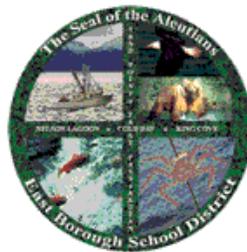
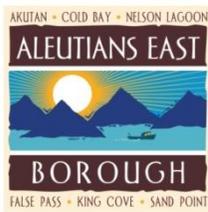


In the Loop



Bringing the Aleutians East Borough, the AEB School District and Eastern Aleutian Tribes together by sharing common goals.

Tsunami Experts Discuss Vulnerable Areas in King Cove, Cold Bay during Recent Workshop

Alaska has more earthquakes than any other region of the United States, and is the most seismically-active area is the Aleutian Islands. More than 80 percent of the world's tremors occur in the Circum-Pacific Belt (the volatile tectonic zone known as the Ring of Fire) where as many as 4,000 earthquakes at various depths are detected annually. For that reason, it's important for residents to be prepared in case a large-scale earthquake occurs, possibly unleashing what could be a devastating tsunami.

Earlier this month, Dr. Elena Suleimani and Dr. Dmitry Nicolsky from the Alaska Tsunami modeling group at the Geophysical Institute, UAF presented a workshop for the communities of King Cove and Cold Bay. They discussed which areas are most vulnerable to tsunamis and how quickly residents should react. The experts shared tsunami inundation maps of the communities,

detailing areas of town that would be susceptible to flooding. The project has been going on for more than two decades and is part of the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program. So far,



King Cove's downtown core is the most vulnerable area in the community because of the low elevation, according to Alaska tsunami experts.

the Geophysical Institute has created inundation maps and reports for more than 20 Alaska communities.

“We calculate all of the possible tsunami scenarios, and we look at historic tsunamis,” said Dr. Elena Suleimani, Tsunami Numerical Modeler with the Geophysical Institute, University of Alaska. “Then for each scenario, we calculate the inundation in that community. Then we combine all of the results, and make the so-called composite inundation map and

write a report, which is scientifically reviewed.”

Community members in King Cove learned about specific areas of concern during the meeting. They were given additional details with the maps about how the downtown core area would be the most vulnerable because of its low elevation. Multiple businesses are located in the area, including Peter Pan Seafoods, the AC Store, Gould's Grocery and Liquor Store, Fleets Inn/Heart Lake Apartments, the City Office and the Post Office. In addition, about 20 homes are located in the



Multiple businesses and about 20 homes are located in King Cove's downtown core area.

downtown core area.

“I think many people didn't really realize what could happen in King Cove if we had a localized earthquake,” said Chris Babcock, King Cove Fire Chief and Aleutians East Borough Assembly member. “A lot of people thought Deer Island would block a tsunami, but we learned that isn't the case at all. It really opened our eyes about the potential threat here in King Cove, and we're

right in the ring of fire, with the Aleutian Trench out in front of us. It's constantly moving. So they said if all of a sudden the ground starts shaking to the point where it's difficult to stand up, and it lasts for 15 to 20 seconds, we need to head to higher ground as soon as possible."

"If you feel a strong earthquake (approximately 8.5 magnitude or greater), that means it's local and a tsunami will arrive in minutes," said Suleimani. "You need to drop everything. Don't wait for any official warning or sirens. Go uphill immediately."

Babcock said one concern would be the large number of employees at Peter Pan Seafoods who would need to leave the building quickly to reach safety.

"Mainly, the concern would be trying to get our elderly people, those who might have difficulty evacuating to higher ground as soon as possible," he said.

"It would be pretty dangerous to be in that sand spit during a tsunami," Suleimani said. "That area would be flooded, so the community needs to decide where to put an additional tsunami shelter for those able to quickly evacuate the sand spit (downtown area)."

Dr. Suleimani said other parts of town, such as the Ram Creek Subdivision, where the school, clinic and other homes are located, is situated in a higher elevation.

"So if you go uphill in that area, you will be safe," she said.

Suleimani warned residents that even large earthquakes that are far away, such as those that originate in Russia or Japan, pose potential tsunami hazards. The difference is residents would have more time to react.



Other parts of town, such as the Ram Creek Subdivision, is situated in a higher elevation area. Dr. Suleimani said going uphill in this area would be the safest thing to do during a tsunami warning.

"It could come in three hours or longer," Suleimani said. "I wouldn't advise anyone to go out to the harbor to observe the water. Remember what happened in Crescent City, California in 2011 after an earthquake hit Japan? The wave came ten hours later."

Eight foot waves destroyed the harbor and battered boats. People were warned to evacuate to higher ground. However, four people who went to the harbor in Crescent City to watch the waves were swept out to sea. Three made it to safety. One of them died.

“Think about it,” she said. “That was ten hours later. The currents can be pretty bad.”

Suleimani also advised anyone who is out in a boat during a tsunami warning to stay away from harbors.

“It’s the most dangerous place,” she said. The safest place is deep water.”



The tsunami experts said Cold Bay is much better off in terms of tsunami hazards because it’s located on high ground.

The tsunami experts provided an entirely different outlook for Cold Bay.

“They are much better off in terms of tsunami hazards because the community is located on high ground,” Suleimani said. “So basically, the only low elevation areas that will be flooded are from both sides of the community where the creeks are, and nobody lives there.”

“So the threat is much less,” said Candace Schaack, Mayor of Cold

Bay, “but we do have an evacuation route set, so we can move to higher ground in case of a tsunami.”

To see tsunami inundation maps of Alaska communities, visit the link below:

<http://earthquake.alaska.edu/tsunamis/atom>

Cold Bay Drafts City’s Five-Year Strategic Plan

The community of Cold Bay met recently to identify several goals for the city’s five-year strategic plan, which ranges from economic development to increasing tourism opportunities.

“We’re really just looking at goals we’d like to see accomplished, and setting a timeline to get something done for Cold Bay,” said Candace Schaack, Mayor of Cold Bay.

Last week, community and City Council members, with the help of a facilitator, came up with eight projects they'd like to see come to fruition. The projects include improving communications, utilization of the community's educational facility, building a boat harbor and breakwater and encouraging small business development.

Improvement of Communications:

Schaack said the community would like to see internet and cell service improve. That includes encouraging the Aleutian Fiber taskforce in its quest to get a fiber/microwave connection out to the Aleutians to increase the speed and connection of the internet. Currently, the region works on a one megabit connection, which is far slower than systems available in Anchorage and other urban areas. The working group of entities, comprised of Aleutian communities, such as the Aleutians East Borough, the AEBSD, the Aleut Corporation, SWAMC, APICDA and Eastern Aleutian Tribes is currently exploring funding mechanisms to hopefully bring about big changes in communications.

Educational Element:

Schaack said one of the community's greatest wishes is to have the school reopened. Right now, there are seven kids in the community – three are school age and the other four are toddlers.

“So it doesn't seem like it can happen in the next five years, so the goal is to have the building used for educational purposes,” Schaack said.



Cold Bay Mayor Candace Schaack said the community hopes to rent out portions or all of the old Cold Bay School, which was closed down a year ago, as part of the town's 5-year strategic plan.

The mayor said ideas included renting out portions of the facility for the Coast Guard to use as a gymnasium or possibly office space. Another is to request that the Borough look into creating

some kind of program for high school students who want to further their education.

“Maybe that would include welding,” said Schaack. “They could pursue various types of certificates so if they’re not planning to go to college right away, they have some type of training.”

Schaack said the community is also talking about starting a conversation with the university and seeing if they would like to utilize office space so they have a center to serve college students in the Aleutians.

“We hope something comes of it before it’s turned over to the state and the facility is torn down. Our goal is to save the building,” she said.

Boat Harbor and Breakwater:

Schaack said setting plans in motion to have a boat harbor and breakwater built in Cold Bay is the community’s highest priority. The goal is to increase development in the community and bring in additional revenue.



Cold Bay Mayor Candace Schaack said the community’s biggest priority is a safe marine infrastructure. She said the dock is manageable but not everybody’s ideal situation. The community would like to have a harbor and breakwater in place.

“We sent surveys out a couple of months ago, and we based them off of our 1999 plan,” she said. “The harbor and breakwater out-scored every other category by three-fold. So it’s safe to say that for the community of Cold Bay, this really is our biggest priority – a safe marine infrastructure.”

“We’d also like to have a safe landing place for when there are medevacs coming off of boats,” said Schaack. “Right now our dock is manageable, but it isn’t everybody’s ideal situation.”

Last year, a contractor completed a major overhaul of the facility to extend the life of the dock. The repairs included replacing a number of wooden pilings around the dock, refurbishing fenders along the side, replacing deck panels, ten ladders as well as work on concrete ladders.

Schaack said a harbor would provide a safe refuge for vessels for fishermen traveling through the region.

“Two years ago, someone tied their boat up to the dock, it got caught up in the waves and mostly sunk,” she said. “It was a huge loss for him. Incidents like that could be completely avoided if we had a small boat harbor.”

Schaack said a breakwater would provide more protection from the frequent turbulent waters and would provide safe berthing for fishing vessels. She said Cold Bay is eager to start making strides in putting funding aside to demonstrate the significance of this priority to the community.



Last year, major repairs were made on the Cold Bay dock to extend its life.

“We’d really like to see something done about it,” she said. “With technology evolving, there has to be a location that would work for a small boat harbor.”

Encouragement for Small Business Development:

Schaack said during the recent meeting, several community members expressed the desire to see a coffee shop/café established. She and others are hopeful that a community member might be interested in this kind of a venture.

Tourism:

Schaack said the community would also like to see tourism and Cold Bay’s abundant history highlighted.

“We really don’t have any type of a visitor center or an information desk at the airport,” she said. “Cold Bay is rich with history.”

The community was established in 1941 as a covert U.S. military air base. By the end of World War II, it was transformed into a secret Russian training camp before Russia declared war against Japan. Years later, the community became a base for the legendary Flying Tigers during the Vietnam War.

“When people come through here, they don’t realize how much Cold Bay has to offer,” Schaack said. “It would be great if we could use one of our facilities to set up a presentation area, work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to get a flat screen and have it on display at the PenAir

Terminal.”

In addition to Cold Bay’s dramatic military history, the community offers scenic and wildlife viewing opportunities as well as hunting and fishing.

“We could be tapping into ecotourism in a big way,” said Schaack.

City/Community Services:

During the meeting, the community drafted an extensive list that residents would like for the City to take on. Those items include supporting the U.S. Coast Guard while the agency continues



Cold Bay residents also expressed their desire to support the U.S. Coast Guard as it continues building a second hangar. Photo by Paul Schaack.

work on a second hangar in the community to be used during the fishing and crabbing season.

Another idea was to establish a local greenhouse. Residents would also like to explore ways to lower the cost of living, fuel prices and the cost of utilities. Another objective includes the cleanup of the 13th Regional Corporation’s site.

“That’s where the Corporation’s dilapidated buildings are located. The buildings are rotting away, and garbage is blowing everywhere from the site,” Schaack said.

“We have since been able to reach a contact to figure out what to do with this facility.”

Medical Services:

Schaack said during the meeting, community members also pointed out how important medical services are in Cold Bay to surrounding communities. Cold Bay serves as the regional center for air transportation on the Alaska Peninsula and the Aleutian Chain.

“Our health care clinicians and EMS personnel assist with medevacs from all other surrounding communities that stop in Cold Bay and then continue on to Anchorage,” Schaack said.

The community expressed the desire to support Cold Bay’s EMS personnel and move forward with plans to remodel the community’s health clinic. The facility was built in 1983 of Styrofoam and concrete, and has exceeded its useful life. During high winds, the roof temporarily lifts. In addition to the structural problems, the equipment is also outdated.

“The original clinic was, at one point, in the airport runway’s visibility zone, and needed to be moved,” Schaack said. “That since has changed because the runway was shortened, so it’s no longer in the visibility zone, and it can remain where it is.”



Cold Bay residents expressed support for the community’s EMS personnel and moving forward with plans to remodel the health clinic.

The Borough administration is looking into possible funding sources and whether to remodel the current facility or build a new clinic in a different location.

Roads/transportation:

The mayor said the last category that the community discussed was transportation and roads. She said there are a couple areas in Cold Bay that need significant attention. For example, she said the Trout Creek Bridge is near collapse.

“It’s basically caving in,” Schaack said. “We’d like to encourage the state or whoever needs to be contacted to take care of that.”

She said another area in town that is in need of improvement is Russell Creek.

“An idea was brought up to build a bridge over Russell Creek, which I thought was a valuable suggestion,” Schaack said.

The mayor said many people in town do their subsistence salmon fishing there, near Mortensen’s Lagoon.

“It’s a high traffic area in the summertime,” she said. “Right now, people drive through the creek to get to the fishing area. It would be great to build a bridge over it so the fish in the creek aren’t being disturbed.”

Schaack said an overarching goal is to bring unity to the community and to triple the size of Cold Bay’s population.

“That’s our vision in going forward with this plan,” she said.

The community hopes to conduct a couple of additional meetings to help develop its five-year strategic plan.

“We want to identify the community’s values and develop a vision and mission statement,” she said. “We don’t have a set date on when we’ll have the plan completed. Strategic plans are always evolving. However, we hope this community effort provides the City Council with some direction so we can focus on projects that are of the highest priority to Cold Bay.”

PUBLIC MEETING

Formerly Used Defense Sites Cold Bay, Alaska

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Alaska District (USACE) will be hosting a public meeting for the FUDS environmental restoration projects in Cold Bay.

Information shared at the meeting will include:

- Discussion of the planned summer 2016 Remedial Investigation at the Milepost 4 and Milepost 5 Frosty Road Sites
- Updates for the Drum Burial Area, Beach Seeps, and UST#1 projects.
- Assess community interest in forming a Restoration Advisory Board

Wednesday, June 22nd, 7- 8 p.m.

Cold Bay Community Center,
Izembek Street
Cold Bay, Alaska



Ms. Beth Astley

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
CEPOA-PM-ESP-FUDS
P.O. Box 6898
JBER, Alaska 99506-6898
(907) 753-5782

Japanese Kayakers Planning to Launch their Aleutian Water Adventure from Cold Bay Today

Four Japanese adventurers are about to embark on an adventure of a lifetime – kayaking from



Coastal paddling in fog during a past expedition in the Aleutians. Courtesy: Shinya, Araiba, Abura and Lauren Adams.

Izembek Lagoon and traveling along the Bering Sea side of the Alaska Peninsula and Unimak Island starting today. However, they're prepared to alter their course if Mother Nature dictates. If that's the case, they will depart from Cold Bay, and will travel along the Pacific side.

“The largest open water crossing for this trip is Unimak

land, but could be more than double that distance between favorable launching and landing points for kayaks,” said Jeff Hancock, owner of Aleutian Adventure Sports in Unalaska.

Hancock said the crossing of Unimak Pass will probably require 6 – 10 hours of continuous paddling without a break. The group will travel through the Krenitzin Islands, then Akun and Akutan Islands before crossing to Unalaska as their final destination.

“The total distance is about 152 nautical miles, but since kayakers tend to stay closer to the coastline, and paddle into land, launching each day, the distance will be somewhat greater,” he said. “A good estimate may be a total paddling distance of 175 nautical miles.”



The adventurers assemble kayaks during a past expedition. Courtesy: Shinya, Araiba, Abura and Lauren Adams.

Hancock has guided and coordinated trip logistics for countless individuals and groups in the Aleutians, such as this one, for years.

“I have led a lot of trips, and have heard guests say many times that they would like to come back to the Aleutians to see more,” Hancock said. “Well, with most tourists, that never happens. However, Shinya and company always come back.”

The four kayakers are Akio Shinya, leader; Takao Araiba, co-leader; Takahiro Shibata, paddler; and Kazuaki Iwamoto, paddler. Shinya and Araiba are from the village of Niseko, on Hokkaido, Japan’s northern Island. Niseko is renowned for its fantastic snow skiing conditions. Shinya has operated a ski lodge there for many years. He’s also involved with avalanche forecasting and ski patrol. In the summer, they operate an expedition kayak tour business on Hokkaido. Both Shinya and Araiba are kayak and ski guides in Japan and are veterans of Aleutian paddling and camping.



Aleutian kayak landings are often hard work, as the adventurers discovered during a past expedition. Courtesy: Shinya, Araiba, Abura and Lauren Adams.

Hancock said their past Aleutian trips have included Unalaska Island circumnavigation; Unalaska to Akutan including circumnavigation; Unalaska to Umnak/Nikolski; Umnak to Four Mountains; and Unalaska to Akun including circumnavigation.



“These guys consider the Aleutians to be like heaven for paddling and camping,” said Jeff Hancock, owner of Aleutian Adventure Sports in Unalaska. Courtesy: Shinya, Araiba, Abura and Lauren Adams.

“These guys consider the Aleutians to be like heaven for paddling and camping,” Hancock said. “They have made many trips to the region, linking various islands, circumnavigating favorites and camping at the outermost edges of the passes between islands to observe currents, tidal

patterns and weather for days on end. It's a technique or philosophy, more focused on learning and understanding a place rather than taking greater risks in order to spring toward some grand goal or for the sake of keeping a tight schedule.”

Hancock said each of the four kayakers are paddling with his own kayak. They use expedition model folding kayaks, each contained in a backpack and easily transportable by passenger plane. The boats can be assembled simply without tools.



The kayakers prepare to launch in Akutan during a past expedition.
Courtesy: Shinya, Araiba, Abura and Lauren Adams.

“The kayaks consist of an outer skin stretched over an aluminum frame, which speaks to their appreciation for traditional skin-on-frame kayak designs developed and used in the Aleutian region for thousands of years,” Hancock said. “They use only custom-made, Aleut-style wooden paddles on their Aleutian trips.”

The Japanese adventurers are completely self-sufficient and will bring all necessary food and

camping equipment with them, without requiring any food drops or other support. They plan to camp on beaches every night, using expedition/mountaineering style 4-season tents.

“They eat locally fished/foraged food as much as possible during their trips, including finfish, shellfish, seaweed and edible plants,” said Hancock. “They pack dehydrated rations, such as rice, noodles, coffee and tea.”

Hancock said the group will arrive in Cold Bay today (Friday, May 27th). With the help of Michael Livingston in Sand Point providing contacts, Allen and Leticia Ellis of Cold Bay will be assisting the group to get from the airport to their trip



The kayakers take a break while camping at Unalga Pass during a past expedition.
Courtesy: Shinya, Araiba, Abura and Lauren Adams.

launch point on the Lagoon or Bay side. Once they embark on their expedition from Cold Bay, most likely the only community they will stop in will be Akutan before reaching Unalaska. The group will have a marine VHF radio for communications.

“In my experience, most Aleutian adventurers that undertake big expeditions in the Aleutians are usually very interested in promoting themselves,” Hancock said. “Shinya and company have always been far more interested in promoting their experiences as well as the beauty and appreciation of our region to others at home in Japan. No other person or group that I’ve been in contact with has ever shown as much interest, intellect and respect for our history, culture and environment as Shinya and his fellow adventurers.”

King Cove Serves Up Firemen’s Picnic this Weekend

King Cove is cooking up a big event this Saturday, and just about everybody in town is expected to show up. The King Cove Firemen’s Picnic is tomorrow, May 28th, at the old school gym.

“So it really doesn’t matter what kind of weather we have,” said Chris Babcock, King Cove Fire Chief. “It’s our biggest and only fundraiser of the year. It’s basically a citywide picnic and the last shebang before the guys go out fishing. It’s open to everybody in town.”



Residents enjoy delicious food at the annual King Cove Firemen’s Picnic. File photo - courtesy: Chris Babcock.

The tradition of the King Cove Firemen’s Picnic goes back more than 20 years.

“It all started because we wanted to raise money to start a fire department scholarship for graduating seniors at the King Cove School,” said Babcock. “So a large amount of that goes back to those who apply from the senior class. Every little bit helps, even if we’re just helping

with their textbooks or lab time.”

Over the years, the fundraiser has grown to include other big events in town, such as the fireworks display on July Fourth.

“Gorilla Fireworks gives us a pretty good discount,” he said. “Some of the funds also go into our Santa Parade that we do every December with the Women’s Club. We try to put money back into the community by doing things that will benefit King Cove and the kids.”

The Department also donates money for student class trips. In addition, the fundraiser is very helpful when the department itself is in need.

“With budgets as tight as they are right now, it helps to provide funding if we need to buy equipment,” he said.

If last year’s turnout is any indication, the Firemen’s Picnic should be a big attraction.

“Last year was one of our biggest years,” he said. “We had almost 200 people. We used to host the event on the first Saturday in June, but it was just too close to the fishermen getting ready to go out in their boats. So this happens about a week or more before they go, and the guys are more apt to show up.”



The AC store has donated a 130-pound pig for the picnic’s roast, just like last year. Photo by Chris Babcock.

Like last year, the AC Store has once again donated a 130-pound pig for the picnic.

“We have two guys in the department who are set up for the pig roasting,” he said.

That’s just part of the delicious fare that will be served up at the picnic. The King Cove Corporation is donating hamburgers and hot dogs from Mr. Prime Beef.

“It’s kind of a potluck thing. People will also bring things like potato salad, beans and things like that,” Babcock said.

The other big draw is the raffle tickets, including one for a 4-wheeler.

“GCI gives us a large donation to help pay for that, along with the City and the Borough,” he said. “That raffle has a 200-ticket cap on it, so people feel they have a better chance to win.”



The King Cove Corporation is donating hamburgers and hot dogs from Mr. Prime Beef. File photo by Chris Babcock.

It takes multiple sponsors to put together a big event like this one.

“GCI also gives us a cell phone to raffle off,” Babcock said. “The raffles also include PenAir roundtrip tickets from Cold Bay to Anchorage.”

Other sponsors include TelAlaska, the Belkofski Tribe, the Agdaagux Tribe, Grant, Eider, Peter Pan Seafoods, Gould’s, APIA, HUD Housing and the Aleut Corporation.

Lisa Fox, Fishery Area Biologist, Bases in Sand Point during Summer Fishing Season



Elisabeth (“Lisa”) Fox, fishery Area Biologist with ADF&G, is now based in Sand Point for the summer fishing season.

Elisabeth (“Lisa”) Fox, Fishery Area Biologist with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), is now stationed in Sand Point for the summer fishing season. Fox was hired for the job in early May, taking over the position formerly held by Matthew Keyse. Fox arrived in Sand Point on May 16th, and is looking forward to getting to know the community better.

“I’m looking forward to this new job,” she said. “It’s going to be a different position for me. I think it’ll be fun.”

Fox is already very familiar with the Aleutian Islands and the Alaska Peninsula. Her educational background includes a bachelor’s degree in biology from UAF and a Master’s degree in fisheries from the University of Washington. She started working for ADF&G in 2003, conducting weir work as a technician in Kodiak, where she grew up. Afterward, she worked four summers on the Alaska Peninsula as a biologist for a genetics research project, based in Sand Point. Following that position, she focused on finishing up her graduate degree. After graduating with her Master’s degree, she worked in Anchorage as a fisheries geneticist for three years. When she and her husband started a family, they decided to move back to Kodiak. Her daughter is now 2 ½ years old. Shortly afterward, she landed the job in Cold Bay as an assistant biologist for the last two summers.

“I was the assistant for Matt Keyse for two seasons,” she said. “I was mostly assisting him with harvest reporting and aerial surveys. I didn’t have as much contact with the town (of Sand Point) or the fleet. I made it over to King Cove a few times, but I didn’t make it to Sand Point much. Now I’m *here* in Sand Point.”

Fox will report on everything that happens during the fishing season and will do whatever preparation work is needed for the following year later in 2016.

“The first opening for the June fishery (for setnetters) is June 7th,” she said. “When we start seeing fish come out of the water, we’ll start knowing what’s going to happen as far as timing, volume and size of fish. I had one gentleman tell me recently that chum salmon was caught during subsistence fishing, so I’m getting reports about what people are seeing.”

Fox said as far as later in the summer, the pink salmon forecast appears to be fairly strong. She said in recent years, the even years have been poor for pink salmon runs. However, that could be changing.

“There hasn’t been a whole lot of harvest,” she said. “So they’ve been building back up. The winter conditions for juvenile pink salmon rearing in the winter of 2014/2015 were really warm. That’s typically good for pink salmon survival, at least in freshwater. So if that is all correct, then it should be a decent pink year, which would be the first time in a while that an even year has been good for pinks.”

Fox said that even though ADF&G doesn’t put out a forecast for sockeye in the South Peninsula, there is a forecast that goes out for Chignik.

“That will kind of determine some of the fishing opportunities in the Southeastern District Mainland (SEDM),” Fox said. “The early run for Chignik is looking good as far as the forecast. The late run is looking about average, so there should be some fishing opportunity for fish that are bound for Chignik.”

Fox said ADF&G is planning to hire someone to fill her previous position (assistant biologist) based in Cold Bay during the summer. In addition to that position, there’s also an assistant biologist stationed in Sand Point.

“Between the three positions (hers included), we do aerial surveys on everything from Kupreanof to Dutch Harbor,” she said. “We also survey all around Unimak Island, everywhere up to Stepovak Bay. It’s such a huge area that we can’t fly all the surveys with just two people, so we’re going to try to get that vacant position filled as soon as possible.”

Fox said without all three positions filled, it would be difficult to complete all the survey work necessary to keep the fisheries as active as they have been.

“Hopefully, we can fight to keep all three positions,” she said.

She acknowledges that with the dire budget situation the state faces, cuts are coming to all departments within the State of Alaska.

“To make up for some of the cuts that are coming our way, we’re going to do the Dutch Harbor food and bait test fishery as a revenue generating fishery,” Fox said. “Then we’ll do our standard Shumagin Islands immature test fishery (in early July, before the post-June fishery begins). We’re hoping to get a little bit of revenue there.”

Fox said little changes for her with regard to managing the sockeye harvest in the area from the Beklofski Bay section to the Mino Creek – Little Coal Bay section. During the last Board of Fisheries meeting (Feb. 23 – 29, 2016), the Chignik Advisory Committee proposed setting up a new Dolgoi Island Section Management plan similar to the management scheme currently used in the SEDM, which is based on the seasonal harvest of sockeye in the Chignik Management Area L. Instead, the Board passed substitute language which requires tallying sockeye harvested in the area based on fish ticket data.

“As for me, that just means I’m going to be monitoring how many fish are harvested in a specific set of statistical areas,” she said. “Then once 191,000 sockeye are harvested in the larger area, we’ll close a smaller portion of that Dolgoi Island area until July 26th, when the allocation period with Chignik is over.”

For now, Fox is gearing up for a pre-season meeting with Area M fishermen. **That meeting is scheduled for tonight, Friday, May 27th at 6 p.m. in the Aleutians East Borough building in Sand Point.**

“We’re basically going over staff introductions,” she said. “I know most of the people here, but just in case some haven’t met me, they’ll know who the new manager is. We’ll go over the season and how it’s going to operate. Then we’ll make ourselves available to answer questions.”

Fox will be in Sand Point until the end of August or the first week in September. Currently, she’s living in the “pilot house,” in part of a duplex. Soon, she’ll move into a new duplex, which was previously used as an old apartment/office building used by ADF&G biologists, until it was demolished last year and a new one was built.

“Once it’s finished, I’ll move into a brand new place with my family when they get here (during the first week of June),” she said.

For now, Fox is preparing to manage a busy fishing season.

“Hopefully, everybody feels comfortable coming by, talking with me and introducing themselves, if I don’t see them at the pre-season meeting,” she said. “I’ll be in the Sand Point office and will be happy to talk to anybody.”

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE**



*Sam Cotten, Commissioner
Scott Kelley, Director*



Contact:
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Date Issued: May 17, 2016
Time: 2:30 p.m.

SAND POINT COMMERCIAL SALMON FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT # 01

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game will be conducting a preseason fishery stakeholder's meeting at the Aleutians East Borough building in Sand Point at 6:00 p.m. Friday, May 27. We will teleconference with both King Cove at the Harbor House and False Pass. The purpose of this meeting is to provide all interested parties an opportunity to discuss the upcoming salmon season with ADF&G staff.

Topics covered will include:

2016 salmon outlook
2016 management strategy
2016 department test fisheries
Other topics as time permits

To obtain further information, please contact the Sand Point Fish and Game office at (907) 383-2066.

False Pass Students Study Octopus in Classroom Aquarium as Part of Tidewater Ecology Project



False Pass students studied and cared for a Pacific Giant Octopus as part of a tidewater ecology project. Courtesy: False Pass School.

What began as a project to raise baby salmon later evolved into studying and caring for a Pacific Giant Octopus as part of a tidewater ecology project for students at the False Pass School.

“Our big fish tank looks like a big commercial lobster tank,”

said False Pass teacher Kevin Barnett. “Last year, we were

somewhat successful in hatching baby salmon. However, we put a substrate of mud on the bottom so they’d have a habitat, like what they would have in the wild.”

Barnett and his students soon discovered that there were stone fly larvae in that mud, which are typical salmon fingerling food.

“However, when you’re freshly hatched baby salmon, you *are* stone fly larvae food. So they literally got eaten by their food supply,” he chuckled. “Well, who knew? We know now.”

This year, the class decided they wanted to set up the tank for saltwater so they could provide an intertidal habitat for a Pacific Octopus. The goal was to feed, care and ultimately release the

animal. To begin the project, the students put out an octopus pot.



The students put out an octopus pot, in hopes of capturing one to care for and study in the school’s fish tank. Courtesy: False Pass School.

“We put it in different places and moved it around,” said Barnett. “The kids kept a journal of all the changes we made.”

Next, they discussed a strategy for putting it in an area where an octopus would likely move into.

“To no avail,” Barnett said. “We caught crabs, sea anemones and all kinds of things, including a greenling. Over the course of the year, we set up a fairly dynamic community tank that is typical of coastal tidewater ecology, but alas, no octopus – until this past March.”



The students ended up catching crabs, sea anemones and other sea creatures, but they were unsuccessful in capturing an octopus. A fisherman ended up donating one to them. Courtesy: False Pass School.

About two months ago, one of Barnett’s students, Regan Hoblet, informed him that her uncle, a fisherman, caught an octopus after he learned the school was looking for one. Barnett said it was probably

three to four pounds.

“For a Pacific Giant Octopus, that’s actually fairly small because they can get up to 100 pounds. So we said, “O.K. The tank can handle that.”

The students put him into his new home. Initially, they weren’t sure if he was acclimating well to his new environment.

“He kind of sat in the corner and turned gray because he was trying to blend in,” Barnett said. “We were concerned that he wasn’t going to eat anything.”

Barnett contacted an octopus expert in Anchorage, but never heard back. By then, the octopus started eating.

“We had to start catching crabs for him because that’s what he eats,” Barnett said. “We actually watched him go after a crab and very systematically pop it open and eat it. Oh, it was very neat for the kids to watch!”



At first, teacher Kevin Barnett and the students were concerned that “Bart” wasn’t acclimating to his new home. However, the octopus soon started eating and getting comfortable. Courtesy: False Pass School.

The class named him “Bart”. The students learned how to care for this amazing animal and kept careful observations on his behavior. Barnett said it was a very valuable project for the students.



The students learned how to care for Bart and kept careful observations on his behavior. Photo courtesy: False Pass School.

“It was just the trial and error approach, which is truly the way you do science,” he said. “The kids stepped right up and made some very sophisticated observations. I think they really enjoyed the project. I enjoyed that he (the octopus) could do most of the teaching – or the process could do the teaching.”

Barnett said not only did the students provide a home for the octopus, but they learned how to be successful at it. In addition, the octopus clearly demonstrated he was happy while he was there.

“You can tell when a Pacific Giant Octopus is happy because they turn red,” he said. “After a few days of being stressed, he started moving around and his color brightened up and turned red. He pretty much stayed that way. It was cool to watch him wander around the tank and do a couple of laps. They’re very intelligent animals.”

At first the students asked whether they would need a book for this project.

Barnett told them, “Well, we’ve got an octopus! What do we need a book for?”

The project was mostly for the middle and high school kids. The students kept him for about seven weeks.

At the end of April, the students went on a weeklong school trip to Homer, thanks to a grant from APICDA. They visited the Center for Alaska Coastal Studies and attended a 2 ½ day seminar on Alaska coastal ecology. They also went to the beach and learned how to identify tidewater organisms.



Barnett said Bart clearly demonstrated that he was happy in his home. The sea creatures turn red when they’re content. Courtesy: False Pass School.

“They hiked into the forest across the bay from Homer and learned how the coastal habitat is interdependent,” Barnett said. “This was the culmination of the project because it went along with our studies.”

When they got back, it was close to the end of the school year, and it was time to let Bart go. Earlier this month, the students set him free down on the beach at low tide.



The students set Bart free in early May. As part of their project, they created a video to document their progress and the animal's behavior. Photo courtesy: False Pass School.

“It was kind of a horrible, nasty, ugly day, but we all went and said goodbye to him,” Barnett said. “We wished him well and gave him a sendoff. He was kind of slow leaving. We watched him squeeze between a rock and make a new home for himself.”

Even after letting Bart go back

into his natural environment, the kids' fascination with octopuses continued. The students went on another school trip to Swedes Lake, located about 45 minutes away, with False Pass fisherman Shane Hoblet.

“The students went tide pooling, and Regan found a baby octopus! We put it in a bucket so the little kids could watch it,” Barnett said. “She took it back to False Pass and released it by the harbor, thinking that was a good place.”

Overall, learning about octopuses was an exciting and worthwhile experience for the students.

“The kids thoroughly enjoyed learning about the octopus,” said Barnett. “They really are just fascinating animals and very entertaining. The kids engaged in real science.”

Video produced by False Pass students about octopus project:

Link: <https://youtu.be/liEfv2G7pew>



One student found a tiny baby octopus during a trip to Swedes Lake.

Cold Bay JUNE 3RD & 4TH
Kids Dolly Derby

KICK-OFF &
DOOR PRIZES
FRIDAY NIGHT
6PM @
COMMUNITY
CENTER

2016



**Prizes for 1st 2nd &
3rd place**

open for all
ages

Free admission!

Congratulations to the Sand Point & King Cove Graduating Seniors!



The graduating class at the Sand Point School includes Chloe Gardner, Evan Wilson, and Jillian Bjornstad. Photo courtesy: Heidi Jacobsen.



The graduating students from the King Cove School are from left to right: Shayla Brandell, Kaylee Bendixen, Troy Brandell, Levi Larsen, Connor Samuelson, Robert Christiansen, Shankell Mack, Marylee Yatchmeneff, Shannel Newman. Photo courtesy: Amanda Turnbull.

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