



Alaska SeaLife Center News Release

CONTACT: Alaska SeaLife Center
Johanna Kinney, Executive Assistant
Phone: (907) 224-6349
Email: johannak@alaskasealife.org

Alaska SeaLife Center Announces Alaska Ocean Leadership Award Recipients

Seward, Alaska (January 17, 2019) – The Alaska SeaLife Center (ASLC) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2019 Alaska Ocean Leadership Awards. These awards are given annually to individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the awareness and sustainability of the state’s marine resources. The Alaska SeaLife Center appreciates the support provided by the award sponsors and thanks the awards committee members: Betsy Baker, Jason Brune, Lisa Busch, Dale Hoffman, Molly McCammon, and Robert Suydam for their assistance in selecting the award recipients. These awards will be presented at the Alaska Marine Gala on February 16, 2019 at the Dena’ina Center in Anchorage, Alaska. The awards for Marine Research and Marine Science Outreach will also be recognized at the Alaska Marine Science Symposium on January 28, 2019.

The following are the 2019 Alaska Ocean Leadership Award winners:



Photo Credit: Josh Corbett

Darryl Schaefermeyer will receive the prestigious *Walter J. and Ermalee Hickel Lifetime Achievement Award*. The late Governor Walter J. Hickel and his wife Ermalee endowed this award for 10 years to recognize individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the management of Alaska’s coastal and ocean resources for more than 20 years. Darryl Schaefermeyer played a major role in bringing the vision of the Alaska SeaLife Center to reality and beyond. Starting as a Project Administrator in 1993 for the Seward Association for the Advancement of Marine Science, Darryl was highly instrumental in creating a marine research, wildlife rehabilitation, and public education institution in Seward, Alaska. He supported this vision through establishing strategic

and beneficial partnerships, identifying and securing funding, management of design and construction contracting, and ultimately supporting all aspects of operations of the Alaska SeaLife Center. He has given over 25 years of commitment and dedicated service to the Center and has held multiple critical roles including General Manager. One of Darryl’s most notable contributions has been the installation of the Alaska SeaLife Center’s innovative heat pump systems, which use saltwater from the icy waters of Resurrection Bay to heat the 120,000 square foot facility, and in his words, “illustrates the broad and tangible ways in which our day-to-day work can contribute to the long-term health and sustainability of our city, our state, and the global community.” Darryl’s significance and impact on the marine community is his strident focus on sustaining the early foundation, the growth of the facilities, and the operations and programs of the Alaska SeaLife Center. We congratulate Darryl on his well-deserved retirement in September, 2018.

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Eklutna, Inc. will receive the *Stewardship and Sustainability Award*. This award is sponsored by Jason Brune, and honors an industry leader that demonstrates the highest commitment to sustainability of ocean resources. Eklutna, Inc. accomplished a great achievement in August 2018 by completing the Eklutna River Dam Removal Project. The Eklutna Dam was first installed in 1929 to generate hydropower electricity to a new city called Anchorage. In doing this, salmon habitats that had been in existence for thousands of years and a major source of food for the Eklutna Dena'ina people were destroyed.

Through efforts of Eklutna, Inc., The Conservation Fund, and many other supporters including the Rasmuson Foundation and the MJ Murdock Charitable Trust, \$7.5 million of private funds were raised and the dam was successfully removed. This was the first step taken in a multi-phase restoration plan for the Eklutna River. In 2019, Eklutna, Inc. plans to work with major electrical utility companies to conduct a long-term study to determine the amount of water needed to be released up at Eklutna Lake to strengthen spawning grounds. In addition to this project, Eklutna, Inc. advocates to protect the North Cook Inlet's rivers and watersheds. They have spent thousands of dollars studying habitat and various aquifers, sharing this data with Universities as well as city, state, and federal agencies. They have created several conservation easements to protect valuable habitat corridors, including permanently protecting 4,800 acres of sensitive islands and water channels within the Knik River Watershed – protecting salmon, beluga whales, waterfowl and many other species of animals.



Marilyn Sigman will receive the *Marine Science Outreach Award*. This award is given to a person, team or organization that has made an outstanding contribution to ocean literacy via formal or informal education, media or other communications. It is sponsored by the Alaska Ocean Observing System. Marilyn Sigman has dedicated much of her career toward helping Alaskans understand ocean science. A Marine Education Specialist for Alaska Sea Grant since 2009, Marilyn developed and matured their statewide marine literacy program. She has served as the Program Manager for the National Science Foundation-funded Alaska Center for Ocean Sciences Education and Excellence

(COSEE), where she linked scientists, educators, and coastal communities in Alaska in outreach, communication, and education about ocean climate change and the sharing of Alaska Native and scientific knowledge. She co-organized the annual Communicating Ocean Science workshop held during the Alaska Marine Science Symposium, bringing informal educators and scientists together to share best practices. She has worked with more than 150 individual researchers on how to develop or implement outreach activities, leading to stronger links for research to K-12 education and community engagement and understanding. In addition, Marilyn directed the Alaska Seas and Watersheds Program, including its school grant program to 22 schools in Alaska and additional efforts to support teaching and curriculum development in Alaska school districts. This program provides schools and school districts across the state with a pathway to increasing place-based ocean and watershed literacy in a systemic way that includes their communities. Her impact on ocean literacy and the marine science community is driven by her passion, dedication, self-drive and tireless work over many years.

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Lloyd Lowry and Kathy Frost will receive the *Marine Research Award*, sponsored by Drs. Clarence Pautzke and Maureen McCrea. This honor is given to a scientist, team of scientists, or an institution that is acknowledged by peers to have made an original breakthrough contribution to any field of scientific knowledge about Alaska's oceans. This award will be given to preeminent Alaska marine mammal biologists Kathy Frost and Lloyd Lowry for their outstanding achievements in marine mammal research over the past 45 years. Both were biologists for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, based in Fairbanks, and were key on-the-ground restoration scientists in Prince William Sound following the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill. Their passion for studying marine mammals and informing others about that research has inspired many scientists, subsistence hunters, and managers. They mentored many students and motivated colleagues and collaborators to publish study results. Working closely with scientists and subsistence hunters, they promoted co-management as few others have done. Their involvement in the Alaska Beluga Whale Committee as Charter Members dramatically influenced a new way of doing business. That approach led to hunters, scientists and managers sitting together at the table for the first time, jointly making recommendations about the most important information to be collected, and helping outline the actions necessary for conservation and sustainable harvests of marine mammals. The manuscripts and data they both produced will be cited for decades to come, and their work ethic has inspired scientists and non-scientists alike. We all mourn Lloyd's passing on November 25, 2018.



Karl Pfeiffenberger will receive the *Hoffman-Greene Ocean Youth Award*, which is sponsored by Dale Hoffman. The award honors an individual or team of Alaskan youth ages 12-19 who has displayed a dedication to promoting the understanding and stewardship of Alaska's oceans. Karl is a senior at Seward High School. He is a member of the Alaska Youth for Environmental Action (AYEA) group and has also started a chapter at his high school. Karl is a Youth Trainer for AYEAs, where he has helped plan and facilitate workshops for his peers, ranging from effectively telling a story to build initiative support, to specific tactics to support conservation through legislation. He collaboratively planned AYEAs statewide campaign strategy and also helped with the local efforts to ban plastic bags. Karl is the only teen member of the Sustainable Seward action group, whose mission is to raise awareness and implement solutions for waste reduction and recycling in the Seward area. Karl has implemented a recycling program within Seward High School, placing recycle bins, cleaning and processing the recyclables, and informing the student body of his project. He has worked for the Park Service at Exit Glacier, teaching visitors about the environmental impact of their actions.

About the ASLC

Opened in 1998, the Alaska SeaLife Center operates as a private, non-profit research institution and public aquarium, with wildlife response and education programs. It generates and shares scientific knowledge to promote understanding and stewardship of Alaska's marine ecosystems. The ASLC is an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. To learn more, visit www.alaskasealife.org.

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