

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Ellen Kazary, Executive Director
Great Land Trust
ellen@greatlandtrust.org
(907) 278-4998

Wendy Sailors, Business Development Specialist
Alaska State Parks
wendy.sailors@alaska.gov
(907) 269-8738

Great Land Trust Facilitates Project that Protects Valuable Habitat and Improves Access to the Kenai River's Eagle Rock Boat Launch

Kenai, AK-

Access to and parking at the popular Eagle Rock Boat Launch on the Kenai River are on track for significant upgrades, thanks to the recent completion of a land conservation effort led by Great Land Trust.

Nearly 35 acres of undeveloped land adjacent to the boat launch has been conserved. Approximately half of the property will remain undisturbed forever, permanently protecting valuable wetlands and creating a natural buffer along the river preserving important habitat for fish and other wildlife. The other half of the land will be used by Alaska State Parks to improve recreational facilities including streamlined access to the boat launch and additional parking.

The property, originally a native allotment, was purchased from Phyllis Bookey. Phyllis and her husband Jim Bookey are longtime Kenai residents, business owners, and active community members. "We're so pleased to know that this property will continue to provide important wildlife habitat and scenic views and will now be open for the public to enjoy," said Phyllis. "My family originally selected this allotment because of its river access, and that river access is why it's still important to the community today."

Great Land Trust, a non-profit founded by Alaskans for Alaskans with a mission to conserve the lands and waters essential to the quality of life and economic health of our communities, led the effort to conserve this property. Great Land Trust works with willing landowners, like the Bookeys, to make conservation and access projects a reality throughout Southcentral Alaska. The Bookeys sold the property to the State of Alaska with the condition that it will be permanently managed for public access, recreation, and habitat protection under a conservation easement held by the Bureau of Land Management.

Great Land Trust facilitated this project between the State of Alaska and the Bureau of Land Management using funding from the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill (EVOS) Trustee Council. The project builds on past EVOS Trustee Council efforts; it is adjacent to other properties, such as the Eagle Rock Boat Launch, that were conserved through EVOS Trustee Council funding, creating a permanent corridor of habitat connectivity along the Kenai River. Protection of Kenai River

frontage is important for the recovery and health of many species that were impacted in the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill.

“Conservation of riverfront land and improved access helps meet goals of the Department of Natural Resource’s Kenai River Comprehensive Management Plan,” said Alaska State Parks Director Ricky Gease. “This partnership with Great Land Trust and others allows us to address safety concerns by diverting boat launch traffic away from the adjacent neighborhood and offers an alternative to parking large vehicles with trailers along the busy highway.” Future plans include the development of a visitor center.

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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.



The Bookey property is in the foreground, with the Eagle Rock boat launch parking lot in the far right of the photo. Photo by Carl Johnson.