

Marine Debris Littering Kodiak Coastlines

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Mary Donaldson/KMXT

Constantly, tons of garbage floating in ocean waters washes onshore on beaches worldwide. In Alaska, the trash fouls beaches and interferes with wildlife habitats. A local nonprofit was formed a few years ago that deals with these issues in Kodiak. Mary Donaldson has this report.

The Island Trails Network has been in the business of cleaning up recreational trails, both on land and water, for nearly two years. The nonprofit defines the trails it maintains as a dirt or coastal path. Andy Schroeder is its director. He says he founded it because of the need to maintain the trails that have previously been ignored. One big issue he deals with is marine debris along Kodiak's coastlines. In 2007 he says the volunteer-based organization began taking aerial surveys of the coastlines on the Kodiak Archipelago.

(Schroeder 1 :20s "affects the entire state.")

Since the magnitude of the issue was identified, Schroeder says he has been taking action locally. He has received grants to help with beach clean-ups from the Marine Conservation Alliance Foundation, that funds these types of activities throughout the state of Alaska. Schroeder says they began the projects this spring and that they will be ongoing.

(Schroeder 2 :24s "and...that beach this year.")

Mary
Smith, from Chicago,

was in town last month giving a tour to chefs, and got to see first hand, the volume of trash that collects on some of our area's beaches on a trip with Schroeder.

(Smith 1 :17s "to be part of that.")

Marine debris is a problem not only because it is unsightly, but it interferes with marine wildlife. He says that mammals and birds become entangled in the trash, and sometimes mistake it for food.

(Schroeder 3 :30s "with full stomachs.")

He says being a conscious consumer helps.

(Schroeder 5 :10s "make choices.")

He says that the process of collecting marine debris is a never-ending cycle.

(Schroeder 4 :43s "where it's recycled.")

Schroeder works closely with a board of directors for the Island Trails Network and says five major clean-ups have been scheduled for this year. The efforts will continue to keep the hardest hit areas clean. He says that anyone who is interested in helping can volunteer for any of the future clean-ups, with the next one planned for later this month on Shuyak Island. A local event is scheduled for September as a part of the International Coastal Clean-Up Day.

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Mary Donaldson.

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