

# Soundkeeper

*Clean Water — Strong Communities*

Fall 2016



## Advocating for Wilderness Designation – the Nellie Juan-College Fjord Wilderness Study Area

The 2.1 million acre Nellie Juan-College Fjord Wilderness Study Area (WSA) in western Prince William Sound has been waiting for federal designation for 34 years. Over 12 years ago the US Forest Service, through their Revised Chugach National Forest Plan, recommended 1.4 million acres of the WSA be designated as wilderness. Yet the federal government has failed to act.

PWSK recently asked the EVOS Trustee Council, the USDA Forest Service, and President Obama to designate the Nellie Juan-College Fjord WSA as a National Monument before he leaves office. It is critically important that such a request be made now. The federal administration could use its executive authority under the Antiquities Act to make this designation.

The Trustee Council's policy is to focus the restoration program on an ecosystem basis. The WSA represents an extremely valuable ecosystem resource that is unmatched anywhere else in Prince William Sound. The EVOSTC habitat acquisition plan has been focused entirely on acquiring private lands to fulfill its obligations of protecting vital habitat within the spill region and has not looked at comparable protection needs on public lands. The WSA is such an area that the EVOSTC could work to acquire under its mandate without expending remaining acquisition funds to purchase private lands. Protecting the WSA would provide an enormous Restoration accomplishment, at no cost.

## PWSK Meet & Greet Event



A Meet & Greet was held in Cordova on Nov. 5, during which attendees were asked about PWSKeeper projects and areas of focus. We also discussed strategies to keep the public informed and of how to most effectively address priority issues with no staff and a limited budget.

Keeping our Mission Statement always in mind, "***Grass roots advocacy for preserving water quality in Prince William Sound Alaska for all users.***" is the first step of focusing effort and creating action strategies. Collaborating with like-minded organizations and individuals in order to maximize impact is the second. PWSK needs to hear from you, send us an email or give us a call!

## Navy presses on to hold War Games during spring migration

A public meeting was held on Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> at the Cordova City Council with representatives from the Northern Command regarding Operation Northern Edge slated to begin its exercises May of 2017. PWSK submitted a letter to Lt. General Wilsbach and the Cordova City Council on our concerns regarding the environmental and public health implications these activities raise. Read the letter on the PWSK website in the What's News section: <http://www.pwsoundkeeper.org/Whats-News/4440659>

## Shepard's Point Update

The Native Village of Eyak is moving forward in the permit application process with the Army Corp. of Engineers for an oil spill response facility to be built on Shepard's Point in Orca Inlet. The proposed facility stems from the original consent decree written into the EVOS settlement. PWSK feels that this facility is not needed, necessary, or appropriate for the location proposed, and would pose huge financial burden upon the State to build and maintain. PWSK joined with Eyak Preservation Council, Cascadia Wildlands, and the Prince William Sound Audubon Society in urging Gov. Walker to look again at economic viability and necessity of the project.

## Keeping the Boat Afloat

Fundraising is a major focus for PWSoundkeeper. We are barely afloat and heading for the shoals. Funding for south central Alaska environmental organizations has been increasingly drying up, and the availability of future funding looks bleak. As a grass-roots citizen advocacy organization our funding resource choices are even more limited as we do not want to be constrained by taking money from businesses or government that might want to limit our ability to comment and/or act upon their decisions.

Prince William Soundkeeper is here for you, but without your support, we won't be for much longer. Please consider giving a generous tax deductible donation today.

Thank you,

Kate McLaughlin, President & Executive Director

Keep updated on issues that affect Prince William Sound's water quality and ecosystem, follow us on [Facebook](#).

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