



"The Heartbeat and Lifeblood of an Alaskan Rainforest"

*Artists for Nature Foundation/ Native Conservancy
Joint Project 2025 – 2027
Copper River Delta & Prince William Sound, Alaska*

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Our mission: To promote and protect the Copper River Delta and Prince William Sound, their wild salmon, Indigenous culture and sustainable communities

The Project

Artists and activists will work in this rainforest bioregion to create a closely observed narrative and inspirational portrait of the landscape, biodiversity and historical significance of one of the finest marine and wetlands ecosystems in North America.

Aims and Objectives

We Intend to

- Use art as activism to help preserve this Alaska rainforest bioregion
- Build a cultural/ political consensus to repatriate Indigenous ancestral lands
- Educate, inform and raise consciousness in this time of climate chaos
- Assist local activists in preventing industrial extraction antithetical to our mission
- Support Native Conservancy (NC) work to protect the culture and ancestral homelands of the Eyak Copper River Wild Salmon People

Meeting Our Goals

We will

- Produce a book, film, art exhibitions and RAVE (Rapid Aerial Visual Expedition)
- Work with traditional Native carvers to create a yellow cedar totem pole
- Create a social media campaign
- Hold press conferences and events in Alaska, Washington DC, and elsewhere
- Finish this project before we die

Measuring Success

If we

- Assist NC's Landback and Oceanback programs to conserve Eyak ancestral lands and generate new opportunities for a sustainable future in the Delta and Sound
- Prevent unsustainable extraction of natural resources in this bioregion
- Place the Bering River coalfields in a Native land conservation trust
- Help NC continue to: Preserve the Eyak language and deliver traditional food to community elders; Protect Indigenous peoples' traditional subsistence practices/ food sovereignty; Provide food security and community resilience against climate change
- Attract more funding and publicity for NC and Artists for Nature (ANF)



The Story

Art is a universal language that can open hearts and minds. Artists for Nature and the Native Conservancy seeks to promote and protect Alaska rainforest, wild salmon and Indigenous culture. We aim to create a closely observed, inspirational portrait of the biodiversity and historical significance of one of the finest marine and wetlands ecosystems in North America.

At the far northern end of the Pacific Northwest coastal temperate rain forest lies a thin strip of green between the ocean and the ice. Here, side by side, Alaska's Prince William Sound and Copper River Delta function like two halves of a beating heart.

These sister watersheds sustain fish and wildlife, forests and fjords, tidewater glaciers and vast wetlands. Connected by mineral-rich glacial meltwater and prodigious precipitation, they are the lifeblood of Indigenous cultures and coastal communities in one of the most spectacular wildlands on earth.

Each year world-renowned wild Copper River salmon return to swim upriver and spawn in the waters of their birth.

Each year, like a giant heartbeat, the Copper River pumps enormous quantities of glacial meltwater through its Delta out into the North Pacific Ocean. From here the coastal current carries the river's mineral-rich waters into neighboring Prince William Sound, seeding and fertilizing the entire marine ecosystem.

Former President Jimmy Carter, in his foreword to the 1997 Artists for Nature book *Alaska's Copper River Delta*, said this region "is superlative even by Alaska's standards."

Today the bioregion, still recovering from the dual catastrophes of the immense 1964 Great Alaska Earthquake and the devastating 1989 Exxon Valdez Oil Spill, faces a host of new threats.

The Native Conservancy is the first Native-led and Native-owned land conservancy in the United States, and has helped preserve more than 1 million acres of rainforest habitat. Artists for Nature Foundation over 35 years has organized artists in 16 projects around the world for the conservation of nature.

Together we will work to protect this invaluable bioregion. Environmental and cultural conservation campaigns spearheaded by local activists will be highlighted and amplified. Central to the project will be Salmon Culture and the Native Eyak people who have survived and thrived along this rainforest coast for millennia.

Eyak elder Dune Lankard says, "We Eyaks are the Copper River wild salmon people. We describe the self-determination and ability to make a living on our traditional coastal homelands as Subsistence, Sovereignty and Spirituality, or Food, Family, and Freedom.

Artists for Nature Foundation



THE NATIVE CONSERVANCY