

## **GoAK 2008 Prince William Sound Cleanup**

The 2008 Prince William Sound Gulf of Alaska Keeper cleanup focused on the shorelines of Green, Smith, Seal and northern Montague Islands. Primarily because of debris density, but also because of problems with weather and surf conditions, only Green Island was completely cleaned. All but a small portion of Smith Island was cleaned. None of Seal Island was cleaned. All but less than a mile of heavily fouled Zaikof Bay on northern Montague Island was cleaned.

Again, 100 volunteers joined GoAK for 3 days in May, 2008, donating 3000 hours to help clean Green and Smith Island. Volunteers gathered 240 large bags (600 ALPAR bag equivalents) of MD on Green Island and 70 large bags on Smith Island, plus other debris too large for bagging. Over 8 tons of MD was collected during the 3-day volunteer cleanup. The bags and large debris were stashed for later pickup by GoAK.

The 7-man GoAK crew then continued cleaning Smith and Green Island, and Zaikof Bay for 30 additional days. During the 8 days the GoAK crew worked on Green Island, another 150 large bags and 5 tons of debris were removed in addition to that collected by volunteers. During the 22 days of work in Zaikof Bay, GoAK collected 560 large bags of MD plus an enormous amount of debris too big to bag, much of it fishing nets. In total, including the MD collected by volunteers, 2 tons of MD was taken from Smith Island, 13 tons from Green Island and 25 tons from Zaikof Bay. Altogether, approximately 55 miles of shoreline were cleaned.

GoAK primarily used larger bags in 2008, each equivalent to about 2.5 ALPAR garbage bags. In total, 1020 large bags were collected, equivalent to 2550 ALPAR bags. That works out to 46.45 of the ALPAR bags of debris collected per mile, not including the larger debris. This density of trash per mile cleaned is approximately twice that of shorelines cleaned in 2007 and reflects the fact that the 2008 cleanup was located nearer the debris-rich currents of the Gulf of Alaska.

GoAK, with 6 volunteers using two power vessels over 5 days, also re-cleaned 12 MD-monitoring sites scattered throughout PWS. Over 300 volunteer hours were spent on the monitoring project. Specific reports on each site have been submitted, but some general observations can be made. Unfortunately, there is a significant amount of MD piling annually upon our beaches. It is too early to state for certain, but it appears from 3 years of monitoring data that the composition of the newly arriving debris is changing from predominantly commercial fishing debris to common household and industrial plastic debris. Much, if not most, of the newly arriving MD in PWS is from western Pacific countries and is not locally-generated debris.

GoAK also initiated a MD survey of northern PWS from Esther Passage to Columbia Bay. However, weather conditions on that exposed northern shoreline limited the survey to bays and passages. Therefore, that survey is only about 50% complete. GoAK intends to finish that project as soon as the snow melts in the spring. Similarly, plans to finish the

Kayak Island survey were also twice stymied by uncooperative weather. As soon as weather conditions allow in the spring, that survey will also be completed.