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October is Membership Renewal Month!

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Hello from the Executive Director's Desk,

The spigot turned on in August and the fall influx of fresh water into the Sound has sent the salmon upstream to their natal spawning beds. The fish feed the ecosystem of the Sound from the top – people, bears and seagulls - to the bottom - with spent bodies feeding the aquatic insects, fish and plants that will in turn nurture salmon fry. The key to keeping this cycle sustainable is clean, cold water. Here's what PWSK has been working on this summer to ensure PWS's water quality.



The Bering River Coal Fields sit above the Copper River Delta on the eastern edge of Prince William Sound.

Because of the importance of this watershed to ecosystem health of Prince William Sound, PWSK is supporting the work that the Eyak Preservation Council and the Pinchot Institute is doing to assist the U.S. Forest Service in obtaining the Bering Coal Field patents currently owned by a South Korean company. If obtained, the patents would be permanently retired. If developed, this area would

undergo mountain top removal coal extraction resulting in the destruction of the Bering, Martin and Copper River Watersheds.

Prince William Soundkeeper submitted a Letter of Support for the Bering River Coal Conservation opportunity to Secretary of Agriculture Thomas Vilsack. A copy of that letter can be viewed on the PWSK website: <http://www.pwsoundkeeper.org>. Additional information, including how to submit a Letter of Support to Sec. Vilsack, or donate toward the purchase, can be found here: http://www.redzone.org/index.php/current_campaigns/bering_river_coal_fields

HB 77, and other attacks on our natural resources: HB77 is currently shelved but will come back up for reconsideration in January. This bill lays down potentially unconstitutional provisions that eliminate the rights of Native Alaska Tribes and other groups to apply for instream flow reservations under State law, places limits on public comment or appeals of State issued water right permits, eliminates restrictions on transferring water rights, and increases the amount of water that can be

obtained without applying for a permit. (<http://openstates.org/ak/bills/28/HB77/>, <http://homertribune.com/2013/04/death-of-hb-77-is-silver-lining-in-legislative-session/>)

Alaska is the only state in the Nation to institute the “Loser Pay’s Rule”, and the only coastal state to not have a Coastal Management Plan. The current Administration seems focused on discouraging the public from petitioning the courts, or questioning their elected officials on their actions regarding natural resource development and use. PWSK is here to make sure that doesn’t happen.



The Cordova Clean Harbors Working Group: PWSK funded the Clean Harbors Coordinator position, use of the PWSK office, and supplies for the 2013 summer project through our *Steve Smith Legacy* bequest. Volunteers walked the harbor collecting trash and noting pollutants present on docks and in the water. They also surveyed harbor users on their practices and concerns ending with a total of 336 surveys collected this year. This data is will be used to determine the future focus of the Clean Harbors Working Group. A

Big THANK YOU! to Coordinators Allen Marquette and Cathy Pegau, and volunteers Karen Swartzbart, Ron Anderson, Nancy Bird, Eva LoForte, the Lindow Family, Sue Farzan, and Bill Cobb.

The **Alaska Wet Dog Jet Ski Race** is scheduled to take place on May 1, 2014. According to their website (last updated on 9-22-12) applications are being accepted as of January 2013. Teams of racers (2 people, each riding their own personal watercraft) and support boats, will travel through the heart of the Sound over a two week period during the first pulse of the spring migration. PWSK will keep you updated on further development of this potentially disastrous race.

The fall **Chugach National Forest Planning Forums** were held September 23 – October 3 throughout southcentral Alaska. During the spring round of forums only a minority of people spoke-up for wilderness, while many others pressed the Forest Service to provide more "access" to remote areas. Even if you've already commented, or missed the fall forums, please take a moment to remind the Forest Service of the importance of wilderness. Comments accepted until October 18, 2013.

Here are our talking points:

1. The USFS should recommend all of the Wilderness Study Area (WSA) in western Prince William Sound as designated wilderness.
2. The USFS should correct its flawed 2002 Wilderness Recommendation, which excludes important parts of the WSA from the wilderness recommendation.
3. In particular, Knight Island, Glacier Island, Nellie Juan Lake, and the upper Columbia Glacier basin are all highly valued for their wilderness character and should be recommended as wilderness as part of the current Forest Plan Revision.
4. Wilderness character in western Prince William Sound is highly valued by residents and businesses, yet population and other pressures threaten the area's natural resources. The USFS should fulfill its obligation to manage this area as wilderness until Congress acts on the WSA.

Prince William Soundkeeper is dedicated to working on these issues on your behalf. Help us be Prince William Sound’s Eyes & Ears so that Prince William Soundkeeper can be your Voice.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kate McLaughlin, President/Executive Director