

Senate Candidate Treadwell Talks Fish in Kodiak

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Crab Fest 2014 attracted a number of folks to the downtown area over the weekend, and even some visitors to the island. One of those visitors was Lieutenant Governor Mead Treadwell — a current Republican candidate for U.S. Senate.

Treadwell's trip to Kodiak wasn't his first. In fact, he's been to the island many times, more recently for a fundraiser this past winter. This particular visit was to attend Crab Fest, but also to take part in a fisheries debate that was supposed to happen over the weekend.

“And neither of my Republican opponents wanted to show up so we instead set something up at the Fisherman's Hall, the harbormaster's office, and invited fishermen, their families, and anyone else to come in and talk.”

Treadwell said his two biggest primary opponents, Joe Miller and Dan Sullivan, are both good men, but neither have a sufficient background and knowledge on fisheries issues.

“What I can say to people in this business is that when I first landed in Alaska, 1974, Governor Wally Hickel was advocating, with many other Alaskans for the 200-mile limit. He put me to work helping to write the arguments that ultimately carried the day in 1976 that got us the 200-mile limit. I then wrote several very intensive papers in college including my bachelor's thesis on fishing in Bristol Bay. I then went on to graduate school, and I've worked as a citizen or in government or on science boards to help improve our science capacity, to help get a CDQ program here and bring more jobs home. And I've been working with the fishing industry my entire time in Alaska.”

He said more than 50,000 Alaskans either work in or support the fishing industry, so it only makes sense to try and preserve the communities and people that make up this unique aspect of Alaska's culture.

Treadwell said Alaska holds a unique place in foreign politics, specifically as fishing expands into the Arctic and the state starts to butt heads with other nations on proper fishery management.

“Frankly given the problems that we have with Russia right now, it's been very disturbing for me because I represent Alaska in the arctic. So I deal a lot with senior Russian officials — their ambassador in Washington, senior people in their foreign ministry, been invited to be in the room with Vladimir Putin to

talk about the arctic and all those things. If we don't make our relationship where we manage a common fishery work better we're going to have problems. We're going to have huge problems. And I agree with where the U.S. is in disagreement with Russia, such as in Crimea, but at the same time they've got to come clean on what their bycatch is. We've got to push for observer groups. We've got to, if they're going to get certification, it's got to be real certification.

If elected to the Senate, Treadwell said he'd like to continue what he has been doing as lieutenant governor and former chair of the U.S. Arctic Research Commission — advocating for sound science to back up quota programs, but also greater research to build on ecosystem knowledge.