



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: 24220403

Project Title: PWS Natural History Symposium

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

Reporting Period: February 1, 2024 – January 31, 2025

Submission Date (Due March 1 immediately following the reporting period): February 25, 2025

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 sixth annual Prince William Sound Natural History Symposium (PWS NHS) took place in person and online May 13-14, 2024. Our lineup featured new and returning speakers on a variety of topics, including cultural history, wildlife, land management, monitoring studies, weather, and more. May 13th was a half day of sessions designed especially with the guiding and education community in mind, though it was also open to the general public. After the sessions, we had



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Coffee with the Scientists, which was organized by USGS, and a social. May 14th was the full day of sessions that the community has grown to know and expect, presented in hybrid format.

On Monday, approximately 60 people joined us in person. On Tuesday, our participants included approximately 130 in person, 90 online, and 20 at the PWS Science Center watch party in Cordova. In our post-event survey, participants indicated their interests as follows, with many checking multiple roles: Guides (25%), Scientists (25%), Land Managers (13%), Educators (25%), Students (7%), and General Public (46%). Following the live event, 22 video recordings featuring 27 expert speakers were posted to our website and to YouTube, where they have received 658 views and 4,157 minutes of viewership as of January 1, 2025.

Following up on the success of the first official watch party in 2023, the Prince William Sound Science Center in Cordova hosted another in 2024 and plans to do so again in 2025. Other watch parties around PWS and southcentral Alaska are in the works.

Planning is well underway for the seventh annual PWS NHS to be held on May 12 and 13, 2025. This year's theme is "Stewardship and Sustainability." We will once again offer a half day of sessions on Monday for the educator/guide community, though the general public is welcome to attend. Tuesday will be a full day of sessions with the latest news and research from around PWS presented by new and returning speakers in hybrid format.

2. Products:

Peer-reviewed publications:

Delta Sound Connections, Spring 2024

Reports:

NA

Popular articles:

Alaska Magazine mention

"Prince William Sound Natural History Symposium to be Held May 13-14," *Turnagain News*, <https://www.turnagainnews.org/articles/prince-william-sound-natural-history-symposium-to-be-held-may-13-14>

Conferences and workshops:



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

Public presentations:

NA

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

Sixth 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:

Outdoor Explorer radio show segment on Alaska Public Media

3. Coordination and Collaboration:

The Alaska SeaLife Center or Prince William Sound Science Center

Jane Belovarac, Wildlife Response Curator at the Alaska SeaLife Center, coordinated a panel about harbor seals delivered by Halley Werner and Savannah Costner, two Animal Care Specialists.

We published a piece promoting the PWS Natural History Symposium in the Spring 2024 *Delta Sound Connections*, a publication of the Prince William Sound Science Center. Katrina Hoffman presented a session highlighting the work of the PWSSC, and they also hosted a watch party in Cordova.

EVOSTC Long-Term Research and Monitoring Projects

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

EVOSTC Mariculture Projects

NA



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EVOSTC Education and Outreach Projects

PWS Regional Citizens' Advisory Council hosted a tabling session, offering information and conversation with participants at the 2024 event. Maia Draper-Reich will present on EVOS at the 2025 event.

Alaska Pacific University Professor of Marine Biology David Scheel presented on octopus in 2024, and APU Department of Marine and Environment Science faculty member Ben Wilkins will present his research on sea cucumbers this year.

Trustee or Management Agencies

We work closely with the U.S. Forest Service Chugach National Forest in planning our annual Symposium. The event is well attended by Forest Service staff, and it is used for summer training. Five Forest Service staff members gave talks at this year's event: Wilderness Manager Tim Lydon spoke about the history of the Chugach National Forest and their programs of work, Begich, Boggs Visitor Center Director Kyle Gallaher spoke about how to give an interpretive talk, and three Begich, Boggs Visitor Center rangers presented a panel on glaciers.

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.

CRRC Education and Outreach Specialist Robin McKnight offered a land acknowledgment and introduction to the Chugach peoples to begin the day.

Jack Blackwell, Katherine Carlton, and Adam Turner presented the panel "Prince William Sound ANCSA Village & Regional Corporations."

4. Response to EVOSTC Review, Recommendations and Comments:

Science Panel Comments

Date: September 2024

The Natural History Symposium has been a resounding success as measured by in-person and online participation and numbers of views of video recordings on the organizer's website and YouTube. The Science Panel has no concerns about this project.



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Executive Director Comments

Date: October 2024

This project is progressing as planned. Annual reports are submitted on time and well-organized. The PI is easy to work with and responsive to staff communications. Funding for this project is co-managed by ADF&G and the EVOSTC Office. Invoices and supporting documents are submitted timely. Invoice format is user friendly. Both PI and Fiscal Manager are very responsive to budget and/or invoice questions. Staff do not have concerns at this time.

PAC Comments

Date: October 2024

Vice Chair Stekoll asked about plans to continue the symposium after EVOS funding ends. Hughes stated they hope to continue each year and will look for further opportunities. Whissel introduced a motion to proceed with no concerns. Stekoll seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

PWSSF is in our third 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 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 us from across the state, as well as from the lower 48. Approximately 29% of last year's attendees were first-time participants. We look forward to continuing to grow the Symposium audience by offering a mix of staple educational content and the latest news and research.

To continue the PWS Natural History Symposium after the EVOSTC grant is completed, PWSSF will apply for additional grant support from other organizations, seek corporate sponsorship, and/or begin charging registration fees.



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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	46,371.90
Travel	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	5,000	2,051.38
Contractual	500	500	500	500	500	2,500	250
Commodities	750	750	750	750	750	3,750	1,819.43
Equipment	5,000	0	0	0	0	5,000	3,979.62
Indirect Costs (2%)	445	345	345	345	345	1,825	1,089.44
Subtotal	22,695	17,595	17,595	17,595	17,595	93,075	55,561.77
General Administration (9%)	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	15,000