

October-November  
1997

# RESTORATION

U P D A T E

Volume 4  
Number 4

## Trustees support protection of Homer Spit, Beluga Slough

The Trustee Council agreed October 3 to assist local efforts by the City of Homer to protect key habitats on the Homer Spit and Beluga Slough.

The Trustees authorized \$422,100 to protect 68.7 acres of low-lying intertidal flats and salt marsh at the base of the Homer Spit. It authorized another \$574,000 for a 38-acre lot on nearby Beluga Slough. It is anticipated that the City of Homer will contribute an additional \$41,000 towards acquisition of the Beluga Slough property.

The Trust for Public Lands, working with the City of Homer and the Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, put together the land packages by acquiring options from several landowners. The Trustee Council agreed to pay the appraised value for the properties on behalf of the City of Homer which will manage the properties under

the terms of a protective conservation easement.

The Homer Spit parcel spans both sides of the spit and is especially valuable for its intertidal resources and recreational use. Tens of thousands of shorebirds are attracted each spring to the intertidal flats on the bay side of the spit to feed on invertebrates. Harbor seals, juvenile salmon, and a variety of waterfowl species also feed in the area. The beach is popular for shoreline walks and bird viewing, especially during Homer's annual Shorebird Festival.

In a federal study, the Beluga Slough was cited for its diversity in wildlife due to the range of habitat. It, too, is popular for waterfowl and shorebirds as well as a variety of land mammals.

See Tidelands, Page 7



“ THE SPIT PROVIDES THE  
MAGIC THAT EACH YEAR DRAWS  
HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF TOUR-  
ISTS TO THE END OF THE ROAD.  
GOV. TONY KNOWLES ”



Photo by Roy Corral

Alutiiq Museum Curator Amy Steffian gives PAG members a lesson in the ancient uses of archaeological artifacts uncovered in the Kodiak region.

## PAG tours Kodiak, listens to local concerns

The Public Advisory Group got both an eyeful and an earful during a whirlwind two-day tour of Kodiak and three island communities last month. The PAG traveled to Kodiak, Old Harbor, Larsen Bay and Port Lions to discuss ongoing restoration projects, possible uses for the restoration reserve, and to listen to a wide range of local concerns.

In Old Harbor, the group heard about devastation of fishing beds by factory trawlers and the need for safe disposal of sewage and household hazardous waste. Larsen Bay residents

See PAG, Page 2

## The PAG Continued from Page 1

asked about the public process and expressed their concern about the possible acquisition of land belonging to the Koniag Corporation.

In Port Lions, 22 residents attended the meeting, including several high school students. One student, after describing the potential benefits of building a fish pass along Crescent Creek, was asked to work with restoration office staff in presenting a formal proposal for the next fiscal year.

Most of the residents attending the Kodiak meeting were there to talk about possible acquisition from Lesnoi Corporation of three parcels which surround the community: Termination Point, Long Island and Cape Chiniak.

The PAG walked the beaches and trails of Termination Point earlier that day while taking a tour of the community. Local support for acquisition of 1,028 acres at Termination Point, located at the west terminus of the road system, has been very strong. The site is popular for hiking, fishing and use of ATVs.

Executive Director Molly McCammon told the Kodiak crowd that a draft of the long-awaited appraisal of the parcel has been completed and that the Trustee Council would take action on the parcel after a full review of the appraisal was completed.

McCammon cautioned the residents that funds for habitat protection are running out and that it may be too much to expect that all three parcels could be purchased and protected. Termination Point has been considered as the top priority, she said.

The PAG also toured Long Island, a former military post about 15 minutes by boat from the Kodiak Small Boat Harbor. The island's 1,426 acres are covered in old growth forest and are already crisscrossed with abandoned military roads. The island has no bears but contains a herd of about 60 cattle that graze the understory.



Ron Reimer, borough environmental engineer, discusses plans for an island-wide program to prevent marine pollution as part of the PAG meeting in Kodiak.

Photo by Roy Corral

Cape Chiniak is located at the east end of the limited Kodiak road system at about Mile 35. Lesnoi is offering 18,200 acres of

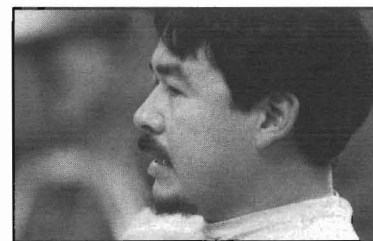
mostly-forested land with about 16 miles of shoreline. More than 2,600 acres have already been logged and Lesnoi Corporation has plans to continue logging. The Borough recently offered to take over 2,700 acres as a borough park if the Council provides the funds.

Waste management was a big concern for the community of Old Harbor, said resident Jeff Pedersen. The Trustee Council should help fund more ways to prevent marine pollution, including the leaching of sewage into the bay, he said. Pedersen is involved in the Kodiak Waste Management Plan, a planning process to create an island-wide system for handling household hazardous waste and used oil.

In each community, residents brought up the need to have local testing for the presence of paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP), the result of a naturally occurring algae that makes clams deadly poisonous.

Craig Mishler, a specialist with the Department of Fish and Game's Subsistence Division, pointed out that Kodiak area villages, more than any other area in Alaska, rely on clams as a subsistence staple. PSP has claimed many lives in the area during the last 20 years, he said, and the presence of the poison eliminates one of the main food sources from their diet.

Residents were asking for development of some system that allows for quick testing of local beaches to ensure the clams are safe to eat.

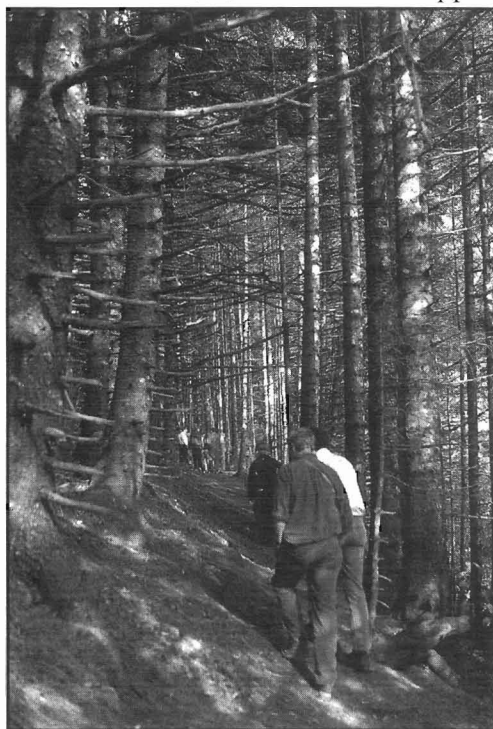


Old Harbor resident Jeff Pedersen presented his views to PAG members.

Photo by Roy Corral

Members of the PAG toured the Termination Point parcel before hosting a meeting with Kodiak residents. Residents and borough officials are working hard to get the 1,028-acre Termination Point, at the west end of the road system, protected.

Photo by Roy Corral



Eight libraries focusing on the natural resources of Alaska have joined to become one, creating a one-stop research facility for fish, wildlife, and land-use issues as well as environmental data in Alaska.

The Oil Spill Public Information Center (OSPIC) has merged with other state and federal libraries to become part of Alaska Resources Library and Information Services (ARLIS).

The libraries of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, the National Park Service, the Minerals Management Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and UAA's Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center, will join OSPIC to become one integrated library. Some of

the libraries joining the new consortium will be open to the public for the first time.

ARLIS, located in the Magnum Electronics building at 3150 C Street in Anchorage, is expected to open its doors to the public on October 20. It will take about two years, however, to fully merge the various library inventories into a single computerized card catalog, said Carrie Holba, chief librarian for OSPIC. The computerized information will also be made available through the Anchorage municipal library computer system and, eventually, on the internet, she said.

The integrated natural resources library has been two years in the planning. It has received funding from each agency involved as well as the

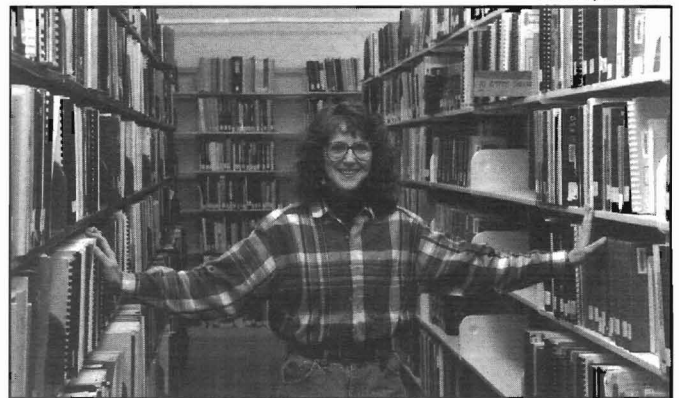
University of Alaska, the Joint Pipeline Office, the Environmental Protection Agency, The U.S. Forest Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, the Federal Aviation Administration, the U.S. Air Force, and the Alaska State Library.

ARLIS can be reached at 272-7847 (27-ARLIS) or via fax at 271-4742.

## Let's just call it ARLIS

*Carrie Holba shows off the newly stacked shelves of the new ARLIS library.*

*Photo by Joe Hunt*



When Hugh Short took over as community involvement coordinator for the Trustee Council in August, he quickly learned that he has to get used to small planes.

During his first six weeks on the job, he has traveled to Chenega Bay, Port Graham, Kodiak, Old Harbor, and Nanwalek. He has plans to visit several other communities in the spill region.

"I've never really liked flying, but it's something I'm quickly getting used to," Short said. "Being in the villages is the only way to learn how people really feel about the restoration activities going on out there."

"We have to have good communication and the best way to do that is face-to-face," he said.

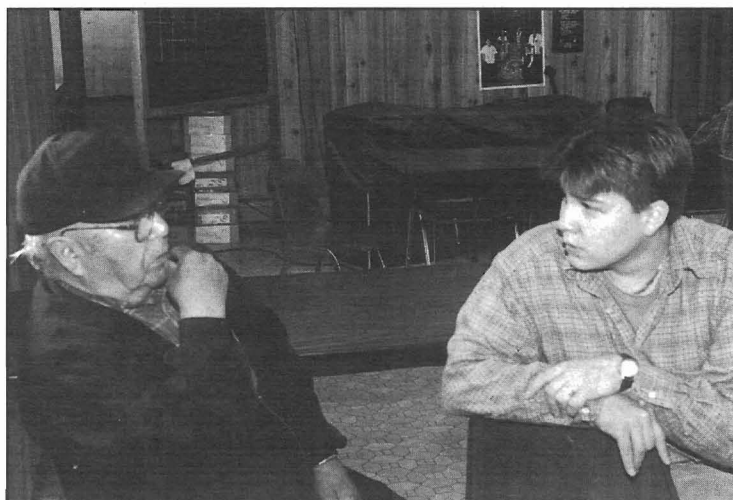
Short said that he has learned that there's a lot of in-

terest in the Restoration Reserve and long term planning for future restoration. "Part of what I want to do is make sure Native communities are fully involved in that process," he said.

Short was born in Bethel and raised in Bethel and Nome. He graduated from the University of Alaska An-

chorage with a degree in political science and spent the 1996 legislative session as an intern with State Senator Georgianna Lincoln. He is an experienced editor and desktop publisher and worked for Koahnic Broadcast Corporation as a training coordinator.

## Helping communities means a lot of travel for Hugh Short



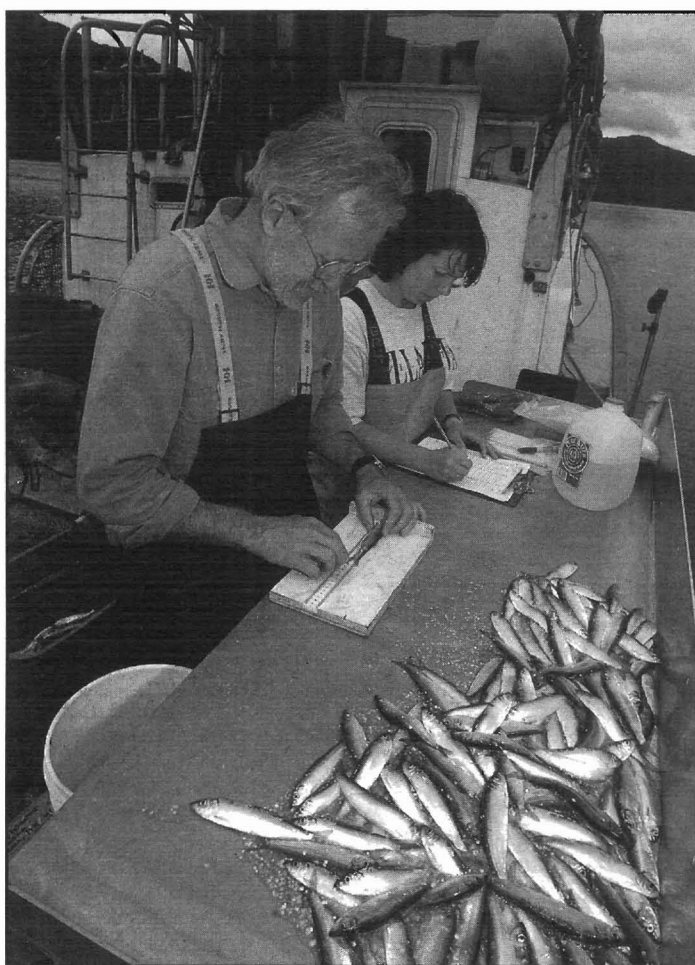
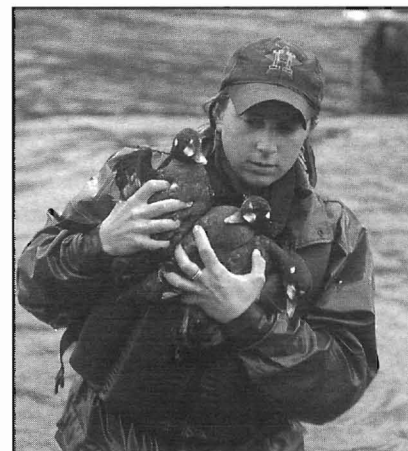
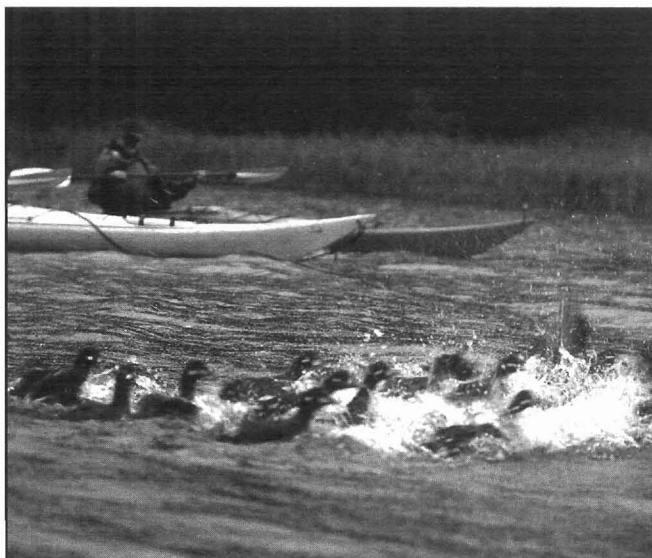
*Community Involvement Coordinator Hugh Short listens as George Inga, Sr. discusses paralytic shellfish poisoning at the Public Advisory Group open house in Old Harbor.*

*Photo by Roy Corral*



## All in a summer's work

Photos by Roy Corral



Dan Esler, of the USGS, employs creative tactics to capture harlequin ducks for his research in the western part of the sound. Esler and his crew (top, left) capture the ducks while they are molting and flightless. They are herded by kayaks into a makeshift corral, allowing helpers like Julie Morse (top, right) to pick up several at a time to be measured and tagged. Above, Lew Haldorson and Jill Mooney, of the University of Alaska-Juneau, sort through herring caught as part of their hydroacoustic studies.

While scientists captured, measured, tagged, and released wildlife this summer as part of their restoration research, Kevin Hartwell was busy capturing the scientists.

Hartwell, a producer with KTOO-TV in Juneau, spent much of his summer capturing the scientists and their research on film for a documentary about restoration efforts in the spill region. The film crew traveled from eastern Prince William Sound to the southern tip of Kodiak Island to chronicle a variety of research, habitat protection efforts, archaeology, and continuing beach cleanup.

"Often times, keeping up with researchers can be difficult and it keeps you pretty busy for really long Alaska days," Hartwell said. "But there are moments. When we were sitting on the beach waiting for Dan Esler's kayaking harlequin herders to drive the ducks around the point. I began to realize that I was witness to one of the world's greatest wildlife exhibitions -- humpbacks breaching in the distance, harbor seals and sea otters approaching out of curiosity, salmon jumping, and myriad bird species, both flying and swimming, all occurring simultaneously with the classic Alaskan back-drop of blue sky and snow-capped mountains.

"It's an experience that transcends all the science and is definitely unforgettable."

"Working with so many different research projects in a compressed period of time gave me a unique opportunity to see how they are each working on one piece of the big puzzle," Hartwell said. "It also gave me a profound appreciation for the complexity of an ecosystem such as Prince William Sound. I feel extremely fortunate to now tell this story in documentary form."

Videographer for the project was Daniel Zatz of Homer. Photographer Roy Corral also took more than 6,000 photos during the summer and provided many of his best images for use by the Restoration Office.

The documentary is being produced for the Trustee Council and will be released in January 1999 in preparation for the 10th anniversary of the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

# RESTORATION

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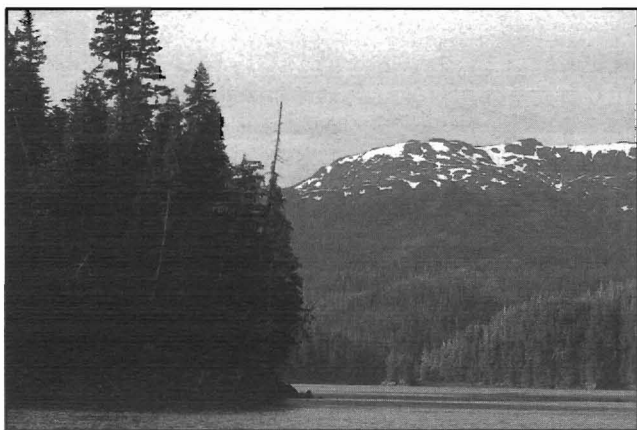
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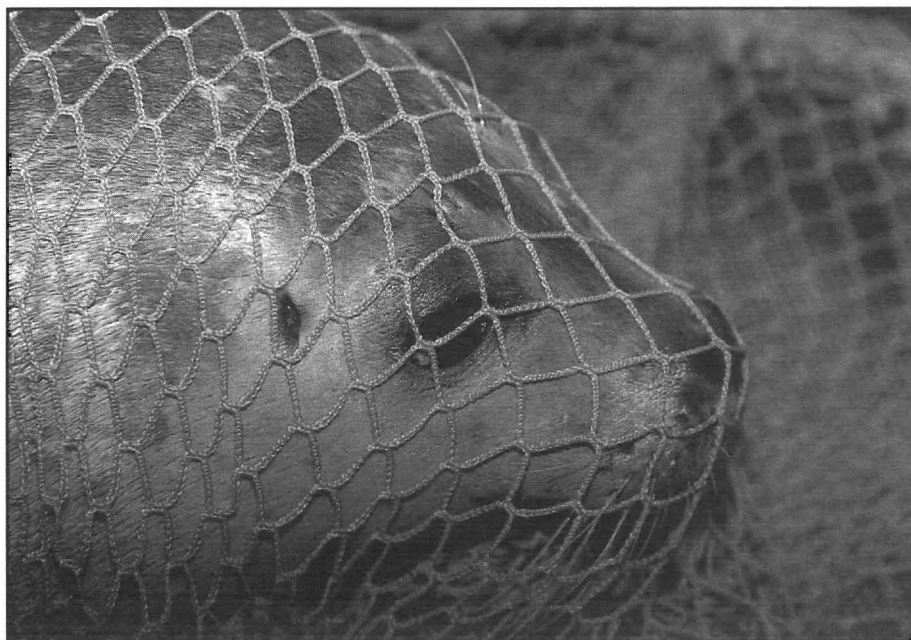
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Above, sea otter is tentative about regaining its freedom after capture by Jim Bodkin and Brenda Ballachey of the USGS. While it checks out its options from the deck of the research vessel, Paul Snyder, Dan Monson, Jennifer DeGroot, and Ballachey encourage the sea otter to take the plunge.



(Top, left) The productivity of kittiwakes on the Barren Islands is being compared with other colonies in Prince William Sound.

(Center, left) The documentary crew chronicled the acquisitions under the habitat protection program throughout the spill region. Jackpot Bay, long known for its salmon productivity, is growing as a popular recreation destination. This coastal region was protected as part of a land purchase Chenega Corporation.

At left, ADF&G Biologist Kathy Frost and her crew captured, measured and tagged harbor seals in an effort to learn why the Prince William Sound population has declined by 70 percent over the last 20 years. This harbor seal awaits processing.

## Believe it or not! 10-year anniversary on the horizon

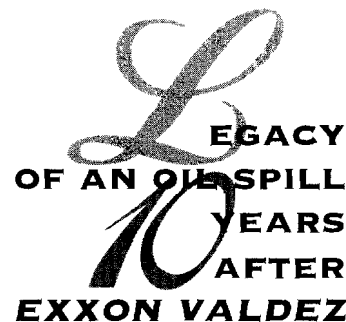
Plans are underway for the 10th anniversary of the Exxon Valdez oil spill, which is now 17 months away.

A five-day symposium will be held at the Egan Convention Center in Anchorage from March 23-27, 1999. The first day will be dedicated to the public, with speakers and events offering an overview of

the spill and lessons learned.

The remaining four days will be more technical in nature. All events will be open to the public.

The Restoration Office hopes to coordinate the event with other memorials and events expected to be held in the spill region during the week of the anniversary.



## 1998 Restoration Workshop set for January 29-30

The Trustee Council will hold its 1998 Restoration Workshop in January with the focus on "Long-term Monitoring and Ecosystem Management." This annual review of research, monitoring and restoration projects will be held January 29-30 at the Hotel Captain Cook in Anchorage.

The workshop will include short updates on the Trustee Council's three major ecosystem projects as well as a dozen or more presentations on in-

dividual research, monitoring and restoration projects.

The two-day workshop will be preceded by day-long reviews of each of the three major ecosystem projects. These reviews will also be at the Hotel Captain Cook and they are open to anyone.

Reviews will be held for the Sound Ecosystem Assessment (SEA) project Monday, January 26; followed by the Nearshore Vertebrate Predator (NVP) project on Tuesday;

January 27; and the Alaska Predator Ecosystem Experiment (APEX) project on Wednesday, January 28.

For more information on the workshop, contact Stan Senner, Science Coordinator for the EVOS Trustee Council: 907-278-8012 or stans@oilspill.state.ak.us.

The annual workshop will not be held in 1999 due to the 10th anniversary symposium to be held March 23-27, 1999.

## Restoration Reserve

*PAG to discuss  
possible uses of fund*

The Restoration Reserve is the Trustee Council's savings account, a fund expected to be worth about \$140-\$150 million by October 2002 after the last settlement payment by Exxon. The reserve was set aside to fund long-term restoration activities. How the fund will be used is yet to be determined.

The Trustee Council is currently seeking public input into possible uses of the fund. The Public Advisory Group will meet November 4-5 to discuss possible alternatives. After the Trustee Council approves a selection of alternatives at its December 18 meeting, public meetings will be held throughout the spill region. A formal decision is expected in the fall of 1998.

To submit your ideas and

comments to the Council, please consider the following questions:

- Should a permanent endowment be set up with annual dividends used to finance restoration projects? Or should the fund be budgeted for expenditure over a 10- or 20-year period?

- Should funds be used to protect habitat? Should it be used for research and/or community restoration projects? What other options should be considered?

- How should the fund be governed? Should a new trustee structure be developed? Should the 17-member Public Advisory Group continue to exist?

- Should spending be limited to the spill region?

Comments about the re-

serve can be sent to the Restoration Office at 645 G Street #401, Anchorage, AK 99501 or fax to 907-276-7178 or e-mail to: [kerih@oilspill.state.ak.us](mailto:kerih@oilspill.state.ak.us).

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Editor • Joe Hunt



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Recent news accounts have left the impression that oil spill settlement money is being used to restore the environment in far away corners like New York, Florida and California.

Though projects are underway in those states, the money does not come from the Trustee Council. The projects are being funded through the Environmental Protection Agency, which was one of the federal agencies reimbursed as part of the

civil settlement with Exxon.

Federal and state agencies received funds to reimburse them for cleanup, damage assessment and litigation expenses related to the spill.

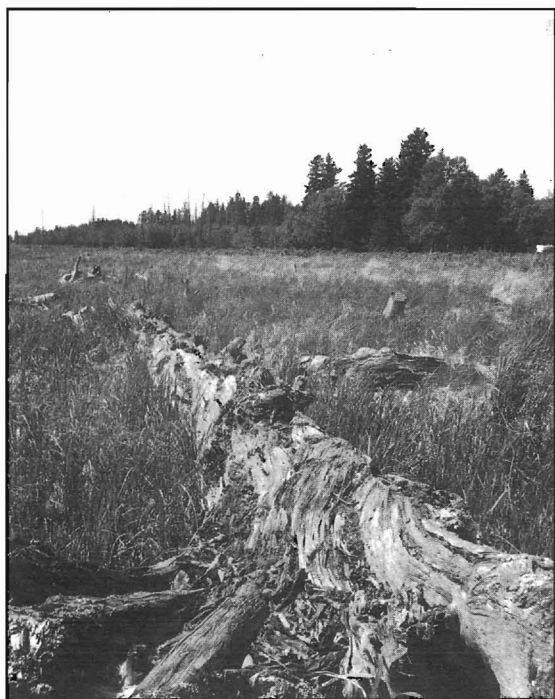
The EPA has been using some of its reimbursement funds to pay for environmental projects throughout the nation. Unfortunately, news stories about the EPA projects have attributed the *Exxon Valdez* settlement as the source of the money without explaining that they

are from reimbursements.

"This has been confusing for a lot of people," said Executive Director Molly McCammon. "The Trustee Council has made it clear these funds are for restoration of the spill region in Alaska."

The court order is clear that after reimbursement to the federal and state governments, all remaining funds must be used to benefit the resources and human services of the spill region injured by the spill

## Spending spill money in New York? No way!



The Beluga Slough parcel, located across the street from Beuluga Lake in Homer, will become part of Homer's conservation zone. (photo by Joe Hunt)

"The public support for this project has been overwhelming," said Molly McCammon, executive director of the Trustee Council. "The outpouring of letters and phone calls from Homer and around the country has been non-stop."

The Trustee Council has received more than 150 letters of support as well as petitions with hundreds of signatures from local residents and visitors to the area.

Dr. John Schoen, director of the Alaska Office of the National Audubon Society, pointed out that tidelands are usually in state owner-

ship. The Homer Spit parcels are a rare exception to that rule, which puts them in greater risk to development. "Many of the valuable tidelands in the Homer area have been filled and converted to other uses," Schoen said. "The (Trustee) Council has a unique opportunity to acquire and protect tidelands which are home to an intertidal community that was significantly injured by the oil spill."

Homer's City Council passed a resolution strongly supporting the acquisition. "Conservation of these highly visible and widely visited areas are vitally important to Homer's quality of life as well as its economic future," said Homer Mayor Jack Cushing.

Governor Tony Knowles, who oversees the three state positions on the Trustee Council, called the protection of Homer Spit an important achievement

for the City of Homer and for everyone who loves to visit the Kachemak Bay area. "There is nothing in Alaska quite like the spit," Gov. Knowles said. "The spit provides the magic that each year draws hundreds of thousands of tourists to the end of the road. Today's action will help ensure that beachside habitat is protected, that the spit's world-wide reputation remains untarnished and that tourism in Homer remains sustainable."

*Tidelands protected*  
Continued from Page 1

**MANY OF THE VALUABLE TIDELANDS IN THE HOMER AREA HAVE BEEN FILLED AND CONVERTED TO OTHER USES. THE COUNCIL HAS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO ACQUIRE AND PROTECT TIDELANDS WHICH ARE HOME TO AN INTERTIDAL COMMUNITY THAT WAS SIGNIFICANTLY INJURED BY THE OIL SPILL.**

JOHN SCHOEN  
ALASKA OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY



## Alaska Coastal Currents reaches statewide audience

When Jody Seitz developed the idea for a radio series about oil spill restoration activities, she knew every day would be a new learning experience. Not only would the subject matter be wide-ranging, from archaeological digs to intertidal ecosystems to contaminant levels in killer whales, but she had never before produced radio spots.

Seitz was trained in Rural Sociology. She worked for the Subsistence Division of the Department of Fish and Game before moving to Cordova three years ago.

Her plan to create a radio series was a way to give local residents news about research on the ecosystem after the spill. With the help of producer Steve Heimel of Alaska Public Radio Network, she has become the voice of restoration on radio statewide.

The series is very educational, especially about the marine ecosystem on which many Alaskans depend. "I think



Photo by Roy Corral

Jody Seitz

Alaskans are very interested in what's going on in the marine environment, especially following this huge oil spill," Seitz said.

Seitz recently finished taping her 75th

episode of the radio series and launched a newspaper column that conveys the same information. Eighteen months after starting the series, she is now on the air from Prudhoe Bay to Juneau. The program was picked up by KUAC in Fairbanks this month, putting it on the air in the state's three major population centers as well as throughout the spill region.

## Alaska Coastal Currents Schedule

**KBBI** 890 am Sat 6:05 pm; Tue 9 am  
Homer - Seldovia

**KCHU** 88.1 fm Thu 5:44 pm  
Valdez with translators in: Chenega Bay, Tatitlek, Cordova, Whittier, Glenallen, McCarthy

**KDLG** 670 am Fri between 2-3 pm  
Dillingham with translators throughout the Bristol Bay region

**KDLL** 91.9 fm Tue 9 am; Fri 7:24 pm  
Kenai - Soldotna

**KLAM** 1450 am Tue, Thu, & Sat 4 pm  
Cordova

**KMXT** 100.1 fm Sun 12:20 pm  
Kodiak

**KSKA** 91.1 fm Fri 10:04 am and 7:24 pm  
Anchorage with translators in: Eagle River, Girdwood, Palmer, Prudhoe Bay, Unalaska, Wasilla

**KSRD** 88.1 fm Fri 10:04 am and 7:24 pm  
Seward

**KTOO** 104.3 fm Fri between 3-4 pm  
Juneau

**KUAC** 89.9 fm Fri 6:30 pm  
Fairbanks with translators in: Central, Circle, Denali Park, Galena, Glennallen, Healy

## Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council



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State of Alaska

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Fisheries Service

**Frank Rue**  
Commissioner  
Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game

## Seeking the trees through the forest



Trustees and agency liaisons toured portions of Afognak Island to get a ground-level view of the land and trees currently under consideration for protection. From left to right, Public Advisory Group member Howard Valley, Trustee Deborah Williams and Operations Director Eric Meyers take a break under the trees.

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