

2007 Gore Point Cleanup Report

From June 30 through August 28, a seven person GoAK crew, with the assistance of 5 volunteers and several donated vessels, cleaned beaches on and near the Gore Point Peninsula, a small peninsula jutting into the Gulf of Alaska from the southeast coast of the Kenai Peninsula. During the first month, the cleanup effort focused on the massive MD deposit located on the Gore Point Peninsula itself. Three short beaches in that area, totaling no more than 2.5 miles in length were literally buried in MD. Designated as the West, East and North beaches, the East beach was easily the worst where MD was blasted 150 yards into the surrounding forest by vicious storms and surf. The East beach also has a huge barrier berm of logs that was heavily entwined with MD. The GoAK crew and volunteers spent over 20 days cleaning just this half-mile-long beach. It took them about 8 days to clean the North and West beaches. From just 2.5 miles on these three heavily fouled Gore Point beaches, the cleanup crew removed 178 MD-filled Super Sacks each weighing between 250 and 400 pounds. Each Super Sack held between 8 and 12 large MD-filled garbage sacks and other loose items.

After collecting MD from the 3 Gore Point beaches, the cleanup crew fanned out to clean beaches on both sides of Gore Point. Another 52 Super Sacks of MD were removed from 70 miles of nearby beaches. All 230 Super Sacks were staged on Gore Point beaches and then lifted by helicopter onto a landing craft for shipment to the Homer landfill. The helicopter also slung out MD such as nets, floats, fuel drums and other material either too large or heavy to bag. GoAK removed 25 tons of MD from the 2.5 miles of beaches at Gore Point and another 20 tons from the 70 miles of beaches cleaned in nearby areas. In total, 45 tons of MD were removed from the Gore Point region and deposited in the Homer landfill. However, before the MD was transferred to the landfill, Homer locals were given the opportunity to sort through the MD and to retain anything of value. Approximately 13 large pickup loads of buoys were salvaged. Dozens of large plastic drums and other containers were also recycled. Thousands of drift net floats were also collected by local artisans. Lines, hawsers and remnants of nets were also saved. It is difficult to estimate, but probably several tons of the Gore Point MD was recycled.

Throughout the Gore Point MD project, volunteers were a vital component to its success. Volunteers twice surveyed the region before cleanup crews actually began working. Five volunteers spent 10 days each at Gore Point assisting the cleanup crew. A volunteer skipper donated his time, crewman and vessel to transport volunteers and supplies between Homer, Gore Point and Seward. Another vessel and crew was also donated to provide logistic support. Many other people passed through briefly and donated time at Gore Point. In addition, many people donated time and equipment in Homer to help unload the MD filled landing craft and transport the MD to the landfill. Conservatively, at least 860 volunteer hours were logged during the Gore Point project. Two power vessels donated 13 vessel days for logistic support.