

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Great Land Trust Purchases 187 Acres, Expanding the Popular Settlers Bay Coastal Park in the Mat-Su

Knik-Fairview, AK-

On March 30th, Great Land Trust (GLT) finalized a deal to purchase 187 acres of undeveloped land adjacent to the Settlers Bay Coastal Park and donated the land to the Mat-Su Borough. The newly acquired land has been incorporated into Settlers Bay Coastal Park, bringing the park's total size to 480 acres, increasing recreation opportunities, protecting forest and wetland habitat, and directly connecting a new neighborhood to the park.

The Borough will own and manage the land consistent with the management plan for the existing park and will expand their infrastructure efforts into the new area in coming years. GLT holds a conservation easement over the entire park, which ensures that the park will be reserved for public recreation and that the wildlife habitat and salmon streams will be protected forever.

Great Land Trust is a nonprofit founded by Alaskans for Alaskans with a mission to conserve the lands and waters essential to the quality of life and economic health of Alaskan communities. Since 1995, GLT has conserved over 56,000 acres of priority wildlife habitat, permanently protected more than 100 miles of salmon streams, secured increased access to public lands, and created parks and public natural areas throughout its Southcentral Alaska service area.

In just under a year, GLT raised over \$1.4 million to purchase the property and complete the project. GLT Executive Director Ellen Kazary said, "This was a fast-paced project with steps – securing funding, landowner negotiations, working with the Mat-Su Borough, etc. – occurring simultaneously. We're so thankful to our funders, partners, and supporters for recognizing what an amazing opportunity this was to expand the extremely popular Settlers Bay Coastal Park."

Funding for the project came from the Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund, Matanuska Electric Association Charitable Foundation, Mat-Su Health Foundation, Mat-Su Trails & Parks Foundation, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, and Rasmuson Foundation, and multiple individual private donors. "The generous support of these funders and donors shows their commitment to work that has a lasting positive impact on the health and vibrancy of our communities for generations to come," said Kazary.

At the closing, landowner Ethan Williams expressed his excitement for the completion of this project. “I’m thrilled to have been able to work with Great Land Trust and the Mat-Su Borough to leave this legacy for future Valley residents. As a developer, I’ve seen a lot of growth in the 45 years I’ve lived here, and I appreciate how important it is to set aside land for parks and greenspace. I’m glad to know that Settlers Bay Coastal Park will be here for my grandchildren to enjoy and for their grandchildren after that.”

The original Settlers Bay Coastal Park project began in 2013 when the owners of the Settlers Bay Golf Course, LLC approached GLT about conserving some of the undeveloped property within the Settlers Bay neighborhood as public open space. GLT raised the funds to acquire the property and establish a regional park for public recreation and habitat conservation, ultimately creating the 293-acre Settlers Bay Coastal Park. Today, the Mat-Su Borough manages the park land for conservation and public use. GLT holds a conservation easement on the property to ensure the park’s public access, open space, and habitats are protected and conservation values are upheld in perpetuity.

Settlers Bay Coastal Park opened in the fall of 2019 and trail development and park infrastructure projects have been ongoing since then. Mat-Su Borough and Student Conservation Association trail crews have built almost nine miles of trails, including singletrack mountain bike trails and an accessible bluff lookout trail, and installed other essential infrastructure such as restrooms, trash cans, benches, parking lots, and gates. With the support of AARP, the Alaska Conservation Foundation, ConocoPhillips, and the Mat-Su Trails & Parks Foundation, GLT and the Mat-Su Borough completed work on an accessible scenic overlook viewing platform this past summer that offers stunning views of the Palmer Hay Flats and the Chugach Mountains across Upper Cook Inlet.

According to data gathered by the Mat-Su Borough, in the summer of 2022, Settlers Bay Coastal Park was one of the top two most visited parks managed by the Borough. Mat-Su Borough Asset Manager Joe Metzger said, “We’re thrilled to have this opportunity to grow the park. Knik-Fairview is one of the highest growth areas in the Borough and it’s important to make sure we’re providing folks with close-to-home places to safely recreate and enjoy nature.”

GLT’s Kazary said, “We are looking forward to a big community celebration at the park this summer. Our work at GLT is made possible by funders, donors, and supporters in our communities. We want to recognize and celebrate with everyone who helps make projects like this a reality.”

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Great Land Trust is a nonprofit founded by Alaskans for Alaskans with a mission to conserve lands and waters essential to the quality of life and economic health of our communities. For more information visit our website at www.greatlandtrust.org.

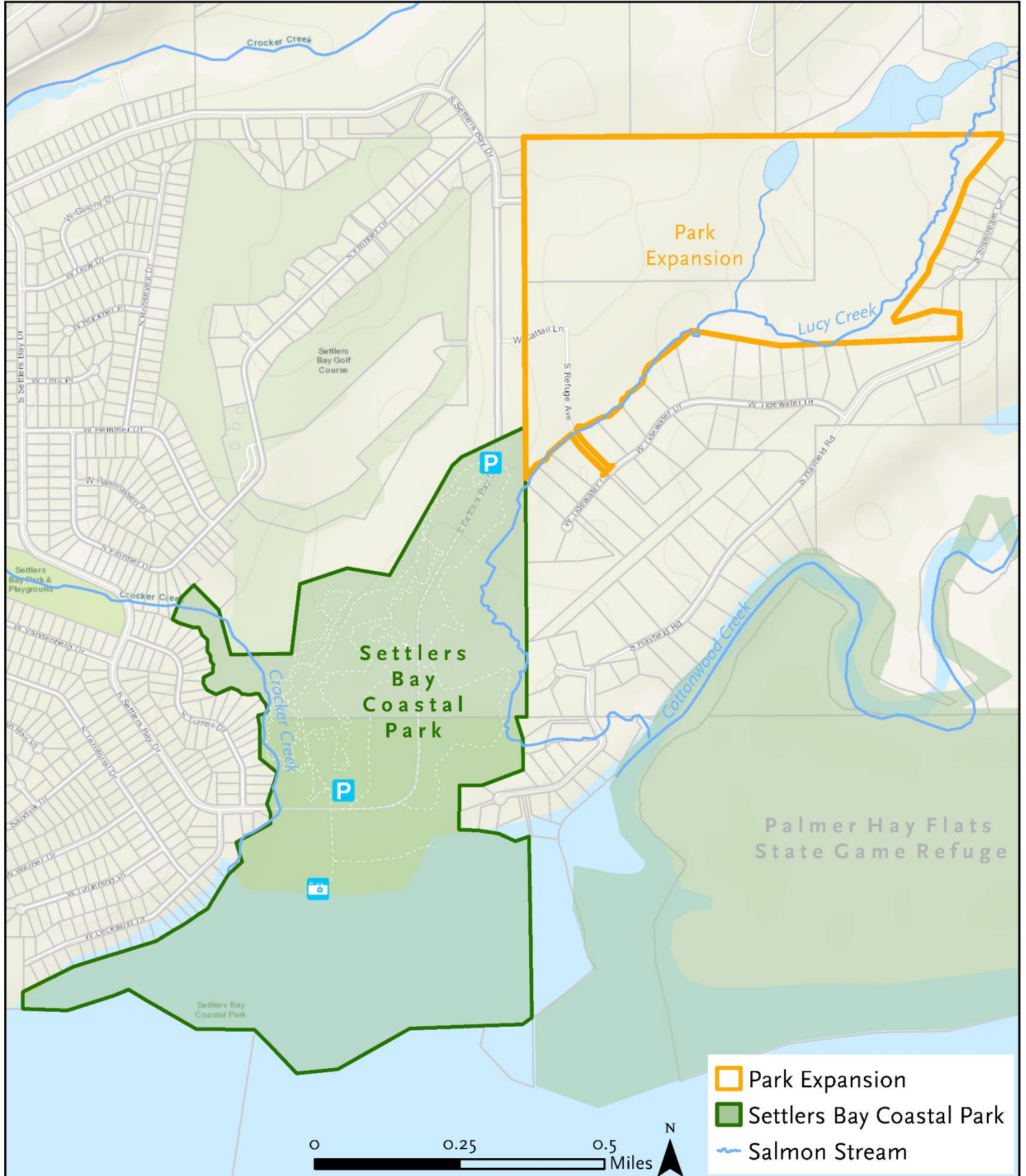
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SETTLERS BAY COASTAL PARK EXPANSION PROJECT

WASILLA, AK - Approx. 187.6+/- acres



Data Sources:
 MSB (parcels, trails); ADFG (streams); ADFG (PHFSCR); ESRI (topo); Gracx (ponds)
 Projected Coordinate System:
 NAD 1983 State Plane Alaska 4 FIPS 5004 Feet
 Map Prepared: 1/23/2023

This map was produced using the best available data, but should not be used in place of plat and survey maps.





GLT and MSB staff join seller Ethan Williams and Borough Mayor Edna DeVries at the MSB Offices to celebrate after signing the closing documents for the Settlers Bay Coastal Park Expansion project on Thursday, March 30, 2023.

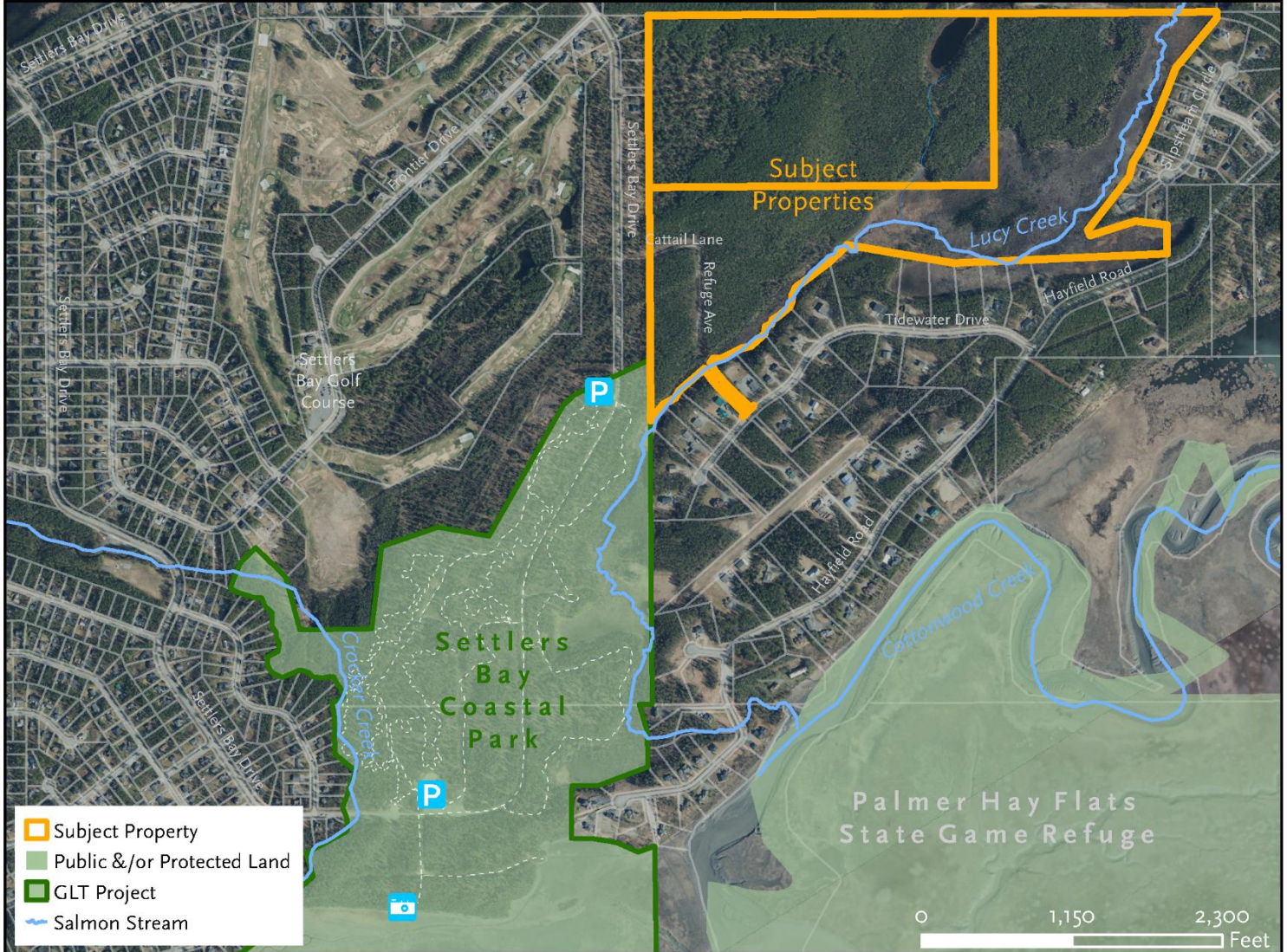


GLT Board Vice-Chair Sara Jansen, MSB Borough Manager Michael Brown, and seller Ethan Williams sign the closing documents on a land deal to purchase 187 acres of land to incorporate into Settlers Bay Coastal Park.

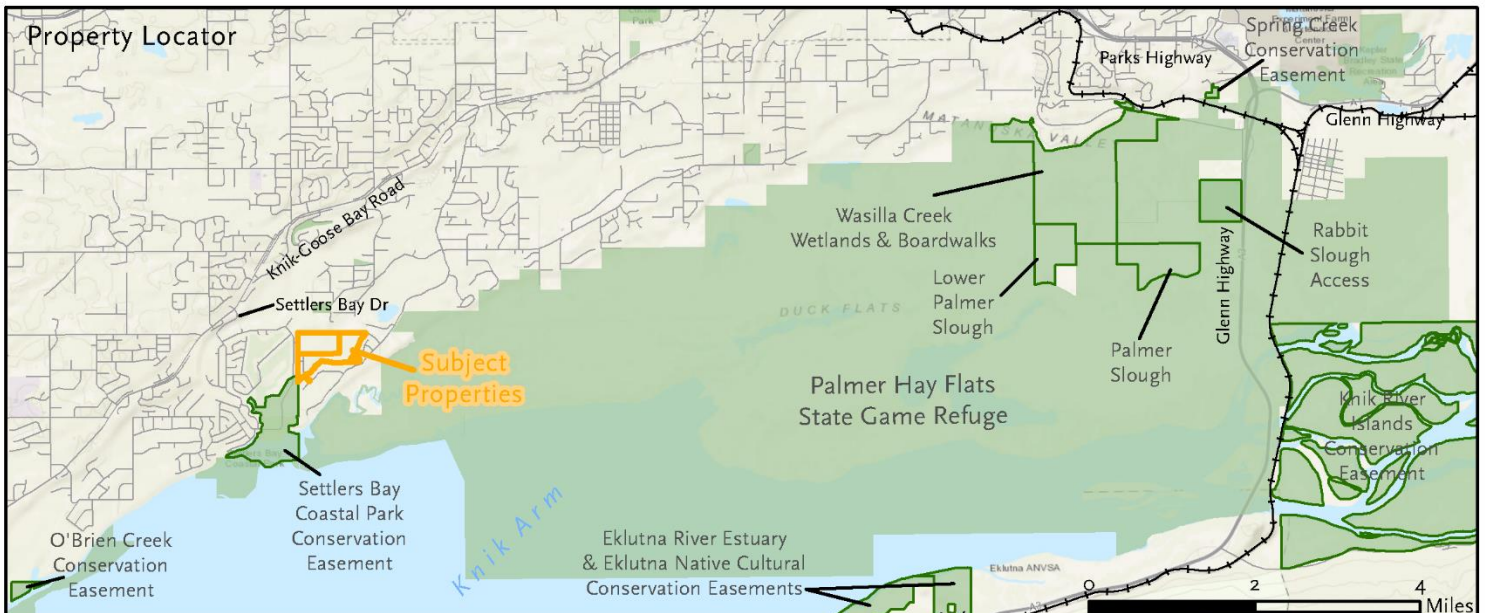


SETTLERS BAY COASTAL PARK EXPANSION PROJECT

WASILLA, AK - Approx. 187.6+/- acres



- Subject Property
- Public &/or Protected Land
- GLT Project
- ~ Salmon Stream



Data Sources:
 MSB (parcels, roads, railroad, imagery); ADFG (streams); ADNR (public land); ESRI (topo)
 Projected Coordinate System:
 NAD 1983 State Plane Alaska 4 FIPS 5004 Feet
 Map Prepared: 4/8/2022

This map was produced using the best available data, but should not be used in place of plat and survey maps.