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**OREGON-RUSSIAN FAR EAST WATERSHED COUNCIL EXCHANGE OCT. 22-30**

The Oregon-Russian Far East Watershed Council Exchange is the third such group visit organized by the Wild Salmon Center and the Siuslaw Institute, and is scheduled for October 22-30, 2011. In addition to participants from Sakhalin Island, this year for the first time, it is expected that there will be representatives from Khabarovsk on the mainland and from the Kamchatka Peninsula, home to over 25% of wild Pacific salmon. This cooperative effort will bring a contingent of Russian experts, including active watershed council members, to Oregon for the purposes of exchanging experiences and expertise, and of contributing to shared learning in the fields of natural resources management and protection. The focus will be on the evolution and operations of several collaborative watershed organizations in Oregon, specifically the Siuslaw Partnership. In addition, while in the Siuslaw Basin, Russian delegates will meet with local and federal government agencies, the Siuslaw Watershed Council, indigenous/tribal representatives, school youth and educators, and local practitioners of habitat restoration and conservation.

The primary goal of the exchange is to provide representatives from the Public Salmon Councils in the Russian Far East, including several newly formed councils, an opportunity to learn from well-established, successful models of citizen involvement in local watershed management that have been developed in Oregon through its watershed council network. Our success in previous exchanges has shown us how important it is to share direct knowledge and experience of a place with the people who can best learn and apply these lessons in their homeland situations. The continued development of this unique relationship-building, and the ongoing accumulation of understanding and expertise that comes from such international cooperation truly benefits all of the parties involved in both tangible and intangible ways. We look forward to continuing this cooperative exchange program as an example of achieving great progress in real international cultural and ecological partnerships. As neighbors on either side of the Pacific, it is fitting that the salmon bring us together in an effort to improve both the productivity and the protection of our invaluable resources.

*Itinerary and media access available by inquiry.*

*The Wild Salmon Center, a 501(c)3 non-profit based in Portland, Oregon, is an international science-based organization whose mission is to identify, understand and protect the best wild salmon ecosystems of the North Pacific. The Siuslaw Institute is a not-for-profit based in Deadwood, Oregon and involved in natural resources projects and education.*