Radiation Monitoring in Prince William Sound, Alaska, Year Three of a Four Year Study

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Is it radioactive? That’s what everyone asks when I tell them that I test items from Prince William Sound (PWS) beaches with my family. I am concerned with what is, and what will be washed up on the beaches of Alaska. I’ve been concerned ever since the earthquake and tsunami in March 2011. When it occurred, it damaged the Fukushima-Daiichi nuclear reactor in Japan. It has been leaking radioactive material ever since the accident, spewing radioactive water into the Pacific Ocean and contaminating the environment. I believe that when the reactor was damaged it contaminated tsunami items, and they are now washing onto our coasts. I’ve been testing beaches across PWS for gamma radiation, which could only come from a few sources, and the reactor in Japan is a suspect. The purpose of my experiment is to test if items washing up on our beaches, such as: natural items (trees, logs, seaweed etc.), flotsam (buoys, Styrofoam, etc.), and marine mammals, have elevated radiation levels. Procedures for this experiment: • Obtain testing equipment • Arrive at site(s) • Test area- follow experimental procedure • Repeat testing procedures at every site • Record Data During this season of testing, I found increasing levels of radiation on the beaches. In two locations radiation levels were approximately ten times higher than the previous years. This year was the third year of testing in a four-year longitudinal study in PWS.

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