



Copper River Ecosystem, Alaska



EASTERN COPPER RIVER DELTA

PHOTO: RJ KOPCHAK

Berg Lakes Parcels: A Strategic Land Acquisition for Conservation

Fall 2003



This prospectus describes the opportunity to complete the purchase a 1,450 acre parcel of land that will anchor the effort to protect all of the 700,000 acre Copper River Delta on the central coast of Alaska. The Delta is the terminus of rivers draining over 26,500 square miles of the Alaskan interior.

Ownership will:

- Put the conservation community “at the table” for discussions about the future of the watershed.
- Initiate a larger collaborative effort to acquire or retire all of the timber, coal, and road development options that threaten the Copper River Delta.
- Help to establish permanent habitat protection for wild salmon and migratory shorebirds.
- Protect one of the 3 known populations of the “dwarf” arctic char in Alaska.

Progress to Date:

In 2002 Ecotrust completed an appraisal of the property, successfully bid for the option to purchase, and has completed the initial steps to close the transaction with the University of Alaska. *Ecotrust is seeking to raise an additional \$330,000 to complete the purchase of the Berg Lakes property.* We are actively seeking grants from foundations, individuals, government entities, and corporations that support acquisitions of conservation lands.



LOOKING DOWN ON THE BERG LAKES PROPERTY FROM THE ALPINE MEADOW ABOVE, A PRIME AREA FOR MOUNTAIN GOATS.



THE MASSIVE BERING GLACIER ENDS AT BERG LAKES, SOMETIMES PINCHING THE LAKE CLOSED AT THE OUTLET.

The Copper River Watershed is one of the most unique, pristine and untamed places in the world, with the eastern half completely road-less. The rivers delta is recognized internationally for its importance as a feeding and rest area for migratory birds on the Pacific flyway; is the largest site in the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network.



Salmon It is widely acknowledged that the most critical unifying element within the Copper River Ecosystem is the world-renowned runs of Pacific salmon. Each year an average of 2-3 million salmon return to spawn and die, transporting marine nutrients to enrich this river system born of almost sterile glacial streams. The economy and culture here depends directly upon the stability of the wild salmon runs in the Copper River Ecosystem.

Biological Uniqueness

Ownership of these parcels at Berg Lakes will help to establish permanent habitat protection for one of only 3 known locations of a newly discovered “dwarf” arctic char. In addition, the Berg Lakes area contains 23% of Alaska’s native plants and 26 species of those are new range extensions from the Aleutian Islands.

Threats and Opportunities

The timber assets, oil, and coal reserves are targets for development, and the US Forest Service, through federal legislative action, has issued an easement for a 55-mile access road across the currently road-less eastern Copper River Delta.

Development of the transportation corridor would require over 200 salmon stream crossings, and

exploitation of the timber and coal assets would destroy the integrity of one of the great forest, mountain and estuarine ecosystems left in North America.



ROADS WOULD FOREVER CHANGE THE NOW ROAD-LESS EASTERN DELTA WETLANDS

Strategy

Within the Delta drainage, Ecotrust has acquired the option to purchase 1,457 acres located on Carbon Mountain and Berg lakes. Owned by the University of Alaska, the strategically located property is surrounded by the 73,000 acre Bering River Coal Field and Carbon Mountain timber tract, and is near proposed oil exploration sites on the easternmost boundary of the Chugach National Forest.

This 1,457 acre purchase will formally initiate the effort to acquire or retire all of the timber, coal, and oil development options that threaten the Copper River Delta, and cornerstones the effort to protect road-less areas of the eastern Copper River Delta. By positioning Ecotrust as local landowners in the Delta, we provide leverage related to decisions affecting development of the watershed. Ownership of this land will help to leverage funding and support for our long-term conservation goals in the Copper River Delta. We have developed a comprehensive strategy to conserve the private lands, similar to a chess game that would result in eliminating the threat of a road across the eastern Copper River Delta. The Berg Lakes Land Acquisition is the crucial first move in the chess game.



COAL SEAMS AT BERG LAKES, CARBON MOUNTAIN