

Fall 2019



The SOUTHEAST STEWARD





Fishing Access Just Got Easier

Finding an easy place to stop off and go fishing after work has long been a challenge on North Douglas Highway, in Juneau. There is almost no public access to Gastineau Channel available, and people had to travel all the way out to the North Douglas Boat Ramp to even get to the water.

But now that's changed. Thanks to you, we were able to build a beautiful, safe, and convenient fishing access site. To make this happen, we had to plow through four years of planning, permitting, and collaborations with contractors and government agencies.

All that hard work paid off. We're excited to say that construction out at the Marjory and Edgar Huizer Fishing Access Site is nearly finished. The stairs are complete, the parking area is finished, and the new kiosk has a roof. Keep your eyes peeled for educational signs coming soon!

This was truly a community project: many thanks to the agencies, businesses, organizations, and individuals who made this community asset a reality. Check out our website for the full list.

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COVER

Brown bear at Pack Creek on Admiralty Island, courtesy of Mark Kelley. www.MarkKelley.com

Thank you to the photographers who contributed to this newsletter!



Tree Swallows Find a Welcome Home



J. Millsap

Conservation lands are important for a variety of wildlife, including tree swallows. Tree swallow nest boxes on Southeast Alaska Land Trust conservation properties adjacent to the Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge are part of a study by the Juneau Audubon Society. There's good news.

"The sites on SEAL Trust land were absolutely amazing this year for tree swallows."

*- Brenda Wright
Juneau Audubon Society*



J. Millsap

Tree swallows line their nests with found feathers from other birds.

Erratic weather is causing stress for wildlife of all kinds in Alaska, with record-breaking temperatures this summer. That's true for birds like the tufted puffin, whose food source is disappearing due to warming oceans.

Drier, hotter weather throughout Southeast Alaska this year has, however, brought about a higher than average insect count — and that's a good thing if you're a tree swallow. More insects equals more protein, and tree swallows need protein to produce eggs.

This year, the tree swallow nest boxes on Southeast Alaska Land Trust conservation properties in Juneau produced a whopping 139 fledglings — up from 78 in 2018.

Brenda Wright, of the Juneau Audubon Society and head of the tree swallow nest box study, was thrilled, "These sites are obviously attractive to insect-eating birds, and also productive!"

The Juneau Audubon Society intends to place even more nest boxes in these locations next year.



The creek which meanders through the Very Beary Berry Wetlands provides excellent habitat for rearing salmon.

Introducing the Very Beary Berry Wetlands

It's clear that neighbors Kristi Allen and David Waters know the property that we are on, and know it well. Kristi and David have agreed to give us a tour of our most recently conserved property – the Very Beary Berry Wetlands, in Juneau.

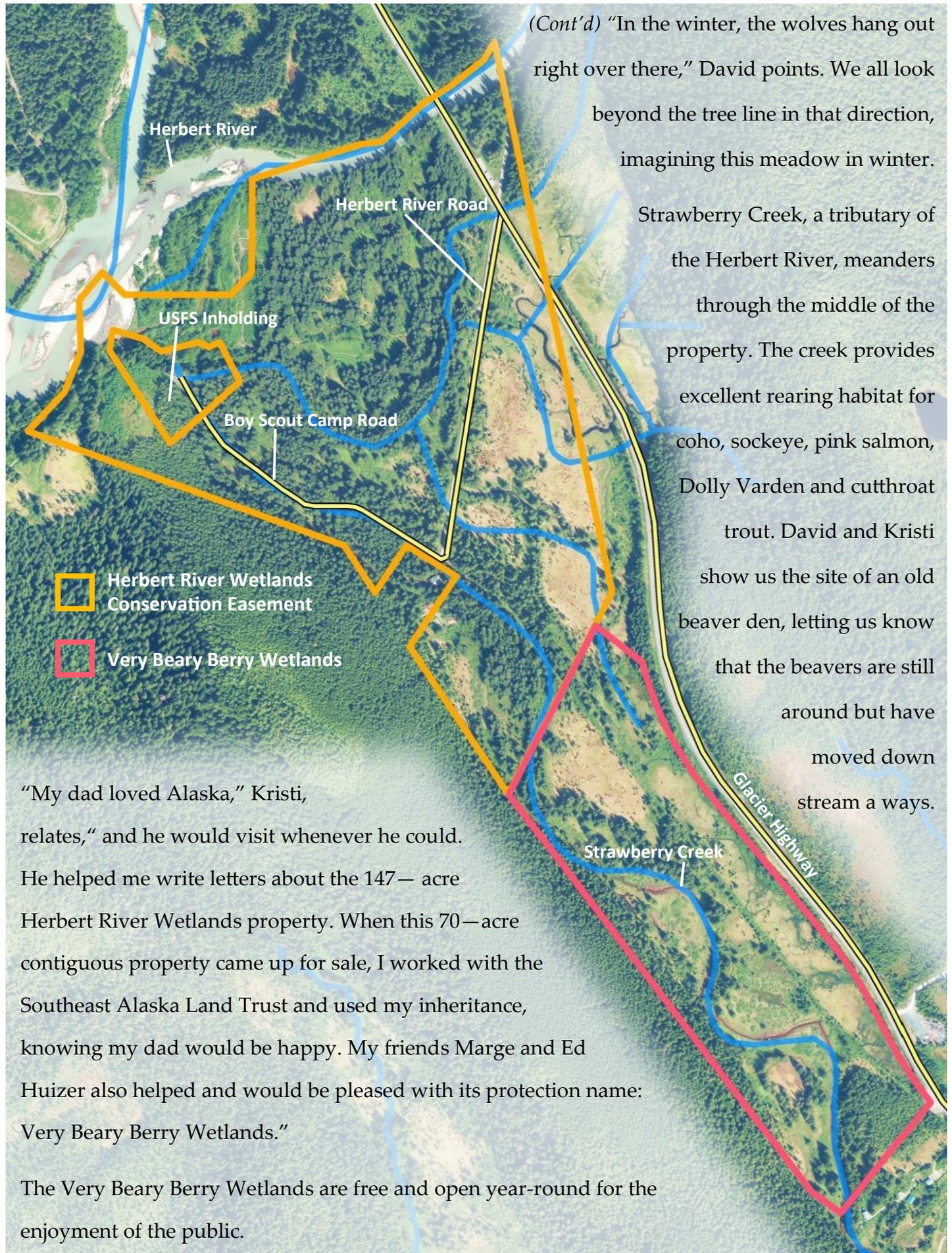
Earlier this year, with a major donation from Kristi and from her late father, David R. Allen, and with funding from the late Marge and Ed Huizer, the Southeast Alaska Land Trust purchased and conserved 70+ acres out by the Herbert River. This property sits adjacent to the Herbert River Wetlands, a 147-acre parcel of land owned by the City and Borough of Juneau, which was placed under a conservation agreement in 2003. Together, these two properties create a 217.5-acre block of protected wetlands, forests, and public open space.



Wild strawberries dot the property.

As we walk, David points out various plants, quietly naming them as we go by: Bog Orchid, False Hellebore, Wild Flag. He lists off half a dozen or so types of berries (though strategically fails to point out their location). We make our way past a large Sitka spruce that is at least four feet wide at the base.

The June sun shines down on us as we continue on, and someone makes a comment about how much wetter it usually is this time of year. On our way into a grassy field, we step past a pile of black bear scat and David claps twice to announce our presence.



(Cont'd) "In the winter, the wolves hang out right over there," David points. We all look beyond the tree line in that direction, imagining this meadow in winter.

Strawberry Creek, a tributary of the Herbert River, meanders through the middle of the property. The creek provides excellent rearing habitat for coho, sockeye, pink salmon, Dolly Varden and cutthroat trout. David and Kristi show us the site of an old beaver den, letting us know that the beavers are still around but have moved down stream a ways.

"My dad loved Alaska," Kristi, relates, "and he would visit whenever he could. He helped me write letters about the 147— acre Herbert River Wetlands property. When this 70— acre contiguous property came up for sale, I worked with the Southeast Alaska Land Trust and used my inheritance, knowing my dad would be happy. My friends Marge and Ed Huizer also helped and would be pleased with its protection name: Very Beary Berry Wetlands."

The Very Beary Berry Wetlands are free and open year-round for the enjoyment of the public.



Otters and birds just got a boost with the protection of shoreline on Tee Harbor, in Juneau.

Tee Harbor Property Conserved

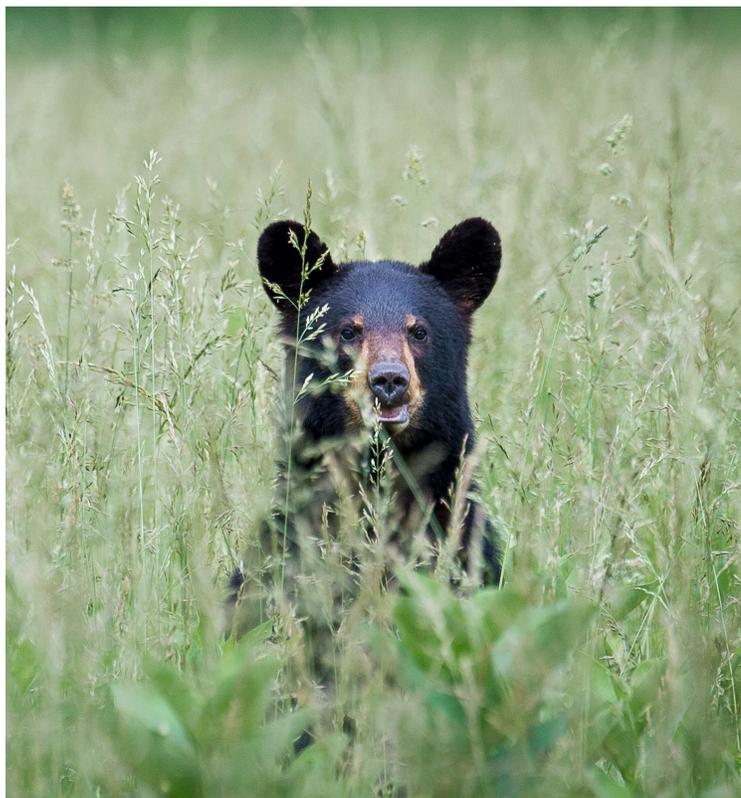
Bruce Baker knows and cares for every inch of his waterfront Tee Harbor property. His care is obvious in his meticulous maintenance of the historic garden, his appreciation of the giant Sitka spruce on the property, and the photos of river otters he happily shares.

Properties like these are important to animals like river otters — as well as birds such as great blue herons and belted kingfishers who stop in periodically. Waterside lands are at risk of development which would reduce the opportunities for wildlife havens. That’s one reason why Bruce Baker, who recently protected his property with a voluntary conservation agreement (called a conservation easement), decided to take action.



As with other properties conserved with a conservation easement, Bruce continues to own the land, pay the property taxes, and manages it pursuant to the conservation agreement. He can also pass it on to his heirs or sell it.

When reflecting on why it’s important to him to conserve his land, Bruce is quick to reply. “Since my late wife June and I purchased this 4.5-acre Tee Harbor property in 1990, I’ve wanted to permanently protect its wildlife habitat and scenic values,” explains Bruce. “With the help of the Southeast Alaska Land Trust, I have been able to make that vision a reality.”



Leave a Lasting Legacy for Southeast Alaska

Making a bequest to the Southeast Alaska Land Trust is a simple way to protect the places you value. You can name the Southeast Alaska Land Trust as a beneficiary of your will, trust, retirement plan, life insurance policy, or financial accounts. Anyone can make a bequest, and no amount is too small.

For more information, contact Allison (907) 586-3100 | Allison@setrust.net

Do you know...

...your donation is the backbone of our land protection work? While the occasional grand funding covers costs for specific projects, it's your generosity and that of the community, which allows us to work with families and community members from all walks of life. The coming year is no exception. We need you more than ever to inspire the love of the out-of-doors and conserve critical lands before they are lost.



The mushrooms are popping in Southeast Alaska! This fungi is known as Chicken of the Woods.

Is Conservation Right for You or Someone You Know?

Would you like to protect your land? Do you know someone who might be interested in protecting their property? People protect land for a variety of reasons. Many times it's a way to ensure their love of the land will remain intact after they leave. For others, it's a way to honor their parents or grandparents. Sometimes it helps with estate planning or financial management. If you would like to have a conversation about conserving your land, feel free to call Krista Garrett, Conservation Specialist, at (907) 586-3100. All conversations are confidential.

Southeast Alaska Land Trust

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The Southeast Alaska Land Trust collaborates with communities, individuals, and organizations throughout Southeast Alaska to help ensure that highly valued habitat, recreation, open space, and cultural and historic areas continue to thrive for the well-being of each generation.



Since you'll already be out during Gallery Walk, come by our office to meet our staff and Board, and find out what we've been up to this year.

While you're here, support the Southeast Alaska Land Trust AND take home a bottle of wine by participating in our Wine Pull! Everybody wins! Sounds fun, right? We hope to see you there!