

# Stream Watch 2022 Season Summary



*Volunteers Making a Difference Since 1994*



Volunteers/Staff at end of season appreciation event (Glaser, 2022)

## Introduction

Stream Watch is a national award-winning volunteer program promoting river stewardship on the Kenai Peninsula. A group of enthusiastic citizens founded Stream Watch in 1994 in order to share river protection information with visitors on the Russian and Kenai Rivers. Over 28 years, the program grew to additional sites on the Russian, Kenai, and Kasilof Rivers.

Today Stream Watch volunteers assist land management agencies with stewardship of important recreational sites and the health of the region's watersheds. Stream Watch volunteers remove riverside litter; install habitat protection fencing; complete fish habitat restoration projects; and share critical information with the general public on river stewardship, agency regulations, and bear safety during the summer season (June-September).

In the past 28 years, Stream Watch volunteers dedicated 25,232 hours of time within the program, provided peer-to-peer education to 71,647 individuals, picked up 39,032 pounds of trash, and recycled 1,151 pounds of fishing line. Alongside these successes the program helped revegetate miles of riverbank by installing habitat fencing and by encouraging visitors to use boardwalks and designated river access.

Stream Watch volunteers can participate as a trained "Ambassador" by committing to at least 24 hours of time each season or through participation in a "Stewardship Day" where individuals, groups, or businesses help with a one-day, river protection project.

- Northern Peninsula Program
  - Kenai- Russian River Confluence (Angler & Falls Trail), Kenai-Russian River Ferry
- Western Peninsula Program
  - Bings Landing, Moose Range Meadows (East & West), Centennial Park, N. Kenai Beach, and the Kasilof River Special Use Area
- Southern Peninsula Program
  - Clam Gulch, Deep Creek, Ninilchik, and Anchor Point
- Ambassador Volunteer Season:
  - Northern Peninsula Program: June 1—August 15
  - Central Peninsula Program: June 1 – September 10
  - Southern Peninsula Program: July 1 – September 10

## Covid-19 Impacts

COVID-19 had minimal impact on the program and program events during the 2022 season. Appropriate precautions were taken as needed, such as not having volunteers or staff attend events after experiencing exposure or testing positive for COVID-19. Alternative options were provided for volunteers when applicable with the best example being the online orientation remaining available for those that do not feel comfortable attending an in person training.



USFS Staff and Volunteers geared up in Pink Salmon (Unknown, 2022)

## Season Recap

Stream Watch experienced a successful season in the year of 2022. The number of ambassadors grew slightly from the previous season to a total of 62, with more being from a younger age range. Over a hundred individuals joined the program on Stewardship Days including trained and untrained volunteers. The largest amount of travel mileage, cigarette butts collected, and recycled fishing line was seen this season with a total of 10,477 miles being traveled by volunteers, 6,957 cigarette butts, and 254lbs of line being shipped out for recycling efforts. Although the weight of trash collected was not as high as previous years, the impact seen was still large. Low weight could be attributed to the early closing of the Russian River Campground because of road construction. Also, few beach clean-ups centered around large items were held this year, meaning that the majority of the trash noted were small/light objects. Large volumes of small objects such as wrappers and drink containers were collected throughout the season to make up the 2,654lbs of trash collected this season. Stream Watch continued to have a positive impact on the Kenai Peninsula as can be seen in the table below that compares this season to the previous nine.

**Table 1:** 2022 Stream Watch Program Volunteer Statistics

Year	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Volunteer Hours	<b>1894</b>	2263	862	1557	1896	1504	1282	1492	1217	1497
Public Contacts	<b>3476</b>	5759	2256	4031	2616	3962	2870	4618	3195	4150
Trash (lbs.)	<b>2654</b>	2925	4590	4258	6921	3110	2413	1808	1446	2953
Fishing Line (lbs.)	<b>254</b>	138	99	127	124	81	75	148	97	-
Cigarette Butts	<b>6957</b>	6789	3072	5549	3485	2257	-	-	-	-

**Table 2:** Site Specific Data from the 2022 Stream Watch Data

Site	Travel Mileage	Hours	Number of Contacts	Pounds of Trash	Pounds of Line	Cigarette Butts
Anchor River	276	8	-	3.4	-	22
Bings Landing	173	32.5	40	20.21	1.52	307
Centennial Park	300	58	138	77.05	10.39	964
Deep Creek	30	106	17	145.08	2.1	604
Kasilof	1465	108	268	380.3	10.2	1661
Kenai Mouth	184	33	489	44.1	0	211
Moose Range Meadows	212	24	16	10.01	2.45	275
Ninilchik	476	17.5	9	13.6	0.335	159
Other	100	51	-	-	8	-
Orientations	-	342	-	-	-	-
Russian River Campground	6658	491.5	2082	147.73	184.68	311
Russian River Ferry	439	56.5	381	112.97	28.63	312
Stewardship Days	N/A	550.5	36	1699	5.5	2131
Invasive Species	164	15	-	-	-	-
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>10477</b>	<b>1894</b>	<b>3476</b>	<b>2654</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>6957</b>

In Table 2, “Other,” is considered volunteer time such as data entry, cleaning fishing line, or other tasks that do not fit the mould of the primary Stream Watch data sheets. “Orientation” is a tally of the time spent by volunteers doing the online or in-person orientation, which was automatically considered six hours upon completion, as well as on-river orientation activities. “Invasive Species” refers to volunteer time spent with the Stream Watch Invasive Species Task Force program, more on that below. “Stewardship Days” refer to discrete work days with volunteers such as habitat fencing, beach cleanups, or outreach days. Stewardship Days are a great way to achieve significant conservation impacts in a short period of time.

Table 2 shows the distribution of Stream Watch activities across all program sites. The Northern Peninsula program consists of the Russian River Ferry and Russian River Campground, where Stream Watch originated in 1994. With a high concentration of volunteers, the Russian River Campground saw the highest number of volunteer hours and public contacts. Centennial Park received the most volunteer attention of any of the Central Peninsula sites and Deep Creek received the majority of volunteer time spent on the Southern Peninsula. Of regular sites, the most trash was removed from the Kasilof River Special Use Area during the dipnet fishery although the majority of the trash collected was noted under “Stewardship Days” due to the attendance of non-ambassadors to the Trashercise Tuesday event.



Luellen family on a serious patrol. (Unknown, 2022)

## Program Administration

Stream Watch is jointly administered by Chugach National Forest and Kenai Watershed Forum. To fulfill its mission, Stream Watch operates cooperatively with the following land managing agencies:

- US Forest Service, CNF (Russian River Recreation Site)
- US Fish and Wildlife Service, Kenai National Wildlife Refuge (Kenai-Russian River Ferry, Moose Range Meadows)
- Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Alaska State Parks (Bings Landing and Anchor River, Deep Creek, and Ninilchik Recreation Sites ) & Division of Mining Land and Water (Kasilof River Special Use Area)
- City of Soldotna (Centennial Park)
- City of Kenai (Kenai Beach)

Stream Watch activities are primarily conducted by volunteers. Chugach National Forest and Kenai Watershed Forum hired the following staff to facilitate volunteer activities:

- Volunteer Coordinator, Brandon Drzazgowski (Kenai Watershed Forum)
- Volunteer Coordinator, Amber Kraxberger-Linson (Chugach National Forest)
- Intern, Kevin Duffie (Kenai Watershed Forum)
- Intern, Alexis McDonald (Kenai Watershed Forum)



Volunteer group after installing fencing at Moose Range Meadows. (Unknown, 2022)

Funding from a variety of agencies and organizations makes Stream Watch possible. Funding or in-kind match for the 2021 season was provided by the following entities: Alaska Conservation Foundation; Alaska Department of Natural Resources—Alaska State Parks and Department of Mining, Land and Water; Alaska Recreational Management; Chugach National Forest; City of Soldotna; ConocoPhillips; Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council; Kenai National Wildlife Refuge; Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership; Kenai Watershed Forum; National Forest Foundation; Sovereign Nation of the Kenaitze ; and private donations.

**Program Funders**

<b>Funder</b>	<b>In-kind</b>	<b>Cash</b>
AKDNR: Division of Mining Land and Water	X	X
Alaska Conservation Foundation		X
Alaska State Parks	X	
Chugach National Forest	X	X
City of Soldotna	X	
ConocoPhillips		X
Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council		X
Kenai National Wildlife Refuge	X	
Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership		X
Kenai Watershed Forum	X	X
National Forest Foundation		X
Sovereign Nation of the Kenaitze	X	



Enduring Service Award Received in 2022. (Oliynyk, 2022)

## **Stream Watch Outreach and Volunteer Recruitment**

Outreach for the 2022 season was similar to the 2021 season. A total of 21 new volunteers decided to join the program, with most consisting of a younger age group than the average. 41 volunteers returned this year for the 2022 season. Volunteers this season had a higher willingness to travel farther distances in order to provide support to sites that don't have a large base of volunteers available, with travel mileage hitting a new record of 10,477 miles. Higher mileage allowed Stream Watch to have a greater impact on areas that historically have had lower attendance and larger presence around people that are outside the area that Stream Watch does the majority of recruiting.

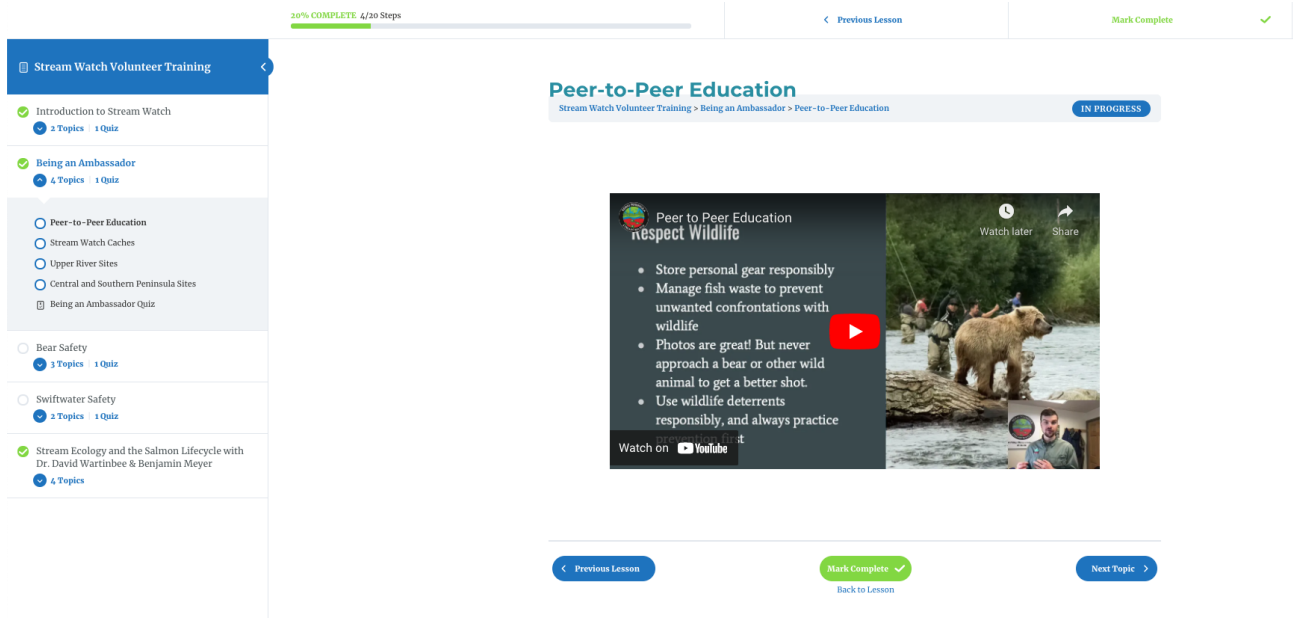
## **Ambassador Training/Orientation**

Stream Watch saw the return of in-person orientations during the 2022 season after the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Only one orientation was held at the Russian River Pavilion on June 4th to test interest after not having in-person orientation for the previous two seasons. 25 volunteers attended the in-person orientation giving promise for the return of multiple in-person orientation for future seasons. The online orientation stayed available this season as well and was a valuable tool for volunteers that were unable to attend in-person orientation. Online orientation also allowed for consistent volunteer recruitment throughout the entire season compared to previous seasons where recruitment slowed dramatically after in-person orientations were concluded. Also, a shorter version of the online orientation has been requested as an option for volunteers that are returning to the program and don't require a full orientation.



In-Person Orientation held at Russian River Pavillion (Glaser. 2022)



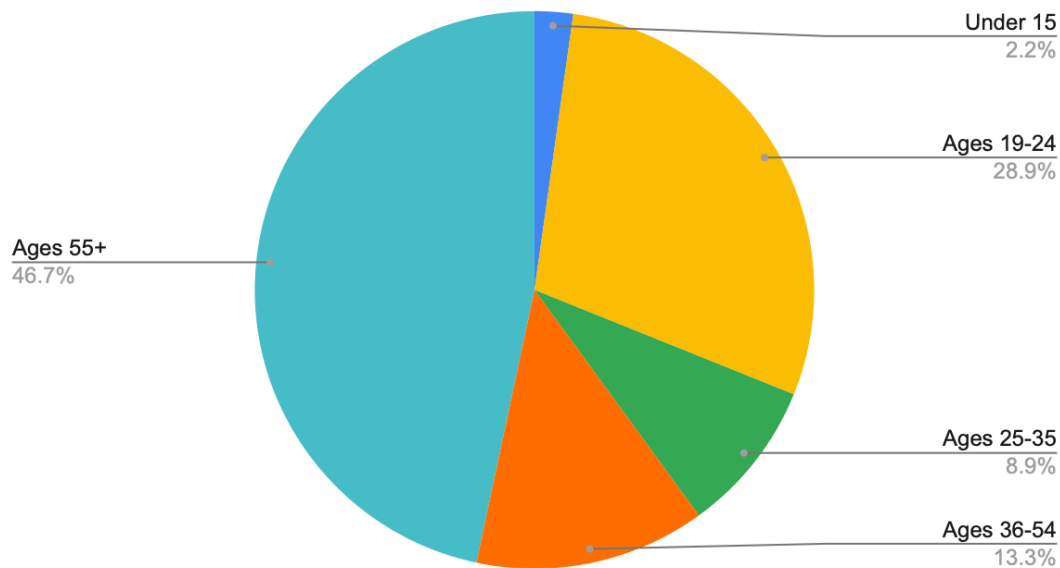


Screenshot from the online volunteer orientation created in the spring of 2021

### Ambassador Demographics

This year, coordinators conducted pre-season outreach to all volunteers with a set questionnaire that included optional demographic information from volunteers. 53 volunteers opted into this demographic survey, and results are shown below.

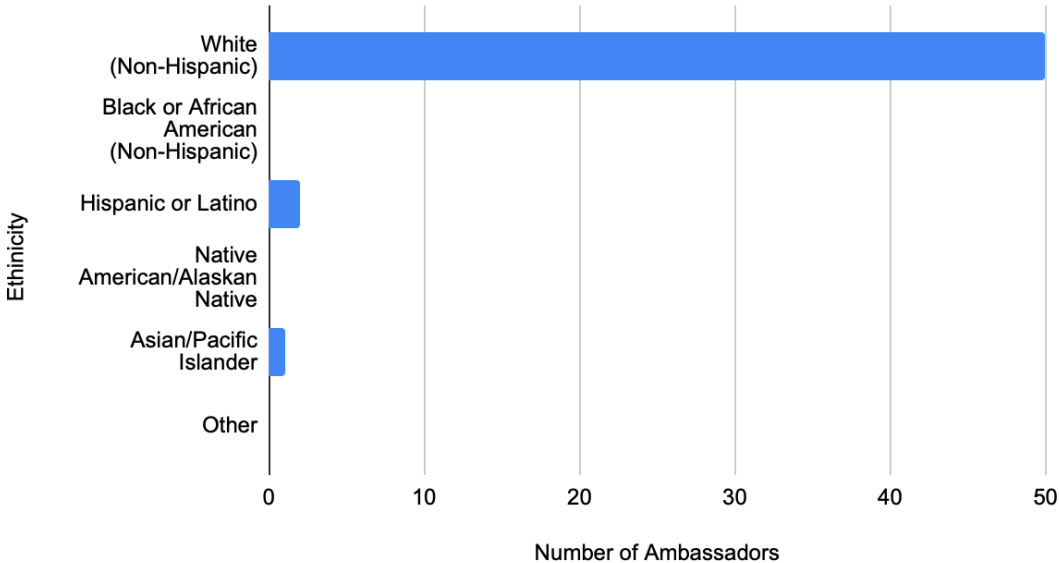
Ambassador Age Distribution by Percent



### Ambassador Gender by Percent



### Ambassador Ethnicity Distribution



## Invasive Species Task Force

Stream Watch collaborated yet again with the Kenai Watershed Forum invasive species program to provide an opportunity for Ambassadors to participate in special invasive species training and control efforts. This group received a special orientation with Maura Schumacher, Kenai Watershed Forum's Invasive Species Specialist, and participated in an array of weed-pulls, invasive species surveys and other activities to contribute to regional invasive species control and education efforts. The Stream Watch Invasive Species Task Force experienced a successful second year. Some adjustments were made to the program after an assessment of the 2021 outcomes. In 2021, volunteers were given survey sheets that allowed them to identify and record infestations of invasive species to be removed around the peninsula. These sheets were under utilized in the previous season, so volunteers are no longer required to fill them out. Also, instead of volunteers removing invasives by themselves, the program took more of a group event approach this season. Infestations were recorded earlier in the season allowing an event to be scheduled around their removal. Having scheduled group based events, allowed for a larger turn out of volunteers and amount of invasive species being removed.



Removal of Tansy on a SWISTF weed pull (Schumacher, 2022)

## Kenai/Kasilof Dipnet Booth

The Kenai dipnet booth is a volunteer-staffed informational table located at the entrance to Kenai Beach off of South Spruce St. in Kenai, Alaska and the entrance of the Kasilof River Special Use Area off of Kasilof Beach Stub. The booth is facilitated by Kenai Watershed Forum's Stream Watch program with support from Alaska Department of Fish & Game, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Alaska Department of Natural Resources and the City of Kenai. The booth started in 2018 in order to inform the public about public health threats posed by bacteria problems produced by fish and seagull waste on the beach. The booth's focus has shifted slightly to provide valuable information on regulations, emergency fishing orders, fish identification, tides, and other work being done with the organizations involved to the public. Kenai Watershed Forum staff and Stream Watch volunteers are the primary personnel present at the booth. Aside from information, booth volunteers also conduct trash cleanups along the beach and give away stickers, finclippers, dog bags, coloring books, and more.

The dipnet booth was on site at Kenai Beach for 22 days (from July 10 until July 31). Of those 22 days, 10 featured operations by a Stream Watch volunteer or KWF or ADF&G employee. The Kasilof Dipnet Booth, however, was in operation for 44 days (June 25th until August 7th). Of those 44 days, 16 featured operations by a Stream Watch volunteer or KWF or ADF&G employee. Operation of the booth generally occurred in 4-hour long shifts that were scheduled through high tide expected on that day. This scheduling ensures that the booth will reach as many fishermen as possible due to the fact that most dipnetters fish during these times. Operation at both sites was lower than anticipated/preferred. It is believed that this lack of attendance was due to the splitting of volunteers that regularly volunteer for the Kenai Booth. Around the same number of volunteers signed up to work a booth shift as in previous years, however, this number was now split between two sites. To mitigate this problem in future seasons, volunteers will be asked to work a specific site based on their location compared to each site. Also, recruitment of volunteers for this event will be performed earlier in the season as compared to previous years to help accommodate for having an added dipnet booth location.



Maryln and Dave Albright manning the Kasilof Dipnet Booth. (Drzazgowski, 2022)

## Marine Debris Cleanups

Stream Watch has been attending to coastal issues with increasing effort over the past five years. The Kenai Dipnet Booth and Trasherise Tuesday cleanups at Kasilof Beach are both regular marine debris programs. Stream Watch also collaborated with Compassion ThruFishing to host beach cleanups around Ninilchik and worked with Marathon Petroleum Corporation, City of Kenai/Soldotna residents, and Kenai Rotary Club to conduct marine debris surveys and cleanups at Kenai Beach.



Staff and volunteers after a beach cleanup on Kenai Beach with a Marathon volunteer group. (Duffie, 2022)

## Digital Outreach

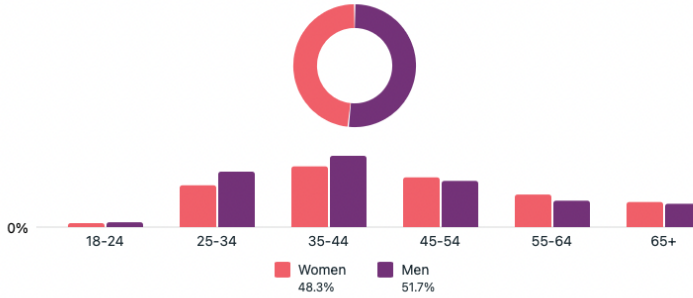
Stream Watch uses social media platforms Facebook and Instagram and Mailchimp as primary communications channels. Statistics from the Facebook and Instagram pages are shared below:

# 2022 Stream Watch Season Summary

Facebook Page likes ⓘ

2,308

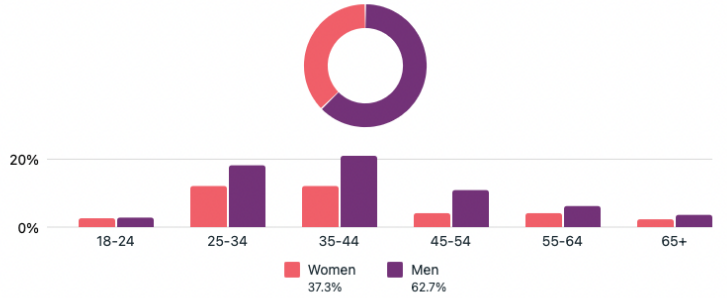
Age & gender ⓘ



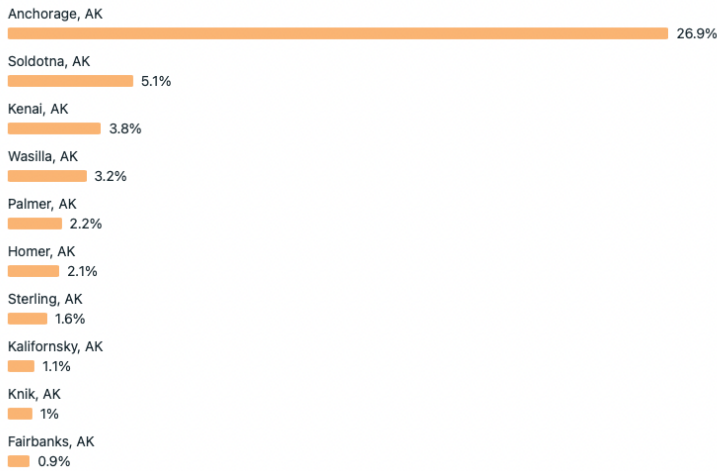
Instagram followers ⓘ

556

Age & gender ⓘ



Top cities



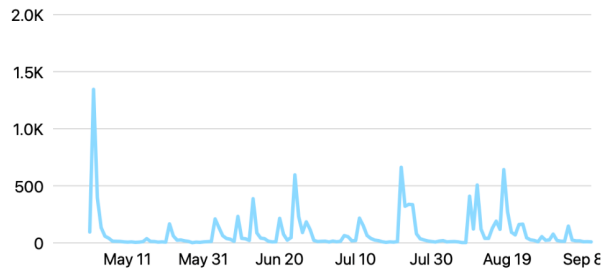
Top cities



Reach

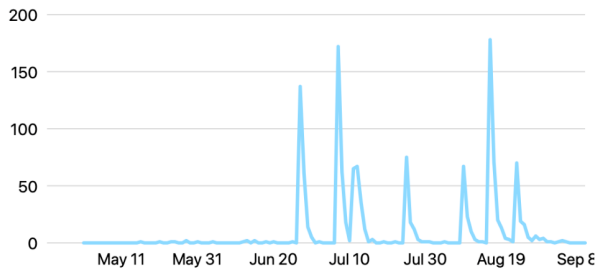
Facebook Page reach ⓘ

6,644 ↑ 312.7%



Instagram reach ⓘ

366 ↑ 2.3K%



Export ▾

## Events

Below is a list of events hosted by the program in 2022. The many stewardship events the program hosted complemented Ambassador efforts and increased program impact.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Name of Event</b>	<b>Host</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Classification</b>
5/18	12am-4pm	Bird Cherry Surveys	KWF	Cooper Landing/Kenai/Soldotna	Invasive Species Stewardship Day
5/19	10am-4pm	RR Ferry Fencing	USFS	Russian River Ferry	Stewardship Day
5/20	10am-5pm	Halibut Tournament/Clean Up	CompassionThruFishing/ KWF	Ninilchik Area	Stewardship Day
5/21	10am-5pm	Halibut Tournament/Clean Up	CompassionThruFishing/ KWF	Ninilchik Area	Stewardship Day
5/22	10am-6pm	Halibut Tournament/Clean Up	CompassionThruFishing/ KWF	Ninilchik Area	Stewardship Day
5/23	10am-4pm	Russian Fencing	KWF/USFS	Russian River	Stewardship Day
5/24	10am-4pm	Russian Fencing	KWF/USFS	Russian River	Stewardship Day
5/25	10am-4pm	Russian Fencing	KWF/USFS	Russian River	Stewardship Day
5/26	10am-4pm	Russian Fencing	KWF/USFS	Russian River	Stewardship Day
5/27	10am-4pm	Russian Fencing	KWF/USFS	Russian River	Stewardship Day
6/2	10-3pm	Moose Range Meadows Fencing	KWF	Moose Range Meadows West/East	Stewardship Day
6/4	10am-4pm	Stream Watch Orientation	KWF/USFS	Russian River	Orientation
6/7	1pm-5pm	Recycling Station Construction	KWF	KWF Office	Stewardship Day
6/16	10am-2pm	Whittier Slug-Out Event	KWF	Whittier	Invasive Species Stewardship Day
6/23	3pm-6pm	Cooper Landing Weed Pull	KWF	Cooper Landing	Invasive Species Stewardship Day
6/24	1-4pm	Seward Weed Pull	KWF	Seward	Invasive Species Stewardship Day
7/5	9am-1pm	Apogee Adventure Visit	KWF	Russian River	Stewardship Day
7/7	3pm-7pm	Soldotna Boot Brush Maintenance	KWF	Soldotna	Invasive Species Stewardship Day
7/12	5pm-7pm	Trashercise Tuesday	KWF	Kasilof North Beach	Stewardship Day
7/14	12pm-4pm	RCG Seed Head Chipping	KWF	Soldotna Creek Park	Invasive Species Stewardship Day
7/19	5pm-7pm	Trashercise Tuesday	KWF	Kasilof North Beach	Stewardship Day
7/20	10am-3pm	Fish Week	FWS	Kenai National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center	Stewardship Day

2022 Stream Watch Season Summary

7/21	9am-1pm	Apogee Adventure Visit	KWF	Russian River	Stewardship Day
7/21	10am-3pm	Cooper Landing Boot Brush Installation	KWF	Cooper Landing	Invasive Species Stewardship Day
7/26	5pm-7pm	Trashercise Tuesday	KWF	Kasilof North Beach	Stewardship Day
7/28	10am-4pm	Russian River Seed Head Clipping	KWF/USFS	Russian River	Invasive Species Stewardship Day
7/29	10am-4pm	Russian River Seed Head Clipping	KWF/USFS	Russian River	Invasive Species Stewardship Day
8/1	8am-1pm	North Kenai Beach Clean Up	KWF	Kenai Beach	Stewardship Day
8/2	5pm-7pm	Trashercise Tuesday	KWF	Kasilof North Beach	Stewardship Day
8/3	9am-5pm	GLA Stewardship Day	KWF	Russian River/Russian River Ferry	Stewardship Day
8/4	9am-5pm	GLA Stewardship Day	KWF	Russian River/Russian River Ferry	Stewardship Day
8/6	9am-1pm	Apogee Adventure Visit	KWF	Russian River	Stewardship Day
8/9	5pm-7pm	Trashercise Tuesday	KWF	Kasilof North Beach	Stewardship Day
8/11	12pm-4pm	Bird Vetch Weed Pull	KWF	Kenai	Invasive Species Stewardship Day
8/12	10-3pm	Russian Fencing Removal	KWF/USFS	Russian River	Stewardship Day
8/13	10-3pm	Russian Fencing Removal	KWF/USFS	Russian River	Stewardship Day
8/14	10-3pm	Russian Fencing Removal	KWF/USFS	Russian River	Stewardship Day
8/18	12pm-4pm	Floating Clean Up Survey	KWF	Cooper Landing/Kenai/Soldotna	Stewardship Day
8/19	12pm-4pm	Tansy Weed Pull	KWF	Soldotna	Invasive Species Stewardship Day
9/1	1pm-5pm	Tansy Weed Pull	KWF	Soldotna	Invasive Species Stewardship Day
9/8	10-12pm	Marathon Beach Clean Up	KWF	Kenai Beach	Stewardship Day
9/10	5-8pm	Stream Watch Appreciation Dinner	KWF/USFS	Kenai National Wildlife Refuge	Appreciation





Staff and a GLA group ready for service on the Russian (unknown, 2022)

## Conclusion

The 2022 Stream Watch Season was shorter than previous years due to the early closure of the Russian River Campground and the slightly earlier appreciation event, but successful all the same. Program records for total travel mileage and fishing line collected were set this year. A larger impact was seen by the southern peninsula through the addition of the Kasilof booth and other stewardship events stationed in that area. As the program looks toward the 2022 season, partners and administrators will work together to continue to deepen the program's impact as a support for land management agencies and conservation activities to benefit the great salmon rivers of the Kenai Peninsula.