



# Bear Tracts

VOLUME 3 , ISSUE 1

SPRING 2011

## Spring Equinox

Spring has come to the Chilkoot River Valley. The ice went out of the lake May first. A few mergansers are still along the river. The eulachon run has occurred and provided a feast for the sea lions and seagulls. Humpback whales have been seen in Lutak Inlet. Sow and cubs have been seen near the river. Another summer season for the bears is upon the Chilkoot River. Tourists from around the world will be arriving to view the bears in their natural habitat. After a successful bear monitor program last year, we are glad to announce the program will continue this summer to educate the tourists about the bears and reduce the human impact to the area. This volume includes articles on several ACBF accomplishments during the past winter.



Bear 235 cub reading the Chilkoot Road bear zone "rules".



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Spring Equinox 1
- State Park Bear Proof Recycling Can 1
- Bear Collar Study 2
- Director Spotlight 2
- Haines Bear Ordinance 3
- Guide Training 3
- Ball Caps and Shirts for sale 4

### Grant Awarded to Purchase Bear Proof Recycling Container

Thanks to a \$1,650 grant from the Chilkat Valley Communication Foundation, an affiliate of the Alaska Community Foundation, a bear proof recycling container will be installed at Chilkoot State Park this spring. ACBF partnered with Alaska State Parks and Haines Friends of Recycling to request the funding to further our community's efforts to recycle as much as possible and simultaneously help protect the Chilkoot bears by reducing their interaction with trash left by humans.

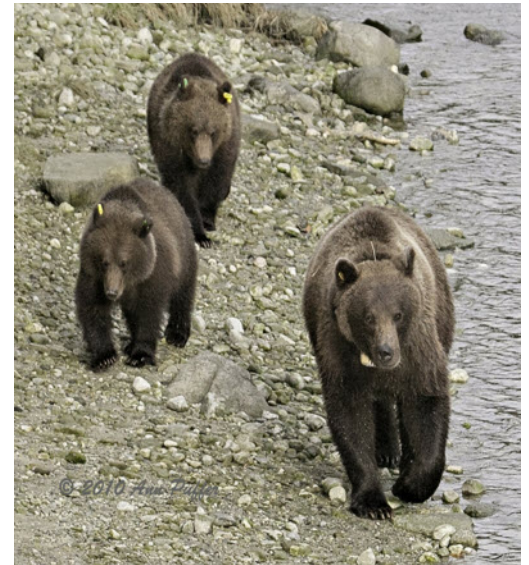
The Chilkoot River Corridor receives approximately 83,000 visitor use days a year that generate considerable garbage. Previously, only two dumpsters at the park were available to dispose of all garbage collected, including recyclables which went directly into the waste stream. Starting this summer the new bear proof container will result in more garbage being handled responsibly and less waste in our landfill. A win-win situation for the bears and for the community!

In addition, two bear proof trash containers purchased with help from a previous Chilkat Valley Community Foundation grant have been installed at the high school track and the entrance to Tlingit Park. These bins will keep human trash contained and away from the many bears that visit the town site. ACBF continues to work towards educating the community and finding solutions to the recurrent negative bear human interactions that have plagued the town, especially during the fall months.

We believe that the best way to preserve the gifts of the Chilkoot and to resolve issues is to work cooperatively with the diverse interests that have a stake in the Chilkoot.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game began a radio collaring study in the Chilkoot in October 2008. They collared 233, a 2 year old female, and 235, a 4 year old female. We recovered those collars last summer and then deployed two new GPS collars, one on 235, now with two cubs, and one on BMJ (443), now with three cubs. Ear tags were put on 235's cubs, Number 637, a male, has Left-Yellow and Right-Green ear tags and 636, a female, has Left-Green and Right-Yellow ear tags. One of BMJ's cubs was also marked, a male 444 has Left -Blue and Right-Pink. Collars on both sows are set to release this Fall. Based on the collaring research, it is believed a fair representation of the habitat use and movement patterns of human tolerant bears using the lower Chilkoot. However, about a third of the bears using the lower Chilkoot are far less tolerant and it would be interesting to see how their habitat use differs, but there are not any funds allocated at this point for such a study.

Anthony Crupi, wildlife manager with ADF&G, plans on giving a presentation after he gets the data analyzed.



Bear 235 with collar and her 2 cubs with ear tags

WHY I CHOOSE TO BE A MEMBER OF THE ALASKA CHILKOOT BEAR FOUNDATION

My family and our company, Alaska Nature Tours, consider the Chilkoot drainage an extraordinary area. One of just a handful on earth where an abundance of resources has sustained wildlife and humans for thousands of years. The Chilkoot Sockeye have been known to have the highest fecundity rates in the state. The river's unique "short swim" between the fertile ocean and lake has helped to evolve genetically bigger Sockeye. Historically bears and humans have coexisted here for centuries. When our company first guided visitors along the Chilkoot in 1985 we seldom saw any bears. Old-timers say they were hunted out. Brown bears are back now and for the last 20 years sows have been raising their cubs on the rich Pink Salmon runs in August and September. In the spring of 2010 approximately thirteen new cubs emerged from their dens. Keeping track of "predator" species has historically fallen through the cracks of state wildlife agencies. California has a brown bear on their state flag but the last wild grizzly was shot there in 1922 It's always a thrill to live where you're not necessarily the top of the food chain. To coexist , one has to be educated about bears and well prepared. The Alaska Chilkoot Bear Foundation gives me the opportunity to help educate and prepare myself, my family, our neighbors and visitors to live safely in bear country within a vision to preserve the resources.

Dan Egoff



Help me by joining the Alaska Chilkoot Bear Foundation

### **HAINES BEAR ORDINANCE**

Visitors come in the summer and the fall from all over Alaska, other states and foreign countries to see the Chilkoot Valley bears, easily accessible from the nearby ferry terminal, major highway and airport. The bears are often on our minds, in our yards and in town, too often in our garbage; dominating the police reports. Haines has been very fortunate so far in not having people/bear encounters with resulting human injuries or death. Not so fortunate are the bears.

In 2002, Juneau police had 1,041 bear related calls, but with adoption of a Juneau Bear Ordinance, since then the calls have been reduced in half. Benefiting from both Juneau and Sitka's experience, the Foundation in 2010, spearheaded the Haines Borough assembly's eventual approval, after spirited public hearings, of a Bear Attraction and Nuisance Ordinance on February 22, 2011. The final result was a disappointment for the ACBF board members, however the ordinance was seen as a first step. The board wants borough wide ordinance coverage, including Chilkoot Valley, not just the Haines townsite. Provisions for effective bear proof fencing and garbage containers, among other changes, are also needed.

The Foundation has made available to the community, with grant assistance, a number of bear proof garbage containers for "bear hot spots". Yet more containers are needed.

Alaska Fish and Game Biologist Anthony Crupi, who covers the agency's Upper Lynn Canal department responsibility, would like to see a brown bear population survey similar to the local annual moose population survey. Bear density in the Haines Borough is presently unknown. The annual human induced mortality of brown bears is 16 in the borough. The present bear quota and 2008 have been exceeded with only about 30% of actual bears reported taken being nuisance bears shot because they were habituated to human food or garbage.

Proper bear/people management cannot be achieved without knowing more about the numbers and locations of the animals. Crupi has collared some Chilkoot bears the past few years, collecting surprising and unexpected results about local bear behavior

### **Guide Training for Bear Country**

Imagine you have been a naturalist guide for the last several summers, and you finally got a job in Alaska. You are excited to show your clients Alaska Brown Bears in the wild. You and your clients are watching a bear feeding by the edge of a river. You notice the bear getting agitated and looking back at a big rock. Then you see a photographer "creeping" up to get a close up. The bear is between your group and the photographer. What will you do?

The purpose of the ACBF guide training helps guides learn some skills and strategies for dealing with these types of situations. A Park Ranger, Bear Biologist and Bear Monitor are on hand to discuss these issues with the guides. Guides also view footage of bears interacting with humans, and behaving...well...like bears. Observing bear behavior is the key to acting appropriately and safely in potential conflict situations. Knowing how bears behave normally and in stress situations, as well as reading bear body language helps people choose actions that minimize conflict. It is also important to instruct clients before going into the field about what to expect and how to behave. The goal is to enjoy watching the bears without endangering either the bears or people. Bears are out there making their living. If they are stressed by people, it becomes difficult for them to feed themselves and their cubs. Bears and people can coexist as long as each respects the other. If we give the bears space to safely feed and care for cubs, we can enjoy watching these magnificent animals without endangering them.

Guides discuss bear behavior and body language, effective actions with clients, giving instructions to clients and diffusing potentially dangerous situations. They also practice using bear spray to see how far it goes (or actually doesn't go)

YES!



I want to invest in the future of the Chilkoot River Watershed!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email (Email addresses are not shared.) \_\_\_\_\_

<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	\$	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Senior	\$	10
<input type="checkbox"/>	Individual	\$	25
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family	\$	50
<input type="checkbox"/>	Supporter	\$	250
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sponsor	\$	2,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Founder	\$	7,500
<input type="checkbox"/>	Endower — Lifetime	\$	10,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	\$	

Please send information about habitat purchasing.

Alaska Chilkoot Bear Foundation, Inc.  
Box 1188 Haines AK 99827

Donations are as allowed by tax deductible law.



**Ball Caps: \$20 (Maroon, Khaki, Sage, Charcoal Gray)**  
**Long Sleeve Shirts: \$20 (Black, Navy Blue, Khaki)**  
**Short Sleeve Shirts: \$18 (Black, Navy Blue, Khaki)**

Order online or send an e-mail to [hats@bearfoundation.org](mailto:hats@bearfoundation.org)

***Waking Up from Hibernation Reminder***  
**Please RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP to the Alaska Chilkoot Bear Foundation.**



PO BOX 1188 Haines,  
Alaska 99827

phone: 907-321-3403

email: [info@bearfoundation.org](mailto:info@bearfoundation.org)

{MAILING LABELS HERE}

Bear Tracts is published by ACBF, a volunteer run non-profit organization. We rely on your support and membership to help protect the Chilkoot River watershed for generations to come.

Partnerships for Harmony in Nature

[www.bearfoundation.org](http://www.bearfoundation.org)