



Soundkeeper

W i n t e r 2 0 0 9

Ensuring a positive, lasting legacy for Prince William Sound

Dear Friends,

As 2009 draws to a close, we want to thank you for your generous support and for being part of our work to protect Prince William Sound. In this winter edition of our newsletter we are pleased to provide a brief report on Prince William Soundkeeper's 2009 results and updates on members, programs and partnerships.

PWSK's work is to protect and preserve the Sound by looking to the knowledge and traditions of the past, and also to the future - educating students, engaging and training citizen advocates, and pursuing public policy issues that both protect the environment and resonate with the communities of the Sound.

Whether its a harbor clean-up in the howling rain (thankfully this year's clean-up took place over two gorgeous sunny days on Egg Island!), writing comments to hold the line on cruise ship waste water discharge, or volunteering to help build PWSK's Citizen Environmental Monitoring Program, we are so very fortunate to have the support of our members and friends. You make our work possible by giving generously of your time, energy and expertise - because you love the Sound and because you believe in the importance of working together to build a positive, lasting legacy for Prince William Sound.

As PWSK works to meet our year-end fundraising goal, we hope that you will continue to be part of this vital work through your continued membership. Your gift is fully tax deductible, and every donation is needed and appreciated.

A heartfelt thank you and a Winter Season's Greetings to all,

Jennifer Gibbins, Soundkeeper / Executive Director



*In Remembrance:
Steve Smith*



*Highlights:
2009 Programs and Campaigns*



New Member Spotlight



*Hot Topic:
Climate Change*



In Remembrance, Steve Smith

Cordova resident and founding board member of Prince William Soundkeeper, Steve Smith, died on October 20, 2009. Steve was a wildlife aficionado, and was particularly passionate about birds. He met Pete Isleib, Alaska's leading ornithologist, in the early '60s and they became fast friends, fellow birders and fellow fishermen. Steve started fishing in Cordova in 1962 and, over the years, engaged in almost every kind of commercial fishery in Prince William Sound and, later, Bristol Bay. He seined herring, ran a herring-roe-on-kelp operation, gillnetted sockeye and silver salmon, seined pink salmon, fished Bristol Bay, pot-fished for Dungeness crab and engaged in more ventures than could be named. When he wasn't fishing, Steve pursued his passion for wildlife and birds. He was an accomplished photographer and made several films on Alaska wildlife that were part of a lecture tour in the mid-'60s. A film about the bald eagle that he made for BBC in the mid-'70s is considered some of the finest documentary footage taken. Steve hunted, fished and filmed his way around Alaska and the world for almost half a century. A multitasking man, Steve was also an accomplished cook. His hospitality and storytelling were legendary and friends and family enjoyed wonderful meals and good company at his beautiful home on Eyak Lake. Steve loved his chosen hometown, Cordova, and gave back to the community in many ways. He was a member of the United Fishermen of Alaska, the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society, the Wilderness Society, American Farmland Trust and the Nature Conservancy. He was a founding member of the Prince William Soundkeeper and the Cordova Kitchen Project. At the time of his death, he was also a board member of Cordova District Fishermen United, Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp. and Prince William Sound Science Center and served on the local Fish and Game Advisory Board.

Highlights

2009 Program & Campaign Results



New Member Spotlight

Derek Blake & Emily Anderson
Husband and wife team, Derek Blake and Emily Anderson, were two of 26 volunteers who worked this summer to remove marine debris from Egg Island, a barrier island on the Copper River flats. Derek is a fourth generation commercial fisherman from Cordova. Emily is an attorney with Trustees for Alaska, a public interest environmental law firm in Anchorage.

Karen Swartzbart
A volunteer Clean Harbor team has been launched by Karen Swartzbart. "Working together we can keep the harbor clean," said Swartzbart. The group will work to monitor and patrol the harbor to help keep it clean and to raise awareness regarding water quality and marine debris prevention. Karen is a shellfish/groundfish technician with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game. She lives in Cordova with her husband Paul, a commercial fisherman, and their son Steve.

Barney's Sports Chalet
Barney's Sports Chalet in Anchorage specializes in high end outdoor gear and custom designed outdoor equipment.

Bear & Wolf/Trident Seafoods
Cordova based Bear & Wolf/Trident Seafood Company specializes in Copper River and Prince William Sound salmon.

Citizen Environmental Monitoring

- PWSK's 08-09 5th grade harbor monitoring program introduces students to visual monitoring exercises and collection of water quality data such as pH, salinity, water temperature, contaminants such as petroleum, marine debris and presence of biological species.
- PWSK launches Eyak Lake Community Monitoring Project, a three-year study of water quality and seasonal variation. Eyak Lake was selected because it provides critical spawning and rearing habitat for Pacific salmon, an important natural resource and keystone species that may be threatened by climate change and increasing human activities.
- PWSK members and community partners conducted meetings with the State of Alaska, successfully protecting 380 acres on Hawkins Island from a proposed state land sale and subdivision. The ill-conceived development would have restricted traditional access and destroyed habitat vital to an important subsistence area.

Clean Harbors

- Please see enclosed Clean Harbors Newsletter

Outreach and Education

- PWSK partnered with KCHU radio, serving Prince William Sound and the Copper River basin, to air daily Clean and Safe Boating public service announcements.

Organizational Development

- PWSK Executive Director/ Soundkeeper Jennifer Gibbins was elected to the board of the Waterkeeper Alliance of which PWSK is a licensed member. Waterkeeper Alliance is a global movement of nearly 200 grassroots organizations who patrol and protect over 100,000 miles of rivers, streams and coastlines in North and South America, Europe, Australia, Asia and Africa.

Campaigns & Advocacy

- Responding to a strong grassroots effort by PWSK members and partners across the state, the Alaska Legislature rejects a proposal to permanently eliminate the prohibition of mixing zones for cruise ships. The proposal would have allowed ships to dump incompletely treated wastewater into mixing zones indefinitely. Concerns raised by the PWSK members and the public cited the impacts ammonia, nickel, zinc and copper on aquatic life, and in particular on fish including salmon.

In Appreciation

Thank you to our members, partners and champions who make our work possible!

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| Alaska Center for Coastal Studies | Harder Foundation |
| Alaska Conservation Alliance | Norcross Wildlife Foundation |
| Alaska Conservation Foundation | North Pacific Research Board |
| Alaska Department of Fish & Game | Ocean Foundation |
| Anchorage Waterways Council | Patagonia |
| Barney's Sports Chalet | FIRE Fund |
| Bear & Wolf/Trident Seafoods | Prince William Sound Science Center |
| Bullitt Foundation | Tatitlek Corporation |
| Cascadia Wildlands Project | True North Foundation |
| Copper River Watershed Project | Trustees for Alaska |
| Cordova Boy Scouts | United States Forest Service |
| Cordova District Fishermen United | Village of Tatitlek |
| | Waterkeeper Alliance |
| | Wildlife Forever Fund |



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Become a Member Today!

Join the PWSK family and help protect water quality and the life it sustains in Prince William Sound!

- \$25 Supporter
- \$50 Protector
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Hot Topic: Climate Change

Climate change in its many forms has been happening throughout the planet's history. However, today the planet faces unprecedented challenges. Perhaps no other state will be more effected by climate change than Alaska. It is already warming at twice the rate of the rest of the United States and, significant warming will continue to occur across the state, especially during winter months. The Gulf of Alaska region is considered particularly important because it is likely to be one of the first regions around the globe to feel the impacts of ocean acidification. Alaska's cold water can hold more gas than warmer water, absorbing more carbon dioxide; and the shallow waters of it's continental shelves also retain more carbon dioxide because there is less mixing of seawater from deeper ocean waters. The first buoy on the planet designed to monitor ocean acidification was launched in the Gulf of Alaska in 2007. Recent research indicates that the ocean's chemical make up is less stable and more greatly affected by climate change than previously believed and marine organisms may be responding faster to climate change than land-based plants and animals. Climate change is affecting ocean temperatures, supply of nutrients, chemistry, food chains, shifts in wind systems, currents and extreme weather events. Ecological shifts in regards to climate change will also have serious effects on human communities in the Sound. Many PWS community members rely on commercial and subsistence fisheries for their economic prosperity and livelihoods. In Cordova alone, 50% of jobs are directly related to commercial fishing, with an additional 25% indirectly dependent on the fishing industry. Developing and implementing strategies on the scale needed and at the pace needed to meet targets will require public awareness and a major commitment to change.



PWSK believes that action at the local level is imperative for increasing public awareness and understanding of climate change issues -- and -- for creating grassroots solutions and a call for meaningful action.

An Ocean Needs to Be Fully Resilient to Better Adapt to Change