



Whittier Soundings

June 2004 Roy Stoddard FC, Brad Wells VFC, Cathey Sterling FSO-PB Volume XIV Issue 6

Environment

To all you good folks that volunteered your bodies and equipment May 15th and 22nd to help gather trash from the shores of Prince William Sound during the 3rd Annual PWSkeeper Beach Cleanup, PWSkeeper and the Whittier Coast Guard Auxiliary express our deepest gratitude and sincere thanks. We appreciate that it is not easy to forego rare good-weather days to arise early in the morning and travel many miles over land (some intrepid folks from NOLS drove from Palmer the morning of the 22nd) and sea to spend the day stooped over bagging garbage, only to then have to drive back home late and bone weary. Gerry Sanger and Dave Goldstein even did it twice, giving up charter business in order to donate their vessels and time. To you, we are doubly indebted. As Dave stated, they couldn't afford not to do it. Peter Denmark was gracious enough to again get us started early each morning by donating the use of his Alaska Sea Kayaker facilities for meeting and hot drinks for fuel as he has done the past two cleanups.

Mike Bender – what a stud! Mike came out alone with the Explorer the morning of the 22nd and proceeded to load nearly all the trash gathered the previous weekend along the shores of southeast Perry Is. How Mike managed to do that while simultaneously tending to his vessel is a mystery, but he worked his butt off and did a tremendous job.



We are also especially indebted to the folks with the Quayak Chief that cleaned beaches in South Bay, to Gerry Sanger's "Applegate Hotties" crew, and Van Waggoner's Lone Island crew for backhauling their garbage to Whittier dumpsters. A special thanks to Rick Hohnbaum, Whittier City Manager, for again organizing Whittier's contribution of dumpsters to the effort. Also, our gratitude to Matt Zencey and the Anchorage Daily News for publishing the great beach-cleanup article.

PWSkeeper, the Whittier Coast Guard Auxiliary with its tremendous organization and support, the National Wildlife Federation, the USFS Glacier District, and NOLS were all strongly represented by numerous hard-working volunteers. Captain Ron Morris, MSO Anchorage Coast Guard, and his wife helped clean beaches along with several other Coast Guard volunteers from the Anchorage office. To all these volunteers we are also indebted. Gerry Sanger, Dave Goldstein, Pete Heddell and Mike Bender ably represented the recreational charter industry. Pete's captain, Scott Gilbert, made two round trips to Perry Island the same day to accommodate our schedule. Gerry Sanger, Dave Goldstein, Mike Bender, Pete Heddell, John Whitney, John Coombes, Van Waggoner, Chris Pallister and the Forest Service all contributed vessels and their expertise to the effort. This is a huge and costly contribution. Without the boats, this party don't float! Many individuals not associated with any particular organization, but with deep appreciation for the Sound, also volunteered their services. They are too numerous to list here, but we value your assistance so much that you can be assured that we will call on you again next season. Thanks also to all the volunteers for the fuel-money donations.



While a tremendous pile of garbage was gathered and bagged, not all of it made a timely trip to the dumpsters. Our stellar USFS pickup crew the past two years suffered an early morning vessel malfunction the 22nd. The Williwaw ingested eelgrass, promptly plugging the vessel's water intakes. Consequently they had to limp back to Whittier leaving approximately 85 bags of garbage and other large pieces of trash stacked in several different spots on Perry, Lone, and Axel Lind Islands. I believe the Forest Service has since collected the stranded garbage.

Over the two weekends, approximately 10 miles of rocky shoreline were surveyed and the intervening stretches of beach cleaned around Perry, Applegate, Lone, Axel Lind, Little Axel Lind, Bald Head Chris and E. Flank Islands. On two Saturdays, on less than 1 mile of southeastern Perry Island beaches, a stunning 80 bags of garbage and piles of other trash were collected.



One 500-yard set of beaches produced 30 bags and a small mountain of other debris. In total, about 180 bags of trash were collected during the cleanup, along with easily half-again-as-much trash comprised of larger individual pieces of debris. That flotsam included items such as 5-gallon oil buckets, water jugs, plastic fuel tanks, a marine sanitation tank, huge nylon-webbed commercial tote bags, parts of commercial fish totes, many fishing nets, large floats; two scoop shovels, 55-gallon drums, a wrecked aluminum skiff, numerous blocks of Styrofoam, plastic tarps, hawsers too big for one man to move, many smaller lines, a car tire, a fishing pole, a canoe paddle, a 20-foot aluminum boat hook and many large metal objects along South Bay's western shoreline. Dave Goldstein's crew found a Bald Eagle carcass and the Perry Island crew found a sea otter carcass in Boot Cove.

Quantifying all of the trash is difficult given the time constraints and conditions under which it was gathered. However, some generalizations can be made. The large majority of the garbage in volume and weight is related to commercial fishing, anywhere from 50 to over 90% depending on the particular beach cleaned. Nets of all types and sizes, hawsers, line, floats, fishing tackle and other detritus from fisheries throughout the North Pacific litter even the inner-Sound beaches. However, there is plenty of blame to go around. Quart oil bottles, some partially full of oil, were prolific along eastern Perry. Plastic shotgun shells were everywhere, presumably from waterfowl hunters. Trash from hunting camps was recovered. Hats, gloves, shoes, and other clothing items were common. Even a glove and boot from separate survival suits were found on Perry shores. Bottles of every kind and description littered the beaches. Hundreds of plastic bottles and nearly as many capped glass bottles from Asian and Russian shores were collected. Many of them at one time contained booze or ordinary household products ranging from bottled water to bathroom products. And the glass float I found – it's mine!

It is hard to determine where and when all of these items made their entry into the water and, hence, onto our shores. But one thing is certain, if all the plastic garbage in the Sound were gathered, it would probably easily equate to a much greater hydrocarbon spill than what the Exxon Valdez created. It is easy to judge the impacts of plastic debris on the environment from an ascetic viewpoint or even from the obvious danger to wildlife from entanglement or ingestion. However, the long-term impacts from plastic litter in the marine environment may in fact be much greater and more insidious than most of us feared. Judging from a recent study published in Science by researchers in the British Isles, pulverized and degraded microscopic plastic fibers and polymers are pervasive in beach and seabed sediments. These minute particles, small enough to be ingested or absorbed by plants and small organisms, are a grave threat to marine ecosystems.

Some of the older Styrofoam and other plastic items were camouflaged with beach moss and algae, making it difficult to recognize and attested to its age. Evidence of plastic UV degradation was common with plastic bottles crumbling into small bits. If you took time to dig under the layers of beach debris, you were certain to encounter enumerable plastic bits and pieces. It is clear that plastic debris is pervasive along PWS shorelines and that it will take a Herculean effort to remove the bulk of it. We have only just started. One thing is clear, however, in an environment as beautiful and wild as Prince William Sound there is no place for any trash.

It is interesting to note that the prevailing winds, tides and currents tend to loosely segregate the floating trash into categories and deposit it on particular beaches. One small southeast Perry Island beach had a large assortment of fishing floats on it, many more than even much larger beaches. Hundreds of plastic bottles littered another beach, many of them milk-jug size. Large items such as a net, tarp and line covered another beach, but no bottles, Styrofoam or other small items were present. It is as if a plastic separator similar to a gravel concentrator is at work out there. I would be interested to hear if others noted this phenomenon.

After three seasons of this, we are beginning to get a better understanding of what we are up against. It seems that we will need to get the local commercial-fishing fleet involved to be truly effective at this task. However, that will probably require that the 4th Annual Cleanup begin even earlier than this year's effort and before commercial fishing begins. I feel as those these past three seasons have been trial runs, because the amount of garbage on eastern Knight Island and, even more so, on the remote barrier shores of Montague, Hinchinbrook and Kayak Islands is just astounding. It is certain that we will need the help of ever more excellent dedicated volunteers such as all of those that lent a hand this year. If any of you have any suggestions as to how to make this a more efficient enterprise, please feel free to forward your suggestions. Send them to Frank Murkowski. Just kidding – I'll gladly accept

them. My sincere gratitude again to all of you. I enjoyed meeting each of you, even if just briefly. Next year we need to have a big plastic-free party afterwards.



All photos in this article courtesy of Chris Pallister

Thanks everybody.
Chris Pallister

Training

The first of several PWC training sessions was held Saturday June 12 in Whittier. The weather cooperated and allowed for the dockside and on water portions of the training. Marty Keef arrived ready for the elements bringing his dry suit, dive shoes and gloves. He got the pleasure of watching the PWC rider safety video before starting any of the basic PWC information and on water training.



Photos courtesy of Cathey Sterling

After going over the features of the PWC, the safety requirements and responsibilities we finally launched the boats. When all were ready, we took the buoys out and set up the buoy course – designed to test operator skills and boat handling.

This year we have the Polaris MSX 150 Four Stroke PWC for the Auxiliary PWC Program.

The next PWC class is scheduled July 17 & 18 in Seward. Anyone interested in attending the next class Please contact Stewart Sterling at stews@gci.net or call 349-5081.

SAREX Training

What is a “**BOIW**”? That’s what we called the **Buoyant Object In Water**. The “thing” which was the object of the SAREX search. Two of these “things” were placed in the waters of Port Wells at 1000 hrs and 1015 hrs to kick-off the mini SAREX of May 22nd. Scenario packets had been delivered to all of the potential SRUs that could participate in the event. After crews were augmented to conduct the search two vessels began their assigned search patterns at 1102 and 1127 hrs respectively. Fresh Aire was first to find and recover the BOIW #1. White Raven then altered their search pattern to a different section of the search area and made the recovery of the BOIW #2. All then met for an after action rendezvous in North Granite Bay.



Photo courtesy of Mark Parmelee

SCENERIO FOR SAREX 5/22/04

THE RESEARCH VESSEL R/V STUTTERFORT WAS TRANSITING THE PORT WELLS AREA ON A TIME AND PLACE SENSITIVE MISSION WHEN IT LOST OVERBOARD TWO HIGH VALUE UNACTIVATED RESEARCH OBJECTS. BECAUSE OF THE TIME SENSITIVE MISSION THE R/V STUTTERFORT COULD NOT SEARCH AND RECOVER THE LOST ITEMS. THE R/V STUTTERFORT HAS ASKED THE U.S. COAST GUARD, DISTRICT 17 FOR ASSISTANCE IN THE LOCATION AND RECOVERY OF THE RESEARCH OBJECTS. DISTRICT 17 HAS GIVEN THIS MISSION TO FLOTILLA 02-04. EACH OBJECT IS SUPPORTED BY TWO YELLOW FLOATS HOLDING VERTICAL A PLASTIC 1.5 INCH DIAMETER, 6 FOOT LONG, WHITE PIPE WITH AN ID FLAG AND TOPPED BY A GIMBLED RADAR REFLECTOR AS PICTURED BELOW. ALL ELEMENTS OF THE OBJECTS ARE INERT AND OFFER NO CBR HAZARD.



Photos courtesy of Marty Keef

Some of the lessons learned were:

1. Expanded Square worked well.
2. Search assignments could have been different for different SRUs.
3. Three lookouts and a driver had a lot to do. Interesting to see how much work is required to accomplish the tasks.
4. Good to see the book work in action. Great practice effort.
5. GPS can record the track made good and can be played back for critique of pattern.
6. Augmented crews are a real need to complete the assigned search pattern.



Photo courtesy of James Chase

THIS NOTICE WAS RECEIVED AT 1000 HOURS ON 5/22/04.

ALL SEARCH AND RECOVERY ACTIVITIES WILL TERMINATE AT 1500 HOURS ON 5/22/04.

AFTER ACTION RENDEZVOUS WILL BE IN NORTH GRANITE BAY BEGINNING NOT EARLIER THAN 1600 HOURS.



Photo by Mark Parmelee



Photo by Marty Keef

SEARCH AREA CORNERS

| ID | GEO | LAT/LONG | |
|----|------|-----------|-----------|
| A | NW | 60 58.4N | 148 10W |
| B | MIDW | 60 55N | 148 15W |
| C | SW | 60 50.05N | 148 17W |
| D | SE | 60 50.05N | 148 10W |
| E | MIDE | 60 55N | 148 06.5W |
| F | NE | 60 58.3N | 148 01.5W |

CONNECT 'F' TO 'A' TO CLOSE THE AREA

SEARCH PATTERN AND AREA ASSIGNMENTS

OUT OF GRANITE BAY

_VESSEL_____

EXPANDED SQUARE #1
CSP = 60 55N 148 10W
FIRST LEG 180 TRUE
RIGHT TURNS
S=.5NM
V= 6 OR 10 OR 12 OR 15 KNOTS
OPERATIONS NORMAL REPORTING VIA CH 81
TO AUX VESSEL 251 AT :05 AND :35 AFTER THE
HOUR

.....

OUT OF PIGOT BAY

EXPANDED SQUARE #2

CSP= 60 52N 148 12W
FIRST LEG 190 TRUE
RIGHT TURNS
S=.5NM
V= 6 OR 10 OR 12 OR 15 KNOTS
OPERATIONS NORMAL REPORTING VIA CH 81
TO AUX VESSEL 251 AT :10 AND :40 AFTER THE
HOUR

.....

OUT OF GRANITE BAY

EXPANDED SQUARE #3

CSP=60 57N 148 08W
FIRST LEG 210 TRUE
RIGHT TURNS
S=.5NM
V= 6 OR 10 OR 12 OR 15 KNOTS
OPERATIONS NORMAL REPORTING VIA CH 81
TO AUX VESSEL 251 AT :15 AND :45 AFTER THE
HOUR

.....

OUT OF PIGOT BAY

CREEPING LINE SINGLE #1

CSP=60 50.4N 148 16.3W
FIRST LEG 090 TRUE
LEFT TURNS
S=.5NM
V= 10 OR 12 OR 15 OR 20 KNOTS
OPERATIONS NORMAL REPORTING VIA CH 81
TO AUX VESSEL 251 AT :20 AND :50 AFTER THE
HOUR

.....

OUT OF BETTLES BAY

CREEPING LINE SINGLE #2

CSP=60 54.8N 148 14.5W
FIRST LEG 090 TRUE
RIGHT TURNS
S=.5NM
V= 10 OR 12 OR 15 OR 20 KNOTS
OPERATIONS NORMAL REPORTING VIA CH 81
TO AUX VESSEL 251 AT :25 AND :55 AFTER THE
HOUR

.....

OUT OF GRANITE BAY

CSP=60 55.1N 148 09.7W

FIRST LEG 090 TRUE
RIGHT TURNS
S=.5NM
V= 10 OR 12 OR 15 OR 20 KNOTS

OPERATIONS NORMAL REPORTING VIA CH 81
TO AUX VESSEL 251 AT :20 AND :50 AFTER THE
HOUR

.....

OUT OF HARRISON OR HOBO BAYS

CSP=60 58.15N 148 09.7W

FIRST LEG 090 TRUE
RIGHT TURNS
S=.5NM
V= 10 OR 12 OR 15 OR 20 KNOTS
OPERATIONS NORMAL REPORTING VIA CH 81
TO AUX VESSEL 251 AT :05 AND :35 AFTER THE
HOUR

.....

Safety Patrol

Memorial day weekend ended up defying the weather predictions with beautiful weather and mostly calm seas. The Whittier SAFE Boat 611 was on patrol Saturday, Sunday and Monday with trainees aboard all three days.

Saturday we ran our patrol route providing area familiarization to Bill Morris and Linda Shogren. We worked on reading the radar and chart plotter along the way. During the course we discussed different scenarios and what solutions would work in the different situations.



Photo courtesy of Stewart Sterling

We stopped at Long Bay in Culross Passage for a little heaving line work. During our time at Long Bay Paula Krebs was making her way Southbound through Culross Passage.



Photo courtesy of Stewart Sterling

Paula met up with us and we did some alongside work with her. After the break we continued North to the NOAA Weather Buoy for another photo session and location familiarization.



Photo courtesy of Stewart Sterling

Sunday Command Center called to inform us that a fishing vessel had struck a rock and was taking on water.

611 got under way with Russ Lyday and Sig Murphy as trainees and met up with the crew from the fishing vessel near the South end of Ester Passage.



Photo courtesy of Roy Stoddard



Photo courtesy of Jim Chase

There were four POB and a dog aboard the skiff. We took the skiff in an along side tow and brought the crew and dog onboard 611. One of the men on the skiff was wet and thoroughly chilled. After having him remove his wet clothing and drying off he got into a mustang suit. Sig and Russ got the full story of the grounding and how the crew got the boat to a less dangerous situation.

Roy and Terry Stoddard were on patrol in their boat and picked up the crew and dog to give them some coffee and a warm place to rest while 611 continued to Whittier with skiff in tow.



Photo courtesy of Stewart Sterling



Photo by Cathey Sterling

Several times on the trip the skiff had to be bailed. Dave Brubaker and crew arrived at the actual vessel grounding and provided descriptions of the vessel for U. S. Coast Guard Valdez. Fortunately for all everyone was fine and the fishing vessel was re-floated and taken to Valdez for repairs.

Later in the day Marty Keef and Russ Lyday accompanied 611 as trainees.



Photo by Cathey Sterling

We did some man overboard (life ring) and heaving line training.

Monday Bill and Linda returned for more training. We will have to enter Linda in the heaving line contests – she developed a pretty good percentage of bull’s eyes in the life ring.



Photo courtesy of Stewart Sterling

They both practiced steering a compass course and locating the NOAA Weather Buoy using the chart plotter. In all it was a great weekend with lots of on the water training time for several qualifying crewmembers.

23 June 2004 marks the 65th Anniversary of the US Coast Guard Auxiliary.

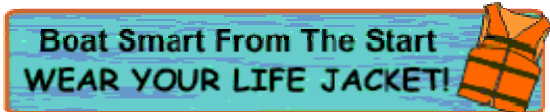
Crossing the Bar

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family of Daryl Sheaver and the Mat Su Flotilla.

COAST GUARD AUXILIARY



17th District



Whittier Flotilla Web Site
<http://www.uscgaux.org/~1700204/>