



CURRENTS



Citizens Working Together For Community Vitality In A Healthy Watershed

Newsletter of the Kenai Watershed Forum

SUMMER, 2001



Dominique Collet examines seed pods from a willow plant. Collet is working on a guide that will help identify the Kenai Peninsula's 20 varieties of willow.

Local Naturalist uses hobby to aid river

Illustrated guide will help identify proper willows for riverbank projects

Landscapers, biologists and naturalists will soon have an illustrated guide to help them identify the Kenai Peninsula's 20 species of willow.

Dominique Collet, a self-taught naturalist, is teaming with the Kenai Watershed Forum to produce the handbook. Grants from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Wasilla Soil and Water Conservation District will pay for the publishing costs.

Willows have long been a diet staple for the peninsula's moose. Lately, landscapers have discovered the willow as an important tool to fight river erosion. The fast-growing, hearty plants anchor riverbanks with their thick roots, creating good fish habitat in the process.

Not all willows are created equal, though. Of the 20 local willow species, only three or four thrive along the banks of rivers, according to Collet. If you can identify those varieties, revegetation projects are easy.

"All you have to do is cut a stick and poke it in the ground and it will grow," Collet said. "If you use the wrong species,

you're wasting your time."

At least a few riverfront owners learned that lesson the hard way. Willows that should have flourished died.

It's an easy mistake to make, Collet says. Many of the willows look similar, making them tricky to identify.

Collet's guide should help. In addition to written descriptions of the plants, Collet's watercolor paintings will give frustrated landscapers visual clues.

"What I'm trying to do is to make something user-friendly," he said. "The idea is to make something like a field guide for birds."

Collet moved to Alaska in 1978 from Belgium, where he guided bird watchers. He has lived on the Kenai Peninsula for 15 years. He lives in Sterling with his children Crystal, Nikki and Daniel. He is a carpenter by trade, but expects to work full-time on the willow guide this summer and fall. If all goes well, the guide will be available next year.

Collet wrote a book on Kenai willows in 1996. That book is more technical in nature, useful primarily to botanists.

WHO IS KWF?

The Key Players

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Kelly Shea
Ole Andersson
Micah Johnson

HOW ARE WE DOING?

The Kenai Watershed Forum is interested in hearing from you. Write, call, fax, e-mail, or stop by sometime. We're located on the second floor of the Blazy Mall in Soldotna.

ADDRESS: P.O. Box 2937, Soldotna, Ak 99669

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E-MAIL: robert@kenaiwatershed.org

WEB PAGE: <http://www.kenaiwatershed.org>

The Kenai Watershed Forum is a citizens' non-profit organization dedicated to working together for community vitality in a healthy watershed.

Summer Program Schedule

Take a Walk with our local experts

Thurs., June 7th, 7p.m. ~ A Geological Perspective of the Kenai River with Geologist, Robert Ruffner. Meet at the Kenai River Flats viewing platform on Bridge Access Rd.

Thurs., June 14th, 7p.m. ~ Stream ecology walk with Dr. David Wartinbee. Check out the aquatic organisms in Soldotna Creek. Meet at the Soldotna Creek Park, parking lot.

Thurs., June 21st, 7p.m. ~ Birding with Ken Marlow. Meet at Morgan's Landing State Park Headquarters (free parking in overflow lot). Easy walking on boardwalk & good variety of birds.

Thurs., June 28th, 1p.m. ~ A Geological Perspective of the Kenai River with Geologist, Robert Ruffner. Meet at the Kenai River Flats viewing platform on Bridge Access Rd.

Thurs., July 5th, 7pm. ~ Sockeye's are in! Meet at Soldotna Creek Park to view the Sockeye and talk about Fisheries Management.

Thurs., July 12th, 1p.m. ~ Slikok Creek plant and bird survey with Professor Boyd Shaffer. Meet at the Kenai Peninsula College, parking lot area. Some agility required.

Thurs., July 19th 1p.m. ~ Slikok Creek Fisheries walk with Mary Price, USFWS. Meet at Slikok State Park. Some agility required.

Thurs., July 26th, 7p.m. ~ Birding with Ken Marlow. Meet at Morgan's Landing State Park Headquarters (free parking in overflow lot). Easy walking on boardwalk & good variety of birds.

Thurs., Aug 2nd, 7p.m. ~ Historical tour of the Victor Holm Cabin. Meet at Kasilof Mercantile.

Thurs., Aug 9th ~ Learn about the local Flora. Meet time & place to be announced.

Thurs., Aug. 16th, 1p.m. ~ Circle walk along Slikok Creek w/ Kari Mohn. Meet at Kenai Peninsula College parking lot. Some agility required.

Walks are FREE (Donations are Welcome) and open to the public, Dress for outdoors. Walks are 1-2 hours long. Call for Directions & more info.

KWF volunteers watch Cooper Landing streams



Pat Dye practices target shooting with an M1-D rifle he built. Pat is training to be a competitive shooter.

Pat Dye monitors Quartz, Cooper and Dave's Creek ...

When Pat Dye taught school in Cooper Landing, he regularly led students out of the classroom and onto the banks of nearby creeks to measure water quality and teach biology lessons. Now that he has retired, Pat continues his streamside visits as part of KWF's Water Quality Monitoring Program.

Once a month for the past two years, Pat has tested the waters at Quartz Creek and Cooper Creek near Cooper Landing. He was supposed to add Dave's Creek to his rounds last month, but came across some resistance.

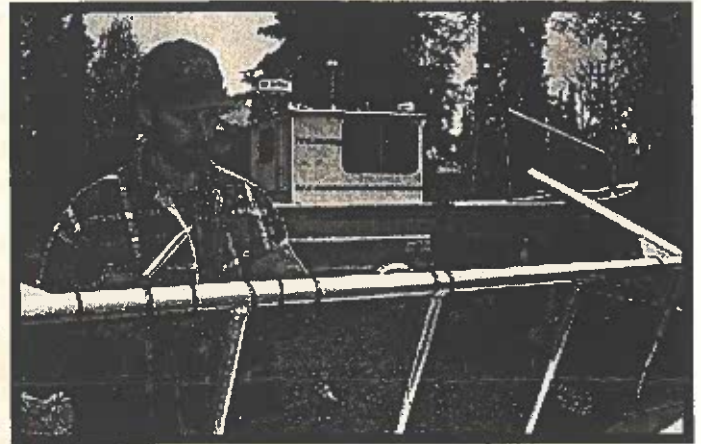
"There was a brown bear in the area feeding on a moose carcass," he said. Monitoring could wait another month.

Quartz Creek and Cooper Creek both appear healthy, according to Pat. There is a big difference between the two creeks, though. Cooper Creek flows out of the bottom of a dam, resulting in colder water and fewer fish.

In retirement, Pat enjoys woodworking and photography. His real passion, though, is competitive shooting. He shoots a pistol and a large-bore rifle.

"It's something I've done all my life and now I have some time to concentrate on it," he said. He hasn't entered any competitions yet, but hopes to do so soon.

Pat would like to pass on his knowledge of guns to kids in Cooper Landing. He recently became a certified rifle instructor with the National Rifle Association and would like to teach youth classes in marksmanship and gun safety.



Dave Westerman strings a new fish trap for Fish and Game. In the winter, Dave works as a substitute teacher.

While Dave Westerman eyes Juneau and Bean Creek

For nearly every month over the last three years, Dave Westerman has made the one-mile walk from his Cooper Landing home to test the waters of Juneau Creek and Bean Creek as part of KWF's Water Quality Monitoring Program.

Based on the data he has collected, the two Kenai River tributaries appear to be healthy, Dave says. He has noticed a color change in Bean Creek over the years – from green to brown – "but that could be caused by many factors," he said. He does not believe the change affects the water quality.

During the summer season, Dave operates sonar counters for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. During the six months he is not watching sockeye salmon pass the counters, he works as a substitute teacher and volunteers in the community.

"Most of our kids (in Cooper Landing) don't have the opportunity to play basketball," said Westerman. So he helps coach youth teams and sets up games with nearby towns like Moose Pass.

Westerman also organizes an adult softball tournament with 10 teams. A local charity uses the tournament's concession stand to make money.

Westerman is married to Terri Tobias and has three children. He has lived in Cooper Landing since 1984.

Soldotna teen Carly Miller helps KWF study pike habits

When Carly Miller recently looked into the stomachs of pike caught in local lakes, she discovered some surprises. With the help of biologists and teachers, she found three-spine sticklebacks, nine-spine sticklebacks and freshwater shrimp, but no salmon or trout.

Many worry that the pike, predator fish introduced into local lakes, could decimate trout and salmon populations. So not finding evidence of trout and salmon in their diets is a good thing, right?

"We think the pike that were caught were in lakes that have had pike for a while, so there aren't any salmon or salmon eggs left," said Carly, a sophomore at Soldotna High School.

Carly presented her results at the Caring for the Kenai, a local contest that challenges students to research an environmental problem and pose solutions. She won third place.

"I've helped my dad fillet fish after he caught them, but I've never dissected them like I did for this experiment," said Carly, who is earning an A+ in her high school biology class. "I learned a lot, especially about pike and the pike's impact on salmon."

Carly believes that educating the public about those impacts is crucial to controlling the pike problem. She also believes that fishing derbies, like the one KWF and Soldotna Trustworthy Hardware sponsored this last winter, are a good way to help cut into the pike population.



THANK YOU * THANK YOU * THANK YOU * THANK YOU * THANK YOU *

Our thanks go out to:



Phillips Petroleum Co.
for their \$5,000 contribution to sponsor the **Soldotna Salmon Festival**.

Alaska Conservation Foundation
and the **Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund** - Summer intern support.



Unocal, Arby's and Tesoro for contributing to KWF's **Sponsor-A-School** program.

UNOCAL 76
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Additional Kenai River Festival Donors

Contributors (\$200-\$499)

The Chase is Over - City of Kenai - Safeway - Seekins Ford - US Fish and Wildlife Service - Kenai Merit Inn - Salamatof Native Association - Phillips Petroleum - Tesoro Alaska Co. - Soldotna Professional Pharmacy - The Nature Conservancy of Alaska - A.C.S. - Hutchings Chevrolet

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Alaska Wildland Adventures - Princess Tours - Bishop Lake Studio - Peninsula Sanitation - United Cook Inlet Drift Association - Harvest Traditions Bakery - Angler's Lodge - The Fish Hut Charters and Lodging - Kenai River Lodge - Mackey Lake Company, Laser Engraving - Mykel's Restaurant - Freedom Realty - H.E.A. -

Additional Support

Kenai Elks Lodge - Nelson and Assoc. - Alaskan Outdoor Adventures - Mailboxes Etc.

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
\$ 45,000 grant to support water quality monitoring

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Wasilla Soil and Water Conservation District
\$18,000 grant to develop a Southcentral willow guide

THANK YOU * THANK YOU * THANK YOU * THANK YOU *

Kenai River Fest 2001

June 9th and 10th

Music

Heartbeat of Mother Earth - Food for Soul
Bunny Swan-Gease - Spur Hwy Spankers
Joe Ray & Katie Skrha - Southern Comfort
Whitey & John Swanson - Maggie's Three
Mayberries - Joe Rheinhart
Kenai River Folk Dancers - Mike Morgan -
& more

Run for the River

A 5k run starting at the Kenai Ball Fields.
Meet time is 9 a.m. Start time is 10 a.m.
Sat., June 9. Register at
www.kenaiwatershed.org/info.html.

Pre-registration fee

Adult- \$5 Under 18 - free

Race-day Registratio Fees

Adult - \$10 Under 18 - \$5



Children's Activities

Hands-on Science - Salmon Hats
Face Painting - Wooden Fish Models
Bird Feeder Construction - Stream Prog
Live Birds with Bird TLC
Fly Tying Workshops - (Sat-noon, 3 & 5pm)
Puppet Shows (5 times/daily)

Artisan Booths

Keeping History Studios - Rhode Photog-
raphy - Handpainted Glassware -
Jewelry - Paintings - Soaps - Clay Otter
Pottery - West Pottery - Hooked on
Fishing - Bead Jewelry - Pottery - Water-
colors - Handpainted Boxes - Stain Glass
- The Ceramic Shop - Bezerkley Wear -
Carved "Old Ivory" - and More

Agencies & Org. w/ Activities

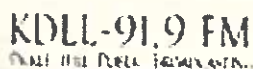
Alaska Fish & Game, Stream Program (Hands on Science) - Kenai Soil & Water Conservation
District - State Forestry with "Smokey" & trucks - and More

- At the City of Kenai, Green Strip, near the Ball Fields, on Main St.
- Fun for the whole family • Door Prizes • Art Booths
- Entrance & All Children's Activities are **FREE, FREE, FREE!!**

Thank You MAJOR SPONSORS (donations of \$1000 or more)



Thank You Sponsors (donations of \$500-\$999)



KWF MEMBERSHIP

Thanks to the following people for recently contributing to the Kenai Watershed Forum. If you would like to renew your membership or become a new member, please contact us at 907-260-5449.

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Lori Landstrom and Terry Rude
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Harry Scholten	David Birchfield
Del and Karen Otter	

SUSTAINING MEMBERS

Austin and Jean Terrell
Cheri Edwards

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Bill and Molly Stockwell	
Laura Sievert	Jim Fisher
Stanton Levitt	Gerald Brookman
Ancel and Barb Johnson	Robin Veluce

NEW EVENT !!!

Coming to Soldotna

the
**First Annual
Soldotna Creek Salmon Celebration**

**Sunday July 29th 1pm to 8pm
at the
Newly Expanded Soldotna Creek Park**

**Food
Picnic Hosted by the City of Soldotna
2pm**

**Music
River Jam - Live Music on the Banks of the
Kenai River**

Keynote Speakers

Kids activities-River Education

**Made possible by a generous contribution
from PHILLIPS ALASKA**



Kenai Watershed Forum
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