

New floors for the PCR

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The Dutch Harbor Fisherman

The Aleutians and the Pribilofs

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A RAY OF EARLY SUMMER



Monica Southworth/The Dutch Harbor Fisherman

After a long and hard winter, the snow has finally melted. The green sprouts of an early Unalaska summer are pushing through last year's dead brown tundra, with flowers blossoming all over the hills. Last week, the sun found an opening in the clouds off Nateekin Bay to shine on a windy day.

Alaska delegation backs wildlife refuge land swap

Environmentalists decry bill to help King Cove

By The Fisherman staff

A bill authorizing an unprecedented land trade between the federal government, the state of Alaska and the King Cove Corp. has been introduced in Congress.

On June 20, U.S. Rep. Don Young and Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Sen. Ted Stevens, all R-Alaska, introduced companion legislation in Congress that would add 61,723 acres of wildlife habitat to the Izembek and Alaska Peninsula Wildlife Refuges.

In exchange for this land, King Cove residents would receive a right-of-way for a single-lane road through Alaska's Izembek National Wildlife Refuge leading to Cold Bay, a community located about 25 miles away.

"We wouldn't introduce something without hopes of it passing, but given that the Democrats are in power right now, it does make it more difficult," said a representative from Murkowski's office in Washington, D.C., when asked by The Fisherman of the chances of the bill being enacted.

"This is a win-win for everyone involved. The people of King Cove would get reliable access to

Cold Bay with minimum impact to the environment, while thousands of acres of valuable land are added to the refuge and to the wilderness," said Ernest Weiss, mayor of King Cove.

The community, tribal leaders, and residents of the city of King Cove are applauding the Alaska congressional delegation.

"We are so grateful that the Alaska delegation, the governor and the state of Alaska is supporting this land-exchange legislation," Weiss added.

"We are the ones who were and are impacted by this decision," Della Trumble, president of the King Cove Corp. "The Aleut people who live here were never consulted when this area was designated as wilderness."

"King Cove is very difficult to access. The Izembek Enhancement Act is a simple solution to this problem, and it shows respect to the people of King Cove," Weiss said.

Once enacted, the exchange would be the first new wilderness in Alaska designated by Congress in more than 25 years. The bill would designate 45,493 acres of that land as wilderness. The state of Alaska has brought nearly 43,000 acres to this land exchange. The King Cove Corp. is relinquishing more than 18,000 acres.

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Sunken Korean freighter located near Dutch Harbor

By The Fisherman staff

Last week, hydrographers working for TerraSond Ltd. discovered the Korean freighter *M/V Pan Nova* in Unimak Pass near Dutch Harbor while mapping the seafloor in the area for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

In 1983, the 551-foot Korean freighter carrying wheat sank in Unimak Pass after colliding with another Korean freight vessel.

It was discovered in approximately 300 feet of water. Preliminary survey information indicates that the vessel broke apart dur-

ing the sinking and is lying on its side.

Unimak Pass is the primary Aleutian Islands ship passage that connects the Bering Sea with the Pacific Ocean. There are an estimated 2,500 vessel trips through the pass each year, with fishing vessels accounted for 60 percent of the total.

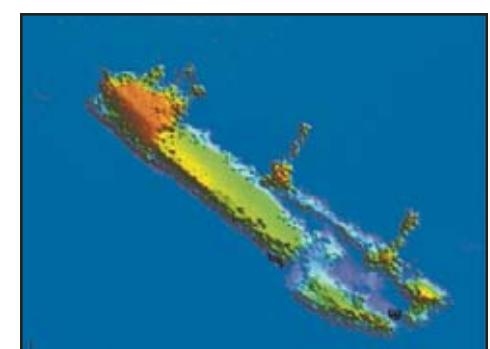
Few collisions have occurred in Unimak Pass historically, and records indicate that no human lives have been lost. Two collisions reported in 1983 were the result of pilot error or carelessness. Poor visibility was considered a major factor that contributed to the vessels' collision.

TerraSond hydrographers were mapping

the seafloor onboard the *M/V Kittiwake* using a multi-beam sonar when they discovered the vessel.

TerraSond's mapping project is funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, part of NOAA, as part of its effort to modernize U.S. nautical charts and help ensure safe navigation in U.S. waters.

Hydrographic surveys are conducted primarily by ships using side scan and multi-beam sonar technology to identify potential hazards and determine water depth. NOS and outside contractors such as TerraSond complete 40 to 50 hydrographic surveys each year.



Courtesy photo/Terra Sond Ltd.
A sonar image reveals the discovered wreck of a Korean freighter found in Unimak Pass.

Collecting elders' knowledge about traditional herbal medicine

Svarny-Livingston gives talk on Unalaska's plants

By Monica Southworth

The Dutch Harbor Fisherman

For the past 20 years, Sharon Svarny-Livingston has been regathering traditional uses of native plants on Unalaska Island. After repeatedly questioning the elders in the community, she has built a significant base of information.

"I'm still finding out things, it's a long process," the former co-administrator of the Qawalangin Tribe said.

Last week at the Museum of the Aleutians, the long-time resident of Unalaska brought samples of plants for the audience to smell and feel. After opening with a story where a boy's life is saved by the plants his mother carries with him, she shared her own tale of rediscovery.

When growing up, Svarny-Livingston remembers only about 200 people living on the island in the 1950s and '60s. Without modern medicine or doctors, the residents of the island were forced to use traditional medicines from plants to deal with illnesses.

Her grandmother was a midwife in the community and delivered all the babies from the time of the evacuation until 1984, but the young girl at the time never paid attention to her grandmother's routine or the contents of her little black bag.

When leaving with her military family for the East Coast in 1964, Svarny-Livingston didn't know she wasn't going to return to a nearly forgotten practice in 20 years.

"I asked the elders about the plants and their uses. They looked at me like I was crazy and told me, 'We use modern medicine now,'" Svarny-Livingston said. "They used this knowledge for ten thou-

sand years, I've only been gone for 20."

To remind the elders of the plants, she would go and gather plants from the hillsides and bring it to them. After crushing the plant, the smells would refresh their memories of the uses and even how to prepare treatments from the plants. "My kids grew up using medicinal plants. At first, they were wary and hated the taste, but now they won't leave Unalaska without the plants," Svarny-Livingston said.

Svarny-Livingston tried the medicines at home, primarily using her three children as "guinea pigs." "Plus the clinic was too expensive for me," Svarny-Livingston laughed.

Holistic healing aims to maintain a balance within the body. Plants can be used to correct problems but are not intended for emergency use.

Traditional knowledge is localized to regions and specific areas, appropriate for that region only and not all-encom-

passing, making Western science wary of it.

But scientists are more frequently finding that aboriginal peoples are able to offer correct diagnoses. Today, even medical schools are beginning to offer holistic healing and herbology as an alternative to prescription drugs.

"I like to pass on my knowledge. And I don't want to be dragged around the hills being asked, 'smell this,'" Svarny-Livingston laughed.

The most exciting plant for Svarny-Livingston is the yarrow plant. Yarrow grows in different subspecies all over the United States.

Mashed-up yarrow plant placed on a wound will coagulate the blood and has a natural antiseptic to keep away infection. As a tea, yarrow raises the body temperature and kills germs. Svarny-Livingston recommends this when a

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Four youth have chance at state track, field team

Contenders excelled at Hershey event

By Monica Southworth

The Dutch Harbor Fisherman

In April, in the first event of its kind, Community Center staff held a local Hershey Track and Field games.

The nationally renowned sporting event for youth aged 9-14 came to Unalaska, and as a result of their performances, four students now have a shot at the state team.

The four are Shannon McConnell and brother Tully McConnell, Levi Howard and Amber Jellison.

"It's something they've been trying to do for

the past five years, and it was given to me to get done," Garcia said. "No one ever had put time to get it done, but I had time this year to plan and work it, and that's how it came about."

About 25 students participated during the games in April.

"It wasn't huge, but we didn't need it to be the first time. Definitely a good starting point," Garcia said.

Running events included the 50- and 100-meter dashes, and events at 200, 800 and 1,600 meters. The other two events were the standing long jump and the softball throw.

Competitors were broken up by age and sex. The age groups were 9 and 10 year olds, 11 and 12 year olds, and 13 and 14 year olds.

Young athletes compete at local levels, and the best times are sent to the state organization.

Top times are selected to select members for the state team, usually consisting of about 60 participants.

Then the top contestants with the best times or lengths from each state are selected to travel to nationals. The scores are also compared to other states to determine the success of the young athletes.

Garcia said he should find out about the potential participants the first week of July.

The Hershey Youth Program was created in 1975 by Dr. Donald Cohen, founder of the National Track and Field Hall of Fame in the United States. Finding a lack of physical fitness in the 9-14 year old age group in the United States, he proposed a program to seven major track and field organizations, encouraging students to participate in basic track and field events.

Like most national events, the program began on a small local level, starting with 36 playgrounds in Charleston, W.Va., quickly expanding to a national program by 1976.

The late Milton S. Hershey, founder of the Hershey Co., was a strong supporter of youth, and after his death in 1945, his company continued in this realm by sponsoring the track and field games. Hershey also supported the Milton Hershey School, every year educating 1,300 boys and girls with disrupted family home lives.

Thirty years after its start, the Hershey Track and Field Games is the largest youth sports program in North America, with more than 400,000 participants.

"It was a great turnout for our first time ever. We'll have double the number of kids next year," Garcia said.

Unalaska's two fueling companies split in union balloting

North Pacific Fuels rejects in controversial vote

By Monica Southworth

The Dutch Harbor Fisherman

On June 22, in separate elections, workers from North Pacific Fuel and Delta Western went to the polls to determine whether to join the International Longshore and Warehousemen's Union Local 223.

The six Delta Western workers voted unanimously to join the union.

Results of the North Pacific Fuel ballot was more complicated.

North Pacific Fuel had 14 voting employees,

including fuelers, truck drivers and three foremen.

Three of the votes were challenged by the union and one was challenged by the employer on June 22, leaving 10 valid votes, split between five members voting to unionize, while five voted against.

The challenged ballots were counted on June 28, resulting in a final tally of six votes to unionize with eight against.

Jan Gilbrecht, an organizer for ILWU, said the union challenged votes by the three foremen, arguing they were supervisors.

In 2004, before working with the ILWU, the NPF employees were attempting to unionize under the Teamsters. After a law change by the NLRB in 2005, the status of foremen was recognized as a supervisory position.

Gilbrecht did not explain why the foremen participated in the election.

"We understand that the North Pacific Fuel workers don't want to be in the union, so we wish them the best of luck," Gilbrecht said.

Delta Western workers unanimously voted to join the union, but their employers filed an objection to the election. National Labor Relations Board Region 19 will be dealing with the case. The employees voting to join the union included fuelers and one office worker, excluding the foremen from voting.

"We feel that it was a fair and valid election," Gilbrecht said. "They have a very tough road ahead of them to prove that something happened to affect the whole election."

Gilbrecht said the next step with Delta Western is to proceed with contract negotia-

tions between the employer and new union members.

Delta Western and NPF are two major fuel suppliers in Unalaska. Delta Western is the leading independent distributor of petroleum products and lubricants in Alaska.

North Pacific Fuel is a part of Petro Star's operation at Resoff Dock, Captains Bay and Latitude 45, with four fueling facilities and fuel trucks and providing full services for fishing vessel offloads.

On 5 p.m. on Thursday, July 5, the ILWU has a barbecue planned at Kelty Field. The event is to celebrate and honor the history of the union and welcome the new members including the APL and Horizon Watchwomen and the newest members from Delta Western fuelers and office staff.

Swap ...

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"We have been good stewards of the wilderness and wildlife in our area for thousands of years," Weiss said. "And we will continue to do so."

The state of Alaska would foot the bill for the road construction. With a cable barrier on each side of the road, off-roading will be prohibited.

"It's a tremendous amount of land that we're putting on the table," Trumble said. "It's tough when I think that we're giving this land back to the government in order to have access to this road. That land represents who we are as a people."

The King Cove road issue first came before Congress in 1998 when a road plan between King Cove and the all-weather Cold Bay airport, approximately 25 miles away, was rejected. Conservation groups fought hard against the road.

As a compromise, Congress appropriated \$37.5 million under the King Cove Health and Safety Act for improvements to the King Cove medical clinic, airport and a road/marine transportation system link between the two cities.

Although the clinic is new, the small community is unable to attract doctors with the skill level needed to handle emergencies and other life-threatening illnesses.

"We're hopeful lawmakers can put politics aside and instead think about what needs to be done to ensure the health and safety of our residents and our survival as a community," Trumble said. "It's about providing us the opportunity for a reasonable quality of life for the indigenous people of King Cove. It's simply what most United States citizens take for granted."

In late June, 18 environmental groups sent letters to both the House of Representatives and the Senate, urging members to vote against the King Cove land exchange bill. The groups, including the National Wildlife Federation, the Wilderness Society and the National Audubon Society, sent a joint letter to Congress.

"The legislation introduced by the Alaska Congressional delegation has given us

tremendous hope that we will finally have a long-term solution to our transportation access problem," Trumble said. "This is an indigenous rights issue, and it should be treated as such."

Trumble added that environmental groups opposing this bill should try harder to understand the issue and speak to the actual facts involved in this land trade proposal.

"There needs to be respect for the people of our community," Weiss said. "Congress needs to consider our view, not just that of the powerful environmental lobby."

"This right-of-way road is our lifeline, today and for generations to come," Trumble said. "And it's the right thing to do for the Aleut people living in this community. They deserve to have this critical access."

"There is absolutely no question in our mind regarding the compatibility between our human environment and the natural environment of the Izembek Refuge," Trumble said. "That won't change just because a small, regulated road may traverse a small portion of the wilderness."

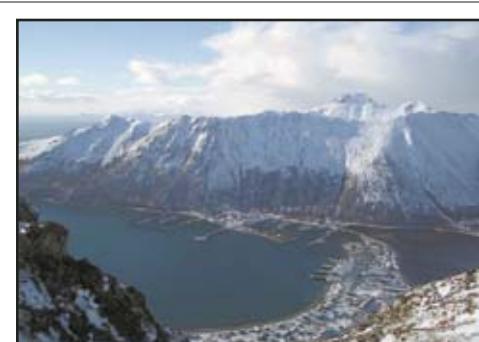
In response to the Environmental Lobby against the bill, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service director, Dale Hall, wrote a supporting letter to the House of Representatives.

"I have personally visited the Izembek Refuge and flown the areas being proposed," Hall added in the letter. "The wilderness values of the lands are significant, and include large areas of tundra swan nesting, as well as caribou movement."

A 17-mile road was built from King Cove to the border of the Izembek Refuge, and a \$9 million hovercraft was purchased by the Aleutians East Borough to ferry residents to the Cold Bay airport.

Studies have shown that the city of King Cove and the Aleutians East Borough cannot, however, financially support a hovercraft, which just arrived with fanfare ("Hovercraft to connect King Cove, Cold Bay," The Dutch Harbor Fisherman, May 10) and would be no longer be needed if the road is completed.

"I fully understand there is no way the Aleutians East Borough or the city of King Cove can afford to subsidize the \$500,000-\$700,000 operating deficit projected for the hovercraft," Weiss said. "No public transit system anywhere in the United States pays for itself. So how can anyone honestly believe we can afford to operate this hovercraft?"



Courtesy photo/City of King Cove and Aleutians East Borough

The city of King Cove stands at the base of the mountain.

King Cove officials may try to sell the hovercraft to a company in the Lower 48 once a road is completed.

The Cold Bay airport was built in 1942 during World War II and has the third-longest runway in Alaska.

King Cove is a community of 800 nestled between numerous volcanoes and often plagued by gale-force winds or fog. It can be a life-threatening situation for people needing to access major medical facilities in Anchorage during health emergencies.

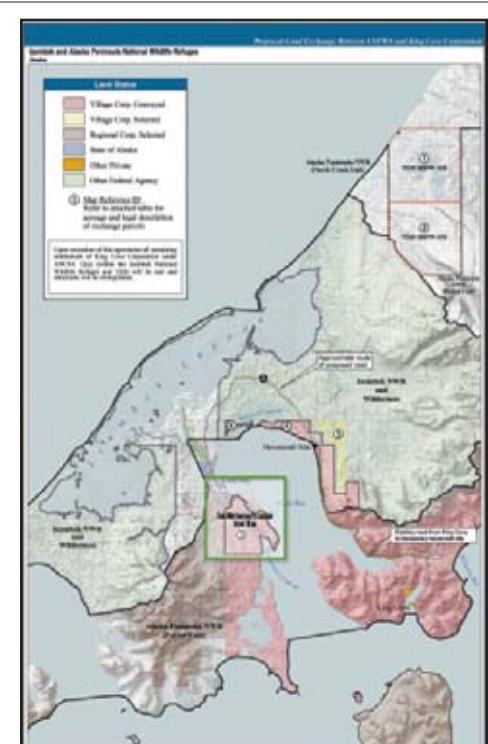
Since 1979, 11 people have died after flying in this flight corridor during questionable weather.

"We deserve this road," Weiss said. "The people of King Cove only want permission to have access to a right-of-way road leading to the world-class airfield in Cold Bay. Our access problem can be solved easily, while at the same time, greatly enhancing the wilderness."

Numerous fatalities from small-plane crashes have occurred while King Cove residents attempted to reach Cold Bay's airport during health emergencies with questionable weather. When stormy conditions or poor visibility prevented small planes from leaving the ground, residents have risked crossing the rough waters to Cold Bay by boat, a three-hour trip.

"We had a situation where an elderly lady with a heart condition died at the dock in Cold Bay after being transported by boat from King Cove in bad weather," Trumble said.

"It's horrible for any patient with medical conditions to be offloaded in that manner,"



Courtesy photo/City of King Cove and Aleutians East Borough

This map shows the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge and the areas to be exchanged, including the road location.

she said.

"I had a sister-in-law who after going into premature labor, delivered her baby on the boat on the way to Cold Bay," she added. "The baby was only 3 pounds. As they lifted the mother and the baby up, the IV cords got caught underneath the dock. They had to lower her, untangle the cords and bring her back up again."

Depending on the size of the boat and the tides, passengers often have to climb 10-16 feet up an ice-encrusted vertical ladder to reach the dock one-quarter mile from shore in Cold Bay. Patients unable to make the climb are put on stretchers with ropes and hoisted onto the dock.

"Without a solution to this problem, it's only a matter of time before someone else dies," Weiss said. "If this legislation saves just one life, it would be worth it."

Weiss put a video up on YouTube.com about the road issue, and can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XteCFoknVPG> under the username ekweiss.