

2010 CoastWalk

94 Miles of Beach Surveyed
546 Kachemak Bay CoastWalkers
1,306 Volunteer Hours
3,210 Pounds of Marine Debris Removed
16,028 Pieces of Debris Romoved

In 2010, after 26 years, the Kachemak Bay CoastWalk program is still going strong. As of this year, we have logged over 10,000 volunteer hours, and each year we have more than the last. In 2010, we picked up over 16,028 pieces of debris, bringing our grand total to over 50,000 pieces! The majority of debris we find is still from shoreline and recreational activities, and the second most numerous item found on the beaches in 2010 was cigarette butts- a startling 3,007. These facts show that we still have work to do getting the word out about marine debris. In 2010, we reached a great number of schools than ever before, and hope to get into even more classrooms and connect with more community groups next year.

This year was the first in many that our pounds of debris were lower than the year before (figure 1). However, the 16,028 pieces of debris found was almost double the amount collected in 2009. We believe this shows that we have been effective in our efforts to remove the large items from the beaches, and now volunteers have time to pick through the rack line and find all the little things. It is so important to get those small pieces of plastic, Styrofoam, and cigarette butts off our beaches because they are the size that animals can ingest. Every piece of debris collected is one that will never wash back out to sea and will never become anyone's dinner!

The drop in pounds last year may also have to do with the fact that much of the debris we find these days in made out of plastic and petroleum products. Many people don't realize that cigarette filters are plastic, and don't biodegrade. Our top marine debris item last year was Styrofoam pieces. Some of these pieces were tiny, but others weren't so small- see the picture below from Glacier Spit. In order to keep this debris item off our beaches, we need to build our docks in ways that don't let loose Styrofoam break off and float away. Please help us spread the word.

The *Drift...Buoys around the Bay* buoy art community project had 39 individual participants as well as a number of group participants. This art collaboration used colorful fishing floats and buoys that were collected from the outer beaches of Prince William Sound to help promote the prevention message around the community. Over 100 Buoys were received and distributed around the community and were displayed in local businesses from June through September. During our CoastWalk kickoff event on September eighth, the buoys were auctioned off to help fund our cleanup efforts. Thanks to all the artists, businesses and individuals who helped make *Drift* a success!

The CACS Challenge Grant program awarded 11 Challenge Grants to accomplish community-based marine debris clean-up and prevention throughout the state. The proposals that were approved restored habitat in Kachemak Bay intertidal areas, State Critical Habitat areas and harbors,

Southeast Alaska intertidal areas and outer coastal beaches in and around Juneau, Revillagigedo Island in the Alexander Archipelago, the Portillo channel, Kruzof Island and underwater pinnacles found in Sitka Sound, and the intertidal and estuarine areas at the mouth of the Kenai River. The Challenge Grant funded cleanups removed over 12,000 pounds of debris and expanded the CoastWalk program throughout the state.

In the coming years, the Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies will continue to work to clean and monitor our beaches and offer marine debris prevention education. With the help of our local, statewide, and national partners, we know the CoastWalk program will continue to be a success. Join us next September for CoastWalk kickoff or stop by the office any time for more information on marine debris prevention education, assessment, and removal. Together, we are making a huge difference in Kachemak Bay and Alaska.

