

Interim Report: Youth Action on Marine Debris: from the field to the classroom Project

Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies

December 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012

The Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies (CACS) began work on the Youth Action on Marine Debris Project in December 2011 by beginning the planning and review stage of the *Alaska CoastWatch Curriculum* and the community marine debris art project. Work on the Gyre Project began in December 2011. In February, Angela Haseltine-Pozzi, the founder of Washed Ashore and Executive Director of the Artula Art and Education Institute, traveled to Homer to begin defining her role in the project. We outlined the project and began designing lessons to be used in the curriculum kits. Project needs were further clarified through these early meetings, and the project plan was expanded to accommodate the use of 100% of all non-toxic debris through creation not only of the plastic gyre but additional sculptures that used all types of marine debris.

In March, Patrick Chandler and Jennifer Medley traveled to Bandon Oregon to work with Angela at her workshop to learn how to set up a workshop space in Homer and the techniques used in large scale marine debris art creation. The tools, consumables and workshop space needs were all inventoried and a complete workshop layout plan was created by CACS through this meeting. Ms. Haseltine-Pozzi provided a manual for setting up satellite marine debris art workshop that will be available for use by communities in Alaska.

In June, workshop space was acquired in Homer and prepared for the first community workshop held by Angela and CACS. Debris was gathered for the workshop with Chris Pallister and Gulf of Alaska Keeper on a twelve day marine debris cleanup on Montague Island and also by local community volunteers in Kachemak Bay. Local businesses provided storage for recovered debris and workshop space was rented. Tools were loaned by volunteers and work on the project began on June 17th with a workshop attended by 19 volunteers. Community and youth workshops to create debris art and prepare recovered debris to be used in art projects will be taking place weekly throughout the summer. Community cleanups will also be held to continue stockpiling marine debris for our late summer and fall art workshops.

Patrick Chandler accompanied the Alaska Geographic and Chugach Children's Forest expedition to Prince William Sound from June 20-27. The expedition included eight children ranging in age from 12 to 14 years old from multiple communities throughout Prince William Sound and the Kenai Peninsula. During the expedition, lessons were piloted that will be adapted into the *Alaska CoastWatch Curriculum* and included in the marine debris kits that will be created next year. Beaches were cleaned with Gulf of Alaska Keeper on Knight Island and another cleanup was done by the expedition crew on Naked Island. The effects of residual oil were studied in Death Marsh and current oil industry practices were observed in Valdez. In addition to learning about the threats to Prince William Sound, students also learned about commercial fishing and recreation. Three videos were created by the youth of the expedition focusing on marine debris and final editing of the videos should occur in the coming weeks.