



**Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council**  
**General Restoration, Habitat Enhancement, Habitat Protection, and Facilities Projects**  
**Quarterly Project Reporting Form**

**Project Number:** 18180119 and 20180119

**Project Title:** EVOS Outreach 2018 and EVOS Outreach 2020

**Principal Investigator(s):** Shawna Popovici; Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR)  
 I&E Unit Manager

**Reporting Periods and Due Dates:**

<i>Reporting Period</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
February, March, April	June 1
May, June, July	September 1
August, September, October	December 1
November, December, January	March 1

**Submission Date:** Report submitted 7/24/24, progress through June 30, 2024. This report is off cycle due to some accounting delays as noted below.

**Project Website:** NA

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

**Project progress is on schedule.**

EVOS Outreach 2018 funds were used to complete the Clam Gulch SRA panels. The panels have been designed, fabricated, and delivered to the field staff for installation in summer of 2024 at Clam Gulch State Recreation Area.

**Project progress is delayed**

The EVOS Outreach 2020 funds were used to complete the interpretive panels for Buskin River Nature Trail. In this reporting period [December 2023 to June 2024], the panels have been designed and are currently in fabrication with shipment to Kodiak in July 2024. This has taken longer than projected as we incorporated the Alutiiq language into the panels and the language experts and review took additional time in the design process. However, the panels are still projected for installation in summer of 2024 at the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge headquarters' Audubon Trail and Overlook.

Additionally, the reporting for these accounts were delayed due to SOA Admin delays in financial processing of CH8s required to remove project overages. This issue caused significant delays in project reporting for these projects.

**Budget reallocation request.**

**Personnel changes.**



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**1. Summary of Work Performed:**

In this reporting period, DPOR's I&E Unit completed design and fabrication for both projects. Only the shipping for the Kodiak project is still pending. Installation will depend on partner's maintenance staff scheduling as they are both in mid-summer taking up staff time.

- Clam Gulch SRA project: From December 2023 to June 2024, DPOR finalized the interpretive panels language and edit reviews with all the partners.
    - The two panels have been shipped to the Alaska State Park regional office for installation, awaiting scheduling for installation by regional maintenance staff availability.
  - Buskin River Nature Trail project: From December 2023 to June 2024, DPOR finalized the interpretive panels language and edit reviews with all the project partners.
    - The five panels have been fabricated and will be shipped in July to Kodiak.
    - Kodiak NWR staff will prepare installation once the panels are received.
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**2. Abstract:** This project implements interpretive services for EVOSTC. The goal is to enhance EVOSTC's public outreach, educating the public about the Exxon Valdez oil spill event, its lasting impacts to the state, and achievements to mitigate those impacts on spill-affected habitats, species, and services.

The goal of interpretive media is to provide meaningful connections to a resource, creating opportunities for and developing stewardship. As time passes since the Spill, building a new generation of stewards and fostering an understanding of that critical event in Alaska history and the work of the Council is vital.

Initial project scope included three tasks:

- The first developed a film with a brief history of the spill, the inception of the Council, and its work over the last 30 years.
- The second created a traveling exhibit consisting of pop-up banners for use at public events and presentations with general information about the spill, the Council, and its work.
- The third developed three interpretive displays highlighting habitat enhancement and restoration projects that were installed on EVOSTC habitat enhancement sites (Dimond Creek/Homer, Mineral Creek/Valdez, and Eshamy Bay/Prince William Sound.).

The priority projects awaiting final installation by project partners are:

- Priority #1: Buskin River Nature Trail Interpretation Project
  - Priority #2: Clam Gulch SRA Interpretation Project
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**3. Coordination and Collaboration:**

As the projects were initially discussed with partners in 2021, Shawna Popovici (DPOR) notified both the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge (KNWR) and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) to discuss moving forward with their priority projects.

For this past reporting period, both partners were highly engaged and active in the content edits. The EVOSTC staff was also engaged with offering suggested comments and edits.

For Clam Gulch, Mike Booz and the ADF&G refuge staff were readily available for the interpretive panel comments and directed major changes to the initial design and writeup. Additionally, the DPOR field staff, Ranger Jason Okuly, provided edits needed in the orientation panel. The panel design was completed and sent out for panel fabrication and shipping. **The panels are with the Alaska State Park regional office for installation in summer 2024.**

For Kodiak NWR, Natalie Fath and refuge staff gave feedback to the final drafts and partnered with Amy Steffian and language experts at the Alutiiq Museum to finalize and review all Alutiiq language placed in the panels. The panel design was completed and sent out for panel fabrication. **The panels being shipped to Kodiak NWR staff who will be responsible for installation in summer of 2024.**

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**4. Response to EVOSTC Review, Recommendations, and Comments:**

In this reporting period, EVOSTC staff were asked to review all the interpretive panels. The EVOSTC staff were very responsive in the review process and gave very helpful and thorough edits in a timely manner, allowing partner entities to get the drafts early for their reviews. Each panel identifies EVOSTC as the funder of the project.

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**5. Budget:** Total balance remaining from both allocations of funding is \$-----. There are no funds remaining after shipping was completed and when final invoices were paid. Installation will be free of charge by project partners in their construction windows in August 2024.

<b>Location/Site:</b>	Clam Gulch SRA
<b>Approved Budget (w/o GA):</b>	\$45,030.47 <i>(Task 78YN was set up with the remaining funds from original \$129,094.00 allocation)</i>
<b>Amount Spent:</b>	\$45,030.47
<b>Remaining Balance:</b>	\$ 0.00
<b>Anticipated Completion Date:</b>	Installation August 2024
<b>Location/Site:</b>	Kodiak NWR – Buskin River Headquarters
<b>Approved Budget (w/o GA):</b>	\$45,000.00
<b>Amount Spent:</b>	\$45,000.00
<b>Remaining Balance:</b>	\$ 0.00
<b>Anticipated Completion Date:</b>	Installation August 2024


See attached Expenditure report for 78YN (2018) and 71LI (2022) projects

<b>Expenditures by Expense Category</b>			
<b>Task Name (Ex)</b>	<b>APPR</b>	<b>Obj Type</b>	<b>EX</b>
71LI - FY22 EVOS Outreach	100421018	1000	\$45,000.00
<b>71LI - FY22 EVOS Outreach</b>			<b>45,000.00</b>
<b>Task Name (Ex)</b>	<b>APPR</b>	<b>Obj Type</b>	<b>EX</b>
78YN - EVOS Outreach Final	107118181	1000	\$37,593.37
	107118181	2000	\$1,768.61
	107118181	3000	\$326.87
	107118181	4000	\$5,341.62
<b>78YN - EVOS Outreach Final</b>			<b>45,030.47</b>

Two panels were designed, fabricated, and shipped to the Kenai Regional Office of Alaska State Parks for installation in the summer of 2024. They were created in partnership with ADF&G staff that manage the Clam Gulch CHA and with Alaska State Park Regional Staff.

The panels focus on safety, orientation, recreation, stewardship, clams, and habitat in the Critical Habitat Area.

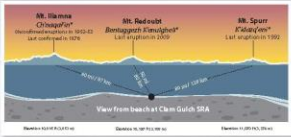
# Welcome to Clam Gulch



## State Recreation Area (SRA)

### Ring of Fire

Situated on the bluffs overlooking scenic Cook Inlet, Clam Gulch SRA offers visitors a panoramic view of the Aleutian Mountain Range and its three tallest peaks — Mount Iliamna, Mount Redoubt, and Mount Spurr. Part of the active *Pacific Ring of Fire*, these three active volcanoes have all erupted in relatively-recent history!



### Clamming Up

Although Clam Gulch is named for the razor clams that live on its sandy shores, the beach is now periodically closed to clamming due to less abundance.

Since 1976, the beaches surrounding Clam Gulch are included in the 700-acre *Clam Gulch Critical Habitat Area* (see map) to help protect the razor clam beds in the area.

### Stats and Facts

**Road Access:** Mile 117.5 Sterling Highway

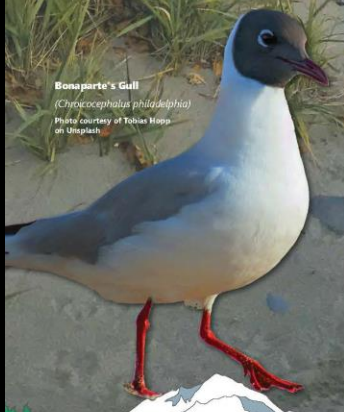
**Amenities:** Clam Gulch SRA houses 120 campsites, parking, fresh drinking water, two vaulted toilets, an enclosed picnic shelter, and beach access.

**Activities:** Clam Gulch SRA is open to most public uses, provided the activity does not damage refuge resources, disturb wildlife, or disrupt existing public uses. Allowed activities generally include hunting, trapping, fishing, wildlife watching, hiking, boating, camping, and the use of all-terrain vehicles.

**ATV:** The use of ATVs within the campground and on the road to the beach is limited to direct travel to and from your campsite. The speed limit on all recreation area roads is 5 m.p.h.

Alaska statutes require all ATV users under age 16 to wear a helmet.

For more information, please visit [www.alaskastateparks.org](http://www.alaskastateparks.org)

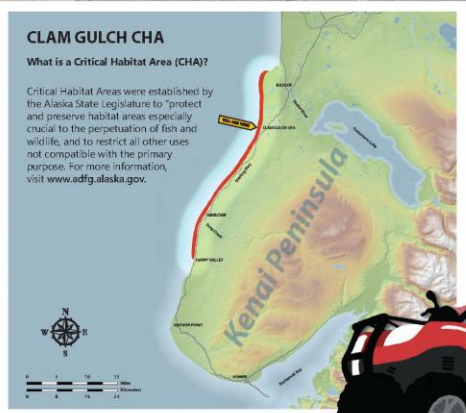


**Bonaparte's Gull**  
(*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*)  
Photo courtesy of Tobias Hoop on Unsplash


### CLAM GULCH CHA


**What is a Critical Habitat Area (CHA)?**

Critical Habitat Areas were established by the Alaska State legislature to "protect and preserve habitat areas especially crucial to the perpetuation of fish and wildlife, and to restrict all other uses not compatible with the primary purpose. For more information, visit [www.adfg.alaska.gov](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov).



\*Outer Cook Inlet Dena'ina Language





Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

# PRESERVING OUR BEACH life

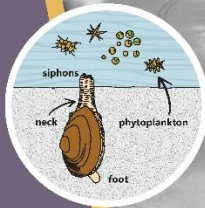


There's a mystery out there for the solving!

## Rugged Razor Clams

Pacific razor clams are a highly specialized organism—one of few that can thrive on the extreme tidal beaches of Cook Inlet. Not much else can live in these intertidal sand flats, with the exception of mussels, surf clams, and the occasional worm or sand lance.

Clams filter out and eat microscopic marine plants called **phytoplankton**. Clams are a great addition to any ecosystem as this filtering process cleans seawater of other microorganisms, bacteria, algae, and excess nitrogen.



Glacial erratics

## A Mind-boggling Mystery

Although there have been very large recruitments of young razor clams returning to Clam Gulch beaches in recent years, the clams are now dying at high rates before reaching mature sizes.

*What is causing this dramatic die-off?* Biologists are unsure. Habitat loss? Stronger storms? Increased predation? Food shortage? Warmer temperatures? All the above? Until the population recovers and the mystery is revealed, this area will remain closed to clamming.



The sandy intertidal is punctuated by glacial erratics, large boulders left by glacial retreat, that intersperse the sandy habitat with rocky refuges for rocky intertidal organisms like mussels and barnacles, or the occasional sea anemone and sea star!

## Take the High Ground

Keep out of the mud! East Cook Inlet beaches, including Clam Gulch, are mostly continuous low-gradient sand and gravel. And due to some of the largest tidal ranges in the world, the beaches here have a very wide, **sandy intertidal zone**—the area between high and low tides.

Take heed: Riding too low in this zone or far into the **subtidal/surf zone** also leaves you at risk of getting stuck in the mud.



Background photo courtesy of SineadZoe.

This panel was funded by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council (EVOSTC), a state and federal partnership, and created by Alaska State Parks.



EVOSTC is identified as the funder of the panels.

This panel was funded by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council (EVOSTC), a state and federal partnership, and created by Alaska State Parks.

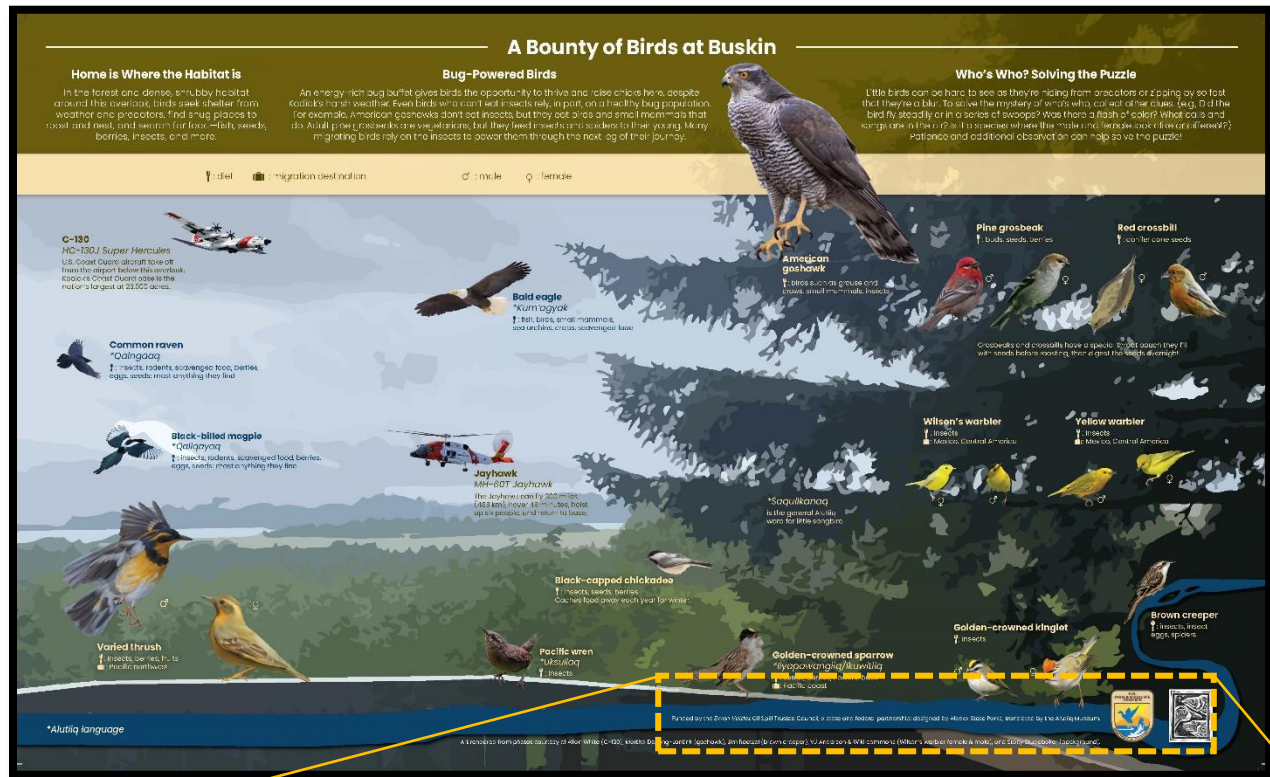


The new kiosk is replacing an old bulletin board that no longer had relevant information about the site to the users. The bulletin board has been removed and the new site for the kiosk has been prepared for install in summer of 2024. It will be placed at the top of the stairs leading to the beach access road and in the Day-use Parking area at Clam Gulch SRA.



For the Buskin River project, Alaska State Parks worked closely with our additional partners at Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, the US Coast Guard, and the Alutiiq Museum. A series of five panels was created for the Audubon Trail and Overlook and the 'connector trail' at the refuge's headquarters as the trails and overlook were recently improved by grass-roots community efforts.

Each panel identifies EVOSTC as the funder of the project.




These panel subjects include recreation, habitat, and wildlife identification. They are also the first interpretive panels in the area that focus on identifications in the Alutiiq language. Alaska State Parks will continue partnering with these organizations when upgrading signage in Buskin River State Recreation Area.

The Bounty of Birds panel notes the importance of habitat for both local and migrating bird populations, as well as captures bird identification as this panel is placed at the overlook. The Boreal Owl panel was placed near the nesting box on site and encourages stewardship. The Meadow (prism) and Forest (Moss/Fungi) panels highlight the different habitats along the connector trail, allowing also for further plant and wildlife identification and language learning. And finally, the poem panel encourages recreators and trail users to be more present as they enjoy the area, encouraging awareness and stewardship.

The panels have been designed and fabricated. They will be shipped to Kodiak NWR Headquarters for installation in summer 2024.



## A Boreal Home at the Buskin River




**Whoooo's Home?**

The elusive boreal owl is small – just 10 inches (25 cm) long with a two-foot wingspan (60 cm). These chocolate- and cream-colored owls live in boreal forests south of the Arctic Circle around the world. They primarily eat small mammals and birds.

**Location, Location, Location!**

Boreal owls nest in tree hollows, which can be hard to find. They're not picky and will often use a nest box as alternative housing. They seek a home in mature forests with a mix of conifers, like Sitka spruce, and deciduous trees, like birch and cottonwoods.



**Boreal owl**  
\**tsika*

Photo courtesy of Dora Marston

**Eating In**

A female lays three to five eggs in May and incubates them for a month while her mate delivers voles and other morsels to the nest for her and their hatchlings.

Usually, a male will support just one nest. However, a researcher near Fairbanks, Alaska found evidence of a male supporting two nests as the front half of a rabbit was in one nest and the back half was found in another!

**Kindness Matters!**


**Always leash your pets during this time.**

April through August is nesting and fledging season for Boreal owls. If you see a nest, being quiet and at a distance will prevent disturbing these families so they can survive and thrive.

**Thank you for your stewardship!**

**Alone, not Abandoned**

Owlets leave the nest in July. They can spend a month near the nest on the forest floor as they learn to fly and hunt. Their parents continue bringing them food while they learn. If you see a fledging owl on the ground, leave it be; its parents are likely nearby!



**Boreal owl fledglings**  
\**tsit*


\*Alutiiq language

Funded by the Cook Inlet Regional Health Authority, a state and federal partnership, designed by Alaska State Parks, translated by the Alutiiq Museum.


## Nature Through a Prism

Colors play a part in the adaptability of life in an open meadow.


**Silver-bordered fritillary**  
\**Saqiangataq (general butterfly)*




**White-stocking black fly, or "white sox"**  
\**Clivwak (general fly)*




**Silver long-jawed orbweaver**  
\**Miskiraq (general spider)*





**Red-tailed hawk**  
\**Aarulik*



**Little Brown Bat** \**Kenaryaq*

Little brown bats zip above the meadow at night, feeding on an abundance of insects. They are nocturnal, which means they sleep all day and hunt at dusk and at night. The bats' dark fur helps them blend into the night sky to stay hidden from both predators (like owls) and prey (like moths and mosquitos). The bats' pale bellies provide countershading against the moon when it illuminates the night sky.


**Yellow-rumped Warbler** \**Saqqilkanaq (sittle songbird)*

Yellow-rumped warblers dart out from tree branches to catch insects mid-flight or hop between bushes in search of berries. These birds are grayish-brown with bright yellow markings on their heads, throats, and backsides—earning them the popular nickname "butter-butts." Like all animals, the warbler's markings help them camouflage and communicate. Their muted coloring blends into the meadow while the yellow markings help attract a mate.


**Red Fox** \**Kaugya'aaq*

The red fox is on the hunt for voles and squirrels. To a human eye, a fox's red fur stands in contrast with the greens and browns of the environment. But many predators of the fox are colorblind. To a bear, a patch of green grass and a red fox are the same color. The fox's white chest and belly are not coincidental either. They camouflage the fox's shadow to help the fox when hunting prey, a trait called "countershading."


**Blacktail deer**  
\**runtaaq*




**Alaska Indian/Unalaska paintbrush**  
\**Suitkaaq (general flower)*




**Keyflower, Fischer's, or rose-purple orchid**  
\**Suitkaaq*



**Chocolate lily**  
\**taaqaaq*



**Golden-crowned sparrow**  
\**Ilyapawangliq / Ikuwitiq*



\*Alutiiq language

Funded by the Cook Inlet Regional Health Authority, a state and federal partnership, designed by Alaska State Parks, translated by the Alutiiq Museum.

## Moss and Lichens and Fungi, Oh My!

The towering \*Napat, or Sitka spruce trees, can grow to 200 feet tall (60 m). That's as tall as a 20-story building! To reach these soaring heights, Sitka spruce require year-round moisture which is readily found in the rain and fog of Kodiak's temperate rainforest.

### Moisture-Loving Moss

As you can see, moss feels right at home in a rainforest. Moss (\*Urut, plural) are plants, but they don't have roots like other plants do. Instead, moss "drinks" water through tiny structures on its surface called rhizoids that attach to rock, bark, or soil.

### Lichen

Often confused with moss, lichens are not actually plants. They are a unique mix of two different life forms: fungus and algae. The fungus provides the structure, and the algae provides the nutrients. Lichens can grow on nearly every available surface. They hang from tree branches, cling to rocks, and attach themselves to tree bark.

### Fungi, a Forest's Friend

Fungi can also live on their own without an algae partner. In this forest, there are hidden networks of delicate fungal threads (mycorrhizae fungi) that grow deep into the soil and mingle with tree roots, providing the trees with both water and nutrients. In exchange, the trees nourish the fungi with their own nutrients.

### Can You Find Me?



## Take a Moment... or Two, or Three...

Consider intentionally engaging all your senses just for a moment, and keep them "tuned in" as you continue along your way.

"The question is not what you look at, but what you see." ~ Henry David Thoreau

**\*Naglluten STOP**

Where you are  
What you're doing  
Don't stop just to keep going

**LOOK \*Tang'rhniqlluten**

At your surroundings  
At what your eyes see  
Don't look just to look

**\*Nitniqlluten LISTEN**

To what you hear  
To what is speaking to you  
Don't just listen to respond

**THINK \*Umyaalinguarluten**

About where you are  
About what you see  
Don't stop thinking  
Don't think to respond

Downy woodpecker  
\*Mugtullq  
(general woodpecker)

Red squirrel

Red baneberry

\*Alutiq language

Varied thrush  
\*Saquilkanaq  
(general little songbird)

Gray-cheeked thrush  
\*Saquilkanaq

Licorice fern  
\*Qaataq

~An excerpt from *Stop, Look, Listen, Think*  
A poem by Zori-26 on [alipoetry.com](http://alipoetry.com)

Funded by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council, a state and federal partnership, designed by Alaska State Parks, translated by the Auklet Museum.

The Audubon Trail, overlook, and the 'connector trail' at the Kodiak NWR headquarters near Buskin River.

