

Newsletter for Kachemak Heritage Land Trust

LANDMARKS

2022

Awe in Observation

Reflections from Moose Camp

Page 6

PHOTO CREDIT: Joey Allred



INCREASING ACCESSIBILITY
Page 3



BIG WINS FOR SALMON AND PEOPLE Page 4



BABY SALMON LIVE HERE
Page 5



STATEWIDE CONFERENCE
Page 8



MAYDAY, MAYDAY
Page 9



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Director's Column

It is time. Let's up our Game.

There are two ways to think about conservation. One is to believe that there is a limited amount of money and people interested in conservation. That is a scarcity mindset and it comes from a place of fear and worry. Scarcity is not my way of thinking.

Instead, I believe in Stephen Covey's theory of abundance. I spend my time focusing on possibilities and trusting people to rise to the important conservation opportunities presented to us. This year has been one of significant growth for KHLT that rests on an organizational philosophy of abundance with a balanced dose of risk management and careful planning.

As I write this, we have been fortunate to purchase and steward 162.64 acres across seven parcels along the Kenai River and its tributaries this year. Together, these parcels now permanently protect 5,450 feet of salmon stream frontage. Last December, we purchased a new office building 210 steps from our existing office located on Bonanza Street in Homer as our staff of six has outgrown the small and cozy Poopdeck property cabin and outbuilding. These are deliberate organizational stretches that accept the abundance mindset. There is so much opportunity being presented to us and insufficient time to do the necessary work. To change that, I ask you to join me in my abundance mindset. It is an optimistic and forward-thinking way of looking at the world and a tangible way to set and reach important conservation goals.

It is up to each of us to be ambassadors for this message. Once land is developed and

its conservation values depleted, it's a hard path back to making that land useful for future lasting conservation. Our wetlands, peatlands, forests, streambanks are in relatively pristine condition here. With those gifts comes the responsibility to jointly be the land's caretakers during our lives. We gather berries, harvest salmon and moose, ski, snowmachine, hike, and love being outside.

In that role as caretaker, it is on each of us to participate in what happens to our own land and the important land in our community. We each make time and donate money for the things that are important to us. It is up to us where we spend that time and money. I ask you to invest in your grandkids' and your own future by contributing to KHLT. Make a first-time donation or increase your annual gift by an amount that is meaningful to you. It is time. It is time for you to join with others to make a gift that will last long beyond you.

It's about strong salmon runs, healthy moose populations, hawks and owls, songbirds, Alaskan orchids, meadows of blooming fireweed, fledgling sandhill cranes, alder leaves that drop into salmon streams and provide nitrogen. It is about taking your kids and grandkids on a walk through the woods. It really is about you and your family and your choice of how to spend your time and money.

And so I ask you, let's up our game for conservation. It is one way to have a tangible and lasting impact in this place that we love.

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Increasing Accessibility

This year, KHLT has focused on expanding accessibility across our three trail systems within Homer. Our goal is to continue to expand access for as many trail users as possible. And, thanks to a generous grant from AARP Alaska and partnership with Homer City Parks, Homer Council on the Arts, and the Independent Living Center TRAILS program, we have been able to make some big improvements this year.

We kicked off our accessibility journey by adding Braille signs on our Poopdeck Platt Community Park Trail kiosks. The trail already features signs that are universally accessible so our hope is that adding Braille will be an added benefit for trail users experiencing vision loss. After our Birdability outing as part of this year's Shorebird Festival in partnership with Independent Living Center and the City of Homer, some of our trail users with disabilities provided feedback on what would be helpful to add to or modify on the trail. One of those suggestions was adding wind chimes to the trailhead kiosks to alert trail users to the start of the trail. Another suggestion was adding bright colored poles to trail junctions where there are bridges or forks in the path. Homer City Parks helped us with those additions. We tried out the fluorescent poles and quickly realized that was not a long-term option. Our next idea is to install brightly colored old buoys at trail junctions. We hope to get those installed in the spring of 2023.

Our two biggest endeavors have been recording readings of the signs along the Poopdeck Platt Community Park Trail and creating new universally accessible signage for our Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park and Nature Trail and Effler Boardwalk.

With the artistic illustration help of Nancy Casey of Casey Designs, our new Calvin & Coyle

Woodland Park and Nature Trail and Effler Boardwalk signs have been redesigned to match our Poopdeck Platt Community Park Trail signs. We are thrilled to be working towards a more cohesive and user-friendly signage system. These new signs are up and ready for trail users!

Over the summer, we gathered local volunteers to read and record at Homer Council on the Arts. The recordings can be found on our website here: www.kachemaklandtrust.org/poopdeck-trail-audio-recordings.html. The next step is to install QR codes on the signs for folks to scan with their smartphones. The QR codes will take trail users to the specific trail sign recording web page.

This project has been a joy to work on and an incredibly cooperative, community-focused experience. With grant funding from AARP Alaska, we were able to work with our partners at the City level, nonprofit level, and community level to bring more universal access to our public trail. Now, when you get the chance to walk the Poopdeck Trail, take a moment to listen to the local voices as they guide you through our urban oasis. Our community came together to bolster this public good, to bring the special unifying, supportive, unique elements of Homer to residents and visitors alike. We hope you enjoy the trails!

Scan to Donate
to Trail fund



Poopdeck Trail



Effler Trail



Calvin and Coyle Trail



Big thanks to the following folks for making this on-going project a reality:

AARP Alaska

Scott Barlett, HOMER COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

Matt Steffy, CITY OF HOMER

Michael Gavillot, INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER TRAILS PROGRAM

Sam Means, KHLT BOARD MEMBER

Courtney Dodge, FORMER KHLT STEWARDSHIP COORDINATOR

Laura Patty, HOMER RESIDENT

Beckham Lightsey, HOMER RESIDENT

Pat Case, HOMER RESIDENT

Joel Cooper, KHLT STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR

Dan Marsden, KHLT STEWARDSHIP COORDINATOR

And all the KHLT volunteers and trail users!



Big Wins

“KHLT’s partnership with DOT P&F has been a huge success for Alaskan residents, visitors, and wildlife. This public, private partnership has led to the protection of over 160 acres of land on the Kenai Peninsula this year. The land protected is not only of intrinsic value, but it is critical to the wellbeing of many animals including salmon. Alaskans rely on salmon in so many ways — protecting the areas where salmon spawn is a powerful way to protect their health and our financial and cultural wellbeing far into the future. We are incredibly excited to be protecting this important land and look forward to future projects with DOT P&F.”

— MARIE MCCARTY, Executive Director, Kachemak Heritage Land Trust

for Salmon and People

As of July 27, 2022, another 52.57 acres of land in the Kenai River Watershed are protected in perpetuity by Kachemak Heritage Land Trust. This marks the fourth project funded by mitigation money from the Sterling Highway MP 45-60 project. This most recent project between Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) Kachemak Heritage Land Trust brings the total number of protected acres through this project for this year to 162.64.

In 2020, KHLT was selected to establish a mechanism to preserve, perpetually care for, and monitor wetland conservation properties for Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) in response to the Sterling Highway MP 45-60 Reconstruction Project. KHLT’s role has been to find, assess, select, and secure specific lands to protect on the Kenai Peninsula.

All of the land KHLT has protected as part of this mitigation project has been comprised of critical wetlands and salmon habitat. Conserving important wetland habitat is just one way Alaskans can work to keep our salmon healthy and thriving with meaningful conservation for the future. Salmon lay their eggs in tiny inland streams and juvenile salmon can live in those streams for up to the three years. Salmon need land to survive,

thrive, and replenish their populations. Each acre conserved gives salmon a greater chance of surviving and gives us humans a greater chance of experiencing bountiful, healthy salmon fisheries.

The 2022 land conservation projects, now protecting 162.64 acres, are an incredible victory for salmon and for people. The most recent 52.57 project includes over 2,000 feet of Kenai River frontage and over 48 acres of riparian wetlands. Equally importantly is that this land will remain open to the public for fishing and remain undeveloped in perpetuity.

The public/private partnership between DOT&PF and KHLT has been a great success for the benefit of residents, visitors, and wildlife on the Kenai Peninsula. KHLT looks forward to continuing to protect valuable land for future generations.

“This partnership with ADOT&PF is a fantastic model mitigation project. The continued successful wetland conservation demonstrated by this effort can function as a guide for future similar activities across the Peninsula.”

— LAUREN RUSIN, Conservation Projects Manager, Kachemak Heritage Land Trust

“This is a huge milestone, as it marks roughly half the credits needed for this major project. The Department greatly appreciates KHLT’s hard work finding and preserving these critical habitats and looks forward to providing additional funding for KHLT to continue achieving its mission.”

— JONATHAN TYMICK, Project Manager, DOT&PF

Baby Salmon Live Here

Thousands of rivers, streams, and lakes cover the Kenai Peninsula and are home to baby salmon—where adult salmon return from the ocean to spawn and die, creating the next generation. These “nursery” streams need a balance of nutrients, cold water in the summer and warm water in the winter, and protection from predators and human development.

If this land is disturbed in a way that impacts the salmon stream, the cycle is disrupted and the future of salmon becomes uncertain. Through the Baby Salmon Live Here program, Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, Cook Inletkeeper, Kachemak Bay Conservation Society, and Kenai Watershed Forum are working together to protect the most important places that baby salmon need to grow, giving salmon a greater chance of thriving long into the future.

The Baby Salmon Live Here (BSLH) program was developed in Anchorage/Matanuska-Susitna by Great Land Trust in 2014. Since then, Kachemak Heritage Land Trust has spread the program throughout the Kenai Peninsula. The goal of BSLH is to bring awareness to where baby salmon live and to encourage stewardship of land that is vital to the wellbeing of salmon and people. One of the main initiatives of the program is to install educational signs where baby salmon live—along the tiny inland streams all over the Kenai Peninsula.

Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, Cook Inletkeeper, Kachemak Bay Conservation Society, and Kenai Watershed Forum work together to install new BSLH here signs each summer. This year’s sign installations kicked off in May. KHLT worked with a group of Ch’anik’na students and the City of Seldovia to get a sign up on the Fish Creek Dam. In partnership with KBCS, KHLT installed four signs around the Homer Harbor. All together, our partner groups installed 17 new signs.



As you explore the outdoors this summer, look for the BSLH signs along waterways on the Kenai Peninsula. Take a minute to check out the surrounding streams for salmon eggs, spawning salmon, and baby salmon. You can learn more about the program, about the interrelation of salmon and land, and how to get more involved by visiting babysalmon.org.



babysalmon.org

Best Internship EVER!

FROM LUKAS SCHNELL

Driving from Vermont to Colorado, up through Banff and Jasper and marveling at the Elias and Chugach ranges, I couldn't help but imagine what would behold



me when I came into Homer. I made my way down the Kenai Peninsula and came around the corner to see the majestic view of Kachemak Bay and the Kenai Mountains; and it was everything I imagined. After settling in, I was able to explore Homer and the surrounding area. Homer is an exceptionally special town. Despite some busy summer traffic, which happens in every destination town across the country, this town has a slowed down, laid-back feel which was exactly the pace I was looking for after an intense first year in law school. While the permanent population is not necessarily small it seems that if you stick around here long enough there is an everybody knows everybody feel. This town is very proud of its culture, and I was able to see that connection embodied through the wonderful people and work done at KHLT. The staff welcomed me with open arms and has been nothing but amazing since I arrived. It is very apparent that everyone who works here cares for this town and the greater work that is being done to help make this planet just that much better. Getting to tag along on outreach and research projects I was able to see just how many people are involved in ensuring this Trust continues in perpetuity and how innovative they are in finding new ways to continue to facilitate environmental change and conservation. It was particularly interesting to learn about how peatlands, and their protection, are to maintain carbon reduction standards; and KHLT is at the forefront of attempting to bring peatland carbon markets to be more recognized and appreciated on a larger scale. While first year property law certainly provided the foundation for property transactions and an overview of conservation easements, seeing the complex legal issues involved in actual transactions and conservation of the land is much more involved. Ensuring that the terms of the easements are adhered to is no simple task for the stewardship crew. From wandering around Seldovia and the Otterbahn trail in the pouring rain to racing to the top of and across the headwall of Alyeska and floating the Kenai River, I could not have asked for a more rewarding and inspiring internship and Alaska experience than this. Best internship ever!



Awe in Observation

Reflections from Moose Camp

CONTRIBUTED BY JOEY ALLRED, KHLT Board Member

EDITED BY HANNAH HEIMBUCH

 PHOTO CREDIT JOEY ALLRED

KHLT Board Member Joey Allred shares the natural wonders, large and small, that he’s observed as a quiet, long-time visitor to one special piece of land in Alaska’s wilderness. These landmarks of creatures, habitats, and experience illustrate the power of connection to wild places.

Moose Camp. Lake Iliamna, Alaska. It’s a remote part of the country. Exists now pretty much as it has for thousands of years. When I first arrived in this wonderful area, the land was cut by thousands of caribou trails, sometimes knee deep from long usage by many hooves. 27 years later, those trails are growing back in, filling, with vegetation and earth. At the time of year I am blessed to spend time here, much takes place.

The Observer. While I didn’t set out to become this observer, it just happened. Sit in the top of a spruce tree every year for three weeks straight, over two decades, and even the least aware discover epiphany.

Stillness. The largest part of observing is stillness, quiet, not asserting oneself. Not easily done by modern man, with our super busy lifestyles. Our constant mental engagement. Where being still, being *quiet*, can be so disconcerting. But you learn. Two years ago I took along my 24 year old grandson. At the two and a half week mark, he was trying to melt down. He’s not the world’s greatest communicator, I know, it takes one to know one. But we stayed to the end, and he harvested a bull. What a privilege to be his grandpa, sharing this place.



Caribou. I have seen exactly three caribou in 27 years, and those very recently. The caribou ate themselves out of this area a quarter century ago. They moved around the west end of Iliamna lake, crossed the Nehalen River, and now the lichen have come back. One of these years, the caribou will return, too.

Beaver. These are three busy weeks each year. Beavers augmenting their winter food supply, building huge underwater brush piles near their houses, their front doors already under ice. When

I first started coming here, there were large clans in the two closest lakes. Like the caribou, they ate through the forage and eventually abandoned the lakes for a stream bottom fully grown with new food. As the years went by, I was in awe of the engineering they undertook, and the habitat they facilitated. Large, deep ponds formed behind dams four feet tall, and at times nearly 100 feet long. Other animals filled in the spaces — waterfowl and fishes and little brown and green frogs. They were hunting, too.

Waterfowl. Around the 10th of September the waterfowl migration starts, from west to east, ducks, geese, sandhills, robins and a myriad of small birds. The smaller birds are in our laps, sometimes landing inches from us. The sandhills can make us crazy with their voices, hour after hour overhead, loud but beautiful. The wonder of all them agreeing one day, without any plan apparent to us, look at their fellows and know, it’s time. Time to fly three or four thousand miles to greener pastures. *Amazing.*

The takeaway of quiet time spent is that nature is intelligent - these natural systems have been repeating for millennia with no obvious conductor.

The Rivulet. It connects White Feather and Salmon Creek. It's a foot wide and maybe six inches deep. It crosses a muskeg then rolls down a little valley to the river. Believe it or not, this tiny stream has a run of red salmon. Not many make it to the lake, but most years, there they are. Where the rivulet drops into the salmon stream it can be a four foot drop. *How do those fish do that?* I ask. And then up that tiny little body of water for a half mile to the Lake? *Amazing.*

Owl. Last year two of us were treated to a convention of Great Horned owls. Something I'd never heard of before. One evening at dusk I heard the owls start hooting to one another, not unusual. However, this evening they seemed more vocal than usual, and gathering near toward the hill. By dark we were back at camp and within a half an hour the trees around camp had one or two owls in each tree — a convention! Many evenings we listen to them communicate from a distance. Hearing 15 within a 200 feet was a raucous and unorderly meeting. No Roberts Rules in evidence, everyone talking over his neighbor. I filmed part of the gathering, honored to have witnessed such a convention. *Amazing.*

Lynx. One day, standing on a game trail beside the lake — *movement!* On the other side was a lynx, traveling. In a few minutes, the cat was around the end of the lake and trotted to within five or six feet of where I stood. He only stopped when I spoke to him. Telling him, *that's close enough.* We stood staring at one another for what seemed a long time. His look said to me — *What are you doing on my trail?*

Berry. Some years the whole country is covered red, black, purple, and blue, ripe for foraging. One cannot take a step without crushing berries. My wife Tonda says those are the best blueberries. I like to say, they are the miracle that we walk on.

Being still raises so many questions. These quiet times are some of my most precious.



Mushroom. At this time of year, the mushrooms begin to pop up after a big rain. The squirrels gather and store them in the trees for winter fare. I suppose I should watch which ones they eat, learn which ones are safe myself. This year, there are no berries or spruce cones. I watch a squirrel store mushrooms instead, stashing a gallon in a tree 15 feet away. Some mushrooms are very large, five or six inches across, and beautiful. Especially when viewed from below. Part of the

being still thing is laying down on mother's flat earth and looking up at her inventions. What a wonderful mosaic nature provides, when only we look. Thanks for mushrooms, mother.

Dragonfly. I'm in the tree 25 feet up in the crown of the large old spruce observation tower. A medium dragonfly lands on a branch near my hand. I watch and he is looking back. A minute passes. He takes off, flies by, comes back again and lands on my hand. Maybe he likes the fact that I'm warm. Soon I'm wondering if I can pet him. Hands come together, I raise my index finger and slowly stroke his abdomen a time or two. He takes off but he returns. 15 minutes we spent this time together, with the dragonfly actually raising up, pushing back on my finger for a pet.

Nurture. Watch the critters abandon one area, watch it then recover. Animals venture to another that has already grown back. Early mankind was nomadic, too. Too long in one area and the result is poor hunting and contamination, moving on as essential to health and happiness. *Movement nurtures.* Watch a mother brown bear get in the face of a larger bear to protect her cubs. Or listen to and watch a family of wolves training their young to be part of the pack. A cow moose discourages both bears and wolves while protecting her calf. Watch the resident swans insisting on taking their signets on a fly-about mornings and evening. Strengthening those young wings for the imminent long range flight south. Their youngsters first long distance trip. *Parenting nurtures.*

Nutrition. As I watch this miracle unfold, there is an occasional niggling that all is not necessarily safe. Everyone is busy looking for the next meal. At least one nesting pair of eagles roost in this area, hawks, and one pair of osprey too. When these citizens eat, something has just died — fish, rodents, ducks, rabbits, songbirds and the carrion left by large carnivores. Nutrition can be stern. Something dies so that another thrives.

Home. A hillside less than a half mile from the tent serves as a yearly brown bear den. I have been inside a couple of these and was shocked at its cleanliness, considering a bear had spent a winter snoozing here. I could still sense the power of the bear, gone many months now. While visiting my friend's home, I am struck again by the order nature. It's messy, yes, but it's been operating for countless years, decades, eons. *Amazing.* In my time here, I've been threatened by bears. I've had a lynx walk within six feet of my toes. A pack of six wolves running under my spotting tree. Lucky me. I was attacked by a very large bull moose and stopped his attack on my person at only 10 feet. These moments make you wonder about your place on the food chain, your time among the homes of others.

Harvest. Moose hunting is the reason for going to this wonderful, wild place. Harvesting a moose is possible but not promised. As the human who has been in this area every year for three weeks, across 27 years now, I have tried to manage my harvest. We don't take young bulls. They get a pass. If there was a harvest time for me, it should begin now. I'm 76 years old and oxidizing. Let the



prime continue to donate to the herd, and when they are old and slowing, it's harvest time for them as well.

Connection. The value of wild places is so very important for continuity — we humans today have largely lost touch with the interconnectedness of our world's natural systems. We are only willing to improve on what is, not be still within it. It's our modern nature to try to manage rather than accept, rather than live within the natural structure. We may just be a bit too smart for our own good. Are we good stewards? Are we arrogant? Are we connected?

Purpose. I have had some of my best moments when I'm quiet and under the spell of nature's finest wild places. May we all strive to help our natural systems thrive. We may not survive, not in good health, if we don't allow for mother's health. We are dependent on her clean water, air, and soil, that we might thrive alongside the myriad of critters around us. The miracle that is wilderness is governed by rules and laws worked out by trial and error over millennia. We are subject to those rules, too. Ultimately we are all protein. We are all landmarks. This year, I saw two more caribou. I hope to see more back in this area before I leave for the great wilderness in the sky. The beavers are back after many years, and we enjoyed the slap of their tails, sharing their displeasure with our presence.

My take away is simple. When we are ignorant of the value of an unbroken natural world, it does not bode well for our children, and theirs. We must appreciate and protect the gifts of nature, nurture, and nutrition. Use what you take and take only what you use. Walk softly, and thank the mother of it all.

Joey is from Anchor Point and has been an Alaskan resident for 39 years. He has been on the KHLT Board since 2013 and has also served on Board of Directors for Anchor Point Seniors and currently serves on the Fish and Game Advisory Council. Joey is committed to public service and looks forward to continuing his service on the board.



Statewide

CONTRIBUTED BY CARSON CHAMBERS
KHLT Communications and Development Manager

After a two-year delay, Alaska's five land trusts were finally able to gather, in person! This April, representatives from all the land trusts in Alaska convened in King Salmon for our bi-annual Statewide conference. As not only a new staff member, but a new Alaskan resident, it was incredibly powerful, helpful, enlightening, and invigorating to be in the same room with our land trust partners across the state.



Tim Troll from Bristol Bay Heritage Land Trust (BBHLT) put together a thoughtful and meaningful agenda — each day was packed with sharing knowledge, history, and storytelling. We were hosted at the beautiful Bear Trail Lodge owned and operated by Nanci Morris Lyon and her husband Heath. The lodge was the perfect setting for the reconvening of colleagues and friends after so many years apart.

This year's Statewide conference focused heavily on Alaska Native history, culture, and connection to land. We were lucky to be treated to inspiring and informative talks from LaRece Egli, Director of the Bristol Bay Historical Society Museum, which educated us about the native history of Bristol Bay and the canning industry of Naknek. We delved into the details and repercussions of ANICLA and ANCSA. We learned how BBHLT, The Conservation Fund, and Pedro Bay Native Corporation are working together to preserve Lake Iliamna's most productive salmon habitat through a 44,147 million acre conservation easement.

As a person new to Alaska, I was, and continue to be, overwhelmed by the complicated and delicate history of Alaska Natives. As a group, it is apparent to KHLT that we need to do more to educate ourselves about Alaska Native history

and culture as they are the original stewards of land. Our goal for 2022 and beyond is to be more informed and to create stronger partnerships with Alaska Native peoples in a shared effort to protect the incredible land we call home.

This year's Statewide was a time of rich information sharing and, equally as important, connection. The bonds created over a shared meal, a game of pool, a guided fly-fishing trip on the Naknek River, all brought us together at a human level. We are all working in our corners of Alaska trying to keep this place wild and protected. As I reeled in the largest rainbow trout I'd ever seen, guided by Reuben who is native to Naknek, my deep appreciation of this place that is my new home was solidified. To be in the land where 90% of the world's salmon is harvested, where people have lived and thrived with the rainbow trout and bald eagles and bears for thousands of years, where a group of 20 individuals came together to fight for open land, was powerful.

I am eternally grateful for the Statewide experience I had and for all those who made the gathering possible. I am even more grateful for the opportunity to be living in Alaska, doing one small part in the greater effort to protect the history and magic of this place.



Mayday, Mayday!

CONTRIBUTED BY DAN MARSDEN KHLT Stewardship Coordinator

PHOTO CREDIT

JEN CHAUVET, Natural Resource Specialist, Homer Soil and Water Conservation District

Amanda Kelly, Homer Council on the Arts (HCOA) staff member and KHLT supporter, discovered the invasive Mayday tree, also known as European Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*) or Chokecherry, during one of her many outings to KHLT's Calvin and Coyle Nature Trail, located adjacent to the Homer Airport Critical Wildlife Habitat Area and near downtown Homer.

Amanda Kelly and Courtney Dodge, former KHLT stewardship staff, began the process of flagging and removing trees after positively identifying them with support of plant specialists from the Homer Soil and Water Conservation District (HSWCD). The Mayday tree is of special concern as it outcompetes native plants, disrupting moose habitat and food availability.

Going the extra mile, Amanda had the fantastic idea of bringing KHLT and HSWCD together with HCOA to first help remove the Mayday trees from Calvin and Coyle and later make this a HCOA community art project and outreach event. HSWCD agreed to bring their expert advice on removal techniques, and generously proposed a comprehensive plant survey on land KHLT owns to locate and identify the spread of invasive species.

The Mayday tree has a few characteristics that make it destructive to ecosystems and wildlife. When consumed regularly, this species can be fatal to moose as the leaves, seeds, or buds react with chemicals in the rumen, releasing cyanide gas. Secondly, there have been studies indicating the potential for these plants to affect salmon populations by altering streambank plant and insect composition, thereby threatening food availability.

With the help of our partners and volunteers, the Calvin and Coyle restoration project was a success, properly disposing of all flagged

Mayday trees and saving a select few for a wood carving class.

The wood carving class at HCOA was a powerful final piece to our invasive management partnership. The sold-out class was full of eager and attentive folks ready to learn about invasive plants, land management, and most importantly, how to carve a kitchen utensil! Local artist Tony Perelli was an engaging and thoughtful teacher as he walked the participants through the tools, process, art, and mindset of creating a meaningful object from wood.

As always, with rapid detection and response, our community can stay ahead of the curve and help manage the spread of invasives. HSWCD advises landowners who are interested in treating their own infestations to use systemic herbicides to cut stumps to effectively kill all parts of the plant, as cutting alone triggers additional re-growth. Please consider contacting HSWCD, State of Alaska DNR, or UAF Cooperative Extension for more information.

Special thanks to our volunteers Alex Kopland, Bill Wuestenfeld, and Desiree Hagan and our partners including Katherine Schake, Jen Chauvet, and Patrick Houlihan from HSWCD; Amanda Kelly from HCOA; and wood artist Tony Perelli, for making this collaborative endeavor a grand success.



Land Trust Alliance Leadership Council

**GAINING
GROUND**

Together, saving land for us all

Land Trust Alliance
Together, conserving the places you love

This summer, our fabulous Executive Director, Marie McCarty, was invited to join the 60-member national Land Trust Alliance Leadership Council. This invitation is a huge honor and a recognition of the impactful work Marie has done in her roles at Kachemak Heritage Land Trust over the past 24 years.

The Leadership Council is a forum for dialogue, collaboration, and innovation serving as an advisory body to Land Trust Alliance management and its board of directors. Participating in the Leadership Council will bring national attention to private land conservation in Alaska. This honor recognizes the hard work Marie has done and the major land protection KHLT has accomplished since 1989. The invitation is an indication that KHLT as an organization has made meaningful, positive impacts in our community.

"This September I attended my first meeting of the Land Trust Leadership Council at the national Land Trust conference in New Orleans. To be in the room with this group of experienced and talented land conservationists was humbling as we discussed the need to significantly increase the pace of private land conservation. The land trust community's Gaining Ground initiative was the topic of much discussion. It is an initiative that prioritizes wildlife habitat conservation, providing access to everyone to land, addressing issues of climate change, and ensuring there is land preserved for the future — all good things that private land conservation supports."

– MARIE MCCARTY, Executive Director, KHLT

"I'm so excited that Marie has been invited to participate in the Land Trust Alliance Leadership Council. The invitation speaks to the respect Marie has at the national level and is a huge opportunity for KHLT and other Alaska land trusts to contribute to important land conservation topics. Marie has great experience to share and can bring what she learns from others back to Alaska. Congratulations, Marie!"

– DONNA ADERHOLD,
President, KHLT Board of Directors

For more information on this initiative and a good short video introducing this initiative, visit: www.landtrustalliance.org/land-trusts/gaining-ground



Shorebird Festival Celebration

Starting in 2013, a collaborative group spearheaded by Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, the City of Homer, and The Independent Living Center, in addition to many community stakeholders, came together to create a beautiful, useful and inclusive space that honors the history and natural environment of Homer. After ten years of planning, fundraising, building, and improving, Homer residents and visitors can enjoy the universally accessible Poopdeck Platt Community Park Trail.

To celebrate this accessible natural oasis in the middle of town and the recent "Birdability" approved trail, Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, Independent Learning Center TRAILS Program, and the City of Homer hosted a ribbon cutting, a guided birding outing, and a neighborhood celebration. Dave Trudgen, Dave Erikson, Carla Stanley, and Eliana Kramer guided local and visiting birders along the public trail, right in the heart of town, pointing out sights and sounds of resident and migratory birds. Birdability is a non-profit organization whose mission is to share the joys of birding with people who have disabilities, and to ensure birding is accessible to everyone. More information can be found at www.birdability.org.

Following the guided tour, locals and visitors gathered on KHLT's office lawn, for a neighborhood cookout. It was wonderful to get together, in person, to celebrate the spring weather, the return of the shorebirds, and the completion of



the public trail while enjoying a bite to eat from Parley food truck and a drink from Homer Kombucha on Tap. Thank you to everyone who made this event possible and for the wonderful support for our first in-person event since 2019!

From the Land Transactions Desk

CONTRIBUTED BY LARUEN RUSIN KHLT Conservation Projects Manager

What a year for land conservation on the Kenai Peninsula! Working with partners and through various grants, agreements, networking with landowners, public outreach and mailings, mapping efforts, and so much more, KHLT has been able to directly protect 162.64 acres of land and work with others to protect 226.61 acres of land.

That's **389.25 acres** of land on the Kenai Peninsula now protected in perpetuity for fish and wildlife habitat, open space, and the benefit of our communities! Protecting this mostly undisturbed land now is more important than ever as pressure from the burgeoning population on the peninsula is resulting in the subdivision and development of our great wilderness.

It may seem hard to fathom, with Alaska's vast forests and sprawling wetlands, but the fish and wildlife that are so dearly important to our way of life are being threatened more and more each and every day. Habitat loss in the lower 48 has resulted in serious declines in animal populations and literal destruction of some salmon populations. In order for us to prevent that same fate on the Kenai Peninsula, we must act now before all of the large private tracts of forest and wetland are lopped into pieces and developed. Human population growth is a reality and rather than fight that fact, we can instead work to protect the most vulnerable and important properties, while conceding that development will occur on others.

While we know what we have to do to protect our Alaskan way of life, we run into bottlenecks by way of lack of time, money, and people power. Currently we at KHLT are working with Pittman

Robertson moose habitat funding, US Fish and Wildlife Coastal Program funds, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities mitigation funds, and many other funding sources to cobble together, with generous donations from the public, funds to protect the most important parts of the Kenai Peninsula. As we continue to be creative with grant writing and fund-seeking, every dollar donated by individual supporters means so much to protecting wildlife habitat and open space in this beautiful place while it still exists to protect.

KHLT is poised to protect more land on the Kenai Peninsula than ever before. We have been approached with a slew of potential projects this year that we would love to take on, but cannot commit to in perpetuity with our current financial and personnel resources. In order to protect more land, we need to grow. With more people power, we can save more land. Now is the time to increase your contributions to KHLT so we can level up to reach the conservation needs of our community.



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350 BONANZA AVE

In our 2022 spirit of growth and capacity building, KHLT made a big step this winter... we bought an additional office building! Just 210 steps from our Poop-deck Platt main office, we are lovingly calling this building our "East Wing." KHLT's investment in this building gives us a diversified and appreciating portfolio in addition to providing more physical room to increase our staff and therefore save more land. Thank you to former occupants and good friends, Haas & Spigelmyer, for helping to make this a reality. Come say hello to Marie and Heather when you're in town at 350 Bonanza Ave.

MANY THANKS TO

Alaska  Boats & Permits, Inc.

for supporting our Fish Need Land Too initiatives!

Congratulations to our Pack-Your-Pantry Raffle Winner!

Jessie, you hit the local food jackpot! Thank you so much to all the local businesses who donated to this year's raffle and to all those who purchased tickets. Even though you may not have won, your purchase supports KHLT's work to protect land on the Kenai Peninsula.

A special shout out to ULMER'S and CLAIRE with HOMER SAW & CYCLE !

We couldn't have done this without you!

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Pick.Click.Give. is an easy way for Alaskans to support your favorite non-profit by donating part of your permanent fund dividend. Please consider KHLT when applying for your 2023 PFD!



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