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Hello Soundkeepers!

Citizen Advocacy is the name of the game for 2014. In particular, PWSK is concerned with actions taken by the State to reduce the ability of Alaskan's to be heard on natural resource use and development as it pertains to water quality. The most worrisome of these appeared in the form of House Bill 77. This bill deals with water resource use allocation, the permitting process, and public ability to comment. As currently written, it is so ambiguous that it threatens the rights of subsistence users, Native Alaskans, and citizens to an adequate and sustainable supply of clean water, as guaranteed by our State Constitution.

A flurry of meetings occurred towards the end of the year, held by citizens who felt that the State was not listening to them. With few speaking in favor, these meetings showed a growing opposition. Letters to the Editor appeared in Alaskan newspapers almost weekly, all speaking against HB77. Finally, earlier this month the Governor announced that the state would review the language of the bill and consider re-wording it before re-submitting to the Legislature. PWSK will keep a close eye on the development of this bill and plan to submit formal comments to the Governor and the Legislature on this issue. The bill may be viewed online here: <http://www.legis.state.ak.us/PDF/28/Bills/HB0077C.PDF>

Last spring, a topic of concern was the permit application for the international motor sport race involving 1,000's of participants, the Wet Dog Jet Ski Race, was slated to be held in May of 2014. The proposed race course begins in Whittier, crosses through Prince William Sound, to Cook Inlet, past Kodiak, ending in Iliamna. According to the Wet Dog web site, the application process has been open since January 2013. (The web site was last updated 1/13, www.wetdograce.com.) It does not look like the race will be held this spring, but as their Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation permit is valid until May 31, 2015, race organizers could still be working on holding the event the spring of 2015.

PWSK is pleased to report continuing support from The Ocean's Foundation with a donation of \$5,000 from their Polar Seas Fund that will go towards our general operating expenses. Our End of the Year Membership and Fundraising Drive raised \$6,500 which included a \$3,000 match from the Leighty Foundation. PWSK's continued success and longevity depends upon funding from supporting Foundations, and concerned and involved Members such as you. Thank you for your generous and continued support.

Kate McLaughlin
President & Executive Director