



*Chaik Bay on southwest Admiralty Island, Photo by John Schoen*

### **Admiralty Island**

Admiralty Island, in my opinion, is one of the most valuable landscapes on Earth. I have spent over 50 years exploring the North Pacific Coast from Puget Sound to the Kenai Peninsula and traveled the coast of the Russian Far East, and I have never found a better representation of a North Pacific temperate rainforest ecosystem that is still largely intact and maintains all of its post Pleistocene flora and fauna, including robust populations of Pacific salmon, brown bears, bald eagles, marbled murrelets, and many other species that have been extirpated or declined throughout their original ranges. Admiralty has also been home to the aboriginal Tlingit Indians for 10,000 years and the Tlingit people still maintain a vigorous community on Admiralty at the village of Angoon. For nearly 100 years, biological explorations and scientific studies have been conducted on Admiralty Island, and I have personally had the great privilege to conduct research on Sitka Black-tailed deer and brown bears there from 1977 through 1989. And then in 2004, working with Audubon Alaska and The Nature Conservancy, we initiated a conservation assessment of southeast Alaska which found that of 22 biogeographic provinces within the region, Admiralty Island was unique in having very high biological values and over 90 percent of its original habitats still intact, including salmon spawning and rearing habitat and the rare large-tree old-growth habitat that has been the target of logging for over half a century. I believe there are few places left in the world with greater opportunities than Admiralty Island for conducting valuable long-term ecological research and monitoring or for providing environmental education programs in an intact ecosystem which still maintains all its functional parts.

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