

Marine Debris

PACIFIC

Coordinating Our Efforts: *Establishing Effective and Scientifically Sound Marine Debris Goals, Practices, and Outreach for Alaska*

Marine debris is a problem that is prevalent in all areas of coastal Alaska, affecting diverse interests such as tourism, fishing, rural subsistence, human health, fish and wildlife populations, and ecosystems. In response, marine debris programs have been formed and supported by diverse and uncentralized groups. These efforts require coordination and would benefit each other's experience. To address this a workshop will be held focused on marine debris issues in Alaska.

The workshop will begin w/an introduction to current marine debris removal efforts in the state and current knowledge about the politics, economics and science of marine debris in

Alaska. After these sessions the workshop will be broken into smaller groups to address the following action items:

1. Where and how accessible are regional debris accumulations?
2. Is standardized marine debris data collection possible?
3. What to do with collected debris?
4. How can we reduce marine debris sources through education and outreach?
5. How to develop emergent programs statewide?
6. Who cares?: Impacts and Effects of MD on habitat, fisheries, commerce, traditional use, ecosystem etc.
7. What criteria should be applied to prioritizing MD cleanups in the state?

At the conclusion of the 2-day conference a panel will meet to compile all the gathered information to create a proceedings document to help provide guidance to future marine debris work in Alaska.



Clean up efforts in 2004 on St. Paul Island, Alaska. Photos courtesy of Michael Williams, NOAA.

WHAT IS MARINE DEBRIS?

Marine debris is any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes.

MARINE DEBRIS SOURCES

Sources of marine debris include land-based sources, such as littering, dumping, and industrial losses. Ocean-based debris can come from fishing vessels, cargo ships, stationary platforms, and other vessels.

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MANDATES

Mandates supporting NOAA's marine debris efforts include the following:

- Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act of 2006, 33 U.S.C. §§ 1951 et seq.
- U.S. Ocean Action Plan
- Coral Reef Conservation Act
- Marine Plastic Pollution Research and Control Act, 33 U.S.C. §§ 1901 et seq.
- Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act, (Title II) 33 U.S.C. §§ 1401 et seq.
- Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. §§ 1251 et seq.

CURRENT PARTNERS

- Alaska Sea Grant College Program
- Marine Conservation Alliance Foundation
- NOAA Marine Debris Program

BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT

- Proceedings volume to serve as a sourcebook for the development of Alaskan marine debris programs
- Better networking and collaboration among marine debris organizations
- Better support for emerging marine debris programs
- Identification of regional priorities for Alaska
- Standardization of data collection to allow for regional assessments of marine debris accumulation, source identification, evaluation of environmental effects

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A juvenile male northern fur seal with a severe wound from marine debris entanglement. Photo courtesy of Micheal Williams, NOAA.

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