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PRESS RELEASE

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HAINES PORTAGE COVE HARBOR CERTIFIED AS ALASKA CLEAN HARBOR

Third in the state, protecting Alaska's marine environment

HAINES, AK – After eighteen months of working with Alaska Clean Harbors (ACH), the ACH Advisory Committee certified the Haines Portage Cove Small Boat Harbor as an Alaska Clean Harbor. The ACH Advisory Committee, the certifying body for the program, includes representatives from Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program, Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources, Cook Inletkeeper, Green Star, Marine Exchange of Alaska, NOAA's Restoration Center, and the Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators (AAHPA).

Alaska Clean Harbors is a voluntary program providing valuable pollution prevention tools for local communities to protect the marine resources that support coastal economies. Through participation in the program, harbormasters complete a self-evaluation and are scored on 88 best management practices (BMP) related to pollution prevention and waste management for their facility. Harbor staff then work with ACH to improve their score and meet program criteria by implementing new BMP, leading to substantial long-term cost savings, improved commitment to pollution prevention, increased waste reduction, and ongoing promotion of clean boating. Currently ACH only works with facilities that have permanent moorage for boaters. At this time, boatyards, cruise ship docks, and loading-type facilities are not included.

Haines Harbormaster, Phil Benner, initiated the Haines Port and Harbor application process, with the support of the Haines Port and Harbor Advisory Committee, Borough Assembly, Mayor Stephanie Scott, Assistant Harbormaster Joe Parnell and harbor staff. Their application highlighted the Haines Harbor fish waste disposal system, single-stream recycling, new sewage pump-out facilities and educational signage.

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Clean Harbor Certification is a voluntary process that encourages the use of best management practices at harbor facilities in order to reduce the production of nonpoint source pollution, mitigate its environmental effects where necessary and ideally, reduce compliance and clean-up costs in order to minimize negative impacts from harbors on Alaska's coastal ecosystems.



The Portage Cove Harbor now has educational signage at all gangways and on the tidal grid. “A lot of our customers are looking to do the right thing environmentally, but do not know how to do it economically and effectively. The signage and pamphlets provide answers and ideas,” Benner stated. Each year in May, the Port and Harbor Department holds Haines Customer Appreciation Day where information on clean harbors and best management practices is provided along with a lunch barbecue. Haines Harbor Staff enthusiastically looks forward for opportunities to reach out to the community and increase positive customer/harbor interaction. Benner is particularly pleased that Haines is the first Southeast Alaska harbor to be certified

Advisory Committee member Brett Farrell, Assistant Director of the Marine Exchange of Alaska, said of their efforts, “Haines has been very proactive recently in improving their harbor’s infrastructure, their services to local and visiting mariners, and their regulatory compliance program. The time and effort they have dedicated to obtaining this designation of an ‘Alaskan Clean Harbor’ shows their continued commitment to provide the Haines community with a quality and environmentally-responsible harbor operation.”

Rachel Lord, coordinator for Alaska Clean Harbors, says there is a lot of enthusiasm for the program around the state. “Haines follows Homer and Seward as the third certified Clean Harbor in Alaska. We’re currently also working with Cordova, Sitka, Bethel, and Valdez on their certification efforts. The commitment made by harbors to become certified Clean Harbors opens the door to improving services to all boating fleets so that everyone can have tools on-hand to protect the marine environment. Alaska Clean Harbors provides assistance on pollution prevention practices for harbor staff and for boaters to ensure a productive marine environment for future generations.”

ACH Advisory Committee member Brett Farrell (Marine Exchange of Alaska) will present the Haines Harbor with their award at the December 10, 2013 Borough Assembly meeting in Haines. More information about Alaska Clean Harbors can be found at their website: www.alaskacleanharbors.org.

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