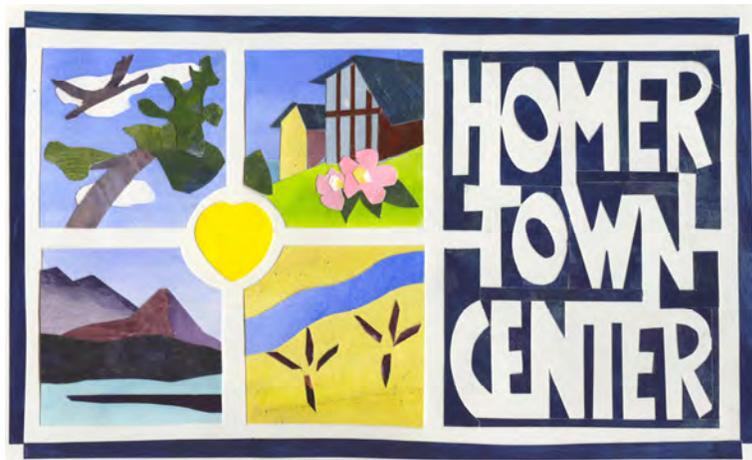




LANDMARKS

SPRING 2006 NEWSLETTER OF KACHEMAK HERITAGE LAND TRUST

TOWN CENTER SUCCESS!



Artwork by Bradley Booth, reprinted by permission

Back in 1998, Kachemak Heritage Land Trust created the Homer Town Square Committee and began an open, public dialogue with community members, downtown property owners, local merchants and city staff. The goal of the Committee was to collaboratively create a vision for downtown intended to enhance economic development and the quality of life for area residents and visitors, and shape a central business district that will instill a greater sense of community and pride in Homer's downtown area.

The first phase of this project, funded initially by the Alaska Conservation Foundation's Sustainable Communities grant program, was to facilitate a series of town meetings and begin conceptual design of the town center and its pedestrian linkages. An "Opportunities and Constraints" report, completed by Dames and Moore and commissioned by the Homer Town Square Committee, described the central business district and provided narrative and maps including land use, slopes and drainage, vegetation, and transportation and circulation patterns.

The Homer Town Square Committee held four well-attended town meetings in the project's first year, inviting people to share their likes and dislikes and their visions for downtown Homer and to learn about town center development in other communities. Spenser Havlick, Professor of Design with the University of Colorado at Boulder facilitated these (*cont. p. 8*)

DIRECTOR'S COLUMN



Dear friends,

I hope you enjoy our spring '06 newsletter! In this issue, you will find updates about the Anchor River mouth purchases, the Diamond Creek project, the Homer Town Center project and more. Without your support, none of this work would be possible -- your membership contributions are the backbone of our operations -- thank you!

Among our summer projects, I'm pleased to share the news with you that I was selected to attend a two-week "Enviropreneur Camp" hosted by the Property and Environment Research Center in Bozeman in June. I will learn about free-market environmentalism with KHLT's park land in the newly-established Homer Town Center in mind.

As most of you know, I have long been passionate about the Homer Town Center Project and the opportunity it presents to preserve open space and greenbelts within the heart of our developing home town. As with many projects in which we play a major role, our success depends on persistence, patience, professionalism and commitment.

KHLT's role as owner and developer of the open space anchor portion of Homer's town center requires that we continue to lead the way. It is imperative that we do the best job possible in developing a keystone property of the Town Center Development Plan, and, by example, demonstrate an ongoing effort to involve and benefit our community, both in terms of an economic engine and our local quality of life. This exceptional opportunity will allow me to spend time I would not otherwise have available specifically for this project. I hope to be able to increase the efficiency of development, discover free-market opportunities, and showcase the collaborative nature of this project. I will be considering a wide range of ideas and hope to use focused time and available professional assistance to bring ideas gathered to concrete action steps and a well-conceived and comprehensive plan. It's an exciting opportunity for me and for KHLT.

What we do now will help to immortalize natural lands, our sense of place, wilderness experiences and the quality of life in this relatively undeveloped world of ours. Thanks again for empowering us to permanently protect Peninsula treasures for ourselves and our kids.

Director's Discretionary Fund Kickoff!

Non-profit funding often comes restricted to specific projects and specific work. In an effort to fund those projects in greatest need at KHLT, we are pleased to announce a one year trial of KHLT's new Director's Discretionary Fund. This fund has been established to create an avenue for donors to directly assist executive director, Barb Seaman, to select priority projects most in need of gap filling funding within KHLT's annual budget. To contribute to this newly established fund, please contact Barb at (907) 235-5263 or at barb@kachemaklandtrust.org.



Generous Donation of Land on Raven's Ridge Subdivision

Former Homer residents Hans and Meghan Anderson have made a very generous contribution to KHLT by donating their 4.53 acre parcel in Homer's Raven Ridge Subdivision near Roger's Loop Road to KHLT to sell to benefit our conservation work. The property was received by KHLT in late December, and was sold shortly thereafter. By deed, the property is restricted to development of a homesite within a specified portion of the property that will not interfere with the adjacent wetlands.



Spectacular Films in Kachemak Nature Film Festival Benefit KHLT!

KHLT is pleased to have been offered the opportunity to work with the Homer Theater, the Kachemak Bay Shorebird Festival, and the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival staff to bring Homer's First Kachemak Nature Film Festival to town during Homer's 14th annual Shorebird Festival. This film festival featured the best of the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival and films ranged from Wolfgang Bayer's spectacular and moving film "Earthling" to the imaginative and entertaining "Dragons: A Fantasy Made Real".

Homer Theater owner, Jamie Sutton, reports that, "Lynette and I have long thought that the central beauty of Homer is the beauty of the land that is Homer. It has drawn to it remarkable people and it will continue to do so as long as we preserve and honor that land. So we chose the Kachemak Heritage Land Trust as our partner for the 1st Kachemak Nature Film Festival. We learned from this year's effort and each new year the film festival will improve. We hope the Trust will continue to be our partners in this undertaking in all of the years to come. We certainly want to continue to support all of your good works."

Huge thanks to the Homer Theater owners Jamie and Lynette Sutton, for contributing a percentage of the Festival proceeds to Kachemak Heritage Land Trust. Huge thanks also to theater manager Colleen Carroll and her staff for their tireless work on the festival.



Conservation Strategy Update

We are almost done with the first year of our work to create a Peninsula-wide conservation strategy. By June of 2006, we will have met with over 40 organizations involved in land use and management on the Kenai Peninsula, describing our conservation tools and successes, and asking for their assistance in locating the most significant land for conservation.

In the second year of this project, we will rank the criteria to apply to the conservation values, layer and display the data with explanatory narrative, and widely and aggressively advertise our findings and work to permanently protect priority land. In the second year we will be gathering local knowledge as the last important layer of information to guide our strategy. We will implement our strategy by directly contacting key landowners to encourage protection of their land. We will share our findings with the public and interested professionals through presentations and an informational newsletter for developers, realtors, estate planners, mitigation entities and other organizations. Please call (907) 235-5263 if you have information to share and would like to participate. Many thanks to the funders of the first year of our project: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Coastal Program, The Pacific Coast Joint Venture, The True North Foundation, The Alaska Conservation Foundation, The Homer Foundation, the Skaggs Foundation, the Charlotte Martin Foundation, and those who contributed to our annual appeal!



WELCOME KARYN NOYES, NEW STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR

Although new to KHLT, Karyn has worked on the Kenai Peninsula for the past 12 years, and has experience in many aspects of natural resource management. Most recently she was involved in the classification and mapping of area wetlands for the Kenai Watershed Forum, and in vegetation surveys for the Western Kenai Peninsula Soil Survey. Her GIS mapping experience ranges from wetlands to whales to landfast ice on the North Slope of Alaska. Involvement in environmental education and ecotourism rounds out her local experience. When not working, Karyn enjoys exploring the natural world through travel, hiking, and backpacking. To satisfy her creative urges, she quilts. Volunteering as a firefighter and EMT with the Homer Volunteer Fire Department also keeps her busy. Her experience will be an asset to KHLT, and she looks forward to working with landowners across the Kenai Peninsula.



WELCOME CHRISTY JOHNSON, NEW KHLT BOARD MEMBER!

Christy grew up in south central Alaska including Kodiak, Anchorage and the Kenai Peninsula. She attended high school in Soldotna while her parents moved to Tutka Bay to start a wilderness lodge business. After high school, Christy worked on board factory trawlers in the Bering Sea, Pacific Ocean and New Zealand. She left fishing to complete her education and received her Juris Doctorate degree from Gonzaga Law School in May of 2005. She and her husband have returned to Homer to assist her parents in running the lodge allowing them to start planning for retirement. We congratulate her for successfully completing the Alaska Bar exam! She has also been selected as the March finalist of the Fish Alaska Magazine annual recipe contest and will be competing in a cooking competition along with three other finalists at the Kincaid Grill in Anchorage at the end of July.

Stay Tuned for Coming Attractions: KHLT Exhibit at the Pratt!

In a rare opportunity to recognize and thank those donors who have chosen to permanently preserve their land for the future, KHLT will host an exhibit titled, "*Documenting the Connection: People and Place*," at Homer's Pratt Museum between November 6, 2006 and December 31, 2006. This is KHLT's first museum exhibit, and features stunning photographs honoring those who have donated a conservation easement or land to KHLT. In addition, the donor's connection to their properties will be described in narrative accompanying the photographs. This project is being conducted in cooperation with the Pratt Museum, and is funded in part by the Alaska Humanities Forum, and with generous in-kind donations from the photographers Tom Collopy and Mary Frische, and the Pratt Museum. Dramatic large format photographs and interviews with the donors describe the impact of the Land Trust's Kenai Peninsula-wide conservation efforts. **Mark your calendars for our opening!**

MEMBER HIGHLIGHT-TOM COLLOPY AND MARY FRISCHE



Tom Collopy and Mary Frische are award winning, professional photographers. Mary and Tom apprenticed under world-renowned wildlife photographers John Eastcott and Yva Momatiuk. They have been working together commercially since 1997. Their wildlife photography is currently on display and available for purchase in Alaska and in the lower 48. For this project, Collopy and Frische have traveled the Kenai Peninsula photographing the men and women who have put easements on their land or have donated their land to KHLT. Their work will soon be displayed in a beautiful exhibit at the Pratt Museum November, celebrating the accomplishments of KHLT and all its members.

WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL TO THE FOLLOWING FUNDERS

Alaska Conservation Foundation

Alaska Humanities Forum

Alaska State Historic Preservation Office through the National Park Service and the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation,
Office of History and Archaeology

Cellular One

Charlotte Martin Foundation

Ducks Unlimited

Federal Forest Legacy Program

First National Bank of Alaska

Homer Foundation

Kachemak Moose Habitat, Inc.

Norcross Foundation

Pacific Coast Joint Venture

Rasmuson Foundation

The Skaggs Foundation

The Mountaineers Foundation

Shelby Cullom Davis Foundation

True North Foundation

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Coastal Program

U.S. Fish and Wildlife North American Wetlands Conservation Act

Webb Family Fund/Pikes Peak Foundation

"The great conservation opportunities of the next century will be on privately owned land, and conservation easements are the most effective way to protect those lands. Landowners like conservation easements because they are a refreshing alternative to government regulation: they are voluntary, local, and respect private property rights. For the many people who love their land, it is the best way to ensure that it will be preserved for all time."

Land Trust Alliance President Rand Wentworth, in The Conservation Easement Handbook Revised

Homer Community Garden up and Running!

The Homer Community garden is up and running and is open to everyone. Last year over 200 people from across the community participated in the Homer Community Garden, including families from the Family Learning Center, and students from the Kachemak Bay Campus of the University of Alaska. About twenty-five plots are available for individuals, families and organizations, but the entire community is invited to participate by enjoying a picnic lunch in the garden and/or attending work parties and gatherings. Individual plots are \$25/season and organization plots are \$50/season. If you are interested in tending a plot or supporting the garden through other resources (time, materials, money), contact Hope at 235-7164 or Hans at KHLT at 235-5263.

National Land Trust Accreditation Program Kicks off!

Excerpt of article in The Land Trust Alliance magazine "Exchange," reprinted by permission from Tammara Van Ryn, Director of the new Land Trust Accreditation Commission

This May marks a seminal event in the history of land conservation: the inaugural meeting of the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance. This meeting is preceded by more than 15 years of conversation among land trusts and an intensive year-long process that involved the participation of hundreds of conservationists from around the country.

The land trust accreditation program was established to achieve three goals: build strong land trusts, increase public confidence in voluntary land conservation and help ensure the permanent protection of conservation land. The 13 new commissioners, announced by LTA in mid-February, will establish a program that meets these goals.

BUILD STRONG LAND TRUSTS: The land trust accreditation program is based on 42 indicator practices drawn from *Land Trust Standards and Practices*. These practices help form the ethical and technical foundation for the responsible operation of a land trust. Implementing them gives the land trust a strong foundation on which to build its programs.

Land trusts undergoing accreditation review will be asked to submit documentation (the specific requirements will be developed by the Commission later this year) that verifies their implementation of each indicator practice. According to land trusts that participated in a similar document review process as part of LTA's Conservation Easement Program Assessment pilots, the process of compiling essential documents in a single location and reviewing and improving them is beneficial for the organization.

Having well-organized and up-to-date policies and procedures helps the land trust in many ways. It enables all participants in decision-making and day-to-day activities to

have established protocols at their fingertips. This provides for more streamlined and consistent actions that can help improve the effectiveness of the land trust. In addition, consistent application of the established policies and procedures enables the organization to more easily defend decisions and actions based on its standard business practices.

INCREASE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE: Accreditation will offer an established "seal" or "mark" that accredited land trusts will be able to use and display. The mark will provide public recognition for land trusts that have made this investment in their organizations and may lead to increased donor confidence. In addition, the development and implementation of this program is being closely watched by the federal and state regulators concerned about land conservation quality and could result in increased regulator confidence as will.

ENSURE PERMANENT PROTECTION: Part of the evaluation process for the land trust accreditation program will involve the review of randomly selected project files for documentation that meets the indicator practices. Attention to adequate acquisition and stewardship documentation, particularly in projects moving forward, will help make sure that there are good records to manage-and if necessary defend-the conserved land. In addition, the accreditation process will evaluate whether land trusts have established the stewardship programs and have resources in place to ensure that the lands conserved today will remain protected in the future.

NOTE from KHLT: KHLT is fully supportive of the accreditation process and intends to participate as soon as the program is in place.

Town Square article cont. from page 1

meetings. As is the case with many such projects, the Committee realized that a truly open and inclusive process must be flexible and respond to the community's pace. Focus groups, established in the larger community meetings, produced reports on economic impacts and benefits, facilities and architecture, natural resources, public art, trails, traffic and parking, and needs for the area's young people. A community survey asking for people's opinions and ideas was completed by nearly 500 individuals, with nearly 1/4 of the respondents offering to volunteer for town square activities. The Town Square Project was formally supported by the City and written into its comprehensive plan update.

A draft trails vision was created within this effort, and two trails were completed, formalizing footpaths in downtown areas that were previously muddy and located on private property. Trailhead signs were Homer's first Public Art project and were selected by a broad range of residents, including representatives from the Town Square Project. Benches were designed and constructed by Homer High School students, another sign of active and broad community participation. In addition, the Committee commissioned an economic benefits analysis of the value of the Town Square concept, researched, written and presented by the University of Alaska's Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER). The economic benefits analysis provides valuable information to guide our growth toward sustainability.

Through course of this effort, the Homer Town Square Project, through Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, received \$32,000 from the Alaska Conservation Foundation's Sustainable Communities Program, \$16,370 from the State of Alaska's TRAAK Program, \$3,000 from the Kodak American Greenways Program, \$9,860 from the City of Homer, \$14,750 from individual major donors and community members, and \$15,000 from the Alaska Department of Economic and Community Development. \$1,680 was raised from special events and over \$5,000 worth of in-kind contributions. The Homer Chamber of Commerce and the Homer Foundation also provided funds via the City and KHLT to bring consultants to town. These combined sources provided a total of more than \$97,000 of financial support for this project.

Specific work funded within the Homer Town Square Project included many hours of consultation with Anchorage landscape architect, Chris Beck, the fiscal and economic analysis of the Homer Town Square proposed development alternatives prepared by the University of Alaska's Institute for Social and Economic Re-

search, consultation by Mark Pfeffer, a landscape architect completing a similar, but private project in Anchorage to discuss infrastructure financing ideas, and consultation and community meetings lead by "Walkable Communities Guru" Dan Burden. In addition, in early 2003, Kachemak Heritage Land Trust was contacted by Professor Nancy Rottle of the University of Washington, looking for a final design studio project for her graduate students. Thanks to help and support from the Homer Chamber of Commerce and the City, a site visit by the entire class was made possible, and a well-researched series of design boards were created by Professor Rottle's students and shared with the community in meetings and at a public open house.

The two design alternatives finally presented by Town Center Development Committee, and recently approved by the City Council for inclusion in the Homer Comprehensive Plan, allow for a well-researched mix of development and open space conservation to provide long-term benefit to the community of Homer. By integrating greenways, natural drainages and water features into the Plan, the area will be enhanced in places that are less fit for development while providing pedestrian connections and aesthetic value to the Town Center. The design alternatives include a formal "Town Square," pocket parks, forested buffers, natural drainages, urban trails, and 2-3 acres of forest and peat meadow preserves.

In 2001, as an enhancement to this larger project, Kachemak Heritage Land Trust completed a capital campaign to purchase 3 1/2 acres of land intended for park use by the public within the town center area. In developing Homer's town center park, we will enthusiastically comply with the ordinances that come out of the work ahead to implement the Plan. The park will be developed to make it safe and useful as a recreation area and as a gathering place for visitors and residents, while simultaneously protecting urban-scale open space for the future.

article cont. p. 9.



Outside KHLT office

Town Square Article cont. from p. 8

As a key landowner in the Town Center area, KHLT is committed to its role in the continuing community action to instill a greater sense of pride in the downtown area, enhance pedestrian linkages and mobility, and contribute to a higher quality of life. The Town Center Development Plan is a good example of fiscally prudent and environmentally balanced planning. By developing efficiently according to a well-crafted plan, we will reduce both the impacts to the natural environment and the costs of developing the infrastructure required. Implementation of the Homer Town Center Plan is a smart fiscal move, and the return on both private and City investments will pay off for generations to come. We are proud to have been a partner in this wonderful public/private collaborative project that will pay dividends to the quality of life in Homer forever. Thank you for your support and for your participation over the years – it succeeded because of you! To review the Town Center Designs visit the City of Homer website <http://clerk.ci.homer.ak.us/tcdplan.pdf>.

Thanks to these Town Center supporters for their active help and participation over the life of this project!

(and sincere apologies to anyone we might have missed!)

Forest Lozier Melody Mahoney Lasse Holmes
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Anchor River Update

As you might remember several years ago, one of the owners of one of the only two privately-owned parcels of land at the mouth of the Anchor River came to us asking us to find a way to purchase both properties to protect their habitat and public recreational values. In our work to assess support, to research funding possibilities, and to plan for the most practical eventual ownership, we were pleased to bring The Nature Conservancy (TNC) into the project. With the private owner ready and willing to sell, TNC and KHLT joined forces to bring agency, private and foundation dollars together with public support. With the State of Alaska as a key partner, grant funds were applied for and received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council, and from many individual donors. We extend a **HUGE** thank you to Ducks Unlimited, to Clarke & Barbara Springer and the Springer Family, and to Brad Feld and Amy Batchelor for providing significant donations to us to complete our push to raise the last of the purchase funds necessary!

Property owners Paul Mutch and the Anchor Land Corporation and The Nature Conservancy entered into agreements for purchase and sale on August 4, 2005. Both closings were to have taken place by the end of December 2005. The Anchor Land Corporation's closing did not occur because issues arose over the status of title. The Mutch parcel was acquired on December 30, 2005.

The Anchor Land Corporation property is divided physically into two parts. One part consists of land located on the east side of the Anchor River. The other is essentially a spit of land located on the west side of the River. Directly to the south of both parcels is the Mutch parcel, now owned by The Nature Conservancy for eventual transfer to the State.

In evaluating the status of the properties, it was discovered that the State may claim title to some or all of the west parcel of the Anchor Land Corporation's property as accreted lands. The State alleges that this land belongs to the State under applicable law. It was also determined that some or all of the accreted lands might instead belong to the owner of the Mutch Tract. Because the acreage under private ownership is in dispute, the original Anchor Land Corporation transaction was not closed, although TNC proceeded with the acquisition of the Mutch Tract, since it was very unlikely that anything more than a very small portion of that parcel could be claimed by the State as accreted land.

The Nature Conservancy has been communicating with the State and with Anchor Land Corporation about the possibility of conducting a quiet title action to resolve the questions of title to any accreted lands on the property. This process asks the courts to determine ownership. TNC plans to undertake this action, remains committed to acquiring the property as identified, and the parties have subsequently amended the original agreement.

As is outlined in the new purchase and sale agreement, the second purchase may take place in stages. The first closing will take place with respect to the entire east parcel. TNC will have the right to acquire at a second closing, the portion of the west parcel that the court finally determines is owned by the Anchor Land Corporation. Both parties have agreed to cooperate with one another to ensure that this action proceeds as expeditiously as possible, and with as little expense as possible, understanding that the State will also need to be a party to the action. If the status of the title to the west parcel hasn't been resolved by June 30, 2007, then either party has the right to terminate the agreement as to the west parcel.

We want to thank so many of you for contributing to this important acquisition project. We also extend huge thanks to Paul Mutch and Jim Jacobs, in particular, for allowing us this amazing opportunity to preserve such a rich and popular place for the future! They have indeed left a legacy. We can look forward to knowing that anglers for generations to come will enjoy this wonderful resource every summer, playing and camping on the beach, watching eagles, waterfowl and shorebirds, and catching kings, steelhead and dollies.

See **YOU** on the River!



Spectacular conservation property for sale!

As we reported to you in the last *Landmarks*, KHLT supporters George and Lucy Cutting generously donated a 30-acre parcel on the Baycrest Hill to us for the purpose of generating operating revenue. The land came to us with restrictions on development that we must enforce in perpetuity. As a condition of our ownership of the parcel, we are required to ensure that no development takes place, except within an established building envelope of approximately 6 acres, in order to protect an important wildlife movement corridor, wetlands, and an existing pedestrian and equestrian trail. Development of a carefully and professionally engineered driveway accessing the site will be accomplished and with Bay Realty's professional assistance, we hope to market this property during the coming summer season, further protected by a conservation easement that will restrict all development to a discreet building envelope. Both the existing deed restriction and the conservation easement will be written to describe the development restrictions.

This is a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate that a healthy balance can be achieved between residential development and the conservation of important natural and recreational values. Myriad habitat values on the parcel and open space views from the Sterling Highway will be protected, trails will remain in place for the public's use and a residence will be built within the least sensitive area on the parcel, for family use and enjoyment. In addition, nearby properties will be enhanced by the open space protected forever and Homer will be provided with another recreational opportunity for both locals and visitors. We salute and sincerely thank the Cuttings for their foresight and generosity!

KHLT's Tree Sale

This year, KHLT conducted a pre-sale of trees selected by Master Gardener and long-time KHLT board member Toby Tyler. The pre-sale was a great success and allowed KHLT supporters to plan ahead for the appropriate trees for their land (and maybe even dig the holes ahead of time!) Many thanks to Toby for his efforts and help!



Photo above Right to left: Friendship Center Director Margaret LaVigueur, Assistant Director Judy Calhoun, Program Assistant, Rayma Hughes, June Uminski, Helen Mandzik, Val Chitwood, Robert Whitaker, Ethel Clendenen, Phyllis Lau, Ethel Waddell.

Photo below: Left, Ethel Waddell, Loretta Pyatt with dog, "Gibson".



WOW-THANKS!

Aided by the tireless work of the **Friendship Center**, and with help from the **Homer's Youth Job Training Program**, KHLT was able to complete a membership mailing to roughly 10,000 households in Kenai, Soldotna, and Sterling. We are pleased to have such wonderful help in getting get our message out to the Central Kenai Peninsula! We especially want to thank the Friendship Center, as they completed the bulk of this work!

Homer's Friendship Center is an adult day service program located in the Homer Senior Center. The program runs Monday through Friday 9:30 to 3 p.m. and includes a variety of activities tailored to meet each participant's needs including gardening, crafts, and special events such as halibut or salmon fishing. They also host a float at the Homer Fourth of July parade and organize the annual Senior Center talent show. This program allows families and other caregivers to continue to care for their loved ones at home by providing support, respite and education to the participants. They provide a great benefit to the community also by assisting local non-profits with

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WHAT DO SEA KAYAKING, BIKING, BLUEBERRY PICKING,
 AND HORSES HAVE IN COMMON? JOIN US FOR SOME
 SPECTACULAR TRIPS THIS SUMMER.



July 10 Seldovia Bike Trip with Toby Tyler

July 15 Kayak for KHLT - Nubble Point Geology-Kayak Adventure

August 12 - Trail Trails Horseback Ride

August 17 9:30 to ?? Monotype Painting with Marian Beck

August 5 Humpy Creek Evening Adventure with Biologist Coowe Moss Walker

September 2 Blueberry Picking and Natural History trip on Grace Ridge with Dale Chorman

VISIT THE KHLT WEBSITE SUMMER EVENT LISTING FOR THE
 WHOLE SCHEDULE! WWW.KACHEMAKLANDTRUST.ORG