

THE SOUTHEAST STEWARD

Newsletter for the Southeast Alaska Land Trust

Spring 2015

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Alex Wertheimer

Greetings, from the new SEAL Trust Board President. Thanks, first of all, to Mike Mauseth for his tenure as President. Mike ably guided us through the transition following the retirements of our long-time Executive Director, Diane Mayer, and Conservation Specialist, Gretchen Kaiser.

Well, it's spring and change is in the air. Frank Rue, the current Executive Director, is retiring and Allison Gillum, our current Conservation Specialist, has been hired to replace him as the new Executive Director.

When Frank took the position as the part-time Executive Director two years ago, he and the Board agreed that his goal, in addition to doing good things for land conservation in Southeast Alaska, should be to help take staffing at SEAL Trust to the next level of professionalism.

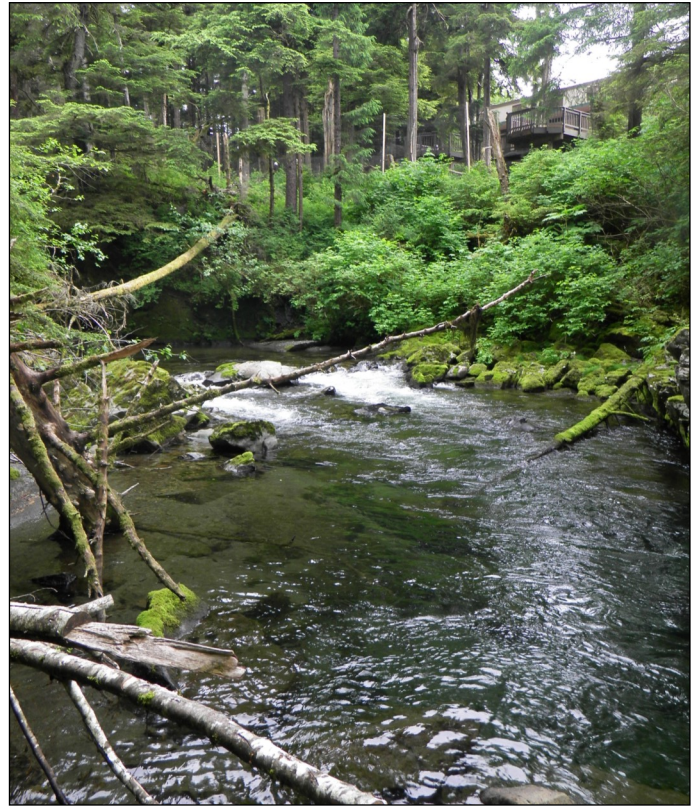
Hiring Allison as the new full-time Executive Director is a great start to fulfilling that goal. Allison has worked at SEAL Trust for a year as the Conservation Specialist. In addition to her great management and leadership skills, Allison brings a wealth of technical land trust skills to the job. She has extensive land trust experience including land purchases, conservation easements, computer mapping and analysis, and land trust operations. Her experience from her previous work for land trusts in New England and Southcentral Alaska gives her a great insight into how issues we face in Southeast Alaska have been addressed elsewhere. The Board is very pleased to have Allison as the new Executive Director.

SEAL Trust has also hired Mike Hekkers as the new Conservation Specialist. Mike served on the Seal Trust Board of Directors before going back to school and getting a Masters degree in Geography. He has been teaching as an adjunct professor at the University of Alaska for the last few years. Mike brings a great set of technical and personal skills and knowledge of Southeast Alaska to the job.

In addition, our Administrative Assistant, Amanda Pilley, was promoted to the position of Conservation Assistant, and will continue to provide important support to the entire staff, as well as assisting with fundraising, development, and property stewardship.

We hope you will stop by the office and meet Allison, Mike, and Amanda. I think you will be impressed and I know they will enjoy sharing their work with you.

Over the years SEAL Trust has been led by great staff. Once again SEAL Trust is in good hands.



SEAL Trust protects *Indian River*

This April, after over four years of negotiations, the Southeast Alaska Land Trust, in partnership with The Conservation Fund, purchased a 10.3 acre parcel along Indian River, in Sitka, from Sheldon Jackson College.

The Indian River parcel, which is adjacent to the Alaska Raptor Center, is an undeveloped river corridor containing Indian River and wetlands critical to the Indian River watershed. The Indian River lacks fish barriers and is catalogued by ADF&G as providing excellent spawning and rearing habitat for coho, pink, and chum salmon, steelhead, and Dolly Varden char.

With the acquisition of the Indian River parcel, SEAL Trust now protects two properties in Sitka with the other property being the 7.5-acre Crescent Bay Conservation Easement (better known to locals as the site of the newly completed Sitka Sea Walk).

OUR MISSION: The Southeast Alaska Land Trust cooperates with communities, landowners, and others, to ensure that habitat, recreation, open space, and historic areas remain in place for the well-being of each generation.



SEAL Trust protects two more properties adjacent to the Mendenhall State Game Refuge

In 2002, SEAL Trust protected its first wetland accretion property adjacent to the Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge: the King Easement. Since then, we have protected 10 more properties adjacent to the Mendenhall Refuge, totaling 37.6 acres. This spring we are pleased to add two more parcels and 7 acres to that tally: the Lazy G Acres parcel and the Hinz II parcel.

SEAL Trust intends to eventually transfer all of its accreted wetlands properties to the State of Alaska so that they can be put back into the Mendenhall State Game Refuge by the legislature.

The Hinz II parcel is near Sunny Point and the Lazy G Acres parcel is off of the Mendenhall Peninsula Road. The people of Juneau know and value their backyard Refuge, but many people don't know that our local Mendenhall Refuge has been designated as "An Important Bird Area of Global Significance", and is crucial to more than 140 bird species. Reestablishing the original Refuge boundaries will help ensure that the Refuge remains healthy and productive.

Mike Hekkers joins SEAL Trust as the new Conservation Specialist



MIKE, always inspired by awesome wild places, originally moved to Alaska to work as a natural history guide in Denali National Park.

Most recently, he worked as Instructor of Environmental Science at UAS for six years covering classes including physical geography, natural hazards, glaciers of Southeast AK, seminars, and others. He also enjoyed managing

the glacial mass balance program on the Mendenhall Glacier. His lands experience comes from both his experiences as a SEAL Trust Board member in the early 2000s and from over a decade of working in residential and commercial mortgages.

Mike is currently an active member of two boards: Discovery Southeast and the Juneau Nordic Ski Club. Along with his family, he enjoys the waters, forests, snow, and glaciers of our region. He is excited to rejoin the excellent SEAL Trust team.

SEAL Trust welcomes two summer interns!

Growing up in Florida, KATIE ASHBAUGH's appreciation for the outdoors came from the clear water, mangroves and oak trees. Katie decided to head north to the vast forests of the Northwest to study Natural Resources Conservation at the



University of British Columbia, in their faculty of Forestry. During her time there, she spent 5 seasons reforesting commercial clear-cut blocks around Northern British Columbia and exploring the beautiful province with her dog, Theodore.

In 2013 she first came to Southeast Alaska and discovered the incredible

waters, old growth forests, and glaciers. In 2014 she returned to work for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game as a wildlife technician and to commercial fish on the Alsek River. She now proudly calls Juneau home and spends her winters working and skiing in Hokkaido, Japan.

STACY SHUTTS is thrilled to be back in Alaska after serving with the Peace Corps in Paraguay for the last 27 months. She worked there as an Environmental Conservation volunteer on projects including reforestation and biodigesters. Stacy collaborated with local farmers on soil rehabilitation, seed saving, and sustainable gardening practices, using the local languages of Guarani and Spanish.



Prior to her time in South America, Stacy worked at the Eagle River Nature Center and the Wrangell Mountains Center. She enjoys gardening and empowering others to grow their own food. While attending Cal Poly, where she received her B.S. in Environmental Management and Protection, she began a community garden for students living in the dorms. When she's not working, you can find her hiking, rock climbing, running, or playing the mandolin. She is excited to join SEAL Trust and share her passion for land conservation!



Photo courtesy of Sally Rue

Wetlands Cleanup, A Community Effort

by Nancy Waterman

On a beautiful Saturday, April 25, over 70 community volunteers removed about 4,000 pounds of trash, debris, and recyclables from the Mendenhall Wetlands State Refuge at Sunny Point and the Auk Nu Cove at Auke Bay.

We thank the staff and members of Southeast Alaska Land Trust, Alaska Geographic, Discovery Southeast, Litter Free, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaskan Youth for Environmental Action, Alaskan Brewing Company, Waste Management, and NorthStar Trekking for their in-kind and personal contributions to this annual clean-up.

We thank the businesses that helped us advertise the event, including the Juneau Empire. Special thanks to Sally and Frank Rue for a midday barbecue lunch, to the Discovery Southeast naturalists for educational activities for the children, and to Amanda Pilley and Daryl Mestas, Alex and Peggy Wertheimer, Dave Haas and Mary Ellen Arvold, and the Rues for providing truck transportation for getting material to the recycling center and landfill. This was a partnership, a community effort, and a success.

With gratitude to all who participated.

Want to learn more about what we do?

Ask about volunteering, or join us for a Stewardship visit.

Call (907) 586-3100 or email us at
setrust@ptialaska.net for more information.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

President	Alex Wertheimer	Kim Smith
Vice President	Brock Tabor	Di Johnson
Secretary	Melinda Lamb	Mike Mauseth
Treasurer	Jay Nelson	Nancy Waterman



The **Southeast Alaska Land Trust** is one of only 3 land trusts in the State of Alaska which have been awarded with accreditation, and one of 254 in the entire nation.

THANK YOU

for your continued vision and support
which allow SEAL Trust to protect
invaluable properties for generations.

We could not do it without you!

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DONATE ONLINE, TODAY!

www.SoutheastAlaskaLandTrust.org

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SOUTHEAST ALASKA LAND TRUST

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YES! I would like to help preserve the natural landscapes of my community!

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☐ \$1000 Patron ☐ \$100 Steward

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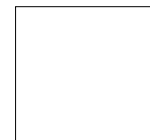
☐ \$250 Partner ☐ \$_____

☐ May we acknowledge your donation?

The Southeast Alaska Land Trust is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization.

Your gift is tax deductible.

Please mail donations to: SEAL Trust, 119 Seward Street, Ste. 2, Juneau, AK 99801



Upcoming Events

www.SoutheastAlaskaLandTrust.org

- Summer | Run For Conservation 5K
Fly Fishing Workshop
- Fall | SEAL Trust 20th Birthday
& Silent Auction
- Winter | Holiday Open House



Find us on Facebook!

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A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

My two years as the Executive Director of SEAL Trust have flown by. While I look forward to seeing Allison Gillum, our very talented new full-time Executive Director, take over, leaving is hard.

Why hard? Well, SEAL Trust permanently protects properties that have significant habitat, recreation, cultural, and open space values. Most of these wonderful places are in our backyard and available for people to enjoy. By comparison, my past work has been more in the realm of natural resource policy. Some of it lead to legislation “permanently” protecting resources, but many of the things I accomplished in the past were ephemeral and subject to the whim of a new state or federal administration.

The tangible successes we have achieved at SEAL Trust are truly permanent accomplishments. I, and everyone else involved, can take special satisfaction in knowing what we achieve at SEAL Trust will not be undone on a whim.

I leave as the Executive Director, but I remain dedicated to the mission of SEAL Trust.

Thanks to all of you, the many supporters who help fund the work of SEAL Trust, future generations will benefit from the permanent accomplishments we achieve today. ~ Frank Rue

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