

Hello and Thank-you for the opportunity to comment on how we can make the best use of the remaining financial resources left to help heal the areas affected by the Exxon Valdez oil spill of 1989. My name is Colleen Rankin, I was at the Kodiak meeting March 18th, and had the opportunity to speak with Craig after the meeting. I am a lifelong Alaskan, have lived in the Kodiak area since 1987 and, at the time if the spill was married to a salmon seiner here on the island, so felt the effects in a very personal way. I have also commercial fished myself and feel a deep attachment to the lifestyle, having known many fishermen from the time I was a child as neighbors and friends. Currently I am fortunate enough to live on a small island in Blue Fox Bay, on Afognak Island at the confluence of Shelikoff and Shuyak straits. The area of this archipelago with the largest impact from the spill. We run a very small, low impact lodge there and besides enjoying the astounding vitality of the area, we feel obligated to somehow send each person away with a new awareness of the fragility and interdependency of a healthy ocean meeting a healthy shoreline. That, of course is what compelled me to write to you today. When I look at what was injured (besides people, lifestyles, ect.), what comes to my mind are relationships of healthy organisms in ecosystems. Because I believe so much in this interaction I would like to support longterm monitoring of Marine conditions, not just in Prince William sound but in the Gulf of Alaska, because we are still learning just how connected the ocean and bays are on each other. We can see with our eyes when land is damaged, but we only realize the extent of damage to the ocean after it shows a symptom. Marine debris removal is also a project I support as I am witnessing the beaches accumulating and absorbing more and more plastics. We have found dead animals entangled on the beaches nears our home. Also I especially support habitat acquisition. Parcels that could be crucial to completing a larger system could mean the difference between the surrounding area being able to function in an undisturbed way. Something that is becoming increasingly rare. A form of containment, if you will. We would certainly try to contain another environmental disruption like the oil spill, and there are still some parcels that lay in crucial areas that are capable of changing the surrounding areas forever. I know that all of the programs are good programs, but I hope that we think big, meaning big ecosystems and protection of habitat that is so wild we may forget about it in our civilized world. They say that the squeaky wheel gets the grease, but we have some opportunity here to speak for habitat that cannot speak for itself. Please consider those wild places when habitat acquisition is considered.

Thank-you so much for your time

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