



Overlooking Kachemak Bay

“Project Ocean” is a 9-week long expeditionary-style learning program developed and operated by Talkeetna Elementary School since 1981. This science-based program combines student-initiated research projects with intensive classroom instruction in marine science, adds outdoor education, natural history and art, and culminates with a 5-day field trip to the ocean. The curriculum is closely aligned with the 6th grade MSBSD and Alaska Content Standards and is carefully designed to motivate students to develop curiosity and learn to investigate beyond the surface.

Students began their field study activities with a scavenger hunt at the Pratt Museum in Homer where they were introduced to the human and natural history of Kachemak Bay. Over the next several days, students teamed up with the excellent staff of the Center for Alaska Coastal Studies and focused their studies on oceanography and intertidal studies. These studies included setting and pulling a crab pot, testing water quality, fishing for plankton (and other creatures), microscope investigations, and intensive exploration of intertidal zones. Students also visited an oyster farm where they learned about (and sampled) oysters, and toured Gull Island where they saw thousands of murrens and kittiwakes. In the end, it was another memorable Project Ocean journey.

This year we received a \$500 scholarship from the Conoco-Phillips *Sea Stars* program and generous grant from the Mat Su Schools Foundation. And of course, endless thanks goes to parents and the community members of the northern Susitna Valley for their bountiful support of this program over the years!



Umm, umm, good...



A new life form?