

Coastal imaging program fills in Alaska shoreline gaps

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92 percent of Alaska’s coastline—including all of Southeast—has been mapped and imaged on shorezone.org. The ShoreZone Partnership includes scientists, GIS specialists, web specialists, nonprofit organizations, and provincial, state, and federal government agencies and their website is hosted by the Nature Conservancy.

In 2016, the ShoreZone program contracted Coastal and Oceans Resources Inc. to image and inventory over 2,700 miles of remote and rugged shoreline in Alaska’s Eastern Aleutians, including Umnak, Unalaska, and Akutan Islands; the Alaska Peninsula; and the Semidi, Chirikof and Barren islands. Users can now “fly this coastline” online, viewing video and thousands of high resolution images showing these isolated sections of Alaska’s coastline—all available free-of-charge. The surveys were funded by NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council.

“We saw the advantages of having quick access to ShoreZone imagery and habitat data following the 2012 grounding of the Kulluk drill rig,” said Susan Saupe, director of science and research for Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council. “Our 2016 surveys have closed some key gaps along our coast, where the ShoreZone program can now similarly enhance future responses to vessels in distress in those areas. We look forward to a time in the near future when the benefits of this program can be realized for every inch of Alaska’s coast.”

A new documentary about ShoreZone in Alaska and its various uses, “A Coastline Online: ShoreZone.org,” premiered on Sept. 29 on 360 North. The documentary can be seen at 360north.org/shorezone/.

The annual ShoreZone Partnership meeting is scheduled for Oct. 12 and 13 at the Hotel Captain Cook in Anchorage where partners will share more information about ShoreZone’s recent successes, plans for the future, and innovative applications. A full agenda can be found at shorezone.org.