ANNUAL REPORT
for 2011
This is the tenth annual report of the Nushagak-Mulchatna / Wood-Tikchik Land Trust

Board of Directors to Consider Expanding Land Trust Service Area to All of Bristol Bay

At the December Annual Meeting the Board considered whether to expand the service area of the Land Trust to all of Bristol Bay. Currently the Trust mission statement directs conservation activities to the Nushagak River watershed and the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge. However, over the last few years the Trust has participated in activities that serve all of Bristol Bay and has been approached about facilitating conservation acquisitions outside of its primary service area. The most notable activity initiated by the Trust that serves all of Bristol Bay is the Flyfishing and Guide Academy. The academy was held in Naknek in 2011 and the 2012 academy is scheduled for Igiugig.

The Board will reconsider expanding the service area at its spring meeting. The revised mission of an expanded land trust would be to: work cooperatively with interested organizations and willing landowners to protect the land, waters and habitat features important for maintaining the resources upon which the residents of Bristol Bay depend for subsistence, recreation and commercial fishing.

Land Trust Conducts Fish Surveys in Advance of Mineral Exploration Near Koliganek

In an effort to address the possible impacts of mining in the Nushagak watershed, the Land Trust raised funds to underwrite a one week fish survey of streams in the vicinity of Kemuk Mountain. The survey was done in advance of exploratory work by Millrock Resources, Inc. on a claim 20 miles west of the village of Koliganek. The exploration is underwritten by Kinross Gold and began in late August. The Land Trust engaged retired ADF&G fisheries biologist Mike Wiedmer and fisheries technician Dan Chythlook from Aleknagik to spearhead the survey work. The survey documented numerous species of fish throughout the area targeted for exploratory drilling. Salmon were found throughout. Sixty-eight miles of previously undocumented salmon streams were nominated for inclusion in Alaska’s Anadromous Waters Catalog. The survey confirms the presence of salmon in the vicinity of Millrock’s exploratory drilling activity. The presence of salmon triggers a permit requirement to implement protective measures. Although the viability of salmon in the claim area is not likely to be affected by this exploratory activity, the survey makes clear the development of a large open pit mine in this area will raise this question.
Tom Tucker and Dan Chythlook capturing fish in Napatoli Creek in August of 2011

The fish survey cost nearly $50,000 and was made possible by donations from Koliganek Natives LTD, the City of Dillingham, Choggiug LTD, the Ekwok Village Council, Leader Creek Fisheries, McKinley Capital Management, The Alaska Conservation Foundation, Bristol Bay Native Corporation, Trout Unlimited, and Royal Coachman Lodge.

Nushagak-Mulchatna Watershed Council Adopts Standards for Responsible Mining in the Watershed

The Nushagak-Mulchatna Watershed Council, at its meeting in Ekwok in October of 2011 adopted a set of standards for reviewing mining proposals in the watershed. The document is called: Standards and Practices for Environmentally Responsible Mining in the Nushagak River Watershed. The Watershed Council is made up of representatives from each tribe, Native corporation and municipal government for the communities in the watershed. Land Trust President Luki Akelkok is Chairman of the Council. Boardmembers Bobby Andrew, Billy Mains and Rick Tennyson also serve on the Council. Boardmember Sue Flensburg and Executive Director Tim Troll serve as volunteer staff to the Council.

The Standards and Practices provide a series of guidelines that mining companies, land owners and regulators can follow to engage residents and in the various phases of project development from exploration to post closure monitoring in the development, operation and closure of mining projects.

Among the practices set forth in the document are the following:

- The principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent as articulated in the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People should govern engagement of local residents;
- Actual notice of permit applications should be provided to all local governments, tribes and Native corporations in the watershed with a minimum 90-day comment period;
- Public hearings should be held in the communities closest to the activities proposed for permitting;
- Scientific information generated by mining companies should be made available in hard copy and digital format;
- Fish distribution surveys should be conducted prior to or at the same time as exploration;
- Instream flow reservations of water for fish under state law should be filed prior to development;
- Mines that require active management forever to avoid environmental contamination should be prohibited.

Finally, the Watershed Council adopts the precautionary principle that says there shall be no
presumption in favor of mineral development. The burden rests with the developer to prove that proposed mining activities will not significantly harm the environment. Where there is scientific uncertainty, the activities should not occur, or should be delayed until the uncertainty can be resolved.

In the cover letter to the documents that was sent out to government agencies, mining companies and other entities Chairman Akelkok stated the Council considers the Standards and Practices to be a working document that will be revised as “new standards for mining and public engagement evolve and technology improves. However, Chairman Akelkok cautioned that the core principles are not expected to change: “First, that watershed residents must be engaged in all phases of a mineral development; and Second, mineral development should not occur if the fish resources of the watershed will be put at significant risk.”

The Standards and Practices for Responsible Mining in the Nushagak Watershed is posted on the land trust website.

**Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy Complete Salmon Habitat Assessment of Native Lands on the Nushagak River**

The Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy have completed a classification of salmon habitat on Native lands along the Nushagak River. The classification is general in the sense that it incorporates several databases, including an archive of traditional knowledge, and a salmon habitat characterization model developed by the University of Montana. All of these were combined to create a system for scoring the salmon habitat value of each 640 acre section of Native Land along the Nushagak River.

The classification was designed to give Native corporations some specific information about their lands that would be useful for future land management decisions.

The following map shows sections of land and a color range. The color value reflects a score that attempts to characterize the conservation value of each section by capturing river complexity, wetlands, flood plain, subsistence harvest locations and cultural or historic sites. River complexity is a surrogate for salmon habitat. Red sections rate high for salmon habitat values and are areas that should be evaluated more carefully before permanent structures or changes are made to the land.

**Financial Status – Year End 2011**

During 2011 the Land Trust raised $5,360 in general donations, $268 for the General Stewardship Fund, $122,473 in grants and other support for various projects, $20,674 in sales income (books, t-shirts, canned salmon), and $__ in interest. Total income for the year was $148,997; expenses came to $123,904. For 2011 the Land Trust had net income of $8,679. Corporate assets at year-end were distributed as follows:

- General Savings $136,570
- General Checking $15,358
- Stewardship Fund $56,582

**Land Trust Website**

Visit the Land Trust website to learn more about our work, our partners, and our Board of Directors.

[www.nmwtlandtrust.org](http://www.nmwtlandtrust.org)
Sailing for Salmon Exhibit Continues With Openings in Anchorage and Cordova and a Book Release

The exhibit *Sailing For Salmon: 125 Years of Commercial Fishing in Bristol Bay* opened at the Anchorage Museum on the evening of April 14 with a presentation on the early commercial fishing in Bristol Bay. It was on display through the summer tourism season and closed in October.

The Cordova City Museum hosted the exhibit in November through mid January. Venues scheduled for 2012 include the Alaska State Museum in Juneau and Alaska General Seafoods Cannery in Naknek.

The Land Trust has published a new book for the exhibit called: *Sailing for Salmon – The Early Years of Commercial Fishing in Bristol Bay*. The book was edited and illustrated by Land Trust Executive Director Tim Troll. The photos in the book were compiled by Troll and John Branson, Historian for the Lake Clark National Park and Preserve. Copies of the book can be ordered from the Land Trust at $24.95 plus shipping, or from Alaska Geographic at [www.alaskageographic.org/store/products/sailing-sailing-for-salmon](http://www.alaskageographic.org/store/products/sailing-sailing-for-salmon).

Executive Director to Leave The Nature Conservancy and Dedicate Full Time to Land Trust

Land Trust Executive Director, Tim Troll, separted The Nature Conservancy effective March 31, 2012. For the last seven years he has served as the Southwest Alaska Program Director for the Conservancy under a job sharing arrangement with the Land Trust. He has moved to full time employment with the Trust. The change, however, is not expected to diminish the commitment of the Conservancy to its work in Southwest, Alaska, nor to its relationship with the Land Trust.