



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

February 1, 2008

Kelly Wolf
P.O. Box 2416
Kenai, Alaska 99611

Dear Kelly,

Thank you for your recent letter regarding NOAA's interactions with the Youth Restoration Corps (YRC). Given your long history working with our Community-based Restoration Program and the respect we hold for you as a conservation partner, we would like to try to resolve misunderstandings regarding YRC's interactions with NOAA staff and Coastal America.

We have undertaken a thorough review of NOAA's participation in the Resurrection Creek restoration project and the efforts of NOAA and other federal agency staff to nominate the Resurrection Creek project for a Coastal America partnership award. First, we would like to clarify the nature and role of Coastal America, which is not, as your letter suggests, a national nonprofit organization. Coastal America is a partnership made up of NOAA and many other federal agencies that helps bring together different agencies' funding and technical capabilities to undertake worthy projects that protect or restore coastal habitats. At the national level Coastal America is led by the White House Council on Environmental Quality and in Alaska it is co-chaired by NOAA and the Department of the Interior. The U.S. Forest Service is one of the partner agencies, and as the lead federal agency involved in the Resurrection Creek restoration project, the U.S. Forest Service requested and obtained Coastal America endorsement of that project in 2006. Endorsement of a project by Coastal America can facilitate greater involvement by other partners, and thus can be helpful in attaining the objectives of a project's principal sponsors.

In 2007 the agencies involved in Coastal America in Alaska nominated the Resurrection Creek project for a national award from Coastal America to recognize the achievements of YRC and others who contributed. As part of the award nomination, NOAA requested a listing of all participants in the Resurrection Creek project. NOAA and the Department of the Interior subsequently withdrew the award nomination at your request. Your letter suggested that our involvement with Coastal America has been improper. Coastal America is a partnership of federal agencies acting within their respective statutory authorities. We never intended to try to take credit for YRC's work and we apologize if any of our actions caused YRC concern. Enclosed please find some literature on Coastal America, the concept of which was summarized by Douglas Mutter (Department of the Interior staff) in his email correspondence to Elvira Wolf dated April 6, 2007.



Your letter also criticized NOAA for visiting Resurrection Creek this past summer without YRC. Our staff attempted to coordinate that site visit with you beforehand and will contact you prior to any future opportunities for a joint visit. The U.S. Forest Service has offered for us to visit Resurrection Creek with them in the past and on future monitoring of their larger project, so some interagency site visits may occur.

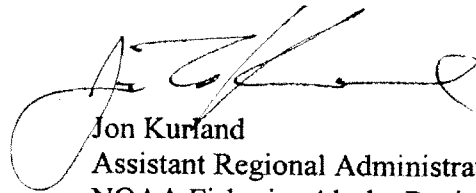
We sincerely hope that our review of this matter has helped assure you that while there has clearly been a misunderstanding, NOAA and YRC share common goals and we appreciate your organization's outstanding work as part of the Resurrection Creek project. We are sorry that YRC did not permit the Coastal America nomination to move forward, as the project was highly likely to have received this award.

In closing, we greatly appreciate and understand your passion for promoting stewardship and accomplishing on-the-ground benefits for the environment, as this is also our mission. We hope there will be opportunities in the future for NOAA to work with YRC on the restoration of fish habitat in Alaska.

Sincerely,



Christopher Doley
Chief, NOAA Restoration Center
NOAA Fisheries Headquarters



Jon Kurland
Assistant Regional Administrator
NOAA Fisheries Alaska Region