

The Oystercatcher



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FRIENDS OF GLACIER BAY

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**Friends of Glacier Bay
Celebrates its 25th Anniversary!**
by Melanie Heacox

A Friend of Glacier Bay is not just someone who pays their annual membership fees, but someone who has felt the great healing silence of Glacier Bay, who has breathed in the wide expanses, worn the fog and rain like a shawl, heard liquid birdsong over still waters, smelled the tides, and returned home

renewed, knowing that wildness can be a breath of fresh air for the heart and soul. That's what it means to be a "friend" of Glacier Bay. If over the years you have also contributed (letters, time or funds) to help us in our mission to "protect ecological intactness and opportunities for solitude" in Glacier Bay, then please accept our thanks and congratulations on being part of our 25-year history. Our membership is spread around the world (but mostly in Alaska) and it's time now to look back and reflect on the past quarter century.

Many good people have given much since our inception back in 1979. But rather than list the many names who have helped along the way, let's focus on some of the goals and accomplishments over this past



Landsat Glacier Bay August 1, 1999

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quarter of a century. FOGB has been active in working towards establishing carrying capacities to keep Glacier Bay wild, reducing/capping motorized vessel use, offering comments on the Bartlett Cove infrastructure so that it does not grow until it eclipses peace and quiet, maintained an ongoing dialogue with local communities, including the Tlingit people for whom Glacier Bay is a homeland, and co-sponsored three science symposia that forwarded the dialogue of science in the park.

And in 2002 FOGB co-sponsored (along with the Gustavus Arts Council and the National Park Service) a successful Wild Animal Festival - Year of the Bear, where we joined our neighbors from Juneau, Hoonah, and Bartlett Cove to celebrate and learn more about the bears around us. We hope to offer similar gatherings in the future to encourage understanding of – and stewardship towards – Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve.

Although we are largely a Gustavus-based organization, we are also a community of far-flung individuals who maintain an abiding interest in – and commitment to – Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve. We've debated our vision for the park. We've given endless hours to conversations and discussions with ourselves and with park staff (of course, we are sometimes both). We've provided local input on the issues of the day, and maintained a seat on the board of the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council (SEACC) on a regular basis. We've provided input to a series of superintendents via our own expertise as people with a longer history connected with Glacier Bay than park staff sometimes have, though a connection miniscule when compared with that of the Hoonah Tlingit.

In looking to the future (and embracing the technological age), we recently initiated an on-line computer "listserve" for members' to access information and feedback in helping the FOGB Board make determinations. Also, we are entertaining the creation of a paid position to increase membership, write letters to the NPS to influence policies, bird-dog important emergent issues, write position papers/ action alerts for the membership, and pursue grant opportunities. Please see article on page 19 and consider if this might be a good opportunity for you to become more involved. But whatever your decision, the fact that you're reading this newsletter

means that you have given your time to a place we hold in high regard. Here's hoping that in the year 2004 you will find yourself again in Glacier Bay and have the opportunity to experience the solitude and ecological intactness that FOGB has worked for 25 years to preserve. Thank you for your dedication. Happy Silver Anniversary!

**TIES TO THE PAST,
CONNECTIONS TO THE FUTURE**
GLACIER BAY SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM
2004

In celebration of our 25 years of membership, we are proud to announce FOGB's involvement in the Glacier Bay Science Symposium, planned for the last week of October, 2004.

FOGB Board member Bill Brown attended the Science Symposium steering committee meeting in Juneau Oct. 1, 2003. The Science Symposium is an initiative of the NPS regional office and BRD (Biological Research Division). There will be a series of symposia at three major campuses: Juneau, Anchorage, and Fairbanks. The first symposium, set for the last week in October, 2004, will be in Juneau, called the "Glacier Bay Science Symposium." The Anchorage symposium will deal with science in the SW of AK; the Fairbanks one will deal with arctic parks.

The Glacier Bay Science Symposium is the first in this series, organized around developing research plans within the parks, with interdisciplinary input. Wayne Howell, park cultural anthropologist, is on the steering committee, and instrumental in seeing that a wide range of issues are addressed at the symposium.



The Glacier Bay Science Symposium will take place at UAS campus and Centennial Hall. 100 students, including Gustavus and Hoonah highschool science students as well as university students, plus 200

scientists and interested folks from Gustavus and Hoonah are expected to attend.

Thanks to Bill and Wayne's input at the steering committee meeting, there will be a FOGB-sponsored panel including Bill Brown speaking on early to recent research in Glacier Bay, Greg Streveler speaking on the transition of research into management; Wayne Howell speaking of social-cultural issues; and Sandy Milner, speaking on baseline terrestrial and aquatic research.

There will be 2 days of presentation of science papers. On day 3 there will be an executive committee meeting of scientists to conceptualize modes of integration leading to basics of a research plan for Glacier Bay National Park. Hopefully someday a research database will come out of this symposium.

Photograph by Wayne Howell at right:

Kari Ames
Duain White
Amber Lampe
Les Dalton
Andria Skafelstad
Frank White Sr.

On the beach at Groundhog Bay, also known as Kaxnoowu (Grouse Fort)

NPS and HUNA HERITAGE FOUNDATION INITIATE UNIQUE LEARNING PROGRAM

by Wayne Howell

Anyone who has spent any time in Glacier Bay knows that the place possesses special intangible qualities that have a way of getting under one's skin - that vast sense of time and space intertwine with the human element to produce an almost spiritual quality. None know this more so than the Hoonah Tlingits, whose intimacy with Glacier Bay is measured on the scale of ice ages and is manifest in the myriad ways the Hoonah clans relate to themselves and to their ancestral landscape.

Over the past several years NPS staff and Hoonah elders have been working together to identify those places in Glacier Bay which are the anchors of special stories, songs, events and spiritual qualities. In technical jargon we call these places Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs); to a Tlingit they are At.oow (owned things) and can be represented by the place itself, or a story, song or crest design depicting that place. Yet as we have come to learn about these special places we have also come to recognize that much of the critical knowledge about them is not being passed along to future generations. For example, very few of the kids today know that the crests represented on their dance regalia actually refer to places in Glacier Bay, or that



certain ceremonial activities at every potlatch in Hoonah actually hark back to Glacier Bay.

Beginning in fall of 2003 Huna Heritage Foundation (the heritage branch of Huna Totem Corporation), Hoonah City Schools and the NPS initiated a seminar involving Hoonah high school students and Hoonah elders. The seminar in September involved a partial day of classroom instruction in which the entire High School was treated to a history lesson by Chookaneidi elder Lily White and Takdeintaan elder Ken Grant, who is also an NPS employee).

The following day a select group of students accompanied Kaagwaantaan elder Frank White and Takdeintaan elder Ken Grant to the ancient settlement of K'axnoowo (Grouse Fort, also known as Groundhog Bay). NPS employees Fawn Bauer and Wayne Howell also participated in that outing. The students heard the history of the Kaagwaantaan Clan



Photograph by Fritz Koschmann: mussel shell beach

as told by Frank White, then took a tour of a portion of the Groundhog Bay archaeological site, where the students were able to identify the remains of a clan house. The students, under the supervision of the elders, also burned a food offering to invite the ancestral spirits to a feast on the beach to culminate the outing.

The following day NPS in cooperation with Allen Marine chartered a catamaran to take 90 people from Hoonah, young and old, to Margerie Glacier, where Chookaneidi elders Lily White and Mary Rudolph conducted a ceremony for the ancestral spirit that resides in the park's glaciers. The 3-day seminar generated much enthusiasm among students and elders alike, so much so that we are already planning a seminar for spring of 2004 to Dundas Bay where we hope to learn more about the ancient site of Xaknoowo and the sacred stories that relate to Mount Fairweather.

POEMS BY NORA DAUENHAUER

KELP

Ribbons of iodine
unrolled by fingers
of waves.

SECOND WINTER

Mountain peaks
on a windy day,
my wet fingers
steaming in winter.

FLYING HOME

The sight of
Cape Fairweather
and Glacier Bay
beneath me
warms my spirit.
North Pacific to Icy Strait,
the sea floods me with its glow,
and memories of youth
shimmer on the mind.

**NPS and SEALASKA HERITAGE INSTITUTE
COLLABORATE TO SUPPORT
TLINGIT LANGUAGE PRESERVATION
by Wayne Howell**

In 2003 the National Park Service and Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI) began a collaborative effort to support Tlingit language preservation efforts in the two Tlingit communities traditionally associated with Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, Hoonah and Yakutat. Concerned that the number of fluent

speakers of the Tlingit language has dwindled steadily over the years as elders pass on and Tlingit is no longer taught in the home, SHI, under the direction of Dr. Rosita Worl, has in recent years initiated a robust program to reverse that trend. In September 2003, SHI initiated a two week-long total emersion Tlingit language school at Glacier Bay lodge. The school involved about 10 fluent speakers of Tlingit and twice that number of beginning and intermediate speakers. The students and teachers spent much of their time participating in traditional activities such as carving, basket weaving and food gathering, all the while conversing in Tlingit. The group also held focused classroom sessions on Tlingit grammar, and held evening sessions where Tlingit songs were taught.

The idea is to increase the language competency of the beginning speakers to that of intermediate, and that of intermediate speaker to master. Eventually it is hoped that the students will become teachers back home in their communities. Many of the participants were from Hoonah or have Hoonah ties. Funding for the total emersion school came from a grant administered by the Administration for Native Americans. The school will continue for two more years. NPS provided logistical support and guided outings throughout the course of the school. Bartlett Cove's gumboots (*shaw*, pronounced *shaoo*) were a big hit, as was a sweat house on the beach near the dock.

In 2003 SHI and NPS also collaborated to support a language program in Yakutat. With funding provided by NPS, SHI has established a Master/Apprentice program in Yakutat. This approach couples a master Tlingit speaker with a beginning student for about 10 hours per week of intensive instruction in spoken Tlingit. The intent of this one-on-one program is to systematically elevate the speaking competency of the beginner to that of master. The program will continue in 2004.

Photograph by Wayne Howell: "Nora Dauenhauer and student Lilly Hudson split spruce roots."





Above: Seal counters Beth Mathews and Grey Pendleton in Johns Hopkins Inlet

DECLINES IN HARBOR SEAL NUMBERS

IN GLACIER BAY NATIONAL PARK, ALASKA,

1992-2002

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Glacier Bay has had one of the largest breeding colonies of harbor seals in Alaska and it is the only place in Alaska where regulations prohibit subsistence hunting of harbor seals and where vessels are restricted from seal breeding areas. Since 1992, up to 6,200 seals on icebergs in a glacial fjord (Johns Hopkins Inlet) and at terrestrial sites have been monitored annually with counts from shore and aerial photography, respectively. We estimated population trends using models that control for environmental and observer-related factors. We detected steep declines in non-pup seals in the glacial fjord in June (-39% in 8 yrs; -6.8%/yr) and August (-64% in 11 yrs; -9.6%/yr) and at terrestrial sites (-75% in 10 yrs; -14.5%/yr). The annual rate and absolute magnitude

of the declines in Glacier Bay exceed any documented harbor seal decline in Alaska with the exception of Tugidak Island. From 1994 to 1999 pup counts in the glacial fjord did not change while pup proportions increased (5.4%/yr), suggesting that seals in Johns Hopkins Inlet are not food limited. The proportion of pups born in glacial fjords (34-36%) is high relative to terrestrial sites throughout the harbor seal's range. In addition, close to 2/3s of all harbor seals in Glacier Bay use ice habitat for breeding, suggesting that glacial fjords are preferred breeding habitat.

The cause or causes of the declines are not known, but seals in GB do not appear to be spending more time in the water. Human disturbance may explain some of the differences in rates of decline within GB, but disturbance is not considered a major cause of the decline. Increased mortality, possibly due to predation, is the prevailing hypothesized cause of the declines, although redistribution of seals out of Glacier Bay and changes in prey availability or quality during the period of the decline also need to be examined. A better understanding of the seasonal movements of seals is also needed to determine if there are impacts on this population that occur outside of Glacier Bay.

SEAL ROOKERY
by Nora Dauenhauer

Under its brown fur
the beach twitches to life.

NEW MAINTENANCE FACILITY
at BARTLETT COVE
by Robin A. Dalton, P.E.
GLBA Park Engineer

The new Maintenance Facility for Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve is anticipated to be completed by mid-January 2004. This \$3.9 million project broke ground on December 7, 2002 by Dawson Construction of Bellingham Washington to accomplish site grading. This effort was followed by

a winter shutdown. Work attempted to commence at the end of March 2003, but due to about 2-feet of frost in the ground, work could not commence until the end of April when the frost was gone. Dawson Construction utilized local labor to a high degree on this project. The new facility has approximately 20,600-square feet of space containing the various shops, office space and storage space. The work-bay and supporting parts, battery, wash equipment and lube oil rooms are within the East half of the building. The work bay includes 7 stalls for working on vehicles and boats, a 5-ton capacity bridge crane, an exhaust hose reel system for vehicle exhaust removal and radiant floor heating. The West half of the building contains new office space for maintenance staff, the plumbing/electrical shop, carpentry shop, and storage. The carpentry shop also has radiant floor heating, a new dust collection system and a paint room. The Parks maintenance staff hope to begin move-in to this new facility in late January 2004.

Once maintenance moves from the existing maintenance shops located by the inner cove, the old shop will be converted into office space for the Rangers and others. This work has been in the planning stages and is anticipated to commence and be completed in 2004.

The Dry Bay project plans for 2004 are to improve the existing quarters there, improve the wastewater treatment system, improve the campground and haul scrap metal and garbage out.



**SEAWEAD: S.E. AK WILDERNESS
EXPLORATION ANALYSIS AND DISCOVERY:
Natural History Symposium in Gustavus a
Success by Cheryl Van Dyke, "TIDINGS" Fall 2003**

SEAWEAD held their first Point Adolphus Natural History Symposium on May 19, 2003. It was a great success. About 40 people attended the day-long event. We learned a great deal about the humpback whales and marine ecology around Point Adolphus.

The first half of the day was dedicated to speaker presentations. Dena Matkin presented on Orca natural history; Lisa Etherington presented results of Glacier bay oceanography research; Suzann Speckman presented information on whale-prey dynamics; Jan Straley presented humpback whale natural history; and Bob Christensen, Mia Grifalconi, and Chris Gabriele presented results from the SEAWEAD humpback whale and human interaction studies of 2002 and 2003.

The second half of the day included a Point Adolphus site visit aboard a whale watching vessel. The field trip was outstanding. The weather was perfect, the tides were big (providing clear examples of many of the processes discussed during the morning oceanography presentation), and there were loads of whales to boot! If you would like to see electronic examples of the information presented at the symposium visit our website at www.seawead.org/symposium.html.

The symposium was financially supported by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Alaska Discovery's Dollars-a-Day for Conservation program.



**COASTAL MAPPING IS COMPLETE (mostly)
by Phoebe Vanselow, Coastal Biotechnician**

2003 was the final field season of the Coastal Resources Inventory and Mapping Program. We finished "coastwalking" all the coastline in Glacier Bay National Park using the protocol employed over the last seven years. The final field season's focus was completing the unmapped shoreline between Pt. Carolus and Taylor Bay (creating a continuously-mapped shoreline from the park boundary in Excursion Inlet to the west shore of Taylor Bay), and tackling the remaining protected areas along the outer coast of the park: Dicks Arm, Graves Harbor/Murk Bay, Torch Bay, and Dixon Harbor. The current protocol is more appropriate for less wave-exposed shores and will not be used on the more exposed, homogeneous shoreline of the outer coast.

Over the course of the program (1997-2003), over 950 miles of coastline in Glacier Bay National Park were mapped, plus the relatively short coastlines of Klondike Gold Rush and Sitka National Historical Parks. During low-tide "windows", teams of two walk the coast and divide it into segments based on changes in substrate and slope. For each segment, the team records characteristics of surface substrate, streams, and a variety of special features, including offshore kelp beds and seabird colonies. They then conduct a biological survey, pace a transect that captures information on vertical zonation, and take digital images of the segment. The precise boundaries of the segments are drawn on aerial photo enlargements of the coastline. After data processing, all of this information can be accessed via an easy-to-use database that allows one to "walk the coast" and display for any segment its exact location, an infrared aerial photo, ground photos showing what the beach actually looks like, plus all of the data that has been collected. The inventory and mapping program resulted in over 6,000 segments!

This year, we mapped the areas along the outer coast and Cross Sound based off of the M/V *Nunatak*. Besides amazing scenery (and weather!), we had many wildlife highlights. We saw a sow brown bear and three brand new cubs playing on the beach in Thistle Cove. We were amazed at the diverse and abundant intertidal life

Photograph by Fritz Koschmann: "Nunatak"

that was revealed during the low tides on exposed shores, especially the mouth of Torch Bay. We had two days in Graves Harbor and Murk Bay with virtually no swell and could see for miles across the flat ocean. We had several wolf sightings, with a relative abundance of very creamy-colored wolves. On one morning, most of us were treated to a chorus of howling from two different areas. We also saw at least eight separate brown bears in the course of a day in one relatively small area. Fern Harbor quickly became one of our favorite anchorages; the view is spectacular. We saw quite a number of sea otters hauled out just east of there – a rare sight. There were also, of course, the humpbacks, Pacific Loons, thrushes, river otter tracks, toads, and all of the other things that made us feel lucky to be out there. Besides all of this, we learned how to get in and out of the skiff onto slippery, kelp-covered boulders with a small ocean swell – no small feat. After all of this adventure, we also mapped the salt chuck channel and lake in North Passage, with irises blooming around us and one aggressive moose.

Part of the summer was spent revisiting previously mapped areas to fill data gaps and reshoot pictures. While this was hectic and required a lot of pre-planning to maximize efficiency, it was a treat to skiff and kayak around Glacier Bay for a couple weeks. My favorite night of the summer was spent camping in the Beardslee Entrance listening to the humpback whales breathing and vocalizing all night long.

Along with other park staff, the coastal mapping team was interviewed and coastwalked-on-camera for the Hawaii KidScience program, which creates educational programs that are broadcast to schools throughout the country. Since then, we have just been plugging away at data processing and closing out the program.

At this point, the field and data processing protocols and the coastal database are being finalized and will continue to be available for distribution to interested parties. The remaining outer coast shoreline still needs to be inventoried and mapped using a method of remote sensing, likely aerial videography. Creating the public version of the database is now becoming a focus and will hopefully be online in the next year or two, allowing other researchers, oil spill responders, and the general public easy access to the data with the ability to focus on what interests them most.

For more information, see the articles in the last two editions of the *Oystercatcher* at <http://fogb.homestead.com/Oystercatcher.html>, and visit our webpage at <http://www.nps.gov/glba/InDepth/learn/preserve/projects/coastal/index.htm>.

May the coast be with you!



Photograph by Fritz Koschmann:
Johns Hopkins Inlet and Reflection

MIGRATION
by Judith Aftergut

A woman I know went north fishing,
writing songs, wearing red rain gear.
We had planted a garden before she left.
Spring arrived at each hidden cove
as she did.

The night of her leaving
was soft as pale silk curtains,
the house beneath the big dipper,
the harvest abundant that year.
She returned with a different spirit.

I went north the following summer,
seeking remnants of her presence,
a name in a log book.
I have not found her in these changing
inlets

FALLS CREEK RESPONSE

TO FERC No. 11659-002 Falls Creek Hydroelectric Project and Land Exchange

Friends of Glacier Bay (FOGB) is a local environmental organization, founded in 1979, whose mission is dedicated to “preserving ecological intactness and opportunities for solitude in Glacier Bay”. One of our main purposes is to work with the National Park Service to ensure that park management strives to maintain the natural environment in a pristine condition.

The Falls Creek Hydropower Project proposal is philosophically very difficult for our organization. Because our mission is to help protect “ecological intactness and opportunities for solitude”, we have many concerns about the environmental impact of this project. At the same time, we recognize the benefits of a clean source of electrical power for this community with a reduction in fossil fuel importation, consumption and pollution.

Below it will be noted that both preservation and social issues favor the no action alternative. **Therefore, Friends of Glacier Bay stands opposed to the Falls Creek Hydropower Project.**

Our concerns to FERC:

A. Preservation Issues:

1. **Stream Flow:** It is not clear that there is enough water in the stream to significantly reduce our community’s reliance on diesel power. (Studies show that there will NOT be enough stream flow to eliminate diesel power year round). It is not clear that enough power will be generated by this hydro project to balance the economic and environmental costs.

2. **Continued Fossil Fuel Consumption and its Transport:** We are concerned about the hazards of continuing to transport diesel fuel

over the rich waters of Icy Strait. Yet, recognizing that hydroelectric is now the only practical alternative to diesel generation in Gustavus, as acknowledged in the 100th Meridian analysis, we predict that there will eventually be something workable; leading contenders include tidal power or hydrogen (fuel cell technology) using surplus hydropower elsewhere in the region.

3. **Habitat Loss:**

Because there is no way to permanently restrict access to the native allotments once a road is built to them, and because there is no way to permanently “lock up” the state land once it is transferred out of the park, we must assume that these developments will eventually lead to loss of critical wildlife habitat, including:

a) **Fish Habitat:**

With hydropower, there will be loss of 14% of Dolly Varden in the creek above the falls.

b) **Bear Habitat:**

This hydroelectric project may be the only reasonable near-term alternative to burning fossil fuel for electricity. But there is a grave risk that the hydroelectric project will eventually cost the bears their prime meadow habitat because there is no way to guarantee that vehicular access can be restricted in the long term. If the land is removed from the park and a road built right to the boundaries of both native allotments, they will eventually be developed to the detriment of the meadow habitat. The two negative factors of fossil fuel consumption versus prime habitat loss are almost equally undesirable. Conversely, the preservation of the habitat or using renewable energy seem equally desirable, but they are clearly mutually exclusive.

If we are thinking only about the next 10 (or even 20) years we might discount both the risk of habitat loss and the likelihood of finding something better than hydropower. But as we look farther into the future it seems both become more likely. Given enough time

they both approach certainty, making the choice clear. Put another way, the long-term risk of losing bear habitat from hydroelectric development seems much greater than the long-term risk of not finding other suitable alternative energy. In a much more developed Gustavus 30 years from now, we could easily be using neither hydro nor diesel for electricity and be quite relieved that we made the right choice in keeping the bear habitat.

4. Precedence: As a “Friends of Parks” organization, we are especially concerned about the precedence this legislative removal of wilderness lands from a National Park will have in the future for this and other parks.

B. Social Issues:

1. Economic feasibility: Is this project economically viable enough to benefit the residents and businesses of Gustavus, and will the park be able to pay the costs of hooking into the system? If not, how will this affect costs to the local consumers? The current contradictory and elusive economical information on this project is of great concern to our organization. An under-funded project that could not be constructed or completed with the best of engineering and environmental considerations would be unacceptable. Gustavus Electric has to obtain public funding or the land transfer will be denied. Rates may even be lower if public financing is a large enough component and if the Park Service becomes a customer, but this will not affect the typical PCE-subsidized ratepayer at all. It behooves us to help FERC reasonably define “feasible” and to make sure that definition is actually met, but these considerations are not as important as the ecological considerations.

2. Local Social Factors:

The native inholdings adjoining the project, whose owners include generations of land stewardship at the mouth of Falls Creek, are not eager to live with a hydro-electric plant upstream approximately 1/4 mile from their home.

Many local folks used to hike or ski several times a year up Falls Creek to the falls. Given the concerns of the inholding owners, and the concerns of Beartrack Inn about the increased traffic crossing to the falls project during the 5-year study work, this area is no longer welcoming to local users. With a hydropower facility there, park hikers cannot expect “opportunities for solitude” with a pipeline, road and generator, next to potentially developed private inholding lands made easily accessible by the hydro project.

NOTE: If this project is permitted, it is imperative that vehicular road access should be off-limits to the public, and that the “Corridor Alternative” should be chosen.

Comments about the DEIS

Erosion of the wilderness preservation system is a cumulative impact, with negative ecological factors. The possible effects on the traded state lands, adjacent native allotments, and adjacent tide lands must be most thoroughly examined. For example, could the state land be sold and developed? There is no way that anyone can guarantee otherwise and this needs to be made obvious. Could the native allotments gain road access through the project area? The road would go right to the boundaries of both parcels, opening up the possibility of inholder development which would have significant negative effects on wildlife using the adjacent tide flats. Those effects need to be examined in detail.

The real costs of the Park tie-in need to be addressed, as do the costs of road upgrade/maintenance.

In conclusion, with all these considerations in mind, Friends of Glacier Bay stands opposed to the development of this hydro project.



Photograph by
Fritz Koschmann

“Cottonwoods, Willow,
Alder”

BACKCOUNTRY PLAN ON BACK BURNER UNTIL DENALI PLAN IS COMPLETE

One year ago, the Oystercatcher opening letter and first articles highlighted the long-awaited Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve Backcountry Management Plan. The plan’s implementation will describe all uses and management of the backcountry in Glacier Bay for the next two decades or more. Announcements concerning the plan were forthcoming. A park website link was being set up for input. Scoping meetings were to happen in Gustavus, Hoonah, Yakutat, Elfin Cove, Juneau and other local communities that might be affected by management decisions.

None of this has happened. The Glacier Bay National Park planning process must await revisions to the Draft Backcountry Management Plan for Denali National Park and Preserve, which was released for review in 2003. The state of Alaska expressed major concerns with elements of the Denali draft. NPS realized the same concerns would be raised for 4 other plans scheduled to be prepared over the next several years. The Regional Director decided to wait until these concerns are addressed and the Denali plan is accepted by the state before Glacier Bay or other parks run into similar issues.

For the first time in Alaskan park wilderness history, the Denali Plan proposed distinct management areas and defined management prescriptions for areas of the park. Management areas could have unique purposes, allow for different recreational experiences, be maintained in specific conditions over time, and have different levels of administrative presence. For example, an area defined as “pristine” might permit less human activity but also have less NPS presence than another area. The type or level of recreational activity acceptable in one area may not be acceptable in another. Some areas may be managed as ecological baselines with no human activity at all.

The broader issue of public access, the definition of “traditional activity”, and use rights in Alaska wilderness is politically volatile at this time due in part to ongoing court cases and the Denali draft Backcountry Management Plan. Interpretations of what ANILCA intended are being debated. ANILCA specifically allows for access for traditional purposes. However, “traditional” was not defined in the text and is still under discussion. For those of you with a handy copy of ANILCA, this is discussed in Section 1109 through Section 1111. You can find a copy of ANILCA at the Gustavus Public Library, the NPS library, or in

Backcountry Planner Allison Banks' office in Bartlett Cove.

In response to the planning process, Banks says, "Well, this past year has been somewhat frustrating, intriguing, and a challenge for me. The postponement of our Backcountry Plan/EIS actually came at a convenient time, as issue scoping in local communities had barely started. I feel there is nothing more frustrating for stakeholders than to be interrupted during good discussions and works in progress. Some biological and sociological research that will benefit the plan process will have a chance to finish before the BMP needs it. This is all to the good. Denali NP's draft backcountry plan is testing new ground in Alaska wilderness management, but the resulting agreements, improved working relationships with concerned groups, and a better educated public may help our own process go a bit more smoothly. This might be called the silver lining, I know, but we are all cloud experts here in Southeast Alaska country, aren't we?"

Backcountry Planner Allison Banks informs us that by Spring 2004 the planning update will be emailed, posted on the park's website, sent to community post offices for display, and copies sent to those who request them.

In the meantime, she is working to revise and update the Alsek River Visitor Use Management Plan originally signed in 1989. Managing the Alsek River involves working with the five Canadian jurisdictions who share responsibility for river issues. These include Kluane National Park and Reserve (Parks Canada), Tatshenshini-Alsek Park (BC Parks), Champagne-Aishak First Nations, and Yukon Territory Department of Renewable Resources. One change from the previous plan will be to include management of recreational use on Alsek Lake in this process. The Park area through which the Alsek and Tatshenshini flow include only a few camping areas at present. Banks does not expect a change in the level of use. She does envision the planning steps of: 1) issue scoping, which will happen in 2004; 2) development of alternative courses of action; 3) draft plan for public input; 4) Environmental Assessment; 5) or possibly an Environmental Impact Statement if there are significant controversies or impact findings during the assessment.

Elsewhere in the Backcountry, the human-bear interaction data analysis is complete awaiting the final report by USGS bear specialist Tom Smith. USGS is planning more investigation into bear-human interaction behavior this next summer. Tania Lewis and Nat Drumheller completed their second year measuring human impacts to shoreline campsites around the Bay. A draft report on their findings should be available before spring.

Next summer, the Pacific Northwest Coop. Ecosystem Studies Unit of the University of Washington and the park will be conducting a visitor survey to gather sociological information on use of wilderness in the park. It will be designed to measure how satisfied visitors are with the conditions and experiences available under current management, and will assist the Backcountry Management Plan/EIS process. So, visitors might be met by a smiling staffer holding a clipboard and survey or may be interviewed personally about their visit and expectations of the Glacier Bay backcountry.

USGS, Biological Resources Division completed the first year of field collection for the Ground Nesting Bird Assessment. John Piatt of BRD Alaska Biological Science Center is in charge of this assessment.

*2003 Teachable Moments
A Summary of Interpretive
Activities
at Glacier Bay National Park &
Preserve*

by Kris Nemeth, Chief of Interpretation

Personal services continue to be the centerpiece of our interpretive and education program at Glacier Bay. In 2003, we provided interpretive services and original programs to over 359,640 visitors at Bartlett Cove, on cruise ships and tour boats, and in the visitor center at Yakutat. We also provided 16 educational outreach programs reaching 1,224 students in Southeast Alaska.

Education and Outreach in 2003:

- **Dzantik'i Heeni Junior High:** On April 18, 120 students from Dzantik'i Heeni Junior High traveled from Juneau to Glacier Bay on two large catamarans. Five park employees joined them for their journey into the bay to provide a variety of programs on such topics as park issues, park management, bears, glaciers, marine mammals, and reading the landscape. Other agency people from Juneau, as well as elders and cultural specialists were also onboard to make this a multi-disciplinary learning experience for the students. Special ceremonies were performed when the boats entered Glacier Bay and when they reached the glaciers. The students had been studying Glacier Bay for the past semester in their science, history and English classes, and raised over \$8000 to make this trip possible.

- **Gustavus Students to Dundas Bay:** Park staff helped facilitate educational field trips to Dundas Bay for both junior high and high school students. Located on the southern boundary of the park, Dundas Bay has a rich cultural history, both pre- and post European contact, and is rarely visited by students.

Photograph by Fritz Koschmann:
Supervisory Park Rangers for Division of Interpretation: Rosemary Salazar and Ingrid Nixon
-- up Bay on the SERAC



Gustavus Junior High Trip: Gustavus School's sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students boarded the M/V *Taz* along with several park employees for the educational boat trip. The park's cultural specialist, Wayne Howell, shared his knowledge and experience in the Dundas Bay area. Because of the group's small size, students were able to travel to shore and explore the natural and human history of the area. A highlight was a trip to Buck Harbison's cabin where the group found everything in place just it had been when the hermit lived there in the early 1960s.

Gustavus High School Trip: This joint venture between the National Park Service and Gustavus School used the M/V *Steller* as a base for this overnight trip for high school students to Dundas Bay. Gustavus and Glacier Bay National Park cultural and natural history experts were onboard to make this place come alive participants. They visited and learned about an historic Tlingit fort site that was occupied for over 800 years, re-articulated the bones of a moose that they determined was preyed upon by a wolf, and read aloud traditional Tlingit stories and legends from the Dundas area.

- **Juneau Sea Week:** For the past 10 years, Glacier Bay park staff has participated in Juneau School District's annual Sea Week celebrations. Working within the established Sea Week curriculum, the park's education specialist presented a variety of different educational programs for all first-grade students in the district.
- **Seacamp:** The park in collaboration with Chatham School District's 21st Century Grant, sponsored a new educational opportunity this summer for local children from nine to 11 years old interested in learning about the marine environment. The camp offered five activity-filled days of exploring and learning which included an Icy Strait boat trip, marine mammal programs, fish printing, coastal plant studies, boating safety, intertidal walks, beach hikes, sand castle building, games and songs.

- **Explorer Booklets:** The park worked with the Alaska Natural History Association to create and distribute four-color Explorer Ranger booklets to cruise ships. The booklets are used in the NPS Junior Ranger program for teenage cruisers interested in learning more about the park and Southeast Alaska.

- **Junior Ranger boat trip with Gustavus School:** Park staff joined Gustavus School kindergarten through second-grade students for a trip into the bay aboard the M/V *Baranof Wind*. Over the course of the full-day excursion, the park's education specialist guided students through activities which complemented their classroom studies on topics such as habitats, explorers, and glaciers.

- **Hoonah Student Interns:** Park staff hosted two Hoonah High School student interns for two weeks. These internships were part of a Hoonah City Schools program called "School to Work." The program's goal is to provide select students with work experience in a school setting that will ultimately help them develop job skills and prepare them for life after school. The students gained a broad overview of park operations, and had the opportunity to work with each division in the park. Both students are also part of Hoonah School's Native leadership group and under the guidance of their teacher, Gordon Greenwold, are working with the park to develop clan-approved designs for the house screen, house posts and totem poles for the proposed Huna Tribal House in Bartlett Cove.

- **Hoonah High School Heritage Workshop and Boat Trips:** Park personnel in partnership with Huna Heritage Foundation and Hoonah City Schools participated in three incredible days of cultural programs for high school students in Hoonah. The activities involved a day in the classroom with a select group of high school kids, and two days of field trips. One field day was spent with more than 30 people at Groundhog Bay under the direction of the leader of the Kaagwaantaan Clan who has spiritual and family ties to the site. Groundhog Bay is the most deeply stratified archaeological site in the region with deposits that date back 10,000 years. The second

field day spent on a charter vessel included 90 Huna people from Juneau and Hoonah ranging from students and Native elders to corporate leaders. The group journeyed to the Margerie and Grand Pacific glaciers where the Chookaneidi Clan conducted a ceremony to commune with the ancestral spirit Kaasteen. It was a deeply moving set of days that provided for a truly unique educational opportunity for all involved.

- **Underwater Video:** A 28-minute film, *Glacier Bay: Beneath the Reflections*, was distributed to cruise ships and began showing in the Visitor Center in Glacier Bay Lodge in high-definition format. The film explores the complex and dynamic marine ecosystem few park visitors will ever see and clearly shows the inextricably linked marine and terrestrial environments, and the unexpectedly varied and abundant marine life under waters fed by melting glaciers. The film is a cooperative project with Panasonic, Pace Technologies, USGS, USFWS, Alaska Natural History Association and the Challenge Cost Share Program.

Awards:

- **Freeman Tilden Award:** A bright shining star in Alaska National Park's Media, Ingrid Nixon won the Alaska Regional Freeman Tilden Award for her performance in four National Park movies, local productions and publications. Her work on films included *Glacier Bay: Beneath the Reflections*, *Alaska National Park: Treasures of a Great Land*, *When Dinosaurs Roamed the America* and *Leave No Trace in Gates of the Arctic*.

- **2003 Telly Award:** The underwater video "Glacier Bay: Beneath the Reflections" won a 2003 Telly Award for non-broadcast media.

- **USGS Shoemaker Award:** The underwater video "Glacier Bay: Beneath the Reflections" won the USGS Shoemaker Award for Communication Product Excellence in the *Audiovisual category*.

Coming in FY2004

- **Glacier Bay E-field Trip:** In March 2004, students around the globe will have the opportunity to take an electronic field trip to Glacier Bay to learn about marine mammals. Kids will work through an interactive website about marine mammals in the park and have the opportunity to ask park staff questions in real time.

- **Tour Vessel and Bartlett Cove Junior Ranger**

Booklet: For the 2004 season we anticipate the debut of a new Junior Ranger booklet aimed at kids visiting Glacier Bay on tour boats or spending time in Bartlett Cove. Kids will have the opportunity to learn about Glacier Bay as they complete a variety of activities and earn a Junior Ranger badge.

FRIENDS OF GLACIER BAY

Meeting Minutes by KB

10-20-03

Gustavus Library

The meeting was attended by Lynne Jensen, Melanie Heacox, Bill Brown, Kate Boesser, Kim Heacox, George Jensen, Lewis Sharman, Phoebe Vanselow, John Scheerns, and Karen Platt.

Mission Statement

Friends of Glacier Bay was formed in 1979. In its bylaws and Mission Statement is found our intent to stand for “ecological intactness and opportunities for solitude.” Kim shared the beauty of a weeklong trip he and Melanie recently made to Adams Inlet.

Board

We have been without a president for a year. Board members for 2002-03 have been Melanie, Kate, John, Heidi Robichaud, and Hank. We need to vote in new or continued members for John, Heidi, and Hank’s seats.

Vessel Management Plan

Melanie spoke of the board’s response to the Vessel Quota and Operating Requirements; Final Environmental Impact Statement Executive Summary. Friends asked for Park Alternative #4 with seven additional points. However, the Park chose alternative #6, with an increase in local use of Bartlett

Cove and a possible increase of cruise ships, contrary to Friends’ concerns. In addition, 13 points within the document contradicted themselves, begging attention. Two issues Friends did address which are thankfully included in alternative #6 are quotas for Dundas Bay and a year-round speed limit of no more than 13 knots for cruise ships.

Lewis and Kim voiced that FOGB mission of intent for “ecological intactness and opportunities for solitude” are not being best considered by the Park chosen alternative. John pointed out that 85% of respondents to the original plan were in favor of reduction of cruise ships. He was told NPS felt it wasn’t an adequate cross-section of public opinion. Lewis pointed out that according to NEPA, “substantive comments must be considered,” which does not mean they count numbers.

It was noted that our expenses are double our income. If we move to an on-line Oystercatcher, expenses would be considerably less each year. We have addresses for 147 folks who have been members of FOGB, but only received money for 3 families and 10 individuals in 2003. We have not had a membership drive in some years.

The son of Elizabeth Lawrence wants to know what we’ll do with the Lawrence estate \$ from his family’s estate. He himself took nothing from the estate, but gave all to non-profits according to the will. In 2002 Dave Bohn suggested putting it in our endowment fund, which would lock up the money and only allow use of the interest.

FOGB Relinquishing Computer

Kate read a letter stating that after creating 2 Oystercatcher newsletters (plus the upcoming issue), obtaining \$500 from a GCA Youth “ACT” grant for use of the computer, Fritz setting up a website, paying for computer upgrades and maintenance, that the 5-year old Gateway computer and printer be given to Kate and Fritz. This was unanimously approved of. A memo recognizing this transaction will be created.

Kate offered to continue to help with newsletters, and to help set up a listserv with the Gustavus Library

for more active ongoing communication between members on current FOGB issues. This was unanimously approved of.

FOGB Paid Position

Kim offered information on the Denali Citizens Council, similar to FOGB, and its recent acquisition of a paid position to boost recognition, dues, interest, issues. It was pointed out that the Land Legacy, Clinic, and Library have done well with a paid employee.

The person in this position writes letters to the NPS to influence policies, bird-dog's important emergent issues (of which there are usually less than a dozen each year), and writes alert position papers for the membership. S/he looks up grant opportunities, and writes grant proposals as necessary.

It was pointed out that "non-response is tacit approval", and that it is time for FOGB to become more active and indeed respond to issues. After some discussion, we agreed that John will meet with those who've attended this meeting and work with the board to come up with job description guidelines for a paid position for FOGB. This will be presented at the January 2004 meeting of FOGB, to be held after mid-January.

SEACC

Bill Brown shared information after attending a SEACC meeting as a representative of FOGB. He spoke how Tongass issues strongly affect Glacier Bay, and that SEACC's work is "mostly damage control by way of litigation" in "out of balance" assaults on land protections. We voted unanimously to send \$1000 (double our usual \$500 per year) to SEACC. We also voted unanimously to support cost cutting where possible, support where necessary for travel and housing when needed for Bill Brown to continue to work as a FOGB representative to SEACC meetings. There are usually 3 meetings each year.

Note: For information on "Out of Balance, the Systematic Unraveling of Tongass land Protections", call SEACC 907-586-6942.

"GLACIER BAY SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM 2004"
(See pages 2-4 of the newsletter)

GLACIER BAY PARK CURRENT ISSUES

1. **Backcountry Management Plan** has been put on the back burner. Only the Denali plan is going forward.
2. **Vessel Management Plan:** A preferred alternative was chosen by the Park. FOGB input was not considered, and input is no longer helpful.
3. **Falls Creek:** Kate took notes on the "Sierra Club's Economic Report on Falls Creek", given after a hike up Falls Creek at a meeting at the Annie Mae Lodge, Gustavus, on Oct. 12, 2003. These were available at the meeting and have been sent to all present, and will be used to formulate an article for the Oystercatcher.

At the Annie Mae meeting, the first spokesperson was Eric Cutter, author of Economic Analysis of Falls Creek Hydro Project. Present from the Sierra Club were Irene Alixiose, Jack Hession, Richard Hellard, Cliff Lobaugh, Dick Myron, and Jennie Purchel.

The Park Service EIS draft should be ready early November. Hearings on EIS on Falls Creek will happen in December 2003 in Gustavus, Hoonah, and Anchorage. There will also be an independent review of the economics regarding the regulatory commission and the Park Service.

The economic study done for the Sierra Club by Eric Cutter will be available as a 30 page email soon. Eric, who worked at a utility company for ten years, is now an economist.

We agreed to look up what "position statements" FOGB has made in the past and consider those in responding to the Falls Creek issue in the December hearings.

Board Members Elected

Kate Boesser and Melanie Heacox will continue to be on the board. John Scheerens, Bill Brown, and George Jensen were unanimously voted as board members as well. A president will be chosen from the board members soon.

We adjourned into a starry cold Gustavus night.

EXPENSES:

Postmaster: Box Rent: \$44.00
Oystercatcher: \$711.00; Postage/Freight: \$107.00
Printing: \$604.00
Bank Fees: \$15.00
Reimburse Lawrence Estate: \$575.00
Gustavus Land Legacy: \$15.00
SEACC (S.E. Alaska Conservation Council)
donation: \$1,000.00
Travel: Bill Brown to SEACC and Symposium:
\$197.00

TOTAL EXPENSES = \$ 2,557.00

INCOME:

Elizabeth Lawrence Estate: 27,570.00
Membership Dues: \$ 211.00
Interest from Savings Account: \$ 82.00
Interest from Endowment Fund: \$ 645.00
Alaska Discovery \$-A-Day Program: \$ 100.00
Member donations: \$ 190.00

TOTAL INCOME = \$ 28,798.00

ACCOUNT BALANCES:

Checking Acct: \$ 3,213.00
Savings Acct: \$ 37,661.00
Endowment Fund: \$ 21,428.00

MEMBERSHIP:

Life Members: 9 couples and 15 individuals (2 are deceased)
2002 paid members: 7 families, 9 individuals, 1 new Life member
2003 paid members: 3 families, 10 individuals

FOGB Board Members:

2002-2003 = Hank Lenter, John Scheerens, Heidi Robichaud, Kate Boesser, Melanie Heacox

SPECIAL REPORT

ON ELIZABETH LAWRENCE ESTATE:

Summary of gifts from the estate:
January, 2002 = \$ 9,581.03
February, 2003 = \$ 8,634.00
July, 2003 = \$19,162.00; October, 2003 = \$ 349.00
Reimbursement to estate:
2003= <-\$575.00>
Total amount of estate gift to FOGB = \$37,151.03

Friends of Glacier Bay

Position Opening

Administrative Coordinator

Scope of Work and Responsibilities:

The Administrative Coordinator is principally responsible for maintaining a continuing communication flow between the Friends of Glacier Bay board of directors, membership, the National Park Service, and associated environmental groups. Specific duties and responsibilities include:

- Monitoring FOGB open forum web site and compiling membership opinions
- Disseminating pertinent information to membership on a timely basis through use of e-mail, mail-outs, newsletters, etc.
- Regular communication and interaction with local and regional NPS personnel regarding pertinent issues and information
- Regular interaction with FOGB board members regarding issues, NPS plans and intentions, and FOGB members input.
- Write and distribute position papers to appropriate agencies or individuals based on board of directors input.
- Explore opportunities for continued increase in membership.
- Grant writing – explore possibilities and opportunities for grants and contributions that will assist FOGB activities.
- General administrative chores as outlined by the board of directors.

Salary: \$20.00 per hour

Hours: approximately 10 – 15 hours per week

Skills and Experience Required:

- Strong verbal and written communication skills
- Ability to work independently, and cooperatively and effectively with the public, FOGB board of directors and membership, NPS personnel
- Grant writing experience helpful

- Familiarity with or willingness to learn assorted computer programs and e-mail systems
- Occasional travel may be required.
- Familiarity with Glacier Bay National Park and associated issues.

How to Apply:

Please forward a cover letter, resume, and writing samples to:

Friends of Glacier Bay

P.O. Box

Gustavus, AK 99826

Questions may be directed to:

John Scheerens

johnscheerens@hotmail.com

907-697-2798

WILDERNESS EXPLORATION, ANALYSIS & DISCOVERY: SEAWEAD

SEAWEAD founded its research, monitoring and natural history efforts on the marine and terrestrial ecosystems of Northern Chichagof Island, specifically at Point Adolphus and Mud Bay. These sites are located in Icy Strait, just south of Glacier Bay National Park in northern southeast Alaska.

In recent years we have expanded the geographic scope of our brown bear habitat use studies to include sites on Baranof Island, Admiralty Island and the mainland. In 2003 we worked with Discovery Southeast to aid in the development of their rapidly expanding use of GIS, provide field support for their Taku river amphibian habitat surveys, and provide web development support.

Our brown bear studies began with a two year pilot project (summers of 2000 and 2001) on northern Chichagof Island. We developed methods for mapping habitat characteristics (primarily vegetation and anadromous qualities) and signs of its use by bears. Bear use was surveyed and monitored through mapping ‘perennial’ bear sign (trails, scratch/rub trees, bedding areas, digging areas) and ‘ephemeral’ bear sign (scat, carcasses, bed activity, and digging activity). The purpose of the mapping was to provide

ecological context for studying changes in bear behavior when interacting with humans at important feeding areas, and to further our general understanding of brown bear patterns of habitat use.

While working on Baranof Island in 2002 we refined the bear sign mapping techniques and greatly advanced our use of GPS technology for spatial accuracy and productivity. This work was also done as a complement to an observational study of bear and human interactions. Results of the habitat use mapping appear to indicate correlation between bear trail density and measures of bear activity like scat concentration, salmon- carcass concentration, and observational data. This suggests that bear trails tell us a lot about where the bears are most active. Kind of a no-brainer...

During fall 2003 we will integrate the data from this seasons effort with data from 3 other sites to consider correlations between trail density and habitat features like plant communities and fish availability. If these correlations prove significant they will suggest that bear trails can help define what habitats are important. That would be hot news and could lead to a wider use of mapping bear sign for habitat conservation.

We look forward to strengthening our relationship with Discovery Southeast on our way to improve both organization’s research and education efforts.

Our hope is that the Point Adolphus/Mud Bay Patterns of Use Study can serve as a case study analysis of human ecology and its relationship to the wild landscape. The purpose of the case study is to work toward integrating the long-term sustainability of multiple uses with conserving an environment where we and the wildlife can thrive. Although it is not unique in southeast Alaska to find humpback whales feeding on herring, or brown bears grazing on sedges, or sportfishers casting in the rivers, or campers seeking solitude, or cruiseships sightseeing the Inside Passage, or local people hunting and gathering, it is rare to find all these overlapping activities in the concentrations we find at Point Adolphus and Mud Bay. The unique character of this study area demands attention, and lends itself to cooperatively developing a strategic model which will have application and significance far beyond this one locality.

Southeast Alaska Wilderness Exploration, Analysis & Discovery
PT. SOPHIA CRUISESHIP DESTINATION

Point Adolphus is approximately 20 miles from Alaska's newest cruise ship destination at Pt. Sophia, Hoonah. The first ship is scheduled to anchor in May 2004. Three cruise ships will pay 33 visits in 2004, and more visits are anticipated in 2005 (Juneau Empire 7/16/03). Whale watching and bear viewing are two of the excursions that will be available for visitors, according to Johan Dybdahl of Pt. Sophia Development Corporation. Point Sophia Development Co. is a joint venture between Huna Totem Corp. and Koma Sales Co. in Juneau, and is developing and marketing the Pt. Sophia destination.

Pt. Sophia will provide the first new Alaskan cruise destination in many years. SEAWEAD is interested in cooperating with researchers, business people, conservationists and Icy Strait residents who are interested in monitoring and planning for the changes to come. The baseline data generated by SEAWEAD's past efforts in Icy Strait provide an excellent context for ecological considerations and a unique opportunity for adaptive planning. If you are interested in pursuing a study or have some planning ideas, please contact us via email at info@seawead.org.



Photographs by Fritz Koschmann: TOP: Pt. Sophia theater; ABOVE: Renovating the Cannery; LEFT: Framing of restaurant and other tourist facilities



Above: Hoonah workers renovating the Pt. Sophia cannery building and dock

**Excerpts from
Wilderness Camp Impacts Report:
Assessing Human Impacts
On the Shoreline of Glacier Bay**
by Tania M. Lewis and Nat Drumheller,
Resource Management

The park has committed to preparing a Backcountry Management Plan. To accomplish this task it is necessary to identify actual and potential ecological and social impacts from human recreation and determine the carrying capacity of Glacier Bay's backcountry.

The shoreline of Glacier Bay supports the park's most sensitive wildlife habitat and productive biological resources, including plant species in varying stages of succession, black and brown bears, moose, wolves, coyotes, river otters, mink, harbor seals, nesting birds, boreal toads, spawning salmon, and molting sea ducks.

In this study we attempted to assess the current state of human impacts in Glacier Bay's backcountry. We did this by examining site specific human impacts in areas of suspected use in Glacier Bay. We identified campsites and noted potential ecological impacts from campers at those campsites. We also recorded social impacts and assigned each site a rating based on the intensity of these social impacts.

Crews walked the beach surrounding high use areas and determined the boundaries of the survey areas. Boundaries were delimited by geographical constraints such as sheer walls, talus, or dense vegetation.

Of the 134 surveyed areas, 105 (78%) contained one or more established campsites. In 29 survey areas (22%) no established campsites were found. Evidence of potentially sensitive species was observed in 134 survey areas (100%). Two hundred and sixty-eight campsites were identified. Seventy-four percent of the sites contained rock rings, 28% had footprints, 22% had trash, 16% had trailing, 9% had supratidal fire pits, while 5% or less sites contained intertidal fire pits, human waste, structures and firewood.

Impacts Parameters

The land in Glacier Bay is rising over an inch per year from glacial rebound. The campsite locations continually change over time in Glacier Bay. Because of this, camper impacts to vegetation and substrates are probably less obvious in Glacier Bay than in more static environments.

Long-lived impacts persist over time, and therefore were weighed more heavily than short-lived impacts in the final impact rating. Trailing was found in 41 sites and trails were most commonly seen between main sites and satellite sites, and from the intertidal zone to heavily used sites. The most worn trails occurred in the northern portions of the bay near the glacier and outwash areas, such as McBride Glacier Inlet, Topeka Outwash and Johns Hopkins Inlet. Fire pits above the intertidal zone were found in 22 sites, which is only a small proportion of the campsites but is still surprising considering that backcountry visitors are asked to build fires only in the intertidal zone to reduce impacts to the terrestrial zone and so that tidal action can wash away the fire evidence.

The most common short-lived impacts observed were rock rings, footprints, and trash.. The number of structures built and left in the backcountry was surprising, as was the number of sites near which we found human waste above the intertidal zone. The human waste was most often found in areas of high use and/or near large sites.

Recommendations

Further research

We recommend that specific sites be continually monitored for camper impacts and results compared to the results of this study. A random selection of sites of differing impact ratings in different portions of the bay should be repeatedly examined as indicators of the relative condition of the backcountry.

We also recommend that further studies be conducted on the distribution and abundance of several sensitive species as well as the effects on human disturbance on these species.

Seasonal Closures

We recommend that in the future, areas of concern be considered for seasonal closures to protect shore-nesting birds, harbor seal haul-out areas, important bear habitat, and den sites of terrestrial predators such as river otter, wolves and coyotes.

Education

Continuing education in “no trace” camping ethics will help keep human impacts in Glacier Bay low. Educating backcountry users on bird nesting behavior, nesting habitat, and the importance of avoiding nesting birds would help reduce nesting disturbance for birds. We also recommend expanding the current camper education to include detailed information of animal sign and key habitats to watch for when selecting campsites in order to minimize impacts on animals. It is important to include boaters, as well as kayakers, in this education effort, as people from boats often go to shore for the day without the benefit of the extensive backcountry orientation that is given to kayakers who will be camping.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION:

Please send your 2004 dues to:

Friends of Glacier Bay, P.O. Box 135, Gustavus, AK 99826

Yes, I want to be a Friend of Glacier Bay! Other contribution (Check below)

_____ \$15.00 Individual

_____ Endowment Fund

_____ \$20.00 Family

_____ Donation to regular expenses

_____ \$300.00 Life Member

_____ \$30.00 Organization

_____ \$10.00 newsletter subscription only

(without voting membership)

Name: _____

Address: _____

email: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

How did you hear about

us? _____

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Photographs by Fritz Koschmann:
Above: Gustavus at sunset: Henrietta House's home

Below: BRD Light Trap below the Bartlett Cove Dock

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and "In This Issue" Table of Contents**

