

CURRENTS

NEWSLETTER OF THE KENAI WATERSHED FORUM

Cover Photo by Clark Fair



**KENAI
WATERSHED
FORUM**

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Winter 2018

WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY WATERSHEDS ON THE KENAI PENINSULA

10 Things in 10 Years

By Rhonda McCormick, Accounting Manager



Ten years ago I joined a dynamic, ever-evolving organization. I had no clue then I would be here for a decade and I had no clue what I was getting into. I am a bookkeeper. I crunch numbers for a living. Working for a nonprofit with a substantial amount of federal and state grant funding is number crunching on steroids. I had no idea I would also find myself standing in a stream with a flow meter in January, or falling into a creek while fish trapping or taking water samples with a volunteer crew for the annual baseline testing. And yet, I have found "my place" in this wonderful world of the Kenai Watershed Forum (KWF). A lot has changed in the past 10 years, and here are my reflections of the top 10:

#10 - In 2010 the Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership was officially approved by the National Fish Habitat Board as the fifteenth habitat partnership in the nation. Presently, there are only 20 habitat partnerships nationwide. Robert Ruffner was a driving force in the formation and application of the partnership and KWF has managed the coordination since the beginning, seeing millions of dollars infused into Peninsula restoration and education projects through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Habitat Partnership program.

#9 - The Kenai River Festival has grown and adapted as Soldotna Creek Park has been developed to be the premier green space in Soldotna. The KWF staff has shown its versatility as we moved the entire festival to Centennial Park when Soldotna Creek Park was in total construction. The largest area of growth; 10 years ago we had 3 food vendors this past summer we had 16 food vendors and their eclectic wares! Educational booths see thousands of kids come through each day and we've seen some big-name bands take the stage! We see 100+ volunteers come out to help during the weekend. We could not do it without them!

#8 - Invasive Species infestations brought about a new staff position. Reed Canary Grass was the first challenge of a full-time Invasives staff member. In recent years, we have seen and conquered an outbreak of Elodea at Sports Lake (among others) and were a contributing member of the same battle at Lake Hood in Anchorage.

#7 - In the of summer 2011 we welcomed a new temporary staff member to head-up the new Lower River Stream Watch program. This short-term funding opportunity incorporating volunteers as habitat ambassadors quickly rose in prominence and has become a permanent KWF position impacting tens of thousands of visitors since starting.

#6 - Before my arrival, in 2006, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation placed a 19-mile segment of the Kenai River on the list of impaired water bodies due to high levels of hydrocarbons. The Kenai Watershed Forum, in partnership with the Kenaitze Indian Tribe, created a motor buy-back program to lower the impact to local residents adhering to the new regulations. Public outreach by KWF and other stakeholders were also a key component to the hydrocarbon levels dropping significantly, and, in 2010, the river was removed from the impaired water bodies list.

#5 - The summer of 2011 brought a new exciting program to KWF; Summer Camp! We purchased a yurt, set it up on a platform, hung up a sign and welcomed kids aged 6-12 to spend a week with Mr. Dan and Miss Hannah for our inaugural year of camp. In the past 8 years, we have seen over 600 campers with 15% of them attending on full or partial scholarship. In 2018, we did an overhaul of camp with a new logo, theme and program.

#4 - Every summer our staff is re-energized by the arrival of fresh, young faces - college interns! In the past decade, I have helped hire 27 interns from schools across the country. Many returned for a second year, some returned for temporary full-time work, and a few became permanent full-time staff members. Our internship program is highly sought after and we receive well over 100 applications every year. We could not complete our summer fieldwork without these eager helping hands and bright minds.



#3 - Our biggest restoration project to date was completed in the past 10 years. Titled, "The Anchor River Restoration", this project involved a gravel pit abandoned in 1996 that was subsequently flooded by the Anchor River in 2002, changing the topography of the flood plain and resulting in unnatural, shallow, braided streams. In 2011, the active channel was relocated to the original 1984 location. This \$1.5+ million dollar project involved many partners and was primarily funded by a stimulus grant from NOAA.

#2 - In 2008, the City of Soldotna approached KWF regarding a historical building located within Soldotna Creek Park. The "Soberg House" was built in the late 1940s for Ralph Soberg, a general foreman for the Alaska Road Commission. The current Soldotna Creek Park was then the AK Road Commission's heavy equipment yard. Following a land swap with the City, a green space

**KENAI
PENINSULA**



**FISH HABITAT
PARTNERSHIP**



was developed. After a period of vacancy, the "Soberg House" fell under disrepair, which brought vandalism and graffiti, the City decided the Kenai Watershed Forum would be the perfect guest at this building and we agreed! We signed a 30-year lease in September 2008 and started construction in 2010. The renovations cost over \$750,000 and support was received from the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust, Rasmussen Foundation, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, Wells Fargo, Central Peninsula Hospital, and MANY generous individuals, small business and corporate contributions. The finished product includes a rotating solar panel, a "green parking" lot that allows for easy drainage, a rain garden and a beautiful energy-efficient office building that retained the same footprint and "look" of the original building. Staff moved in over Thanksgiving weekend 2011 and we have never been happier!



#1 - STAFF. This organization would be nothing without the amazing people who have dedicated their craft to make KWF a noteworthy organization in the environmental community of Alaska. I have had the pleasure of working alongside 22 highly talented full-time employees in the past 10 years. Another 39 seasonal and temporary hires have come through the doors. In total, including interns, 88 people have pushed forward our mission through hard work and commitment to that mission during my tenure. I would be amiss without mentioning the three Executive Directors who have been the backbone of this organization during their tenure. Robert Ruffner is a legend in the environmental world, earning the River Hero Award from the River Network. He retired in late 2015 and now serves on the Alaska Board of Fisheries but continues to be a strong supporter of our organization. Jack Sinclair came out of retirement from Alaska State Parks to head up KWF and stayed with us for two+ years. He resigned in mid-2018 to attend to family commitments. Currently at the helm is long time employee, Branden Bornemann. Branden is excited to be leading the company he has seen grow and adapt to changing environmental needs.

Well, there you have it. There are many more remarkable things about the Kenai Watershed Forum. It was difficult to limit it to just 10!

People and projects have come and gone, but our purpose and mission have remained the same since the formation by a group of concerned citizens 21 years ago; "Working together for healthy watersheds on the Kenai Peninsula". Our main emphasis of Research, Restoration and Education remain as strong as ever. We are in it for the long haul.

"I'm happy I have also been around to see the growth and development of such a great company and an even better group of people- despite the large staff change it remains such an amazing group of people with a great company culture/mission always kept in mind. Pretty awesome, I'm glad you have found such a home there." - Madison Orth, Rhonda's Daughter, College Student, Longtime Volunteer



Kenai Watershed Forum
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Soldotna, AK 99669

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The Kenai Watershed Forum (KWF) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to maintaining the health of the watersheds on the Kenai Peninsula. We are recognized as the regional watershed organization of the Kenai Peninsula, successfully identifying and addressing the needs of the region by providing high-quality EDUCATION, RESTORATION, and RESEARCH programs.

Our mission is "Working together for healthy watersheds on the Kenai Peninsula." KWF is a dynamic and maturing organization that is poised to serve the Kenai Peninsula and the State of Alaska with increasing effectiveness in the near and distant future.

KWF Staff

Branden Bornemann
Executive Director

Rhonda McCormick
Accounting Manager

Tami Murray
Development Director

Alice Main
Stream Watch Coordinator

Maggie Harings
Environmental Scientist

Jennifer Hester
Invasives Specialist
Adopt A Stream Instructor

Joseph Robertia
Summer Camp Instructor

Mike Gracz
Wetlands Project Manager

KWF Summer Staff

Anya Hondel
Dareena Doyle

2018 KWF Interns

Terese Schomogyi
John Lowin
Tyler Barber
Rachel Smaby
Madeleine Tucker
Tait Stevenson

KWF Board of Directors

Denise Newbould, President
Aaron Cooper, Vice President
Terri Carter, Secretary
Matthew Pyhala, Treasurer
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Dr. David Wartinbee
David Trudgen



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we have once again made great strides in public education, environmental restoration, and watershed and wetland ecosystems studies and data collection.

The words of the great naturalist Aldo Leopold come to my mind when I think of the important work of KWF. He said, "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." As our population grows, the pressure on our rivers to meet the demands of harvest, recreation, and urban growth increases. We must work together to accommodate these demands, while ensuring we do not compromise the resilience, stability, and natural aesthetics of this glorious place we call home. I know I speak for all of the Board when I say we are honored to be a part of the KWF, an organization that works collaboratively, with all user groups within our community, to achieve this critical goal!

Sincerely,

Denise Newbould
President- Kenai Watershed Forum

Dear Friends of the Kenai Watershed Forum,

The Kenai Watershed Forum experienced an eventful 2018. Branden Bornemann, a senior scientist who has been with us for seven years, stepped up in July to serve as acting Executive Director. It is with great pleasure that I announce that Branden can remove "acting" from his title, as he is now the Executive Director of the Kenai Watershed Forum! The enthusiasm of Branden and the rest of the staff is palpable and contagious! We are fortunate to have such an outstanding team at KWF, who are not only very talented but also passionate about our mission, core values, and programs. Therefore, I extend a heartfelt thank-you to our wonderful staff! Through their hard work and dedication, and in coordination with our community partners, this year

2018 Program Highlights

By Maggie Harings



BIANNUAL KENAI RIVER WATER QUALITY SAMPLING

For 18 years, The Kenai Watershed Forum has partnered with several local, state and federal agencies to conduct two water quality sampling events throughout the summer along the Kenai River and some of its tributaries. Small volunteer groups are formed and each are assigned a set of sampling locations to visit by foot, motorboat, kayak and even packraft! The water samples taken are sent to a lab for processing and the results are then returned to KWF for analysis. This process serves as a biannual "check-up" for the river-if the results returned show exceedances parameters, then agencies can get a jump-start on mitigation. Historically, these events have initiated the implementation of positive changes to the Kenai River that have resulted in cleaner water for both recreationists and the flora and fauna that utilize the river!

Agencies included: Kenai Peninsula Borough, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, City of Soldotna and U.S. Forest Service



KENAI BEACH MONITORING

Beach monitoring efforts continued throughout the summer along the beaches in Kenai, Alaska. Specifically, we sampled for fecal coliform and enterococci; bacteria often derived from a local gull population just upriver of the Kenai River outlet. Sampling was done in conjunction with high tides, which often required early-morning alarms, coffee, and some good jams to get us going!

CROOKED CREEK: JUVENILE PIT TAGGING STUDY

Little is currently known about juvenile coho salmon along the Kenai Peninsula. In response, the Kenai Watershed Forum joined forces with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to take a closer look at their movement relative to a culvert replacement at the Sterling Highway overpass of Crooked Creek near Kasilof, Alaska. KWF installed four Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tag arrays along the creek and tagged several hundred juvenile coho using PIT tags. While originally designed for use within the

Columbia River, PIT tags now serve as a mainstream technique with which to determine a fish's location by stream section. When a fish swims through an array (two in-stream antennas), the ID associated with the fish's PIT tag and the direction of its travel is detected and recorded in a nearby reader. This study will continue for about two more years in order to learn as much as possible about these little fish. Pretty neat!



KENAI RIVER BOAT COUNTS AND TURBIDITY MONITORING

Each year, boaters flock to the Kenai River to catch some salmon and soak up some precious Alaskan sun. With fishermen, though, comes boat wake! Throughout the second half of July, KWF deployed Hydrolabs to conduct turbidity monitoring at two locations within the river in order to identify any changes in turbidity that may have occurred since the previous assessment. KWF also conducted boat counts along the river-both aerial and from shore!



CULVERT ASSESSMENTS

Each year, KWF collaborates with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game as well as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct culvert assessments throughout the Kenai Peninsula. These assessments provide biologists with critical data regarding the functionality of the culvert. If data returned shows that a culvert is functioning as a fish passage barrier to anadromous fish, it can be replaced so that that stream flows are returned to a more natural, functional state for fish!





Photo by Hamilton Hunt

Wonder, Wood Frogs, and the Kenai Watershed

By Joseph Robertia, KWF Summer Camp Instructor

Deep in the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, we squished our way across the floating carpet of vegetation, sending waves of sphagnum moss, bog rosemary, and bright pink sundews undulating with each step closer to the pond's edge.

We had been hiking for nearly a half hour, but now approaching the water I urged the queue of 13 anxious children behind me to quiet down. A trio of Pacific loons took note of us from the center of the pond and on the far side a beaver lodge sporting limbs with freshly chewed white tips were a good indication its fur-bearing resident was nearby, but none of these were the species we had come for. Our quarry was much smaller, nearer to our feet, and relying on its cryptic camouflage to not be seen, but this was not my first field hunt for amphibians.

"I see one!" I shouted at the sight of a small wood frog just a few yards away. I felt a sudden surge of excited bodies pressing against my backside. "Stay back. Stay back. We don't want to startle it."

With careful, calculated steps I stalked closer to within striking range, extended my telescoping net to cover the final distance, then dropped the mesh bag over the unsuspecting frog.

"We got him!" I cheered, and the kids erupted in excitement.

Prior to being in the Kenai Watershed Forum's "Wilderness, Wildlife, and Wonder" Summer Camp – for which I was the new director in 2018 – more than half of these children didn't know there were any amphibians in Alaska, much less six Native species. Fewer still were the number of kids who had ever actually seen or touched one in the wild.

This was the reason I designed the camp's curriculum to not only spend half a day teaching the kids some basic biological facts about this taxon, but also



trekking into the field to find them firsthand.

Carefully removing the frog from the net, I placed it in a clean specimen jar so that every child could take their time to study its features close-up with minimal stress or harm to the animal. They could take in its bulging eyes, wet skin, webbed toes, and dorsal-lateral fold. This field experience reinforced what they had already learned in the classroom. The lessons are geared toward the age-group of each week's camp.

Younger kids, aged 6-9, learned more about the features that make amphibians unique: metamorphosis from aquatic larvae to terrestrial adults; how they are ectothermic (cold-blooded), but lack claws and scales like their close relatives the reptiles; and most importantly to this age group, how most breathe and can absorb water, oxygen, and chemicals through their skin, which is why it is so



important to minimize handling of wild frogs and never touch them if the kids have bug repellent, sunblock, or other lotions on their hands.

Older kids, 10-12 and 13-16, get a more advanced scientific lesson, learning more about the three main orders: (frogs and toads, salamanders and newts, and caecilians); the difference between camouflage and aposematic coloring; the global decline of amphibians due to climate change, habitat destruction and fragmentation, invasive species, over-harvesting, and chytrid fungus – a lethal disease to amphibians which has been found on the Kenai Peninsula.

In regard to this latter concept, I was rigorous in emphasizing methods for not spreading this sickness, such as never releasing pet amphibians in the wild, not releasing wild caught ones to new or different areas, and sterilizing their boots, nets, and other equipment with diluted bleach between outings. They also learned the basics of filling out field data forms during our field trips and reporting our findings to various organizations as part of contributing to citizen science initiatives.

The Kenai Peninsula is fortunate to have hundreds of lakes and ponds that are (relatively) road-accessible, so we were able to vary our weekly expeditions to further minimize stress to the animals and damage to their environments. This allowed us to report the presence or absence of wood frogs in several areas, which hopefully will aid future surveys, such as by the state or state-universities, which would be more qualitative and quantitative than our own.

Altering our geographic locations weekly, combined with temporal changes throughout the summer, also allowed us to hear the calls of mating frogs early in the season, followed by seeing the gelatinous clusters of hundreds of eggs in later weeks, and all the stages of developing tadpoles throughout the remainder of the year.

Amphibians were only one day's focus in the week-long camp. Other days the kids learned about other animals – birds, bug, bears, etc – of the Kenai Watershed, and a multitude of methods for protecting the environment. Taking all of this into consideration, I hope I met my goal as being a science educator, which was not merely to teach kids about nature, but inspire them to find it as interesting, enriching, and worth protecting as I do.



SUMMER CAMP 2019-A SNEAK PEEK

Building on the success of the Kenai Watershed Forum's 2018 Summer Camps, we plan on continuing to teach a basic foundation of biological science and environmental stewardship to children 6-16 through place-based outdoor education.

On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons, we'll adhere to the ethos of "Leave No Child Inside" and be outside for no less than half the day to reinforce the scientific principles taught during morning interactive lessons and art projects in our educational yurt.

Tuesday and Thursday will be all-day hikes – rain or shine – in the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge to allow the kids to witness, firsthand, salmon spawning, bears eating wildflowers, and grouse as well as other resident and migratory birds raising their chicks. At least one of those hike days will entail going up Bear

Mountain, so campers can feel the sense of achievement hiking to a summit, as well as staring out on the Kenai Watershed from such a majestic elevation point.

New in 2019, we are also hoping to add into the curriculum a lesson about the world of miniature creatures – such as slugs, beetles, and spiders – in order to teach about these species that all too often go overlooked or underappreciated, yet serve a valuable role in the ecosystem. By the end of this year's camp, kids will hopefully feel a new sense of fascination with these small specimens all around us, and they will definitely understand the entomological quip that "all bugs are insects, but not all insects are bugs."



WILDERNESS WILDLIFE WONDER
KENAI WATERSHED FORUM SUMMER CAMP



DAREENA DOYLE

Summer Camp Assistant

Working at summer camp allowed me to work with so many different kids. Every week brought a new group of kids and each group had their own way of learning and going about the activities that were prepared. This made

every week different and exciting. The kids seemed to really enjoy camp as well and were able to develop a love for the outdoors and continuously grow in this aspect. Whether they were looking at a bear seen from the van, dissecting owl pellets, listening to a story, observing a beautiful view on the top of Bear Mountain, or cleaning up trash to protect the environment, many of them were very engaged in all the activities and able to explore all these things deeply and really appreciate each one.

This really left an impression on me and how these kids whether they were 6 years old or in the older group of 13, they could all enjoy being outside and learning about the various things around us that sometimes go unnoticed. I learned a lot from them as well, as they opened my eyes to things I had not noticed and they offered a new unique and open-minded perspective.

These summer camps, full of new experiences for everyone, really shed light on the value of learning from one another and how each camper brings something special to the world.

WATCH FOR 2019 REGISTRATION!



Stream Watch

By Alice Main, Stream Watch Coordinator

Four Reasons Why Stream Watch is the Best Volunteer Program in the World A Coordinator's (Slightly Biased?) Perspective

Did you drive around the peninsula this summer, tune into KSRM, and hear something about bear safety, or fishing regulations, or a mention of Stream Watch? Did you visit the Russian River, Centennial Park, or anywhere else on the peninsula and see this charming logo on a shed or an article of clothing? If so, you have seen some crumbs of the education and restoration program called Stream Watch. I say crumbs because, as those of you who are familiar with the program can attest, it is much, much more than radio ads and logo placement. In fact, I welcome you to join me in believing that Stream Watch is the best volunteer program in the world. Here's why:



#4 Volunteer Perks. Beyond that warm fuzzy feeling you get from giving back, Stream Watch has some of the greatest perks for volunteers. **A)** when people commit to becoming a Stream Watch Ambassador, they receive invaluable training. Ambassadors learn all the key educational messages the Stream Watch

promotes: stream ecology, ethical angling, bear safety, and "Leave No Trace". They also receive swift water wading and bear spray training. **B)** when they arrive at their first "Ambassador Shift" they are gifted a sharp uniform comprised of a ball cap, black jacket, and a fly-fishing shirt! **C)** on days Ambassadors volunteer, they are eligible for free camping at either the Russian River Campground or Centennial Park! **D)** at the end of the season Stream Watch staff host an Ambassador Volunteer Appreciation Event. This is a celebration of the season, their service, and often consists of food, drink, a presentation, several activities, and an appreciation gift.

#3 Program Partners. Stream Watch had 6 program partners this year consisting of local, state, and federal land management agencies. Twice a year all of these partners come together to amend of the Annual Operations Plan. This allows Stream Watch to leverage existing agency efforts, ensuring that all volunteer efforts continue to meet the evolving needs of the area, and that messaging across agencies and volunteers remain consistent.

#2 Volunteers. Stream Watch are some of Alaska's best. First and foremost, we have Stream Watch Ambassadors -- our cadre of trained volunteers. Ambassadors dedicate countless hours out on the river in the summer to clean up trash, mend habitat fencing, and communicate with local and visiting river-users alike. They share tips on fishing, give friendly reminders of fishing regulations, and connect the dots for folks to relate how our actions as river users can impact our salmon. They do this all with a smile on their face and a level of grace and passion few possess. If you have the pleasure of knowing one of these people, please join me in thanking them for their service, for it is truly admirable.





EXXON VALDEZ OIL SPILL TRUSTEE COUNCIL

A \$54,000 grant from EVOSTC enabled our Stream Watch program, to fund eighteen-months of additional stream protection activities in the intense summer public use centers on the southern Kenai Peninsula, around the stream and river mouths of the Kasilof, Ninilchik and Anchor Rivers and Deep Creek for the 2018 and 2019 summer field seasons.





On top of this stellar group of Ambassadors, we also get assistance from many organizations and individuals with our Stewardship Days. This year we had eight come out to lend a hand, helping install and remove over four miles of habitat-protective fencing, conduct a 20+ mile river cleanup, and remove thousands of pounds of trash from our beaches. A special recognition should also go out to Carl High for partnering with us on a beach cleanup this fall. With his help we removed almost 3000 pounds of debris in an afternoon! Thank you to everyone who volunteered. This program could not accomplish what it does with out you!

#1 Positive Impact on our Salmon. The biggest reason Stream Watch is the best volunteer program in the world is because it makes a huge positive impact on our salmon, helping preserve one of the LAST REMAINING WILD SALMON RUNS IN THE WORLD. Working together with all the dedicated volunteers, staff, program partners, and supporters, Stream Watch helps keep this salmon run strong through protection, restoration, and education. Stream Watch seasonally installs, maintains, and removes temporary habitat fencing to protect the riverside plants keeping our banks intact for juvenile salmon. Stream Watch also protects wildlife by removing riverside trash and monofilament line, preventing wildlife entanglement, and the accumulation of microplastics and lead in our waterways. Stream Watch partners with agencies to stabilize eroded banks and removing fish passage barriers to restore habitat.

Stream Watch provides a huge presence on-river and off the river, providing peer-to-peer education, and yes, radio ads, to educate the public with the goal of making everyone better river stewards.

Now that I have stated my case, I hope that I have convinced you that Stream Watch is the best volunteer program in the world! If you are moved to be a part of this program, I highly encourage you to do so. You can commit to becoming an Ambassador, participate in a one-day fun-filled Stewardship Day to get your feet wet, donate to the Watershed Forum to help us support these amazing volunteers, or contact us if you have another idea of how to join forces.

I look forward to hearing from you.

To get in touch: Email StreamWatch@KenaiWatershed.org, Call 907-389-4304, or Visit Stream Watch on Facebook, Instagram, or go to www.kenaiwatershed.org

The Kenai Watershed Forum would like to thank the following organizations and individuals for their support for the 2018 Stream Watch season. Your dedication to this program is greatly appreciated.

Program Partners:		Stewardship Day Supporters:	
Kenai National Wildlife Refuge		Girl and Boy Scouts	
Department of Natural Resources		Kenai River Rotary	
Alaska State Parks and the Division of Mining, Land, and Water		Youth Conservation Corps	
City of Soldotna		McLaughlin Youth	
City of Kenai		Wildwood Work Release Program	
Kenai Peninsula Borough		Trout Unlimited	
Alaska Department of Fish and Game.		Carl High	
		Alaska Wildland Adventures.	
Ambassadors:		Don Janiak	Phillip Owensby
Marie Aamodt	Gal Easley	Miki Janiak	Cheryl Phillips
Barb Anderson	Leah Eskelin	Becky Kersey	Patricia Pyhala
Henry Anderson	William Farrell	Evan Koehler	Elaine Reale
Kathy Aronstam	Chantal Febrre	Amber	Tone Reale
Deborah Beland	Kay Gardner	Kraxberger-Linson	Wanda Reams
Mike Beland	Douglas Gates	Ellen Luellen	Angel Reams
Greg Bianche	Marilyn	Samantha	Madison Reams
Kim Bianche	Gravenhorst	Luellen	Gref Revaux
Linda Bond	Ron Gravenhorst	Shawn Luellen	Pat Rivenvark
Dorreen	John Halrason	Taylor Luellen	William Scott
Borkowski	Millie Harmon	Terry Mader	Sally Tachick
Whitney Clement	Katy Hayes	Tom Mader	Diane Taylor
Fay Corbey	Kathy Keindl	Colleen	Racheal Todd
John Corbey	Cindy Holland	Marinucci	Peter Weesner
Carolyn Daum	Clayton Holland	Alicia Morgan	Jan Zimmerman
George Daum	Tannan Holland	Fred Mrozraski	Chris Zinga.
	Gene Horning		
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Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council		Kenai Peninsula School District	
Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership		Kenai National Wildlife Refuge	
National Forest Foundation		Alaska State Parks	
United States Forest Service		Ron Gilman River Center	
Alaska Conservation Foundation		City of Soldotna	
Alaska Department of Natural Resources		Alaska Wildland Adventures	
Division of Land, Mining, and Water		Anchor Point Chamber	
Alaska Recreation Management		Deep Creek Tractor Launch	
State of Alaska		Alaska Recreation Management	
Alaska Brewing Company			
Cooper Landing Chamber			

KWF Interns

"Working at KWF changed my perspective on just how impactful a non-profit can be in its mission and in its community." - Tyler Barber, University of Wisconsin



TERESE SCHOMOgyi

University of Notre Dame

I had no idea my summer as a Stream Watch intern with the KWF would be one of the most impactful, dynamic, and informative experiences I've had. Living and working on the beautiful Kenai Peninsula for eleven weeks was nothing short of a dream, and it also exposed me to the world of salmon fishing. I knew very little about this industry and livelihood beforehand, but finished my summer well versed in salmon identification, the importance of river plant habitat for salmon development, and ethical angling and dip-netting practices.

These are only some of the things I learned at the KWF, though. Because every day was so different (thanks, Alice, for always keeping us on our toes!), I felt like my eyes were opened each day. I gained insight to the various partnerships between the national, state, city, and non-profit organizations, all of whom are working together to protect vital salmon habitat. I learned tons about the wildly and beautifully unusual state of Alaska, both from talking with our Stream Watch volunteers and exploring its roads and trails myself. I had crazy fun - from singing onstage at Salmon Fest to paddling down the Moose River.

Most importantly, I saw the passion, intelligence, and dedication it takes to run small non-profit and make tangible differences on communities. I feel like I received more from the KWF than I could possibly have given it and its staff; I am eternally grateful for the opportunities, adventures, and education they gave me every day. This organization makes a world of a difference in so many lives - now including my own.



TYLER BARBER

University of Wisconsin

I spent this past summer working as a stream watch intern with the Kenai Watershed Forum. It was a summer that made an immeasurable impact on me. It became apparent to me that KWF was no ordinary non-profit organization almost immediately, with seeing the amazing Kenai River Festival being put on by 6 full-time employees and a handful of interns. Working at KWF changed my perspective on just how impactful a non-profit can be in its mission and in its community. It's only because of the people that work there that this is

possible. Being an employee at KWF is the closest I've felt to being a part of a family, outside of my actual family of course. With a typical day spent out doing work to help conserve Alaska's natural resources in one of the most scenic landscapes in the world, it is pretty hard to complain with the circumstances. The summer was full of memories, from sleeping under a canoe in the Kenai Wildlife Refuge Canoe System, to picking up countless pounds of trash and fishing line, seeing Denali for the first time, catching my first salmon, and meeting dozens of wonderful people. This job also provided me with the unique platform of being able to explore the state of Alaska, and while the span I traversed in my time there was relatively small, it was enough for me to conclude that Alaska is beautiful in a way that only Alaska can be. Kenai Watershed Forum is a great organization, full of great people that do great things, so go volunteer with Stream Watch and become a member of team stream, or just donate already, they deserve all you can give.



JOHN LOWIN

University of Pennsylvania Shippensburg

Learning from the KWF staff this summer was a blast and helped build on my understanding of aquatic systems. It is helping in classes right now (aquatic ecology) and I share what all I learned there with all of my friends, family, and professors back home. One of the larger highlights of the summer was the canoe trip Stream Watch did with the wildlife refuge. Being submerged in the world of trail maintenance for three days with good company was awesome. The normal Stream Watch work under Alice can't be left out

though. I loved spreading the message of wildlife conservation and how could you beat talking about fishing all summer?



RACHEL SMABY

University of Wisconsin

Some of the most memorable experiences from my summer as a hydrology intern involved working in the field, exploring what Alaska has to offer. Taking water samples, monitoring turbidity, and assessing culverts were my main activities, but I was also able to work with the Stream Watch and Summer Camp programs at times throughout the summer. Overall, I think this internship was a great way to learn more about the techniques and applications of hydrology, which has helped me with deciding what I'd like to pursue after college. The staff members were also great

to work with, making the summer a lot of fun!



TAIT STEVENSON

Cornell University

Coming to Alaska and working for the Kenai Watershed Forum was truly a surreal and unforgettable experience. As the Invasive Species Intern, I had the opportunity of getting to survey multiple lakes on the Kenai Peninsula for elodea, an invasive aquatic plant. I loved this experience because it allowed me to be outside and experience the incredible wildlife and breathtaking scenery of the Kenai Peninsula on a daily basis. It also gave me invaluable experience in learning methods and techniques of different ways of dealing with invasive

species. Doing invasive species work was especially great because I was able to do so under the mentorship of the incredible Jennifer Hester.

Some of the other highlights of my summer include surveying the Swan Lake Canoe System for elodea, doing invasive species outreach in the villages of Nanwalek and Port Graham, and getting to experience the Kenai River festival. I enjoyed working with the fun and impassioned staff of the Kenai Watershed Forum. Their ability to engage the community and their genuine love for Alaska are definitely things that have resonated with me and will carry as I pursue future endeavors.



MADELEINE TUCKER

Colorado College

The summer that I spent as an intern for the Kenai Watershed Forum was one of the most formative and joyous times in my life. The significance of this experience to me was multifaceted. It both gave me a chance to explore one of the most startlingly beautiful places in the world, and it taught me lessons that I will never forget about community, trust, and what it means to work with people who believe profoundly in the change they are creating.

The Kenai Watershed Forum's internship program is an indication of how readily they put faith in others. There was no "probation period" when myself and my fellow interns arrived at the beginning of the summer - we were never made to prove ourselves trustworthy to the KWF staff. We were all immediately welcomed onto the team with open arms, and I felt relied-upon from the moment I arrived. This environment of trust gave me motivation and room to grow into role set before me. I came out of my time with the Forum a far better employee, with an understanding of the responsibilities and rewards of environmental nonprofit work. I could go on and on about the incredible individuals who make up the KWF staff, and about the impression that Alaska's wildness made on me, but suffice it to say that I came out of the summer with more role models than I know what to do with, and a conviction to return to the far-north as soon as I am able.

How do you "fill in the gaps" during the off-season? With a faithful volunteer!



After someone told Keegan Delon's Mom KWF was a "good place" he decided to continue his dedication to service in our community with the us at the Kenai Watershed Forum. Keegan is a high school freshman with the Connections Home School program, and is dedicating 1 day a week to whatever we need help with.

So far, he has participated in an Adopt-A-Stream classroom creek visit, removed fencing with Stream Watch, helped with data entry, and has watched hours upon hours of Kenai River activity videos for a research project. The staff loves having a capable, computer-savvy young person as a volunteer on a regular schedule.

Keegan, also volunteers as a coach for the Aurora Borealis robotics team and in the previous three years was a regular at our local food bank. He aspires to be an engineer later in life and is strongly considering Avtec as his chosen post-secondary school. BIG THANKS to Keegan for the many hours he has already contributed to our mission and we very much look forward to the rest of the school year knowing he will be a part of our team!



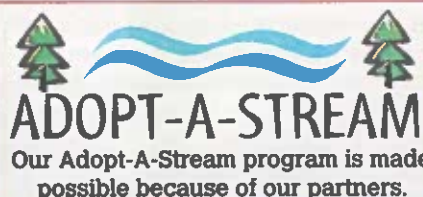


Adopt-A-Stream

By Jennifer Hester, Invasives Specialist
Adopt-A-Stream Coordinator

For 12 years the Kenai Watershed Forum has engaged students from local schools with watershed and salmon education. The curriculum is part in-class and part hands-on in nature. During a creek visit, the students are scientists who measure and record the water quality metrics of dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature, conductivity and turbidity. These young scientists also learn about healthy watersheds by observation. The students sample juvenile fish, learning salmon and trout identification and life cycles. Aquatic invertebrates are sampled for a lesson in food webs and nutrient cycling.

The spring semester of 2017 also gave students the chance to participate in community & trail improvements. The students brainstormed as a class what they wanted to improve on the Kenai Peninsula. After they decided on a project, they surveyed, designed, wrote letters for support and implemented the needed improvements. These students did activities that ranged from picking up litter, clearing debris, completing minor repairs, and installing outreach signs designed by the students and created by the Workforce Development Center. Our curriculum was also expanded to include social studies for a lecture series on local history. We believe that fostering stewardship for the Kenai Peninsula also needs to look at our history and the elements that make where we call home unique. We engaged with 19 classrooms from Nikiski, Kenai, Soldotna and Kasilof.



THANK YOU!

Andeavor Foundation, Inc.,
ConocoPhillips, Exxon Mobil, Jack
Hester and a few anonymous donors

Anadromous waters mapping

By Jennifer Hester, Invasives Specialist Adopt-A-Stream Coordinator

Waters on the Kenai Peninsula— whether it's the majestic Kenai River to an unnamed stream we drive over every day on the way to work -- may serve as vital areas for spawning, rearing or migration of salmon. We, surprisingly, have observed juvenile coho fry in wetlands and small creeks far from the main channel of the Kenai, Kasilof and Swanson Rivers. These areas are vital to the success of fry in order for them to migrate to the ocean in a year or two. As the human footprint spreads, it's important to understand where salmon habitat lies and what we can do to mitigate our effects. The Kenai Watershed Forum focuses on nominating undocumented waters for ADF&G's anadromous waters catalog to afford protection for salmon habitat. In 2018 we nominated with ADF&G a 151-acre lake where we could see the redds (nests made by the female salmon's body for her eggs) as well as carcasses of adults. We trapped juvenile salmon in four streams for a total of 1.2 miles.



Invasives

By Jennifer Hester, Invasives Specialist
Adopt-A-Stream Coordinator

ELODEA -

The aquatic invasive plant elodea, which harms salmon habitat, impedes boating and float plane operation and decreases residential values, has spread and infested over 25 lakes in Alaska. With further spread, the estimated economic loss is \$97 billion a year to Alaskan salmon fisheries. Due to the serious consequences of invasive species, the Kenai Watershed Forum is committed to the eradication of elodea. Eradication of elodea for three lakes: Stormy, Beck & Daniels began in 2014 and was an incredible success. Under budget & one year earlier than anticipated, elodea was no longer found in these lakes by 2016!

Unfortunately, in 2017 elodea was discovered in three more Kenai Peninsula Lakes: Sports Lake and two unnamed lakes adjacent to Beck Lake. Sports Lake treatment began two and a half months after initial discovery. As of September of 2018, we found no elodea and are hopeful that it is eradicated from Soldotna! The two unnamed lakes were treated two months after initial discovery. We monitor the levels of herbicide, fluridone, and these lakes were less than the lethal range coming in at only 3ppb a month after treatment. We added more herbicide in 2017 before the lakes became iced in. On May 9, 2018 our fluridone levels were at 6.6ppb, just at the lethal range and we saw a significant reduction in biomass of elodea. On September 10 we surveyed the lakes again & observed a decrease of elodea abundance from 50% in 2017 to 18%. We are hopeful that by spring of 2019 the Kenai Peninsula will be elodea free!

TERRESTRIAL INVASIVES

Two terrestrial plants, bird vetch & white sweet clover, have plagued Alaska from Anchorage to Fairbanks for years. As we saw more & more infestations pop up on the Kenai Peninsula, we realized that the health and the biodiversity of the Kenai Peninsula depended on us. With numerous partners, including Homer Electric Association, Department of Transportation, Fish & Wildlife Service and Copper River Watershed Project we were able to treat every known

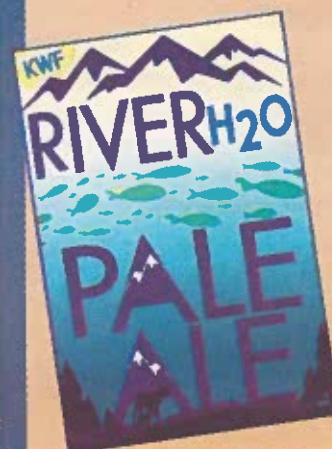
infestation of bird vetch and white sweet clover on the Kenai Peninsula, with the exception of Seward. Our results are beyond encouraging! We led weed pulls, completed surveys, assessed wetland proximity, utilized conservative chemical treatments and conducted outreach with land owners. For the bi-annual plant white sweetclover, we removed every plant that was flowering or seeded at our five sites. Our final bird vetch surveys, at all ten sites, saw a reduction of 85-100% of land cover. Follow up visits for the next five years are needed, but we are hopeful that the success we saw in 2018 will continue and the Kenai Peninsula will be free of these two harmful invasives!



Thank You KRB!

We'd like to thank Kenai River Brewing for the beer they made for us this year.

All of us here at the Kenai Watershed Forum want to thank our friends at Kenai River Brewing for not only the continued support they give us but the entire community!

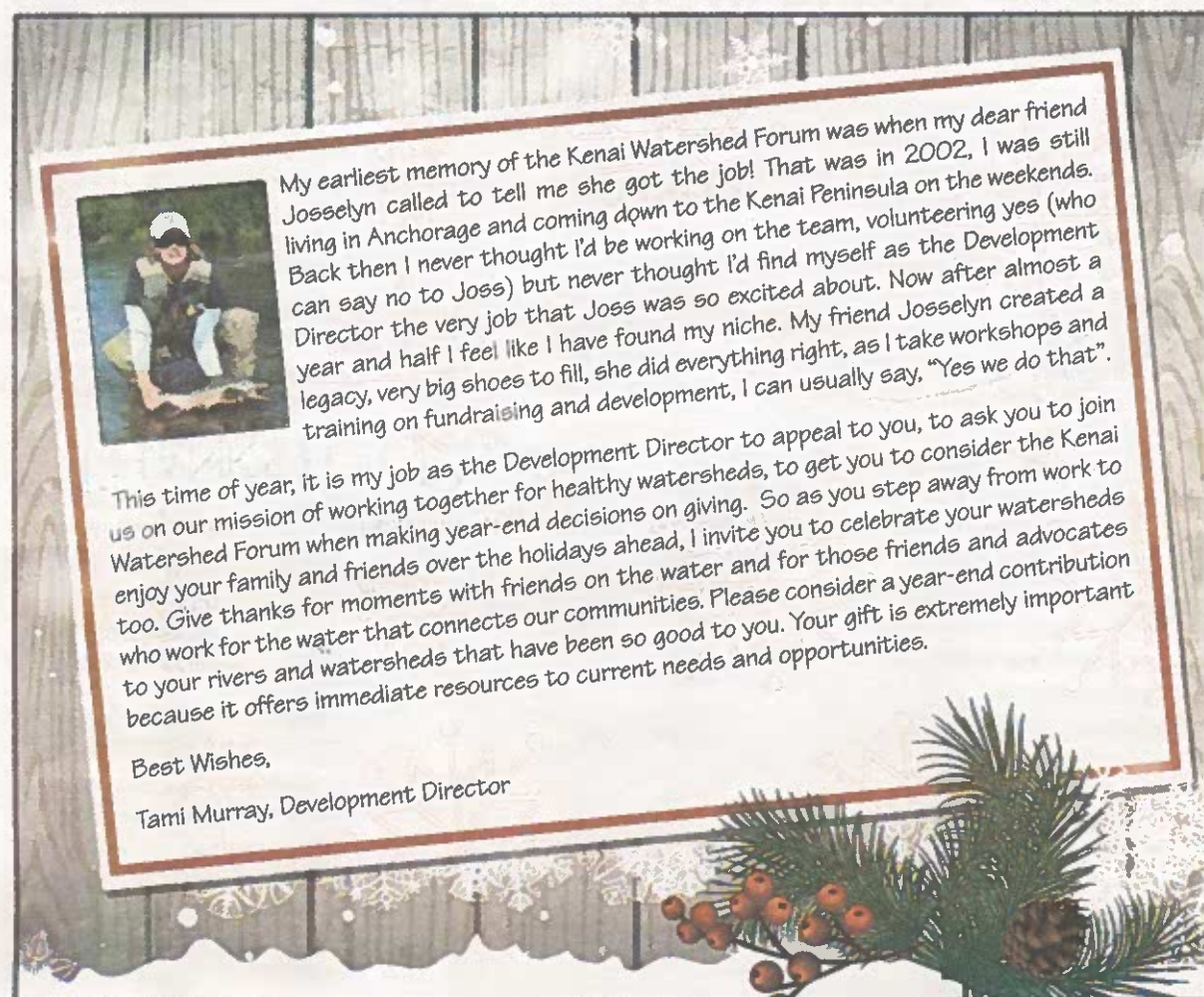


We were just one of a few nonprofits chosen to be recipients of a custom brew.

We have to say we think ours is the best!
The River H2O Pale Ale.



BECAUSE TOGETHER WE WILL KEEP THE WATERS FLOWING AND RIVERS RICH WITH LIFE FOR THE NEXT GENERATIONS.



My earliest memory of the Kenai Watershed Forum was when my dear friend Josselyn called to tell me she got the job! That was in 2002, I was still living in Anchorage and coming down to the Kenai Peninsula on the weekends. Back then I never thought I'd be working on the team, volunteering yes (who can say no to Joss) but never thought I'd find myself as the Development Director the very job that Joss was so excited about. Now after almost a year and half I feel like I have found my niche. My friend Josselyn created a legacy, very big shoes to fill, she did everything right, as I take workshops and training on fundraising and development, I can usually say, "Yes we do that".

This time of year, it is my job as the Development Director to appeal to you, to ask you to join us on our mission of working together for healthy watersheds, to get you to consider the Kenai Watershed Forum when making year-end decisions on giving. So as you step away from work to enjoy your family and friends over the holidays ahead, I invite you to celebrate your watersheds too. Give thanks for moments with friends on the water and for those friends and advocates who work for the water that connects our communities. Please consider a year-end contribution to your rivers and watersheds that have been so good to you. Your gift is extremely important because it offers immediate resources to current needs and opportunities.

Best Wishes,
Tami Murray, Development Director



100+
WOMEN WHO CARE
SOLDOTNA • KENAI • HOMER

The Kenai Watershed Forum helped to get the 100 Women Who Care program going on the Kenai Peninsula, we received funds from Homer and the Soldotna/Kenai groups. In total \$6700 from the first quarter meetings! We encourage all our community women to join one of the groups; it's very rewarding for all involved!

Thank You Ladies!

**RASMUSON FOUNDATION
WORKS TO PROMOTE A
BETTER LIFE FOR ALASKANS.**

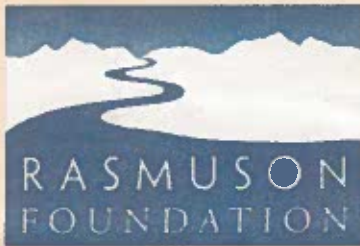


"Helping others is an Alaskan tradition."
-Elmer Rasmuson

There are countless ways that the Rasmuson Foundation has been engaging and giving to the people of Alaska.

We recently received a \$10,000 grant to build an ADA accessible ramp and deck onto our building. With the help of the Rasmuson Foundation and our partners at The City of Soldotna, Davis Block, Foster Construction, Spenard Builder Supply, Superior Craftsman and our members we will soon be ADA accessible!

The Foundation is undeniably one of the state's most generous benefactors when it comes to philanthropy, in 2011 we received a \$50,000 grant to renovate and restore the Soberg House (the building we are in today). We are forever grateful.



THANK YOU!

Jim Arnesen Allen Auer Bonnie Bernard Roger Boyd Mary Broderick Carolyn Cannava Andrew Carmichael John Carter Terri Carter Frey Chay Angela Coleman Lorraine Crawford Michael Crawford Warren Crawford Christina Degernes Hannah Dolphin	Lynn Dusek Donna Endresen Nicole Engstrom Steve Fickes Ranger Fox Michael Haggerty Carrie Henson Sarah Hobart Johanna Huhta Karen Hummel Rebecca Hutchinson Alexandra Jefferies Sean Jones Claire Keene Karl Kircher Stephanie Kobylarz	Emily Kornelius Amber Kraxberger-Linson Lori Landstrom Nathan Linson Ian Malone Rebecca Marcott Carol Mareh Paula Martin Peter Mauro Rhonda McCormick Benjamin Meyer Stephen Miller Kristin Mitchell Stanton Moll Richard Mullowney Tami Murray	Michael Navarre Timothy Navarre Marlon Nelson Janice Nightingale Josselyn O'Connor Kurt Olson Madison Orth Jennifer Pelka Jennifer Peura Andrew Pfeiffer Matthew Pyhala Sarah Pyhala Brian Reid Jordan Ruffner Tara Ruffner Jack Sinclair	Spencer Smith Wayne Stanislawski Tammie Stoops David Story James Toussaint William Tracy Martha Wallace David Wartinbee Kathleen Wartinbee Michael Wykie Plus 8 Anonymous Donors
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BRINGING OUR 2018 CONTRIBUTIONS TOTAL TO \$4275!



Pick.Click.Give.

THANKS FOR PICKING, CLICKING AND GIVING IN 2018!



Kenai Watershed Forum

HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

WEDNESDAY, DEC 5 • 4PM-7PM

HOT DRINKS & HORS D'OEUVRES WITH A SIDE OF HOLIDAY CHEER!

Please join us for a casual celebration to reconnect with old friends and new as we celebrate all the successes we have seen this year.

KENAI WATERSHED FORUM HEADQUARTERS IN SOLDOTNA CREEK PARK
44129 STERLING HWY • SOLDOTNA, AK (PARKING AVAILABLE AT SOLDOTNA CREEK PARK)



YOU CAN HELP KENAI WATERSHED FORUM EARN DONATIONS JUST BY SHOPPING WITH YOUR FRED MEYER REWARD

Fred Meyer donates over \$2 million per year to non-profits

Here's how the program works:

- Sign up for the Community Rewards program by linking your Fred Meyer Rewards Card to Kenai Watershed Forum at www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards. You can search for us by our name or by our non-profit number UE448.
- Then, every time you shop and use your Rewards Card, you are helping us earn a donation!
- You still earn your Rewards Points, Fuel Points, and Rebates, just as you do today.