

Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund Statement of Work

I. Project Title: Strategic Conservation of Priority Salmon Habitat – Phase 7

II. Project Number: 53001

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IV. **Project Period:** 3/1/20 – 11/30/22

V. **AKSSF Objective:** 1A-7 **PCSRF Objective:** HP&R

VI. **Project Description**

1. Synopsis

Great Land Trust (GLT) will work with willing landowners to target and conserve important salmon habitat through conservation easements and fee-title acquisitions, permanently protecting 500 acres or more of land and the waters bodies they encompass.

2. Introduction

Great Land Trust (GLT) is a private, nonpartisan non-profit organization formed in 1995 with a mission to conserve and steward lands and waters essential to the quality of life and economic health of Alaskans. GLT's service area is Southcentral Alaska and includes the Municipality of Anchorage, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Kenai Peninsula, and the culturally and geographically diverse communities of Western Cook Inlet, the Copper River Basin (including Cordova), Prince William Sound, and Kodiak and Afognak islands. Over the past 24 years, GLT has completed 52 conservation projects totaling over 55,500 acres of valuable habitat including over 85 miles of salmon corridor, some in the most rapidly developing and developed areas of the state. GLT has also conserved areas used for subsistence in urban and remote areas of the state including watershed scale projects in the Kodiak archipelago and the educational subsistence fishery of the Native Village of Eklutna.

Background: This project builds upon six prior AKSSF grants awarded to GLT to conserve important salmon habitat (AKSSF projects 44712, 44806, 44159, 44202, 51005, and 52010, *Strategic Conservation of Priority Salmon Habitat – Phases 1-6*). With prior AKSSF grants and Geographic Information System (GIS) habitat prioritization data, GLT has been able to identify and conserve over 7,696 acres and 20.2 miles of important salmon habitat. AKSSF previously funded GLT to prioritize and conduct outreach to landowners to develop potential projects, resulting in the projects proposed for conservation in this grant.

Identifying lands for conservation: To ensure that the work focuses on the highest conservation value projects and the lands most important to sustainable salmon populations, GLT uses GIS resources, ecological data, land use information, expert opinion, and partner priorities to rank lands for conservation. GLT is constantly updating its GIS database as newer data layers become available. GLT also enlists the support of local, regional, and agency experts to verify GLT's GIS findings. For each of the prioritizations GLT has completed, depending on the area assessed, GLT has invited representatives from the following organizations to review and comment on

GLT's findings before finalizing the report: the Kenai Peninsula and Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Municipality of Anchorage, Kodiak Island Borough, Audubon Alaska, the Environmental Protection Agency, Kenai Watershed Forum, Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, Bristol Bay Heritage Land Trust, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) Palmer and Anchorage offices, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Natural Resource Conservation Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the University of Alaska, the U.S. Geological Survey, Alaska Native corporations, local fishing guides, Tribal governments, The Conservation Fund, and The Nature Conservancy.

As shown in the graphic below (Figure 1), GLT has completed prioritizations of most of the lands in GLT's service area. All of these prioritizations weighted anadromous waters and wetlands at a higher level. For this project, GLT will use the results from these prioritizations to target conservation projects throughout GLT's service area to permanently protect 500 acres of priority habitat supporting spawning, overwintering, or rearing Chinook (*Onchorhynchus tshawytscha*), coho (*O. kisutch*), sockeye (*O. nerka*), chum (*O. keta*), and pink salmon (*O. gorbuscha*) and/or steelhead trout (*O. mykiss*) populations.

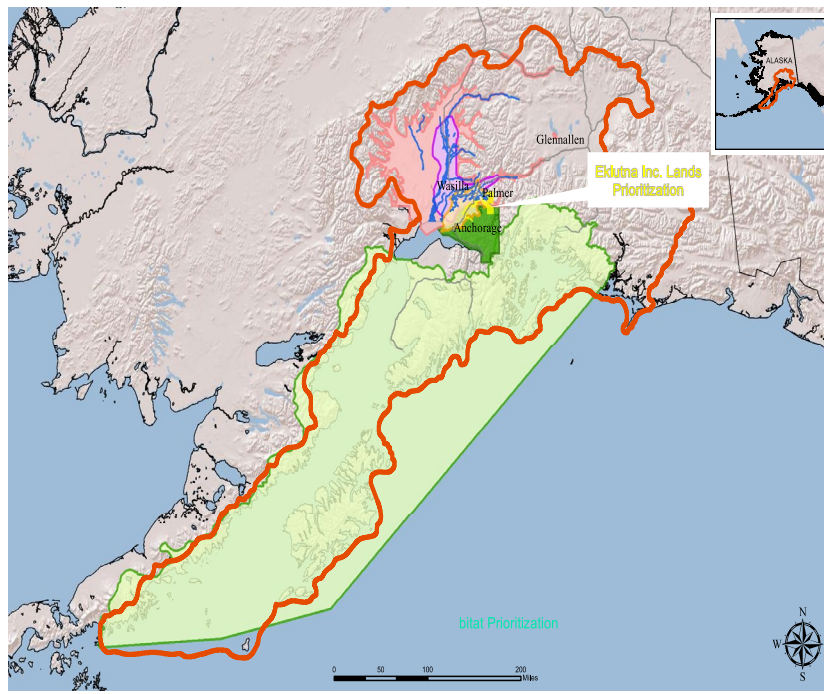


Figure 1: GLT's service area and habitat prioritizations

Purpose and Activities: GLT will work with community and agency partners and private landowners to complete land conservation projects that directly protect important salmon habitat. This project will specifically target land conservation projects that are in a designated Subsistence Harvest Area identified by ADF&G and those that are threatened by incompatible development. Projects in nonsubsistence areas may also be pursued.

GLT’s protection methods include conservation easements and fee-simple acquisitions. Conservation easements will be granted via donation or by purchase. A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust that limits development or use of a property for conservation purposes, such as protecting wildlife habitat, open space, productive farmlands, or important salmon habitat. All of GLT’s conservation easements are perpetual.

Once a conservation easement is complete, with GLT’s dedicated Stewardship Fund, GLT will monitor and enforce the easement annually in perpetuity to ensure that the conservation values have not been impacted or degraded by human alteration. If a violation occurs and the conservation values have been negatively impacted, GLT will work with the landowners to mitigate the impact or pursue litigation to amend the violation and restore the conservation values.

Acquisition projects will be purchased from or donated by willing landowners, transferred into public ownership with a municipal, state, or federal entity, tribal entity, or non-profit organization, and managed as part of a new or existing refuge or protected area. In some cases, GLT will retain a conservation easement on lands that are granted to a third party.

3. Locations

This project will conserve high raking priority lands within GLT’s service area and may include the five parcels in the table below:

Potential Projects	Lat	Long
Rabbit Slough Additional Lands/Phase II Palmer Hay Flats, Upper Knik Arm	61.520710	-149.327888
Matanuska River Side Channel Butte, Matanuska – Knik Confluence	61.527224,	-149.093217
Anton Larsen Bay Northern Kodiak Island, Kodiak Archipelago	57.843408	-152.625840
Katalla Copper River Delta, Gulf of Alaska	60.181604	-144.583551
Tazlina River at Copper River Confluence Tazlina, Copper River Basin	62.040449	-145.391567

4. Related Projects

44712, 44806, 44159, 44202, 51005, 52010

VII. Objectives

Protect 500 acres or more of priority salmon habitat through conservation easements and/or fee simple acquisitions

VIII. Methods

GLT has already prioritized, selected, and developed five potential projects to pursue through this project. If any of the selected projects become inviable, GLT will review its

prioritization results and select other equivalently high-scoring projects and evaluate the conservation opportunities with agency partners to ensure that limited salmon habitat conservation funds are most effectively utilized.

Relationship Building with Private Landowners and Partners: GLT will reach out to the landowners of potential projects to explore their interest in conservation options for their lands which may include travel to communities throughout GLT's service area. Project selection is determined by criteria including the following: 1) habitat value to salmon, 2) an interested and willing landowner, 3) parcel threat, 4) parcel value to subsistence uses, and 5) feasibility of project cost with resources available from AKSSF, nonfederal matching fund sources, and other leveraged funding sources. For acquisition projects, it will be necessary to spend significant time in the relevant communities meeting with local state, federal, municipal, or tribal governments to cultivate relationships and identify the right future owners/land manager for the project. Once a landowner has agreed to a conservation action, GLT will complete the initial site assessments of the property to further document the conservation value of the salmon habitat. Once the site assessment is done, each project will be presented to the GLT Board of Directors for approval to move forward.

Conservation Easements: After the GLT Board approves a conservation easement project, GLT staff will begin working on due diligence. Due diligence activities include, at minimum, a title review, environmental hazard report, appraisal, and a property boundary survey. Once the due diligence activities are completed, GLT staff will begin working with the landowners to draft an engagement letter or purchase and sale agreement as well as the conservation easement. This often involves legal review by independent counsel and extensive meetings over many months with the landowners.

Once the easement is drafted, GLT staff will visit the property to complete the Baseline Documentation Report (BDR). GLT completes BDRs for each conservation easement GLT holds. This report describes in narrative and photos the condition of the property at the time the conservation easement is conveyed. The report documents the historical and current uses of the property and summarizes each of the conservation values being protected with the easement. The report serves as a legal document that is a snapshot of the property at the time the easement is conveyed and will signal to GLT at annual monitoring site visits if there has been a violation to the terms of the easement.

Acquisitions: If a project is an acquisition, many of the due diligence steps are similar. However, GLT will only acquire a parcel if there is a willing tribal, non-profit, municipal, state, or federal partner that has the resources to assume ownership and to manage the land for conservation purposes. Determining the right partners and getting the appropriate approvals often takes significant time, attendance at official meetings, legal review from governmental council, and formal resolutions by the entity. In some instances, GLT will retain a conservation easement on a fee simple property.

IX. Benefits

This project will permanently protect approximately 500 acres of priority habitat to support spawning, overwintering, and/or rearing Chinook, coho, sockeye, chum, and pink salmon and/or steelhead trout populations. Priority parcels include those that support subsistence fisheries and are in danger of development.

X. Products, Milestones, and Timelines

April 2020 – December 2020:

- Finalize habitat conservation projects to be pursued
- Contact landowners to determine interest and type of project (conservation easement or acquisition)
- Complete initial site and habitat assessments to determine conservation value
- Have owners sign willingness statements/engagement letters to move forward with a project
- Complete budgets for each project
- Obtain GLT Board approval to move forward

January 2021 – December 2021:

- Complete title reports
- Complete environmental hazard (‘Phase 1’) reports
- Draft conservation easements and/or purchase and sale agreements
- Complete appraisals and identify the value for each project
- Work with community, agency, and/or municipal partners to secure acceptance of acquired lands and a management agreement for habitat
- Complete baseline documentation reports
- Complete conservation easements or acquisition negotiations

January 2022 – October 2022:

- Close on conservation easements or acquire fee simple titles
- Transfer property to community, agency, and/or municipal partners, as appropriate
- Publish stories about completed projects in GLT’s eNews highlighting the parcels conserved through this project

XI. Project Budget

GLT Budget	Total
100 Personnel	\$97,700
200 Travel	\$8,948
300 Contractual	\$86,000
400 Supplies	\$0
500 Equipment/Real Property	\$500,000
Subtotal	\$692,648
Expenses subject to indirect	\$192,648
600 Indirect	\$19,265
Total	\$711,913

Line 100: Personnel (\$97,700)

The GLT Executive Director, Conservation Director, Conservation Project Manager, Lands Manager, Stewardship Coordinator, and Communications and Administration Manager are responsible for completing the objectives and deliverables of this project. They will engage landowners and work with them to draft the conservation easements, coordinate with state, municipal, or Tribal entities on acquisition projects, complete the baseline report for each project, solicit bids and select contractors as appropriate for completing due diligence activities, secure and track matching funds, and perform all necessary reporting and compliance requirements. Fringe costs include paid time off, health insurance, taxes, and retirement benefits and is included in the hourly rate.

- Ellen Kazary, Executive Director, is responsible for financial management, ensuring compliance with all rules and regulations, and reporting requirements and will oversee and manage the budget and staff: 400 hours @ \$70/hour = \$28,000.
- Dave Mitchell, Conservation Director, will coordinate with local agency and governmental partners, coordinate with landowners and explain the conservation options available, perform conservation easement and acquisition negotiations, and approve due diligence documentation: 400 hours @ \$60/hour = \$24,000.
- Mike Schroeder, Conservation Project Manager, will supervise all contractors for due diligence, draft the conservation easement and purchase and sale agreements, and coordinate closing transactions: 400 hours @ \$52/hour = \$20,800.
- Amanda Peacock Hults, Lands Manager, will be responsible for project-related GIS mapping and will perform the initial fieldwork and baseline documentation reporting necessary for each project as well as prepare for long-term management of conserved properties: 300 hours @ \$45/hour = \$13,500.
- Matt McMillan, Stewardship Coordinator, will support the Lands Manager in completing the initial GIS mapping, field/site assessment, documentation of conservation values, and the baseline documentation reports: 200 hours @ \$38/hour = \$7,600.
- Libby Kugel, Communications and Administration Manager, will be responsible for office and grant administration activities directly related to this project including filing narrative and financial reports, coordinating travel and meetings, and project communications and publicity: 100 hours @ \$38/hour = \$3,800.

Line 200: Travel (\$8,948)

- Staff will be driving throughout GLT's service area, as needed, including the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and Tazlina, to facilitate projects: 2,000 miles @ .58 cents/mile = \$1,160.

- Staff will travel three times to Kodiak and/or Cordova to facilitate projects:
 - Airfare: 3 tickets/person @ \$400/ticket x 2 people = \$2,400
 - Lodging: 6 nights/person @ \$194/night x 2 people = \$2,328
 - Car rental: 12 days @ \$75/day = \$900
 - Meals per diem: 12 days/person (including driving trips) @ \$90/day x 2 people = \$2,160

Line 300: Contractual (\$86,000)

- Title insurance reports and closing costs: 5 reports @ \$1,500/report = \$7,500
- Environmental Hazard Assessment Phase 1 reports: 5 reports @ \$3,500/report = \$17,500
- USPAP appraisals: 5 appraisals @ \$7,000/appraisal = \$35,000
- Land surveys: 2 surveys @ \$8,000/survey = \$16,000
- Attorney consultations to review the conservation easement drafts: 5 legal consultations @ \$2,000/consultation = \$10,000

Line 500: Equipment/Real Property (\$500,000)

Acquisition costs (not to exceed appraised value) for the purchase of conservation easements or fee-simple acquisitions: \$500,000

Line 600: Indirect (\$19,265)

GLT will use the de minimis indirect rate of 10% (as described in 2 CFR 200) which excludes, among other items, subaward amounts over \$25,000, capital expenditures, and equipment.

XII. Match Budget

GLT Match Budget	Total
100 Personnel	\$0
200 Travel	\$0
300 Contractual	\$0
400 Supplies	\$0
500 Equipment/Real Property	\$249,170
Total	\$249,170

Line 500: Equipment/Real Property: \$249,170

GLT will provide a combination of in-kind and cash match. The in-kind value of donated conservation easements and/or a bargain sales for acquisitions (when a landowner sells property for less than the fair market value) will be determined and documented by a professional appraisal.