

Admiralty Island News and Issues Update - February 2010

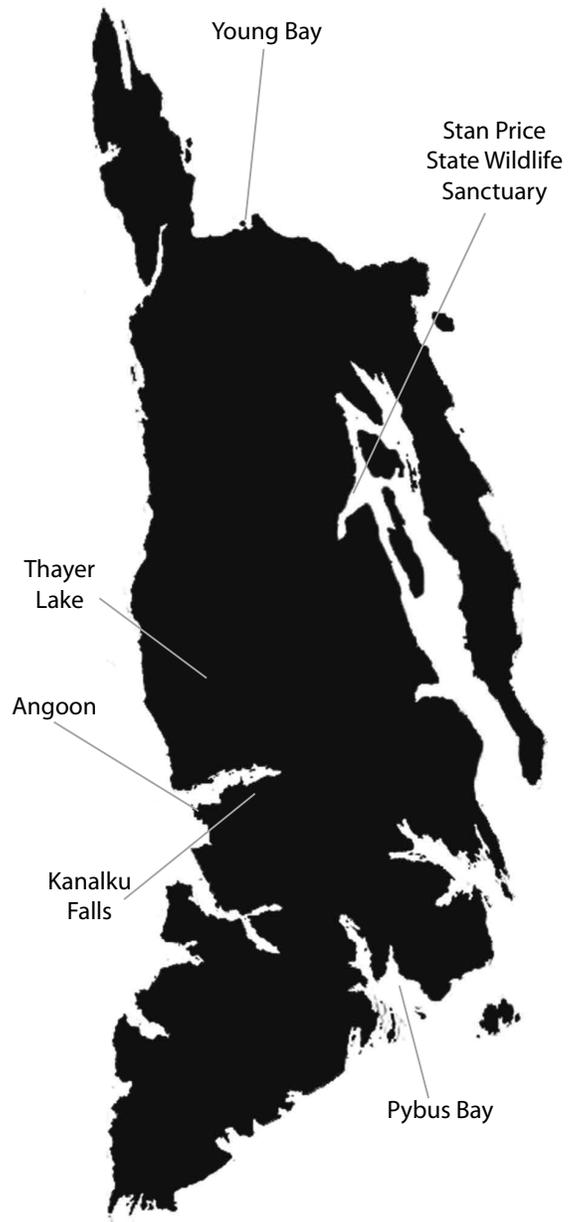
Senate Bill 104 – Expansion of the Stan Price State Wildlife Sanctuary

The Pack Creek delta constitutes the state's current Stan Price Wildlife Sanctuary. These tidelands are managed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and are an integral part of the Pack Creek bear viewing area. On the adjacent national forest upland, Pack Creek itself is part of the Pack Creek Zoological Area, managed by the U.S. Forest Service. State Senator Dennis Egan has introduced a substitute bill for one introduced last legislative session by then Senator Kim Elton. The bill would expand the sanctuary to include all state tidelands from Windfall Harbor north past Pack Creek to Swan Cove. It would also add tidelands on Swan and Windfall islands to the sanctuary.

Passing this legislation would help the Alaska Board of Game dismiss any proposals, which have been made every several years in the past, to open portions of the area to bear hunting. Friends of Admiralty Island has worked hard to defeat these hunting proposals and supports the expansion of the sanctuary. Senator Egan's bill is currently winding its way through the state legislature with considerable support from The Territorial Sportsmen, recreation and wildlife guides and local businesses.

Native "Futures" Sites

Sealaska Corporation (Regional Native Corporation) is seeking, through congressional legislation, to select and gain title to lands throughout Southeast Alaska to fulfill their entitlement. A number of historical and cultural sites have been identified for selection. We support these selections on Admiralty Island. We do though have serious questions concerning proposed "Native Futures" selections on Admiralty in Young Bay and Pybus Bay. This is a term used in the legislation to indicate key areas of public land that would become Sealaska lands for use as commercial tourism sites for lodges and related development. Limitations on the types of uses and scale of development at these sites is not provided for in the proposed legislation, and public access through these sites could be denied by the corporation. We are concerned that these sites could become major developments negating the National Wilderness and Monument values that are now protected by law. While logging would not be permitted, the impacts of commercial tourism activities at these sites would likely reach well beyond their 50-acre maximum footprint.



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To learn more about Sealaska's proposal and ways you can comment, visit:

http://www.sitkawild.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=233&Itemid=202

Angoon Airport

Project planning for the Angoon Airport has been undertaken by the Federal Aviation Administration and Alaska Department of Transportation in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service. A draft Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated toward the end of this year. Friends of Admiralty supports Alternative 12-A which would be nearer the existing ferry terminal on Kootznoowoo Inc. (village corporation) land and would have substantially less impact on Wilderness and Monument lands compared to the other two options in Favorite Bay. If the 12-A option is selected, a land trade may be a solution to ensuring no loss in value or acreage for Kootznoowoo Inc.

Angoon Tidal Power

In May 2009, Natural Currents Energy Service, LLC., based in Highland, New York, filed a notice of intent to apply for an original license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for a hydrokinetic (tidal) pilot project near Angoon. The project would utilize turbines mounted on barges which would be moved to assess the best locations for power generation and permanent placement in the future. Friends of Admiralty will continue to monitor this project.

Kanalku Fish Ladder

The Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Forest Service will soon begin development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for construction of a fish pass at Kanalku Falls. The proposed fish pass may involve a major concrete structure to ease fish passage over the falls. This could substantially alter this very scenic falls and may have significant biological implications to the lake, fish, and other wildlife – most notably bears. We hope to work with the agencies involved to ensure this project is in keeping with Monument and Wilderness values. In the meantime, we encourage ADF&G to step up monitoring of commercial salmon harvests in the Angoon area to ensure that escapement goals for Kanalku red salmon are achieved.

Thayer Lake Hydro

A Final Record of Decision (ROD) for the project was issued in Spring 2009. The ROD incorporated some of the comments that Friends of Admiralty made during the EIS review process, most notably the need for a requirement that transmission lines between the facility and Angoon be buried underground.

We are also concerned with the lack of reliable data on Thayer Creek water flow and believe this information is essential to protect fish and for establishing reliable operational parameters for generating power. An instream water flow gauge was installed several years ago but did not produce reliable data, due to an installation error. We are at a loss to understand why a replacement gauge has not been installed.

Kootznoowoo, Inc. (Angoon Village corporation) is actively seeking funding for construction. Friends of Admiralty Island recognizes the importance to Angoon of having this alternative source of power on-line. We will continue to work with the stakeholders in this project and look forward to being able to support a final design that is based on reliable stream flow data.