

## Ted Stevens Marine Research Institute Dedication Speech by Denis Wiesenburg – August 21, 2007

Thank you, Phil, for the opportunity to speak today, and thank you Senator Stevens for your lifelong commitment to a robust, sustainable fishery.

I would like to introduce two people in the audience today who are a big part of our activities at Lena Point: Dr. Bill Smoker, Director of the Fisheries Division at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and Dr. Keith Criddle who is the first Ted Stevens Distinguished Professor of Marine Policy funded by the Pollock Conservation Cooperative.

What a great day for NOAA Fisheries and the State of Alaska!

On behalf of University of Alaska President Mark Hamilton and University of Alaska Fairbanks Chancellor Steve Jones, please accept our congratulations on the completion of your new state-of-the-art facility.

And, on behalf of the School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, I am delighted to be able to share in your great accomplishment and I am looking forward to the day when both our University of Alaska fisheries building and the Ted Stevens Marine Research Institute stand together, side-by-side, on Lena Point.

The faculty, staff and students in our Fisheries Division here in Juneau have been neighbors and partners with NOAA's Auke Bay Laboratory for nearly 30 years. The strength of that partnership extends to this new facility.

Our long relationship with NOAA Fisheries has been enjoyable and productive and has resulted in both long-term friendships and scientific partnerships. More importantly, this relationship is good for science and good for the state of Alaska.

As longtime partners and collaborators, our university faculty and graduate students and NOAA scientists have worked together to find new and innovative solutions to fisheries issues in Alaska. We have evolved with the changes in our fisheries over the past three decades, and are currently pursuing an active role in an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management.

Also, our Fisheries Division faculty are educating the workforce of tomorrow by training Alaska's newest fisheries experts right here in Juneau. Nearly three-quarters of our fisheries graduates go on to work in Alaska with 20% working for NOAA and other federal agencies. We are educating Alaskans in Alaska to manage Alaska's fisheries.

Many of our former students have found lifelong careers with NOAA Fisheries and are currently working in this new facility.

So today, we congratulate NOAA on the completion of Alaska's largest fisheries research facility. As the University of Alaska completes its academic and research building here at Lena Point, we look forward to the day when the best minds in Alaska will walk back and forth between these two buildings to exchange ideas that will help the people of Alaska understand, manage, and grow their great fisheries.

Again, congratulations and thank you.