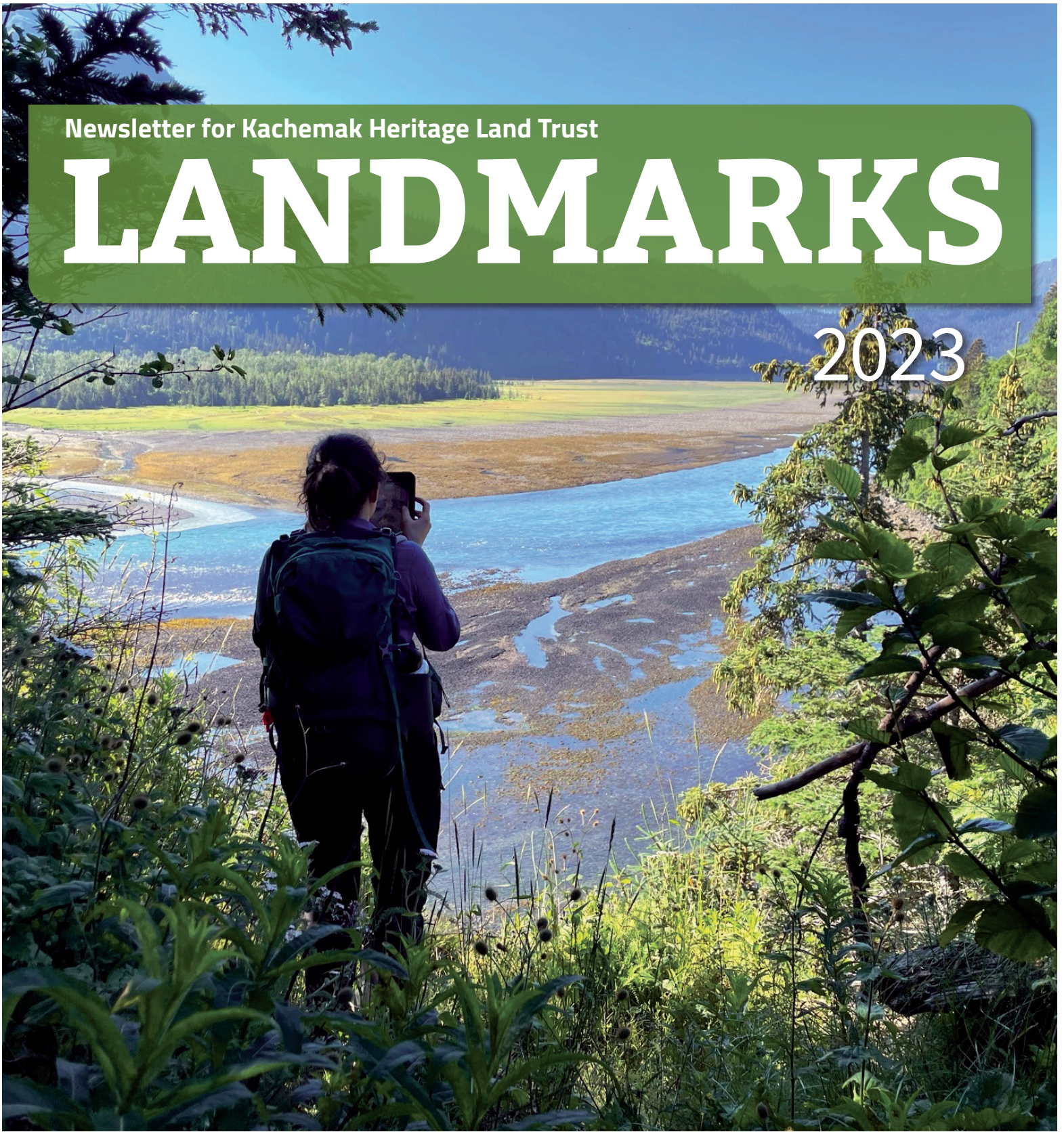


Newsletter for Kachemak Heritage Land Trust

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2023



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# Director's Column

## Perpetuity and Heels

Last April I wore heels and a suit.

One of the things I love about Alaska is that we dress as we please. We wear socks and sandals, Xtra Tuffs and skirts, down coats with shorts and leggings, and always have a wool hat in the back of the truck lying on a raincoat. Unfortunately, this year I also had mittens in my car all summer.

Last April when I visited with our Alaskan legislative delegation in Washington, D.C., I wore heels and a suit to attend the Land Trust Alliance's Advocacy Days. The simple act of dressing up made me appreciate just how much I love Alaska and our quirky independent lifestyle. We are in Alaska for a reason. For many, if not most, that reason is the place and the freedom to be yourself.

I brought our delegation the optimistic message of people just like you who make or support the amazing decision to protect land forever. Some of you choose to limit your impact on your property for the benefit of everyone. Sometimes that means placing a conservation easement on land, allowing the landowner to keep the land with permanent conservation restrictions. Sometimes people donate land for conservation. On occasion, KHLT buys land for conservation. And sometimes, we help other organizations acquire conservation land. We have specialized land transaction and management skills that benefit our community and a hands-on Board of Directors and talented staff at the ready. And we have people like you who donate, care for your land, and volunteer.

The message I carried to our legislators was heartfelt. After 25 years at KHLT, my passion for the people and place increases each year. There are many ways to protect land — through advocacy, education, legislation, and on the ground conservation. KHLT's niche is specialized and, most importantly, it's perpetual when most things in life aren't.

I can't save the world alone. You can't either. That means when I donate, I have to decide what organizations are on my list for donating my money.

When I figure out who I will donate to each year there is a set of questions I use to guide my decision-making including the following. You might have different questions.

- Do the organization's values align with mine?
- Does their work tug at my heart?
- Do they do what they say they will do?
- Are they having a lasting impact?
- Are they fiscally responsible?
- Is this a group I would like to be a part of?

You'll see the range and impact of KHLT as you enjoy this newsletter and I hope that we answer your contribution questions in a way that helps all of us build our conservation legacy in this beautiful place. There must be places set aside for conservation that will last and your participation in KHLT will help make that so.

Voluntary land protection truly is in everyone's interest.

**STAY INFORMED:**    
Search for "Kachemak Heritage Land Trust"

[www.kachemaklandtrust.org](http://www.kachemaklandtrust.org)

# Land and Sea

CONTRIBUTED BY LAUREN RUSIN KHLT Conservation Projects Manager

As Conservation Projects Manager for KHLT, I have been working to protect habitat for fish and wildlife on the Kenai Peninsula for almost seven years now! In addition to KHLT's efforts to protect open space and recreational properties for humans, our preservation of salmon and wildlife habitat has innumerable benefits.

On the Peninsula, it is much easier to determine the value of an acre of land than the value of a salmon in the Kenai River or a moose in one of the many critical habitat areas we are currently protecting. However, Kenai Peninsula salmon are hugely important to our tourism economy, guides who lead clients on rivers, and commercial drifters and seiners in Kachemak Bay and Cook Inlet.

This year and last year, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in harvesting a portion of the bounty of the Bristol Bay sockeye run. The Bristol Bay watershed supports the largest sockeye salmon run in the world, producing about 46% of the world's wild sockeye harvest. The fishery is valued at more than \$1.5 billion and provides nearly 20,000 jobs annually to people across the United States.

Witnessing thousands of drift boats and set netters travel to the fishing grounds and prepare for one of the last great migrations of animals on earth is truly awe inspiring. Commercial fishing is grueling, exhausting, painful, and powerful. Staying awake for hours on end, running on coffee and the shouts of the Skipper, radios

buzzing in the background, being completely soaked from the sky and the sea... it's heavy and monotonous. But then, there is a beauty and a rhythm and an actual magic working in harmony with the natural world. I am so appreciative of the great journey that these salmon endure, driven by instinct to return to their breeding grounds, providing nourishment for millions of people across the globe.

The connection I, and other fishermen, have to salmon is truly tangible during the summer season and really drives home, especially for me as a conservationist, the importance of fostering and protecting salmon habitat. Salmon are anadromous, which means that they spawn and rear in freshwater streams and then travel out to sea to feed for multiple years. KHLT is currently developing a strong and carefully considered program to encourage future communication and collaboration between land trusts and members of the commercial fishing industry to help broadcast the need for supportive land environments for salmon and to create partnerships to protect that land.



It is in the mutual interest of land trusts and fishermen to work together to ensure a healthy future for Kenai Peninsula salmon, and this effort is designed to bring these parties into conversation about the importance of land to fish. KHLT works to highlight the qualities of, and needs for, differing types of habitats during various life stages of salmon. Our goal is to ensure that the land portion of the salmon life cycle, where the salmon lay eggs and the next generation is born, is prioritized and valued when considering the future of Kenai Peninsula salmon.

KHLT's work to protect terrestrial salmon habitat has vast benefits to the fishing industry as well as to our uniquely Alaskan way of life. Continuing to conserve land near and adjacent to rivers, streams, and wetlands is critical to maintaining healthy salmon populations that most of us directly or indirectly depend on. Protection of this important habitat will continue to foster a productive fishery in Cook Inlet and beyond!

## A New Level of Appreciation

CONTRIBUTED BY DAVE TRUDGEN, KHLT Board Member

When I first drove onto the Kenai Peninsula in 1976, it was an awe-inspiring experience. With its rivers, lakes, and forests natural beauty was everywhere. I then made my way to Kachemak Bay and immediately knew this was a very special place. I thought that if I could live here, it would be amazing. Though I have never had the chance to live in Homer full time, in 2000 my wife and I were able to purchase, with friends, recreation property along Kachemak Bay. It was those friends that first introduced me to KHLT.

I was familiar with land trusts but did not know too much about KHLT. After learning more, it became very easy to begin supporting the organization. KHLT's primary purpose of "permanently protect[ing] important fish, bird and wildlife habitat as well as recreational lands on the Kenai Peninsula for the future" rang especially true for me. The more I learned about KHLT the more impressed I became.

I am a retired biologist with 40 years of working experience in Alaska, several years of which were in and around Kachemak Bay. One issue that became pointedly clear during my work experience was the importance of intact ecosys-

tems to maintain biological diversity and population abundance. The lands KHLT has been able to preserve represent the wide diversity of habitats on the Kenai Peninsula, helping to preserve those ecosystems. They are clearly accomplishing their primary purpose.

My support for and appreciation of KHLT has been inspired by the outstanding staff and its active board of directors. I have had the privilege of knowing several of the staff through the years. Their ability to identify and evaluate biological and recreational important lands, determine if they could be purchased, and follow through with securing funding and purchase of these lands is impressive. I also know several of the board members. They, too, are equally impressive and represent a diversity of backgrounds, helping KHLT to remain the flourishing land trust it has become. I have always been impressed with how well the board and staff work together to support this dynamic organization.

Recently, I was honored to be asked to become a new KHLT board member. Having the opportunity to join such a vibrant group is thrilling. It means a lot to me to be able to work with a



board that is as passionate as I am when it comes to protecting biologically significant lands for current and future generations. I look forward to working with fellow board members and staff as we evaluate potential properties to add to KHLT's portfolio. Whether floating a remote river or hiking an urban park trail, KHLT will help ensure such opportunities are available now and well into the future and I am proud to be part of it.





# Fish Need

## Land Too 2023

Kachemak Heritage Land Trust's journey into Fish Need Land Too events this year began at the Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership Science Symposium in Kenai. Together with Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, KHLT gave a presentation to the attendees about our science to management, boots-on-the-ground program that we call Fish Need Land Too. This weekend-long symposium was chock-full of dense scientific information about fish habitat and invasive species. It felt like a welcome moment of enthusiasm to present our fun, light-hearted, educational, and effective program we've created and honed over the past six years.

Fish Need Land Too (FNLT) is a collaborative program between KHLT and Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (KBNERR), where we take small groups of people into the field to discover how land benefits salmon. KBNERR biologists help participants discover how healthy habitat directly benefits salmon at all life stages and KHLT explains how conservation efforts help provide "room and board" for juvenile fish. It's been a really engaging way to get local landowners to connect further with their land, help decision makers connect the dots and make priorities, and inspire commercial fishermen to

advocate for the protection of terrestrial habitat for salmon.

KHLT and KBNERR got to lead two very different, but equally rewarding, FNLT trips this summer. In June, we gathered with neighboring landowners in Anchor Point to explore the Henry's Bridge area. We were joined by landowners, parents, and kids. Not only did we get to see the baby salmon in action, we got to talk about how the locals use and interact with this land.

In July, US Fish and Wildlife Services invited KHLT, KBNERR, and Cook InletKeeper to lead an afternoon in the field with the US Fish and Wild-





life Fisheries managers from across the country. Sue Mauger represented Cook Inletkeeper, a community-based nonprofit organization that combines advocacy, education, and science toward its mission to protect Alaska's Cook Inlet watershed and the life it sustains. The 3.5-hour field site visit showcased our ongoing and deep partnership. We shared expertise on the science of watershed and coastal ecological systems and how environmental research and monitoring has been informed by, and integrated into, a community engagement processes and on the ground land management for conservation.

We started at Stariski bridge where Sue discussed her work to monitor stream temperatures, cold water mapping, and the effects on salmon. We moved up to Henry's Bridge where Jacob Argueta and Syverine Bentz from KBNERR showed baby salmon in their native habitat and passed around a photarium with baby salmon in it. We learned about the benefits to salmon of tiny headwater streams. Then we headed to our final destination, the "top" of this chain, Stariski Meadows, where Marie McCarty from KHLT discussed the history of the property, KHLT's role in protecting it, and the "power of peat." Jacob with KBNERR took a core sample of peat to really show the sponge-like, thermal-blanket nature of peat — a critical piece of the salmon habitat puzzle that keeps Stariski Creek cool in the summer and warmer in the winter.

The feedback we received from the USFW folks was exciting — they really enjoyed getting onto the land that they work to protect and manage, usually from an office. It was powerful for them to see the key points of the watershed, how it is connected to provide habitat for salmon, and how our three partner organizations are working together to advocate for and protect this critical life sustaining system.



# Taking a Chance

CONTRIBUTED BY DAN MARSDEN, former KHLT Stewardship Coordinator

**Imagine this:** Bonfires and barbecues, birding events and food trucks, yard games and cork popping, conferences around the country, hiking with volunteers, tripping over downed spruce, laughing, falling into swamps, taking photos, protecting land, building trails, making maps, riding boats across the bay, making a difference, building community, building friendships, protecting baby salmon... I just described my experience, in brief, over my last 18 months at KHLT.

I'm not sure of anything. But I'm pretty sure life is just an experiment. When I applied to KHLT in the fall of 2021, I didn't know what to expect: I'd never been to Alaska before and it was far away from friends and family. I'd never worked for a land trust before. I didn't know anyone here (so I thought), didn't know if my car could make it across the country, and had not met KHLT staff in person. But, life is an adventure so I decided to go for it. I accepted the offer, packed my bags, and thus the experiment began.

And I'm glad I did. This was a special place to work. KHLT was a small home away from home and I appreciate that now, fully, with the clarity of hindsight. These people are my friends, whose relationships I hope will last many years to come. I decided to leave my position as Stewardship Coordinator at the Land Trust and will likely be gone by the time this article reaches publication. I am excited for what the future may bring, although this decision leaves me feeling sad to leave

behind such a great group of fun-loving people who care deeply about the planet. This includes all our board and committee members, volunteers (more on you in a bit), and generous donors. To every one of you... Thank you for the support.

Within our small but mighty stewardship crew, I want to thank Joel Cooper for distilling his abundant knowledge of natural resource management and having such a high standard of the work that we do. This also goes to Marie, Lauren, Heather, and Carson for leading your respective roles and being so much fun to be around. Lastly, to our volunteers. Our volunteers make the ongoing stewardship of the lands under our care a reality. Special thanks to Mike Mungoven, Amanda Kelly, Sabine Simmons, Alex Koplín, and Shirley Fedora for being down for whatever the wilderness throws at them. It's been great to get to know you personally and witness your incredible commitment to help advance our mission.

## THANK YOU!!

Now go forth and save more land (as Marie likes to say).





# 8,000+ Years of Shifting Baselines in Kachemak Bay

CONTRIBUTED BY MARILYN SIGMAN

**PHOTO** “Five people in rowboat with two sets of oars; shoreline in background with buildings and people.”  
Captain George H. Whitney Photograph Collection, Alaska State Library Historical Collections. 1896-1913. <https://aida.alaska.edu/digital/collection/cdmg21/id/12962/rec/8>

Ecological baselines don’t really exist, as I’ve been reminded sternly by ecologists, in the sense that there is a stable (and desirable) state (or states) of the ecosystem that every ecosystem is bound to return to after disturbance. Our human minds, however, work hard to create and sustain a stable, predictable world. We burnish our memories as baselines of how a place was and often mourn the changes, with nostalgia for who we were in that place and during that time.

When I began mourning the changes I saw in Kachemak Bay that were the consequences of a rapidly warming climate, I got the notion that the past held answers to how to live and thrive here—or not—even as the ecology inevitably shifted. I wondered how I might journey back in time to trace the trajectory of abundance in the particular place of Kachemak Bay. My journey took me through reams of archaeological and ecological data and theories and into the knowledge and stories handed down over generations of Dena’ina and Sugpiaq/Alutiiq that stretched back into time immemorial.

Historians and anthropologists would have told me this was a fool’s quest. It’s impossible to ever know what really happened, or what people were really thinking about reasons for settling into or leaving Kachemak Bay, over the 8,000 years for which there are archaeological artifacts of human societies here. Stories told with archaeological evidence in scientific journals don’t mesh neatly, or at all, with Indigenous stories of timeless relationships. Traditional ecological knowledge expands well beyond the limits of ecology as a science that requires a specific type and amount of evidence that connections exist between humans and other species.

The phenomenon of “shifting baselines” helped me make sense of the confusing welter of information as I sought a true and deep history of place and change. This concept emerged in fisheries management in a paper written by Daniel Pauly in the 1990s to describe how human perceptions about the “health” of a fish population changed over time. People who remember accurately that the salmon and halibut they caught were bigger in “the good old days” are often unaware that the fish were even bigger and more abundant before humans entered the picture with our increasingly efficient fishing technology. Pauly connected the same phenomenon, which he called the “shifting baselines syndrome,” to the people who manage fisheries—their baselines of abundance often begin when their career begins in the same way that fishermen remember the big fish they caught when they were younger. What’s lost in the use of reference points at the scale of individual lifetimes, Pauly concluded, is that the “perception of change,” becomes generational, with each generation redefining what’s “natural” and “normal.” In other words, we develop amnesia about past levels of abundance or scarcity in the context of shifts in ecology. What gets lost is our understanding of

the long-term nature of the human role in causing ecological shifts.

So baselines, I learned, are an artifact of human psychology. We create them at different scales – from personal memories that anchor us



“Man with moose antler trophy, circa 1896.” [Dall DeWeese]

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Man\\_with\\_moose\\_antler\\_trophy,\\_Alaska,\\_circa\\_1896\\_%28AL\\_%2BCA\\_424%29.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Man_with_moose_antler_trophy,_Alaska,_circa_1896_%28AL_%2BCA_424%29.jpg)



*Kachemak Bay is an edgy place. It straddles the edges of lands scarred by glaciers. The cooled ash of volcanoes is interwoven with the leavings of streams that meandered the landscape for millions of years. Glaciers and streams wrote their chapters into this land. The volcanoes provided punctuation, and an entire book lies beneath the rubble, written huge by the patterned, heaving rhythm of the world's tectonic heart. Beyond a southern horizon of peaks, the Pacific Plate nudges the North American Plate in the many-fathomed Aleutian Trench. The plates lock up and then bolt into earthquakes. The Pacific Plate dives down and bubbles back up as fiery lava.*

*The water shape-shifts, from bay to fog and cloud and back to the bay again as rain or snow. Currents and tides arrive from the south and depart to the north in a great counterclockwise gyre spun up by the moon and the revolving planet. The tides, with a range that is among the most extreme on Earth, are two enormous in-and-out breaths every day. The land recedes in trickles and sudden slips. The boundary of land and beach shifts, changing slowly—tide by tide, storm by storm—or suddenly.*

all to events and periods in our lives that were particularly ecstatic or traumatic to the historical baselines and norms of cultures, including the culture of Western science, and of societies. While the ecology has shifted dramatically in our region after an earthquake or a volcanic eruption, societies and cultures have also been shifted by

historical events, political movements, and ideas like colonialism, evolution, and conservation.

What emerged from my examination and meditations on human ecology in Kachemak Bay was the inflection point of change in ecological relationships after the explorers from the colonizing nations arrived. In a few hundred years, the ecological dynamic changed from one in which Indigenous hunters and gatherers depended on local fish and wildlife resources and traded regionally for millennia to one in which colonizing nations harvested fish and wildlife at an industrial

scale to satisfy distant desires for furs, fish, and whalebone corset stays. They depleted fish and wildlife populations and extirpated species in place after place. The fur traders, fishing fleets, and whalers moved on. In the case of seals and whales, whose oil fueled the stone lamps of Indigenous peoples and gave turn-of-the-century cities a warm glow, they were saved from extinction by the invention of kerosene and the use of fossil fuels. And the rest, as they say, is history—and an ecology centered around the quest to satisfy human needs and desires on a global scale.

The idea of conservation, the science, and the political will to regulate harvests to sustain them and to protect habitat eventually prevailed. But it came too late for the race of herring that wintered in Halibut Cove until the late 1920s. It came too late for the giant Kenai wolf that stood shoulder-high to a lion and roamed the Kenai Peninsula until 1915. The antlers of giant Kenai moose now rest in many dusty attics. Salmon and halibut are getting smaller.

In 1949, ten years before Alaska became a state, Aldo Leopold, an early pillar of scientific wildlife management, forged a land ethic for both public land managers and private landowners that mirrors the traditional ecological knowledge of Indigenous peoples. This land ethic expands the definition of “community” and “the land” to include not only humans, but all of the other parts of the Earth, as well: soils, waters, plants, and animals. The relationships between people and land are intertwined: care for people cannot be separated from care for the land. The land ethic is a moral code of conduct that grows out of these interconnected caring relationships.

KHLT’s mission of conserving the natural heritage of the Kenai Peninsula is rooted in these relationships and in a human community of individuals whose baselines of entry into that heritage may be vastly different. Our challenge is to be stewards of the lands and waters and fish and wildlife even as ecosystems inevitably shift.



“People standing by a building at Coal Point Station” (1892 in photo caption, 18957 written on the photo) Accompanied a Homer News article by Michael Armstrong. “Parks Day: Celebrating Early Homer Spit History, 7/23/2014. <https://www.homernews.com/life/parks-day-celebrating-early-homer-spit-history/>



“Men with a catch of a three-hundred-pound halibut, Homer Spit, 1904.” The men in the picture are “Mssrs. Smith, Stone, Penberthy, and Nikoli.” Penberthy was Homer’s first postmaster. PHOTO CREDIT: Stone R.W. Collection gypsum Mill, U.S. Geological Survey (srw0069.jpg)

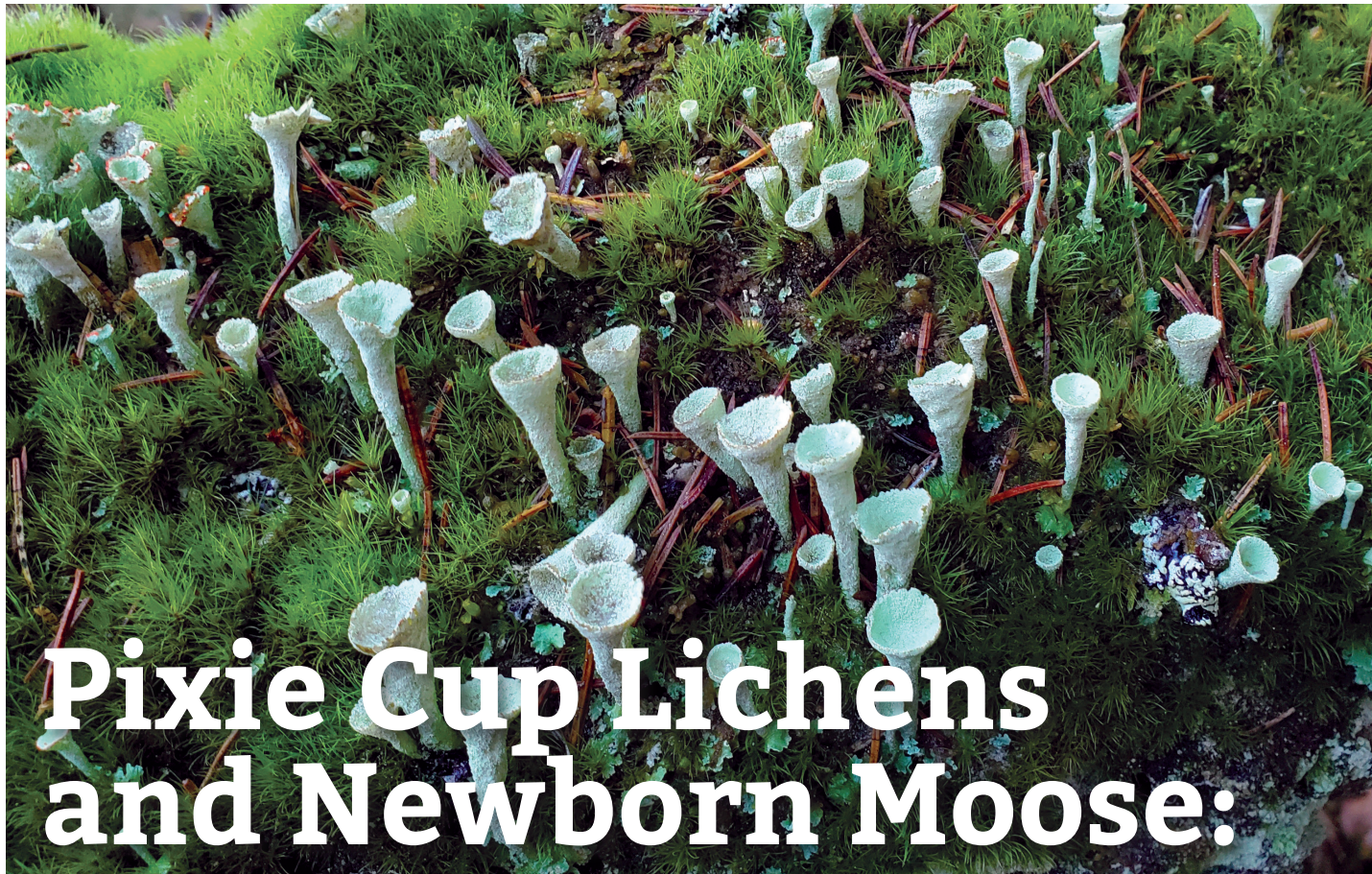


“Looking Up Bear Cove.” 1889? – 1904?

PHOTO CREDIT: Weatherbee Family Collection, UAF <https://vilda.alaska.edu/digital/collection/cdmg11/id/8164/rec/23>

The text in italics is excerpted from *Entangled: People and Ecological Change in Alaska's Kachemak Bay*, published by the University of Alaska Press in 2018. The book received the 2020 Burroughs Medal for distinguished natural history writing.





# Pixie Cup Lichens and Newborn Moose:

## The Joys and Responsibilities of Stewarding Land

CONTRIBUTED BY AMANDA KELLY, KHLT Stewardship Coordinator

I have a special affection for KHLT's popular Calvin and Coyle Trail. Although I didn't know it at the time, it was my first encounter with the Land Trust a few months before I moved to Homer and I was quickly enamored. It was late April and a drizzly rain saturated the earth with luscious greens of moss and ferns glowing in the forest. Since that time I've come to know the trail intimately, each turn marking a memory — here is where I saw a great gray owl, a varied thrush, a mama moose with two newborn calves, here is where a spruce grouse burst from the brush and gave me a fright.

I am now honored to be even more connected with this trail and the conservation land it traverses in my new role as Stewardship Coordinator. I help take care of this ambassador property so that others, too, can delight in the pixie cup lichens and fungus faces in the trees.

Our beloved community trail sees a lot of use, especially in the summer months. In June alone, trail logs show that Calvin and Coyle received visitors from at least 40 other states and 16 countries. Alaskans stopped by from all over the state. Most folks signing the register were first-time visitors and it's likely most frequent trail users do not sign the register every visit, if at all.

This summer, with help from Cameale Johnson of Homer Trails Alliance, we installed a trail counter at the Calvin and Coyle Woodland Park trailhead. Gaining further insight about the amount of foot traffic can help direct our management efforts. One thing is clear — the trail could be even better with some key improvements, but we can't do it alone! Trail maintenance requires substantial funding for supplies and staff time. Help from volunteers allows us to accomplish more with our limited resources. We've installed a QR code on the trailhead kiosk encouraging trail users to donate directly to the Calvin and Coyle Trail Fund.



*Do you love trails?*

Please contact Amanda at [amanda@kachemaklandtrust.org](mailto:amanda@kachemaklandtrust.org) to find out more about volunteering and supporting the trail fund!



# Foraging Spruce Tips

CONTRIBUTED BY AMANDA KELLY, KHLT Stewardship Coordinator

This summer we held our third spruce tip picking party — a group effort to collect 30 pounds of spruce tips for production of a special beer. Sales of Kenai River Brewing Company's Spruce Tip Double IPA support our conservation work. Beer is not the only delicious thing you can make with spruce tips!



Here are some ideas to help you get creative with this aromatic and nutritious foraging find.

- **Simple syrup for cocktails or mocktails**
- **Mead** (offered seasonally at Sweetgale Meadworks!)
- **Jelly**
- **Tea**
- **Shortbread** (finely chopped and folded into the batter)
- **Infused salt or sugar**
- And my personal favorite:  
**Finely chopped spruce tips mixed into natural vanilla ice cream.** I like to add dark chocolate shavings, too! You could take this even further with homemade spruce tip ice cream from scratch.

Are we missing something? Let us know if you have other great spruce tip ideas!

**FUN FACT** Kenai River Brewing Company backs up to almost 29 acres of KHLT-protected land along Soldotna Creek and the Kenai River.

## Highlights from the trail register

- Fields, streams, forest — wonderful biodiversity in compact space.
- No bears, no moose, however there might be some fairies :)
- Fab, absolutely fab. The walk is gorgeous.
- What a joy — listening to hermit thrush as we discovered new plants!
- Loved this trail! Perfect hike!
- Beautiful afternoon light.
- Half walk, found grouchy antlered moose. Skedadddled!
- Magical trail & aggressive mosquitos!
- Awesome! Can't wait for mushrooms!
- Thunder! We heard thunder!
- An incredible experience for me! Thank you!
- Thanks for keeping a nice trail open for us!
- Nice, peaceful, lots of moose tracks!
- Really beautiful, nice trail.
- No animals — yes, 2 birds. Nice boardwalks. Saw God.

## 2023 international visitors

England, Ecuador, Switzerland, Israel, Netherlands, Thailand, Canada, Costa Rica, Germany, New Zealand, Australia, Russia, Ukraine, Malaysia, Belgium, Italy, and "God's Country"

**41 states logged in 2023 in addition to AK**





# 2023 Events Highlights

KHLT jumped back into the world of events in 2023 after a few quiet years due to the pandemic. Check out the quotes and highlights from attendees and facilitators below.



## Shorebird Festival

### Birding at Louie's Lagoon

*"The group of people who joined us during the Shorebird Festival expressed great interest in Louie's Lagoon and we had an intriguing conversation about birds and habitat. I enjoyed introducing new people to a shoreline I get to visit every month."*

— DONNA ADERHOLD, KHLT Board President

## Coastal Habitats, Pacific Birds

### Joint Habitat Venture

*"We spent a beautiful morning on Homer Spit, birdwatching and learning about the conservation history of Louie's Lagoon. What a fantastic opportunity to gather with Shorebird Festival goers — many of whom made their own long migrations to travel to Kachemak Bay — to marvel at these amazing migratory shorebirds and their stopover habitats. Special thanks to Kachemak Heritage Land Trust for facilitating!"*

— LAURA FARWELL, Conservation Coordinator



## Volunteer Party

*"The Fish-A-Que was a fun event and a pleasure to be a part of. Grilling mounds of rockfish, touching base with friends old and new, supporting the Land Trust was a great way to spend an afternoon. Thanks for inviting me."*

— DAVE BRANN, KHLT Volunteer and "Land at Heart Award" Recipient



## Forest to Kitchen

*"I was delighted to guide a foraging field trip that connected people to KHLT lands. The foray provided a learning opportunity and sensory experience for those whose minds, bodies and spirits yearn for nature's nourishment."*

— KIM MCNETT, Naturalist and Artist



*"My experience preparing for the class, meeting the other instructors and working with them, with Carson and Marie, and conducting the class was so educational, enjoyable, and fulfilling. I also have a new appreciation for KHLT and their mission. This experience was a unique and inspiring journey from the forest and field to the kitchen and table."*

— TERI ROBL, Local Chef



## Blueberries & Birds

*"Hiking up Grace Ridge on the Blueberries and Birds walk was absolutely incredible. Any one of us could have chosen to stay home on what appeared to be a gray drizzly day, but would have missed an absolutely enchanting day of camaraderie and an experience only being outside in nature avails. We had so much fun, laughing, "ooing and ahing" at the variety of mushrooms along the trail, the huge trees, the fall colors, sharing food and looking for berries on the magical tapestry of amazing colors in the alpine. The rain and fog lent a beautiful element of lighting and intimacy up top. At the end of a long day, covered in mud, we all were so happy to have experienced the very memorable day we did. It was truly enchanting!"*

— RIKA MOUW, KHLT Volunteer and Supporter

## Bounty on the Bay

*"The folks at Kachemak Bay Wilderness Lodge in China Poot Bay graciously and generously offered to host a beautiful farm-to-table fundraiser dinner in support of KHLT this summer. The crew put in an immense amount of time and effort to create a fantastic menu, a magical ambiance, and a truly local meal. Unfortunately, we couldn't escape some bad fortune — a Covid outbreak forced us to cancel this special event. We hope to try again next year! If you missed out this year, be sure to check out our website for information next spring/summer so you can get tickets before we sell out."*



— CARSON CHAMBERS, Communications & Development Manager KHLT

### Want to get involved in our upcoming events?

You can check out current and future event opportunities on our [website](#) or by following us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).

*We look forward to you joining us!*

**GET INVOLVED:** [f](#) [@](#)  
Search for "Kachemak Heritage Land Trust"

[www.kachemaklandtrust.org](http://www.kachemaklandtrust.org)



# Legacy Giving

Leaving a legacy gift offers individuals like you an opportunity to carry a gift far into the future. For some people, legacy giving can be a way to contribute to organizations they care about when they have not had the ability to make gifts during their lifetime.

A legacy gift, or bequest, is a gift made to charity in your will or trust. A significant benefit of making a bequest gift of land to KHLT is that it allows you to continue to use the property during your life. Please talk to us first – come in or call us before you give a legacy gift whether it is land, cash, or something else. Take time to share your vision, concerns, and timeline. Discuss our conservation requirements and our unique options. With careful planning, donors may receive financial benefits while creating a meaningful legacy.



## You can make a legacy gift by:

- Including KHLT in your will
- Gifting through a qualified pension plan (401K, IRA, 403b)
- As a beneficiary of your life insurance policy

If you are interested in making a gift, contact us today. Your inquiry is always confidential. Contact Executive Director, Marie McCarty at [marie@kachemaklandtrust.org](mailto:marie@kachemaklandtrust.org) or call (907) 235-5263.

It is important to discuss all potential donations or sales with an attorney and/or tax advisor, as each person's situation is unique. KHLT does not provide specific tax or legal advice.

*"In the early 90's I got involved with this fledgling land trust. I was helping friends collect recyclables in Homer. We separated, organized, and finagled free transport with Linden trucks to get them up to Anchorage. It was a lot of work with very few volunteers. I built a glass breaker using a 55 G drum with motor and chains to shatter the glass. By then we were able to locate at the Homer landfill building. Eventually, we met with the Kenai borough mayor and they said they would take it over. It was a very empowering experience and well worth the reward of seeing recycling scale up in the borough level.*

*My religion has always been my deep love and connection with nature. So, being a good steward of my personal properties has always been a priority. KHLT has scaled that up to help preserve especially key critical habitats. It's a wonderful organization that really helps the planet. Like nature, I now feel the seasons changing within me. So when I rewrote my will, I was drawn to share a percentage of it with KHLT. As time moves on I'm drawn to increase that percentage."*

— NEIL WAGNER

## Congratulations to our Pack-Your-Pantry Raffle Winner!



Our Pack-Your-Pantry local food raffle was such a success last year, we did it again! **Congratulations to this year's big winner, Mel Strydom!**

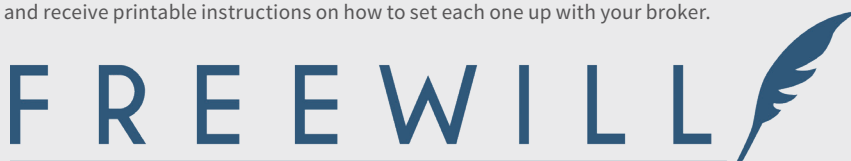
Thank you so much to all the local businesses who donated to this year's raffle and to all those who purchased tickets.

For those who didn't strike it lucky, your purchase supports KHLT's work to protect land on the Kenai Peninsula, thank you!

### LOCAL DONORS

Alaska Salt Co.  
Alaska Stems  
Blood, Sweat & Food Farms  
Bridge Creek Birch Syrup & Lamb  
Homer Hilltop Farm  
Jakolof Bay Oyster Co.  
Quickwater Adventure Seafoods of Alaska  
The Classic Cook  
Twitter Creek Gardens  
Two Sisters Bakery  
Ulmer's Drug & Hardware  
Will Grow Farm

**Have you heard of FreeWill?** This online will-writing resource takes just 20 minutes to use and helps create your legal will and legacy gift at no immediate cost. With their secure online tool, you can make your plan and designate a portion of your legacy to Kachemak Heritage Land Trust to secure the future of land on the Kenai Peninsula. Use FreeWill's online tool to log your assets, name Kachemak Heritage Land Trust as beneficiary, and receive printable instructions on how to set each one up with your broker.







# King Maker

## and a Land at Heart Award

Kachemak Heritage Land Trust crowned both a King Maker and a Land at Heart award recipient at the Annual Meeting of the Members at Alice’s Champagne Palace on Tuesday, December 6, 2022. Each year, KHLT recognizes an individual who has been an outstanding leader in conservation with the Land at Heart award.

This year’s Land at Heart award went to a long-time KHLT supporter, extraordinary stewardship volunteer, and all-around exceptional community member, Mike Mungoven. Mike is a retired Natural Resources Conservation Service soil scientist and has been one of KHLT’s most steadfast volunteer monitors. He has been to all of KHLT’s protected properties and has likely been to all photo points for each of those properties. Mike assisted with KHLT’s Krishna Venta Conservation Area and Bon-durant Restoration projects, was involved with the Poopdeck Platt Community Park Trail construction, and the maintenance of all of KHLT’s trails. Mike’s passion for land conservation is what drives his commitment to KHLT and the land itself. He and his wife, Lisa Climo, are important partners in protecting land in perpetuity.

Alaska Boats & Permits has been recognized as this year’s recipient of the King Maker Award from Kachemak Heritage Land Trust. The King Maker Award recognizes Alaskans making a difference for salmon. The goal of King Maker is to share with people the value of protecting habitat critical to salmon, helping to ensure long-lasting conservation. KHLT has crowned a King Maker

annually since 2016. Alaska Boats & Permits, Inc. (ABP) was founded in 1997 in Homer, Alaska, by (according to their website) two small-boat fishermen, a retired librarian, and a recovering

attorney, with a borrowed fax machine and a rolodex. The “recovering attorney” is William “Wild Bill” DeVries. Bill was a longtime supporter of KHLT. So much so, that the land trust created a special stewardship fund in his name — the Wild Bill Fund.

Around five years ago, ABP began to see some new faces. The organization is now a family-run business owned and operated by the BOWENS and LIGHTSEYS. The BOWENS came to Homer in the 1980s as fishermen and they raised their two daughters, Maddie and Molly, in this fishing town. The family has kept the ABP tradition of supporting local nonprofits alive. A couple years ago, KHLT’s Stewardship Director, Joel Cooper, spoke with Doug Bowen about KHLT’s Fish Need Land Too programs and it clicked for Doug — land protection is important because salmon need land to reproduce and Alaskans need salmon to survive. Last year, Maddie, Doug, and the entire ABP team have worked with KHLT to do outreach and fundraising geared towards commercial fisherman. They are helping spread the word that baby salmon live in tiny streams in our backyards and that fish need land too.





# Rally Reflections

Each year, the Land Trust Alliance organizes a national conference for land trusts and partners from across the country to gather. This year's conference was held in Portland, Oregon. Marie, Joel, and Carson were able to attend in large part due to generous donations of airline miles from KHLT supporters, thank you!



*"I came away from the national land trust conference in Portland with practical new skills in land transactions and creative new ideas about nontraditional ways to approach conservation. Topics ranged from how to consider groundwater in land conservation planning to the complexities of the tax code. KHLT and Southeast Alaska Land Trust co-hosted an afternoon meeting to learn from our colleagues from the Lower 48 about how best to develop a statewide association of land trusts. The meeting was attended by multiple representatives of all of the Alaskan land trusts. We are immensely grateful to the following folks for taking the time to provide guidance and support:*

*Glenn Lamb, former Director of the Columbia Land Trust and a Land Trust Alliance Board member Teri Murrison, Executive Director for the Idaho Coalition of Land Trusts Curt Soper, recently retired Executive Director of Chelan-Douglas Land Trust and current Vice President of the Board for Washington Association of Land Trusts Brad Paymer, Western Division Director of Field Programs at Land Trust Alliance, Laura Farwell and Monica Iglecia of Pacific Birds Joint Venture. This meeting was the kickoff event for exploring how to develop a statewide land trust association."*

— MARIE MCCARTY, KHLT Executive Director



*"I just attended my third Land Trust Alliance Rally in Portland. As Stewardship Director, I am grateful to attend Rally as it is an invaluable opportunity to learn from other land trusts and to keep up with advancing technologies that help improve KHLT's stewardship program. Many thanks to our special donor who covered my costs for attending Rally! One of my favorite things to do at Rally is attend the Stewardship Roundtable discussion where stewardship staff from all over the country share their stories about how they are managing their lands. There is so much to learn from this discussion and I always walk away feeling like I have a better perspective on how to deal with such things as third-party trespass, project approvals, trail maintenance, and public inquiries. I attended several workshops where I increased my knowledge about conservation easement amendments, discretionary approvals, stewardship staffing, use of data and remote sensing tools, and partnering with Tribes. I also like to check all the booths where I can look for the latest advancements in technology that can assist stewardship staff monitoring and management of KHLT's portfolio. This year, I found a web-based platform for remote monitoring utilizing satellite, aerial, and environmental data. This allows stewardship staff to identify changes, track projects, and assess ecological conditions changing over time. KHLT has already started using this nifty tool to increase our staff efficiency and improve our analytical capabilities."*

— JOEL COOPER, KHLT Stewardship Director

*"Rally benefited me and my greater organization professionally by introducing me to new ways of thinking about a variety of land trust related topics. The courses and seminars I took gave me new ideas and perspectives related to fundraising, marketing, outreach, and broadening organizational diversity. I will be able to incorporate these ideas, suggestions, and perspectives into my work as the Communications & Development Manager for Kachemak Heritage Land Trust. As a result of Rally, there are a few different fundraising pieces that I'd like to incorporate into our work and there are current diversity and inclusion initiatives that I want to continue to pursue.*

*And, we are currently taking steps to increase organizational DEI education and training in an effort to reach and represent a broader audience. Much of our work has been focused on learning about Alaskan Native peoples. After Rally, I feel confident that we are on the right track and doing the work we need to do. It's a long road ahead, but it's the right path. The best part of Rally, for me, was getting to connect with the other Alaska land trust folks in person. It was so fun to see everyone again!"*

— CARSON CHAMBERS, KHLT Communications and Development Manager



Learn More  
about Land Trust Alliance Rally







# Home Away

## From Home

CONTRIBUTED BY JOE DONLEY, KHLT's Summer Law Student Intern

My internship formally began with KHLT in June of this year but the journey to this position really started in July of 2022. I was touring Alaska with my wife, a couple of friends, and my in-laws for my mother-in-law's birthday. Our tour had allotted two days in Homer where we engaged in all things touristy. We walked Bishop's Beach, wandered around the Spit, went halibut fishing, and we were in awe of the natural beauty that surrounds this community. As I sat in our hotel on our last evening here, I thought to myself, "How can I come back and when can I come back?" I did not anticipate returning less than a year later.

While searching for a place to get dinner, I noticed our hotel was near Kachemak Heritage Land Trust. At this point, I did not know what a land trust was or what they do. What I did know was that I was entering my second year of law school at Elon University School of Law in North Carolina and I desired to work in the environmental field and more specifically with land use regulations. So, I took a chance and sent an inquiry through the KHLT site. A few weeks later, an email from Marie hit my inbox. It is the same enthusiastic and bubbly demeanor that we have all come to expect from Marie and she was thrilled that I was interested, but the internship is typically advertised to Vermont Law and Graduate School students. This was great news, as I am a VLGS student, and I am working towards a Master of Environmental Law and Policy alongside a J.D. from Elon University.

When I arrived for my first day, I was oddly calm. Especially for a perpetually nervous person. However, this opportunity felt different, it felt like something I had been building towards my entire life. Suddenly, it was a reality. On the first day I met Marie, Carson, and Lauren at the Klondike office. Lauren's dog Petey instantly

insisted that I was his long-lost best friend and snuggled right up to me while we discussed KHLT, each other, and the work we would be doing. After this initial meeting, I knew that KHLT's work and



the city of Homer would become my home away from home.

Since then, I have had many notable and beneficial experiences not only in my professional career but my development as a person and as an environmental advocate. I have monitored various properties with Amanda, attended "Fish Need Land Too" events with Carson and Marie, learned the ins-and-outs of non-profit finances with Heather, watched the process of land acquisitions with Lauren, and compiled information and management plans alongside Joel. Outside of work, the staff gave me numerous recommendations and suggestions to explore this amazing place. I traveled to Port Alsworth, went whale watching in Seward, bear viewing in Katmai National Park, hiking across Kachemak Bay, and explored as much as I could. I want to thank all of you for the kindness and helpfulness you have demonstrated to me during my time here. It will not be forgotten, and I intend to turn these many lessons and experiences into a basis for my future work in preserving and conserving lands around the United States for the use and enjoyment of future generations.



# Familiar Faces

This spring, a few familiar faces joined KHLT in brand new capacities. Dave Trudgen, a long-time KHLT supporter and Courtney Dodge, KHLT's former Stewardship Coordinator, are our newest Board Members. Former volunteer and contract staff, Amanda Kelly, joined the team as our Stewardship Coordinator. We are thrilled to have these land-trust die-hards on our team in new capacities. Please give them a warm welcome when you see them around town!

## Amanda Kelly

Amanda grew up outside of Atlanta and spent a few years in Florida before coming to Homer in 2016. She first got involved with KHLT as a volunteer in 2017 and has since contributed as a seasonal employee and contractor, gaining experience which led her to join the team full time. Previously, she spent many years working in restaurants and 3+ years at Homer Council on the Arts. Amanda loves hiking, foraging, tide pooling, making art, reading, camping, and adventuring with her partner and their dog.



## Courtney Dodge

Courtney has had a lifelong interest in conservation with various stints of it being her livelihood. A Homer resident for seven years, Courtney enjoys foraging for and learning about the wild edibles and medicinals in Alaska and going on hiking adventures with her dog Lando and husband Jacob. Courtney worked as KHLT's Stewardship Coordinator for five years prior to her role on the Board of Directors. Courtney looks forward to continuing to support KHLT in this new role and capacity. She's optimistic about what the future holds for conservation in the Homer area and on the Kenai Peninsula.



## Dave Trudgen

After graduating from Michigan State University in 1976 with a Wildlife Biology degree, Dave Trudgen loaded up his old VW van and moved to Alaska where he has worked and lived ever since. Dave is a retired wildlife biologist and environmental consultant whose forty years of work experience would serve him well as a KHLT board member. He has a diverse background working both in the public and private sectors. His work experience includes Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the University of Alaska's Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center (AEIDC), The Alaska Energy Authority (AEA), Alyeska Pipeline Service Company and OASIS Environmental (now ERM Alaska).



Dave's interest in KHLT began over 20 years ago when he and his wife Marcia along with other partners purchased property in Homer at the head of McNeal Canyon and became supporters of KHLT. This was a dream come true for Dave. The importance of KHLT's mission of "preserving irreplaceable lands on the Kenai Peninsula" cannot be overstated.

## 2023 KHLT Quick Stats

- 6 Full-time Staff
- 9 Board Directors
- 46 Protected Properties
- 3,898.09 Acres Under Our Care
- 28 Conservation Easements
- 18 Fee Owned Properties
- 3 Public Trails in Homer
- 30+ Annual Volunteers
- 184 Members



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