United States Environmental Protection Agency

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EPA'S TARGETED WATERSHED GRANTS 2005 ANNUAL REPORT

December 2005

The University of Alaska, Anchorage

Using EPA Capacity Building Grant funds, the University of Alaska Anchorage, Resource Solutions set out to build a diverse network of skilled leaders from government agencies, Alaskan native communities, environmental groups, and development interests to promote a more sustainable economy and environment.

A diverse group of stakeholders gathered at the Sustainable Partnership Workshop.

Among its accomplishments, the university developed and conducted a successful workshop, Building Sustainable Partnerships, which strengthened collaborative problem solving capabilities and fostered community-based watershed efforts. Workshop participants represented three geographic sections of Alaska, including areas with large new gold mining developments and a remote area renowned for its world-class salmon fishery. This fishing area, located in a small rural village in southwest Alaska (population 600), is known to attract up to 30,000 visitors monthly. The area has no public restrooms or sanitation systems. Because of its remote location, state camping regulations are rarely enforced. Consequently, public health issues, including hepatitis, are a growing concern for the local community.

Outcomes of the Sustainable Partnership Workshop:

- A remote southwest Alaska village agreed to pursue a grant for the upcoming fishing season in order to institute a "honeybucket" system, whereby visitors would be given a bucket upon their arrival and provided instructions for how to safely dispose of waste.
- A dialogue with local community members was initiated to share information in areas where extensive gold mining exploration activities are occurring.
- A Watershed Steering Committee was formed to guide community-based restoration efforts. The committee held their first regional meeting in Bethel, Alaska in September 2005.

Jane Oakley facilitates a break-out session at the workshop.

"It was great – the Corps of Engineers said they wanted to sign an MOU for a project that helps us share mapping data across the Kenai Peninsula."

– Robert Ruffner
Executive Director
Kenai Watershed Forum