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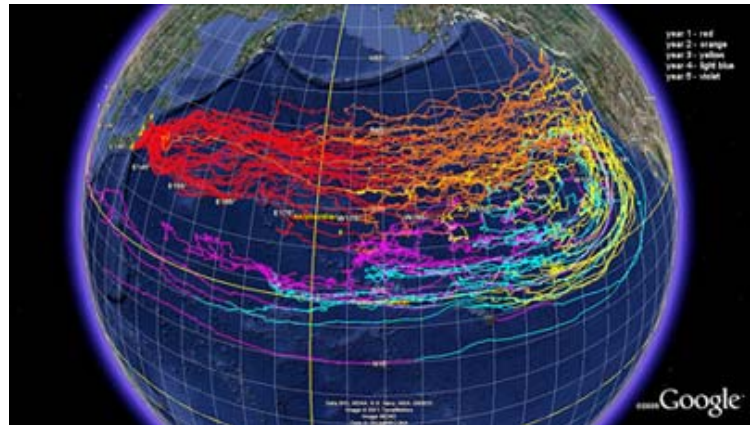
MCAF Establishes Alaska Monitoring Program for Japanese Tsunami Debris
Senator Murkowski plans round table discussion of Alaska's preparation.

The Marine Conservation Alliance Foundation (MCAF), which has conducted more than 72 marine debris cleanups throughout Alaska, is establishing a monitoring program to locate and identify Japanese tsunami debris making landfall on Alaska's shores. This and other Japanese tsunami debris preparations will be discussed at Senator Murkowski's round table discussion on Friday, January 20 in Anchorage at the UAA Campus, Gorsuch Commons room 107 from 10:30-11:30am.

"The monitoring program is designed to examine beaches in a systematic manner and tabulate the number of objects arriving on Alaska beaches. In addition, we will also use a random sampling technique to detect statistical changes in the overall volume of debris which could be attributed to the tsunami," stated Dave Gaudet, the MCAF Marine Debris Program Coordinator.

MCAF's weekly surveys will take place near the communities of Craig, Sitka, Yakutat and Kodiak and will help NOAA and others plan future cleanups. The results will be posted online.

Debris from the Japanese tsunami has been reported along the beaches of Washington, British Columbia and Alaska. While debris of Japanese



(above) OSCURS tsunami debris simulation shows the second wave of debris (driven by currents) arriving in 2013. Map courtesy NOAA and Dr James Churnside.



(left) A Japanese buoy found in Yakutat in late December, similar to buoys washing up all along the Pacific Northwest.

origin is commonly found on Alaska beaches, the recently reported debris: floats, large empty containers and other light debris, is consistent with expectations that it may be from the tsunami. This wind-driven debris is estimated to travel as quickly as 20 miles per day, much faster than the seven miles per day of those items subject only to movement by the current, which should arrive in 2013.

While concerns of radiation have caught the public interest, this is “highly unlikely” according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, “by the time the (Fukushima) radioactive water leak developed, the debris was already in the ocean, miles away from the reactor, and moving farther offshore by currents and wind.”

“After the overwhelming devastation in Japan, it is distressing to see reminders of it washing up on our shores,” said Merrick Burden, MCAF Executive Director. “Although we’re planning cleanups for next summer, if a massive onslaught of tsunami debris hits, it will overwhelm our current resources.”

In Washington DC, the U.S. House and Senate are debating the reauthorization of the Marine Debris Act. If passed, this act would devote funds to marine debris clean-up, including coastlines where debris from the tsunami makes landfall.

Results of the monitoring effort will be posted at www.mcafoundation.org and on Facebook at “[SeaAlliance – Restoring Our Shores \(marine debris\)](#)” where the public is welcome to join the effort and report their own debris pictures and findings. The survey results will also be made available to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). This program is being funded by NOAA’s National Ocean Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through the Coastal Impact Assistance Program administered by the State of Alaska.

Formed in 2003, the MCAF is the research, education, and marine debris removal arm of the Seattle and Juneau-based Marine Conservation Alliance, an industry association that represents many of the harvesters, processors, and communities who rely upon sustainably caught seafood from the federal waters off Alaska.