



Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council
Long-Term Research and Monitoring, Mariculture, Education and Outreach
Annual Project Reporting Form

**For Instructions for each section below, see Reporting Policy, II (B); the Reporting Policy can be found on the website, <https://evostc.state.ak.us/policies-procedures/reporting-procedures/>*

Project Number: 23220403

Project Title: PWS Natural History Symposium

Principal Investigator(s): Paul Twardock, Symposium Planning Committee Chair

Reporting Period: February 1, 2023 – January 31, 2024

Submission Date (Due March 1 immediately following the reporting period): March 1, 2024

Project Website: princewilliamsound.org

Please check all the boxes that apply to the current reporting period.

Project progress is on schedule.

Project progress is delayed.

Budget reallocation request.

Personnel changes.

1. Summary of Work Performed:

The fifth annual Prince William Sound Natural History Symposium (PWS NHS) took place in person and online on May 16, 2023, with the theme “Resilience: Perseverance and Tenacity in Prince William Sound.” Our lineup featured new and returning speakers on a variety of topics, including cultural history, wildlife, land management, monitoring studies, weather, and more. Approximately 240 people attended the live event: 100 in person, 120 online, and 20 at the PWSSC watch party in Cordova. Attendees indicated their primary interests as PWS residents (19%), scientists (16%), educators (17%), guides (12%), tourism (9%), land managers (6%),



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fishing (4%), and students (3%), and many indicated multiple interests that drew them to the event. Following the live event, 18 video recordings were posted to our website and to YouTube, where they have received around 900 total views.

The 2023 programming also included a half-day boat tour in Prince William Sound for guides and a “Coffee with the Scientists” social/educational event the day before.

The 2023 PWS NHS was also the first to feature an official watch party, which was hosted by the Prince William Sound Science Center in Cordova. They plan to host another watch party this May.

Planning is well underway for the sixth annual PWS NHS to be held on May 13 and 14, 2024. The 2024 theme is “Hope for a Sustainable Prince William Sound.” The first half day will focus on foundational information for the guiding community, with topics such as how to lead an interpretive walk and an introduction to birds, while the second day will be the hybrid event the community has come to know and love, with regional experts sharing the latest in news and research.

2. Products:

Peer-reviewed publications:

Delta Sound Connections, Spring 2023

Reports:

NA

Popular articles:

NA

Conferences and workshops:

Fifth annual Prince William Sound Natural History Symposium (May 2023)

Public presentations:

NA



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Data and/or information products developed during the reporting period:

Fifth annual Prince William Sound Natural History Symposium recordings, available on our website at princewilliamsound.org and on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/@princewilliamsoundstewards1615>).

Data sets and associated metadata:

NA

Additional Products not listed above:

NA

3. Coordination and Collaboration:

The Alaska SeaLife Center or Prince William Sound Science Center

Jane Belovarac, Wildlife Response Curator at the Alaska SeaLife Center, led a panel about sea otters with Halley Werner and Savannah Costner, two Animal Care Specialists. We are coordinating another presentation with Jane Belovarac and her team about harbor seals for the upcoming Symposium.

We published a piece promoting the PWS Natural History Symposium in the Spring 2023 *Delta Sound Connections*, a publication of the Prince William Sound Science Center. We are currently developing an article for the Spring 2024 *Delta Sound Connections*. Dr. Scott Pegau from the Oil Spill Recovery Institute at the PWS Science Center presented two talks at the 2023 Symposium: “Status of PWS Herring” and “Volunteering Monitoring of Intertidal Habitats.”

EVOSTC Long-Term Research and Monitoring Projects

Dr. Scott Pegau from the Oil Spill Recovery Institute at the PWS Science Center presented two talks at the 2023 Symposium: “Status of PWS Herring” and “Volunteering Monitoring of Intertidal Habitats.” He encouraged PWS users to participate in citizen science efforts by taking photographs of certain monitoring locations since the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill.

Dr. Morgan Bender will present “Mussels and Oil: 30 Years of Data” at this May’s Symposium.



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EVOSTC Mariculture Projects

NA

EVOSTC Education and Outreach Projects

PWS Regional Citizens' Advisory Council Education Coordinator Maia Draper-Reich presented "Then & Now: 34 Years Since the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill" and hosted a tabling session for further conversation with participants.

Additionally, Maryann Fidel from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation presented on "Marine Water Quality Monitoring and Lingering EVOS Oil."

Trustee or Management Agencies

The land management session presented by Chugach Alaska Corporation, the U.S. Forest Service, and Alaska State Parks is a staple of the annual Symposium. We work closely with the U.S. Forest Service Chugach National Forest in planning our annual Symposium as well. The event is well-attended by Forest Service staff, and it is used for summer training.

Native and Local Communities

We are honored to partner with the Chugach Regional Resources Commission and Chugach Alaska Corporation for sessions at our annual Symposium. In 2023, CRRC Executive Director Willow Hetrick and scientist Allison Carl offered a land acknowledgment and introduction to the Chugach peoples to begin the day. Jack Blackwell, John Johnson, and Ashley Cunningham presented the panel "Chugach Alaska Corporation: Lands, Cultural Resources, and Community Section." We are coordinating sessions with CRRC and Chugach for the 2024 PWS NHS in May.

4. Response to EVOSTC Review, Recommendations and Comments:

PWSSF is in our second year with our first Executive Director, who is coordinating the Symposium alongside the long-standing organizing committee that includes representatives from our Board of Directors, the U.S. Forest Service, the PWS Regional Citizens' Advisory Committee, Alaska Pacific University, Alaska Sea Grant, local charter boat operators, and outfitters. The committee regularly consults with the PWSSF Board and with representation



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from local communities, schools, and landowners. As in the past, we have reached out to a variety of organizations to ensure a mix of new and returning speakers. These include the PWS Science Center, the Alaska SeaLife Center, the Chugach Alaska Corporation, the Chugach Regional Resource Commission, the City of Whittier, Alaska State Parks, USGS, NOAA, the National Tsunami Center, the Alaska Volcano Observatory, the PWS Aquaculture Corporation, the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), Alaska Geographic, the University of Alaska Anchorage, and more.

Outreach and promotion are critical to reaching audiences across a variety of locations. Last year’s attendees joined from Whittier, Valdez, Cordova, Chenega, Tatitlek, Girdwood, Kenai, Palmer, Seldovia, Fairbanks, Anchorage, Eagle River, Portage, Seward, Denali National Park, Talkeetna, Soldotna, Homer, and Hope. Out-of-state attendees joined us online from Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Kentucky, New York, Delaware, Illinois, Ohio, Florida, Wyoming, Utah, Oregon, and Washington. Approximately 59% of last year’s attendees were first-time participants, while 14% had attended one PWS NHS, 11% had attended two, 5% had attended three, and 10% had attended all four previous years. We look forward to continuing to grow the Symposium audience by offering a mix of staple educational content and the latest in news and research.

5. Budget:

	Proposed FY 22	Proposed FY 23	Proposed FY 24	Proposed FY 25	Proposed FY 26	5 Year Total Proposed	Actual Cumulative
Personnel	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	75,000	31,392.40
Travel	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	5,000	1,252.25
Contractual	500	500	500	500	500	2,500	0
Commodities	750	750	750	750	750	3,750	933.9
Equipment	5,000	0	0	0	0	5,000	3,760.50
Indirect Costs (2%)	445	345	345	345	345	1,825	746.77
Subtotal	22,695	17,595	17,595	17,595	17,595	93,075	38,085.82
General Administration (9% c	2,043	1,584	1,584	1,584	1,584	8,377	
Program Total	24,738	19,179	19,179	19,179	19,179	101,452	
Other Resources (In-kind)	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	25,000	10,000