communication with our partners, stakeholders, potential future partners, decision-makers, and others to protect, restore and enhance coastal resources has been, and will continue to be, a major goal of the Coastal Program. We believe that these information sharing roles are one of the primary strengths of the program. Based on current staffing and funding levels, we expect to maintain our current, relatively comprehensive level of coordination with other agencies (local, State and Federal) and stakeholders in project development and implementation, and to make modest increased investments in community-based watershed organizations.

Alaska Region Conservation Partnerships staff routinely present papers and posters on our restoration projects at State-level, regional, and national symposia and conferences. We will continue to support these efforts. Additionally, the Alaska Coastal Program works closely with our partners to share information important to coastal trust resources in Alaska by hosting a variety of workshops and training events in support of conservation statewide. Past events include leadership roles in coordinating the:

- Statewide Watershed Council Forum, 2006
- Designing for Aquatic Species Passage at Road-Stream Crossings, 2006
- Interagency Restoration Conferences, 2005
- Biotechnical Streambank Stabilization Shortcourse, 2004-05
- Southeast Alaska Watershed Council Workshops I & II, 2004-05
- Kenai Habitat Restoration Workshop, 2006
- Southcentral Alaska Willow Identification Workshop, 2001
- Cook Inlet Ecoregional Assessment Scientific Workshops, 2000

The Coastal Program has also aggressively supported the development and distribution of curricula, maps, GIS coverages, technical tools, and publications meeting locally-important information needs for our partners. A subset of these innovative products includes:

- Statewide Alaska Restoration Listserv, 2005
- It Ain't Easy Being Green, Amphibian Curricula, 2004
- Willows of Southcentral Alaska Guide for Restoration Applications, 2002
- Wetland Sedges of Alaska Identification Guide, 2003
- Publication and Distribution of the 2nd edition ADFG Streambank Revegetation and Protection Guide, 2005
- Shorezone nearshore mapping, Cook Inlet and the Southeast Archipelago, 2003-06
- ADFG Special Areas Inholdings Inventory and Mapping.
- Traditional Use Area Conservation plan for the Nushagak Mulchatna watershed, 2006.

GOAL 4: Enhance Our Workforce

The Alaska Region's fully integrated Conservation Partnerships Program, comprising the Coastal, Partners for Fish and Wildlife, Fish Passage, and Private Stewardship Grant Programs, is staffed as follows:

Regional Office: (PFW/FP/C/NFHAP)	1 Conservation Partnerships Division Chief
Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Field Office: (PFW/FP/C/NFHAP)	1 Supervisory Habitat Restoration Biologist 1 Habitat Restoration Biologist 1 Habitat Restoration Hydrologist/Engineer
Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office:	1 Habitat Restoration Biologist (PFW/FP/NFHAP)
Juneau Fish and Wildlife Field Office:	1 Habitat Restoration Biologist (PFW/FP/C)
Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office:	1 Habitat Restoration Biologist (PFW/FP)

The Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Field Office is fully staffed; our goal during the next 5 years is to reach an optimum staffing level of two Habitat Restoration Biologists and/or Habitat Restoration Hydrologist/Engineers in each of our Field Offices.

The Alaska Region encourages each of our Conservation Partnerships staffers to attend a minimum of 80 hours of training annually for professional development and in support of the goals of this strategic plan. Training opportunities that we have found particularly valuable to the Coastal Program include the following, which are available at the National Conservation Training Center and elsewhere:

Continuing Education- Technical:

- River Restoration Northwest Design Symposium
- Alaska Statewide Habitat Restoration Workshop
- Applied Fluvial Geomorphology
- River Morphology and Applications
- River Assessment and Monitoring
- River Restoration and Natural Channel Design
- Land Trust Alliance- Habitat protection shortcourses
- ESRI - ArcGIS
- Introduction to River Science Management
- Designing for Aquatic Organism Passage at Road-Stream Crossings

Continuing Education- Developmental:

- Federal Agencies and Non-Profit Partners

- Natural Resource Negotiation and Conflict Resolution
- Stepping Up to Leadership
- Advanced Leadership Development Program
- Effective Budgeting for Supervisors & Managers

Alaska Region Habitat Restoration staffers are encouraged to join professional societies such as the American Fisheries Society, American Water Resources Association, River Restoration Northwest, River Management Society, Land Trust Alliance, The Wildlife Society, Society for Ecological Restoration, and Society for Conservation Biology.

Our Habitat Restoration staffers have an average of 6 years of experience with the Coastal Program. The Conservation Partnerships Division Chief has completed the FWS Advanced Leadership Development Program and one of the two field level Habitat Restoration Biologists who undertake Coastal Program activities has completed the Service's Stepping Up to Leadership course. While the small size and wide geographic spread of our Conservation Partnerships staff limit our options for formal mentoring programs, these same factors demand that our field staff regularly consult with each other to address project-specific and programmatic issues. In particular, our Habitat Restoration Hydrologist/Engineer plays a key consulting role in project design at all field stations. This on-going collaboration between staff and field offices fosters a shared learning environment that provides similar benefits to a formal mentoring program. Our staff have also participated in several temporary details at the Service's Washington Office. We will continue to encourage these details to allow our staff to gain exposure to national-level policy development and implementation.

GOAL 5: Increase Accountability

The Alaska Region Coastal Program has an enviable track record of fiscal integrity; we have been successful in meeting the program's commitment to dedicating 70% of Regional allocations to on-the-ground projects, with the remaining 30% used for staffing and other administrative functions. Assuming that future budget allocations match inflation, we will continue to meet this mandate. Similarly, if funding levels balance inflation, we will maintain the habitat conservation targets depicted under Goal 1. We expect to accomplish 2 management control reviews (1 per Coastal field office) during the next 5 year period.

We will continue to enter all habitat restoration and technical assistance projects into the HabITS data base annually, and will link all projects to trust species. We will use images to document at least 75% of our project accomplishments in HaBITS.