

## **Earth Council Geneva sponsors Marine Debris Clean-up in Alaska**

*Earth Council Geneva* (ECG) is once again co-sponsoring a Marine Debris clean-up effort in Alaska during the summer of 2009. Along with the *Marine Conservation Alliance Foundation* (MCAF), ECG is providing matching funds, and sustaining a program which targets derelict fishing nets and debris on the remote reaches of Shelikof Strait.

These waters and beaches are home to brown bears, wolves, marine mammals, geese and seabirds by the thousands, and the environment supports the strongest wild salmon runs on earth. Fisheries in this thriving ecosystem contribute \$2 billion a year, and nearly half of America's total seafood harvest.

Debris comes from merchant ships, tankers, fishermen and coastal communities far and near. Beyond the effort to clean the beaches, an educational campaign is also raising public awareness. "We are changing behaviour toward a best practices approach," stated Reto Braun, chairman of ECG.

"It starts at the community level," added Dan Strickland, participant in the clean-up effort. "The support of organizations like ECG and MCAF are crucial, and together we are attacking the issue hands-on, on the beaches, as well as educationally, at the root of the problem."

Clean-up efforts will target beaches which see an influx of brown bears every summer, as they come down to the coast to feed on the returning salmon. Other marine mammals in the region are Steller sea lions, seals, otters, dolphins and whales. A full report with pictures will be posted when the work gets underway, and upon completion in the fall as well. Stay tuned...