

THE KEEPER

... PROTECTING THE COOK INLET WATERSHED & THE LIFE IT SUSTAINS

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COOK • INLET • KEEPER

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Latest Mixing Zone Proposal is "Putting Lipstick on a Pig" Public Comment Due December 19

Last year, Cook Inlet Keeper lead opposition to the Murkowski Administration's proposal to increase pollution in salmon streams through the use of "mixing zones." Keeper helped generate more than 600 comments and 1,200 petition signatures opposed to mixing zones, from stakeholders as diverse as the City of Kenai, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Seafood Producers Coop. Due to this overwhelming public opposition, the State withdrew its proposal and released a new proposal in October.

The Murkowski Administration's new mixing zone proposal contains a more complex process prior to mixing zone approval, but the end result will be the same - if finalized, toxic and other polluting discharges will be acceptable in salmon (and other fish) streams, which will hurt Alaska's wild salmon marketing and the countless families around the state. Cook Inlet

Keeper expects the new proposal will have similar opposition.

Mixing zones are areas near discharges into water where water quality standards are not met until the edge of the zones. Allowing mixing zones makes discharges to water cheaper for both industry and municipalities, since they do not have to prevent or treat those discharges to levels that meet water quality standards designed to protect people and fish. The mining industry, in particular, is supporting changes to the state's current prohibition of mixing zones in salmon spawning areas.

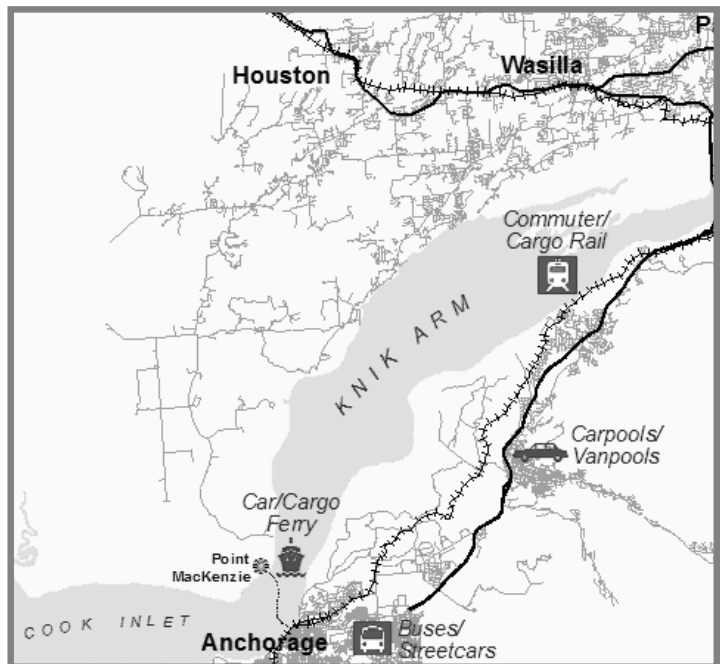
Given the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's lack of water quality monitoring capacity, Alaska's decreasing stream flows as the planet warms, and other technical factors, ADEC will not be able to know with a

(Continued on page 3)

Knik Arm Bridge: Common Sense Priorities Should Trump Bridge to Nowhere

What happens when our elected federal representatives reach the peak of their political power? They ensure massive amounts of money flow to Alaska regardless of local needs, the needs of other parts of the country, and the environmental consequences. As characterized by Cook Inlet Keeper Senior Engineer Lois Epstein, "the Knik Arm Bridge is an excellent example of how the seniority system in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate results in irrational project decisions. Even the Congressionally-mandated name for the bridge, 'Don Young's Way,' is a parody of the political process since

(Continued on page 2)



Transportation Alternatives to Don Young's pork barrel bridge

Knik Arm Bridge Cont. (from page 1)

Congressman Young got his way regardless of whether the outcome makes sense.”

Cook Inlet Keeper – in collaboration with numerous public interest and Anchorage-based urban organizations – has worked since last spring to expose the reasons why building the Knik Arm Bridge is not good fiscal, community planning, or environmental policy. Our work highlighted the loss of road-building and repair dollars resulting from the bridge, since its \$231 million dollar federal “earmark” (a line-item in federal law devoted to a specific project) contains approximately \$175 million that will be taken from the state’s “core” transportation funding, resulting in core transportation funding at or less than 1998 from 2005-2008.

Additionally, following passage of the federal transportation law in early August, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita destroyed parts of the Gulf Coast region making that area’s rebuilding a more immediate priority than a Southcentral Alaska bridge likely to benefit only a small number of developers and construction workers. While in Washington, D.C. on non-Keeper business, Epstein collaborated with the conservative think tank, The Heritage Foundation, to educate politicians and other organizations in D.C. and nationally about local opposition to the Knik Arm Bridge and the desire of Alaskans – who are generous and compassionate – to send bridge money to the Gulf Coast region. Epstein also spoke in D.C. to Grover Norquist’s weekly meeting of Americans for Tax Reform on the formation of the americagivesback.org website, which provides citizens with tools to encourage Congress to take money from unnecessary transportation earmarks (also known as “pork” transportation projects) and use that money for hurricane relief. Numerous newspaper editorials throughout the country have argued since then for a reduction or elimination of the money Congress allocated to Alaska for “bridges to nowhere,” i.e., the proposed Knik Arm and Gravina (near Ketchikan) bridges.

To address the complex transportation and land use challenges in Southcentral Alaska, Keeper took the lead in developing a thoughtful, multi-component, transit-based alternative to the bridge this past summer. In

a coalition letter to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Keeper and other organizations urged FHWA to include this multi-component alternative to the bridge in the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This ferry, rail, carpool/vanpool, and bus alternative (see figure on page 1) would meet the needs of the bridge project at vastly lower cost, while still stimulating economic development and allowing for population growth.

Keeper’s comments to the FHWA during the draft EIS scoping meetings covered other problems with the bridge including: likely destruction of the historic and cohesive Government Hill neighborhood in Anchorage; devastation of ongoing efforts to convert downtown Anchorage to an exciting urban center, and exacerbation of the already-excessive growth rate in the Mat-Su Borough which has resulted in strains on school and road infrastructure and inadequate police and health care.

Keeper also highlighted to decision-makers at FHWA and the federal Marine Mammal Commission that Cook Inlet’s remaining beluga whales may be critically harmed by the bridge. A bridge across Knik Arm will result in beluga and prey habitat losses, habitat changes (e.g., increased water velocities underneath the bridge), and construction-related impacts from noise, localized siltation, boat traffic, etc. While Keeper does not doubt that impacts can be minimized with careful bridge design and construction, any adverse impacts to the beluga could result in this whale population’s extinction.

Despite the many reasons for the bridge not to be built and Washington’s growing desire to reduce “pork” spending including an October 20, 2005 failed Senate vote to send some of bridge money to rebuild the Lake Pontchartrain, the bridge continues to move forward incrementally. There are some hopeful signs, however – on October 20th, the FHWA project manager announced at a Government Hill Community Council meeting, that she will rethink all EIS decisions made to date, including the decision that ruled out the coalition’s proposed inexpensive, multi-component alternative to the bridge.



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WATERKEEPER ALLIANCE

Latest Mixing Zone Proposal Cont. *(from page 1)*

high level of certainty that spawning salmon will be unharmed by mixing zone discharges. Moreover, the perception of such harm can seriously impact the state's wild salmon marketing and labeling programs.

Cook Inlet Keeper is now working with various fishing, conservation and Native organizations to counter this ill-advised proposal, with the goal of shutting the door on increased salmon stream pollution forever. Comments on the state's mixing zone proposal are due on December 19, 2005. The state will hold three workshops on the new proposal in Juneau (November 30), Fairbanks (December 1), and Anchorage (December 5), with the Anchorage workshop followed by a public hearing. See www.inletkeeper.org or [www.dec.state.ak.us/water/wqsar/trireview/mixing-](http://www.dec.state.ak.us/water/wqsar/trireview/mixing-zones.htm)

Submit Public Comments by December 19 to:

Nancy Sonafrank, Environmental Specialist
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610 University Drive
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709
nancy_sonafrank@dec.state.ak.us

zones.htm for more information, or contact Bob Shavelson at bob@inletkeeper.org or Lois Epstein in Keeper's Anchorage office at lois@inletkeeper.org.

Gravel Pit Issues Move to the Front Burner Kenai Borough rejects changes to gravel rules

Gravel mining is a multi-million dollar industry in Alaska, and on the Kenai Peninsula, gravel plays an important role in local economies and in local road and housing construction. As with any finite resource, however, there are trade-offs to gravel extraction, and on the southern Peninsula, those trade offs frequently center on safe drinking water and healthy salmon streams. Although the Kenai Peninsula Borough attempted to mitigate some of these problems with a gravel ordinance several years ago, the ordinance falls far short of providing adequate water quality and quantity protections for nearby property owners, and does little to address salmon habitat concerns. As a result, conflicts between gravel mining operations and local residents have increased over the past 18 months.

Last Fall, for example, Keeper prompted an EPA enforcement action after local fishermen complained of gravel mine pollution fouling the Anchor River. Earlier this year, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources filed criminal charges against an Anchor Point gravel operator for allegedly harming the water rights of an adjacent property owner, and a group of Anchor Point residents filed a civil lawsuit against a proposed gravel pit in their neighborhood. Then, in Summer 2005, Keeper responded to citizen concerns and challenged a large proposed gravel pit immediately adjacent to the anadromous waters of Stariski Creek.

Due largely to the severe limitations in the Kenai Borough gravel ordinance, however, Keeper lost its case at both the Planning Commission and the Board of Adjustment levels. Finally, in September, the Kenai Peninsula Assembly refused to adopt changes to the local gravel pit ordinance that would have placed a stronger burden on gravel operators to show they would not harm surrounding water rights. Nonetheless, Keeper's case, the debate over the ordinance changes, and the related issues discussed above have heightened the need for gravel mining reform on the Kenai Peninsula, and the stage is now set for a comprehensive new gravel pit policy this Winter under the guidance of new Kenai Peninsula Borough Mayor John Williams. Keeper recognizes the need for reliable supplies of gravel throughout Cook Inlet, and will push for



Keeper challenged this proposed gravel pit next to Stariski Creek, an important salmon stream on the Lower Kenai Peninsula.




EPA is now enforcing wetlands and water quality violations at this Anchor Point gravel pit in response to Keeper's efforts. Wetlands filling violations visible at bottom.

mapping and zoning policies that separate gravel mining from sensitive fish habitats, and that protect property rights and drinking water for surrounding residents, while giving gravel operators the predictability they need to make sound business decisions. For more information, contact Bob at 907.235.4068 ext 22 or bob@inletkeeper.org.

Lease Sale 199 Postponed

Strong opposition to offshore oil and gas development in Lower Cook Inlet has led to yet another reprieve. A lack of industry interest in the Cook Inlet offshore area led the U.S. Minerals Management Service to postpone a lease sale scheduled for next spring until 2007. Cook Inlet Sale 199, which would have leased more than 2 million acres of rich fisheries in lower Cook Inlet for offshore oil and gas development, has been tentatively rescheduled for May 2007. Your support and comments helped make a difference!

Cook Inlet Keeper believes Alaskans have a golden opportunity to shift away from oil and gas development and pursue tidal, solar and wind energy sources – to stake a claim in global energy markets for clean, renewable energy and the countless jobs it will support. Because Alaska is feeling the disproportionate effects of climate change, relative to the Lower 48, there are even stronger motivations to make the switch. To learn more about renewable energy in Alaska, go to: <http://ses.uaa.alaska.edu/Projects/Renewable%20Energy%20Alaska%20Project.htm>. 

Nearly 40 students from throughout Alaska gathered in Homer in August for the Summer Get Together of the Alaska Youth for Environmental Action. The theme of this year's gathering was Climate Change. Cook Inlet Keeper helped host an alternative energy tour.




Joe Whitteberry introduced students to solar and wind energy and gave a demonstration of the solar panel at Cook Inlet Keeper's Homer office.



Scott Simmons taught students about alternative fuels and gave a demonstration on how to make biodiesel from vegetable oil.

Oil Dumping Permit Coming Up For Review Citizen comments needed to stop toxic dumping in Cook Inlet fisheries


In late 2005, the Environmental Protection Agency will release a public comment draft of the Clean Water Act permit that allows the oil and gas industry to dump billions of gallons of toxic waste into Cook Inlet's rich fisheries. The permit, issued under the EPA's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), will regulate the discharge of drilling and production wastes not only from existing platforms and facilities in Upper Cook Inlet, but also from all future discharges associated with development in the Lower Inlet. Historically, industry has argued that Cook Inlet's marginal

reserves make it uneconomic to properly treat oil and gas wastes. However, with record oil and gas prices – and record industry profits – these multinational corporations will be hard pressed to argue they can't afford to stop dumping their toxics into our fisheries. In conjunction with its attorneys at Trustees for Alaska, and in cooperation with consultants and Native Tribes, Cook Inlet Keeper is developing extensive legal, economic and scientific comments on the draft permit. For more information, contact Lois Epstein, at 907.929.9371 or lois@inletkeeper.org. 

Oil & Gas Seismic Testing Off Anchor Point Lead Agency Ignores Federal Marine Mammal Law

As this newsletter goes to print, oil and gas exploration contractor Veritas is conducting offshore seismic testing near Anchor Point on behalf of client ConocoPhillips. The testing entails 3 vessels, and an array of towed air guns, fired at 15 second intervals over each low tide cycle, for 6-8 weeks. One acoustic scientist has described seismic testing as "the loudest underwater noise short of warfare," and the research literature is replete with studies showing how seismic testing can harm marine mammals, which often rely on echolocation for hunting, navigating and socializing. New studies, however, have raised additional concerns about the effects of seismic testing on fish and crabs.

In response to the seismic testing proposal, Keeper Bob Shavelson and Oil & Gas Industry Specialist Lois Epstein met with representatives from ConocoPhillips, reviewed documents, and attended public meetings. Keeper proposed scientific tests to better

understand the effects of seismic air gun blasts on local fish and crab, but ConocoPhillips balked, instead agreeing to explore the possibility of sharing underwater noise data in the future. In the course of the permitting process, however, Keeper learned that the lead agency – the federal Minerals Management Service (MMS) – had flatly ignored calls from the federal agency with expertise in marine mammals (the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)) to obtain a special harassment authorization under the federal Marine Mammal Protection Act. ConocoPhillips' seismic program has broad implications, not only for oil and gas exploration around Alaska, but also nationally, because Congress is working to remove long standing drilling prohibitions in all marine areas to address rising oil and gas prices. As a result, Keeper is spearheading a coalition of local and national groups to hold the MMS accountable to our marine protection laws. 

WATERSHED WATCH UPDATES

Feds Begin Endangered Species Review for Beleaguered Beluga Whale Keeper tells Marine Mammal Commission Immediate Changes Needed

The Cook Inlet beluga whale is an isolated stock whose numbers have dropped over 50% in the past decade. Scientists predict the cessation of unregulated subsistence hunting would reverse this troublesome trend, but recent estimates suggest this vulnerable population of white whales has – in the words of agency scientists – “flat-lined” (i.e. shown no signs of rebounding to former numbers) at between 250-350 animals. In



Photo by Karen Deatherage

Crowds gathered to watch beluga's in Turnagain Arm in September.

October, the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission – which is charged by Congress to oversee marine

mammal protections nationwide – invited Cook Inlet Keeper to speak before the MMC's annual meeting in Anchorage. Keeper Bob Shavelson shared with the Commission the pressing development issues facing the Cook Inlet beluga – including the 40 million gallons a day of sewage from Anchorage, the proposed expansion of the Port of Anchorage in key beluga habitat, and the proposed Knik Arm bridge, which would bisect perhaps the most important beluga whale habitat in the entire Inlet – and pressed the Commission to pursue immediate steps to permanently protect critical habitats areas for the beluga. To highlight the serious concerns over the whale's continued survival, the National Marine Fisheries Service recently has begun a “status review,” to determine whether the whale should be listed under the Endangered Species Act. While Keeper has confidence NMFS agency scientists will conduct an objective review, there's less certainty that the politically-appointed bureaucrats in Washington, DC, will allow science and facts to guide their policymaking. As a result, Keeper is devising alternative strategies to ensure NMFS has appropriate motivations to resist the intrusion of politics in this important decision. For more information, contact Bob at 907.235.4068 ext 22 or bob@inletkeeper.org.



Canadian Corporation Raises Ante in Push for Massive Pebble Open Pit Mine

For the past two years, Canadian mining interests have been touting the Pebble mine prospect – located across Cook Inlet in the Bristol Bay watershed – as the largest copper/gold/molybdenum deposit in the Americas. Trade journals and news articles have regularly reported glowing prospects for jobs and economic vitality from the proposed open pit mine, which would sit in the headwaters of arguably the richest red salmon fishery in the world, and which would invariably increase pollution and development pressures in the Cook Inlet watershed. Recently, the mine's proponent – Canadian corporation Northern Dynasty (a subsidiary of Hunter Dickinson) – has upped the stakes in its gambit for the mine, and raised some eyebrows in the process. For example, Northern Dynasty repeatedly told local residents it would not use cyanide in its gold refining processes, yet recently it reversed course,

telling investors that cyanide technologies were “on the table.” Additionally, Northern Dynasty recently paid local stakeholders and politicians up to \$600 “per diem” to attend three days of mining meetings in Anchorage – a trip where Northern Dynasty already covered all the participants' food, travel and accommodations. While Cook Inlet Keeper has yet to take a formal position on the mine, it is increasingly skeptical it can meet Governor Jay Hammond's criteria for a responsible project (see sidebar). In the meantime, Keeper recently attended a meeting of the Western Mining Activist Network, to build its knowledge and relationships around hard rock mining, and is working closely with various groups, including the Cook Inlet Alliance, to ensure Alaskans have the most accurate information on which to make a decision.



Governor Jay Hammond: 1922-2005

Former Governor Jay Hammond passed away this summer, leaving behind a rich legacy as arguably the greatest statesmen ever to grace Alaska's political stage. In July 2005, Cook Inlet Keeper was honored to have Governor Hammond serve on its 10th Anniversary Host Committee, and over the past year, the “Alaska Bush Rat” played a leading role defining how Alaska should undertake large development projects such as the Pebble Mine. According to Hammond, the criteria for a responsible mine include:

- Is it environmentally sound?
- Do a majority of Alaskans want it?
- Can it pay its own way?
- Does it meet the Alaska Constitution's mandate to manage resources for the people's maximum benefit?

Keeper is working hard to continue the legacy of Governor Jay Hammond, by pushing for responsible development projects in Alaska that reflect the best interests of all Alaskans.

Murkowski Continues Push to Eliminate Local Communities from Coastal Decisions

Shortly after taking office in 2003, Governor Frank Murkowski and his Chief of Staff Jim Clark set their sights on the most important coastal protection law in the state – the Alaska Coastal Management Program (ACMP). While the Murkowski Administration gutted countless protections throughout coastal Alaska, it took particular aim at local input from local residents, whose voices have been all but smothered in the newly proposed ACMP. In November 2005, Keeper testified in Anchorage, before the NOAA's Office of Coastal Resource Management, to explain why Alaska's sweeping changes to the ACMP should not gain federal approval and funding. Keeper will continue to work with coastal resource managers and citizens to re-gain local influence in coastal decisionmaking; the upcoming legislative session will be critical to let our lawmakers know that local citizens should have a seat at the table in coastal project decisions.



Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. joined Cook Inlet Keeper's booth for a signing of his book *Crimes Against Nature* following his keynote speech at the Alaska Ocean's Festival in Anchorage in July.

Cook Inlet Keeper Celebrates 10 Years Helps Launch Prince William Soundkeeper

Hundred of citizens joined together on a busy weekend in July to help celebrate Cook Inlet Keeper's 10th Anniversary, and to launch the new Prince William Soundkeeper.

Since its inception in 1995, Cook Inlet Keeper has trained hundreds of volunteers to monitor water quality, successfully held corporations accountable for illegal pollution, protected hundreds of thousands of acres of beluga whale habitat, and kept a close eye on the health of Cook Inlet salmon streams.

Cook Inlet Keeper was the 12th Waterkeeper Program in the nation, and until last year, was the only Waterkeeper program in Alaska. Now, citizens throughout Prince William Sound have united to form the new Prince William Soundkeeper. More than 200 people joined with Waterkeeper Alliance President Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. on a perfect summer evening in July to launch the new Soundkeeper Program. The occasion was marked by a cruise from Whittier to Blackstone Bay aboard the M/V Klondike. The Soundkeeper will take the Waterkeeper concept to an area still recovering from the devastation of the 1989 Exxon Valdez Oil Spill, and play an important role protecting water quality, fisheries and sustainable communities throughout the Sound.

More than 300 people gathered together on the following day to celebrate Cook Inlet Keeper's 10th anniversary, where Cook Inlet Keeper honored its founding members and the many members and volunteers who have made its advocacy and monitoring work possible over the years. Festivities included traditional Native Dance performances by the Kenaitze and Nanwalek Native Dancers and keynote address by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., followed by a fresh fish and oyster BBQ and live music by Homer's own Three-legged Mule.



Keeper's Executive Director Bob Shavelson honors founding members including Mike O'Meara and Pamela K. Miller as part of Cook Inlet Keeper's 10th anniversary.



Cook Inlet Keeper Celebrates 10 Years Cont.

During the keynote address, Kennedy highlighted the importance of protecting Alaska's important fisheries. "I don't want my children to grow up in a world where there are no commercial fishermen, where we've lost touch with the seasons and the tides and the things that connect us to the 10,000 generations of human beings that were here before," Kennedy said. "I want my children to be able to catch a fish out of Cook Inlet, and be able to eat that fish, just like people have been doing for hundreds of years."



Thanks to your support, Cook Inlet Keeper can continue to work hard and build off of its past accomplishments, to ensure that future generations can enjoy the same Cook Inlet that we cherish today.



Same Great Keeper, New Great Name! 10th Anniversary Marks Move to "Cook Inletkeeper"

The year 2005 marks Cook Inlet Keeper's 10th Anniversary, and in addition to a series of events, planning updates and celebrations, Keeper is moving ahead with another big development: a name change! Since our official inception in 1995, we have been part of the National Alliance of Waterkeepers, a grassroots network of Waterkeepers dedicated to protecting local watersheds nationally and internationally. As the Waterkeeper movement has grown in numbers and stature, however, so too have efforts to co-opt the Waterkeeper name for purposes contrary to water quality protection. For example, a group of developers on Long Island, NY, has embraced the "Baykeeper" name, to confuse local residents about the mission of the "real" Baykeeper there. In response, Waterkeepers throughout the nation decided to standardize their names, to promote a uniform "brand" for Waterkeepers, and to ensure our ambitious efforts do not become diluted by unscrupulous copycats. Now, all Waterkeepers have adopted one of the Waterkeeper family of names (i.e. Baykeeper, Soundkeeper, Riverkeeper, etc.). As a result, beginning on January 1, 2006, Keeper's official name will be "Cook Inletkeeper." Cook Inletkeeper will remain an Alaska business managed by an Alaskan Board of Directors. The only difference now is that we will be in solidarity with other Waterkeepers - through our consistent naming convention - to ensure all Waterkeepers are legitimately working to protect our precious water resources for current and future generations. The Keeper Board and staff struggled with this decision, because we've become attached to the original name. At the same time, we all recognized the need to unite with our fellow Waterkeepers, and to present a coordinated front in the fight for clean water and healthy communities. If you have any questions about Keeper's name change, feel free to contact Bob at bob@inletkeeper.org or 907.235.4068 ext. 22.



Thank You

Thanks to the following sponsors of Cook Inlet Keeper's 10th Anniversary Celebration:

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Melvin Malchoff
Michael Neece

In Memory of Don "Toot" Hallstead and Governor Jay Hammond

AND THANKS TO ALL OF COOK INLET KEEPER'S MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS FOR A GREAT 10 YEARS!

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

Bash Makes a Splash in its 8th Year

There's nothing like a little sunshine to bring out the smiles. Add delicious food, fantastic live bluegrass music, good conversation and great company – and you've got a successful 8th annual volunteer appreciation Splash Bash! There was a large turn out this year as we celebrated all the hard work and dedication of Cook Inlet Keeper's volunteers. Top honors were given to Scott Miller, Duane Howe, and Lani Raymond for being selected as volunteer and team of the year respectively. Other honors went to Anne Wieland for the most data sheets turned in (36!), John Mouw and Laurie Daniels for long-term dedication, Jonas Akers for steadfastness and consistency, Tom Collopy and Mary Frische for best photos and sense of humor, and Derek Reynolds for being the most versatile volunteer. Cutthroat Bluegrass provided live music, and food, drinks, oysters and gifts were generously donated by local restaurants and businesses. Thank you to all the volunteers – we can't wait to celebrate with you again next year!

Thanks to Cook Inlet Keeper's Citizens' Environmental Monitoring Program volunteers: Jonas Akers, Ole Andersson, Dale Banks, Heather Beggs, Laura Brooks, Josiah Campbell, Tom Collopy, Joel Cooper, Laurie Daniel, Jim DePasquale, Brenda Dolma, Dave Erikson, Mary Frische, Megan Gajkowski, Mike Gracz, Patty Graham, Oriana Harding, Patrick Houlihan, Duane Howe, Jacob Keller, Rich Kleinleder, Jim Levine, Milli Martin, Scott Miller, John Mouw, Bree Murphy, Norbert Neumann, Craig Phillips, Heidi Pancake, Bridget Paule, Lani Raymond, Derek Reynolds, Janice Schwartz, Christine S'gro, Jesus Trejo, Frank Vondersaar, Elizabeth Villarreal, Kyra Wagner, Neil Wagner, Elizabeth Wasserman, Karen West, Anne Wieland, Lindsay Winker. Thanks to those who contributed to Keeper's 8th Annual Splash Bash Volunteer Appreciation Party: Amped Café, Fritz Creek General Store, the



Anne Wieland was awarded for being the volunteer who turned in the most data sheets.

Homer Bookstore, Ulmer's Drug and Hardware, The Old Inlet Bookshop, Smokey Bay Natural Food Store, North Country Charters, USFWS Islands and Ocean Visitor Center, Fat Olives, The Gear Shed, Latitude 59, Homer Jeans, NOMAR, Solstice Music, The Katie Kuhn's Community Pool, Cutthroat Bluegrass, The Pratt Museum, Two Sisters Bakery, Red Pepper Kitchen, Scruggs Automotive, K-Bay Caffe Roasting Company, and Homer Brewing Company.



Road Construction Update

During 2004 and 2005, Cook Inlet Keeper contracted with the Homer Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Department of Transportation (DOT), and Quality Asphalt Paving to monitor streams along portions of the East End Road construction project in Homer, Alaska. The regular monitoring associated with this project is now complete and Cook Inlet Keeper is currently preparing a water quality report to summarize the findings.

Additionally, the Homer SWCD, DOT and Zubeck, Inc. have contracted with Keeper to monitor Woodard Creek and the stormwater drainage system along the Bartlett Street road construction project. In addition to the standard water quality parameters measured, metals, hydrocarbons and solids will be analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the stormwater filter that has been installed in the Bartlett stormwater drainage system.

This monitoring partnership continues to stand as a model for how agencies and private contractors can work with citizen groups to monitor our public waterways and promote best management practices that protect water quality in our local streams.

East End Road Preliminary Findings

After monitoring the East End Road construction project from June 2004 through September 2005 preliminary findings show that temporary and long-term best management practices (BMPs) employed to reduce soil erosion and site sediment loss were effective in reducing the amount of sediment leaving the construction site. This is reflected in the lower turbidity levels recorded at sites downstream of the work zone. Effective BMPs employed on the East End Road project include silt fences, straw bales, rock-lined channels and ditches, live water diversion, mulching, and seeding.

Some deficiencies were observed, however. Temporary erosion control BMPs were not as effective during rain events or during the winter months. Temporary BMPs such as silt fences and straw bales were flanked, undermined, and blown out during increased flow levels resulting from rain events. Temporary BMPs were not inspected and maintained over the winter or repaired and refurbished prior to spring break-up.

The data collected during this road construction project did not produce any detectable changes in temperature, pH, or specific conductance in the streams monitored. Continued monitoring will provide information on how quickly streams return to pre-construction conditions and the effectiveness of long-term BMPs.

Watershed-Wide Sampling Event

From headwaters to river mouth on September 21st you could see Keeper staff scattered throughout the Anchor and Ninilchik River watersheds. Twenty sites were sampled in one day to collect water samples and measure stream discharge. By sampling on the same day, we hope to understand how nutrients and sediments are distributed in all the major tributaries. With this information, we can identify if there are land-use activities (road building, logging, gravel mining) that are increasing erosion rates beyond what natural occurs in these watersheds.



Ole Andersson of the Kenai Watershed Forum measures discharge on the lower Ninilchik River.

Keeper staff (Sue Mauger, Joel Cooper, Marla McPherson, Edan Badajos, Ingrid Harrald, Will Schlein, and Karyn Noyes) with help from Kenai Watershed Forum staff (Mike Gracz, Ole Andersson, and Michael Slade) and Homer Soil and Water Conservation District staff (Lindsay Winkler) put in a full field day in teams of two or three. One crew took off by helicopter to sample headwater sites not accessible by road. The four other crews drove down the Sterling Highway to sample the lower reaches of the Anchor and Ninilchik Rivers.

Each team was equipped with velocity meters, tape measures, and datasheets to measure the volume of water moving through the stream chan-

nel (discharge). With so many people sampling at one time, more equipment than usual was needed to make the day successful. This was possible by the generous loan of equipment from the Kenai Watershed Forum, Coble



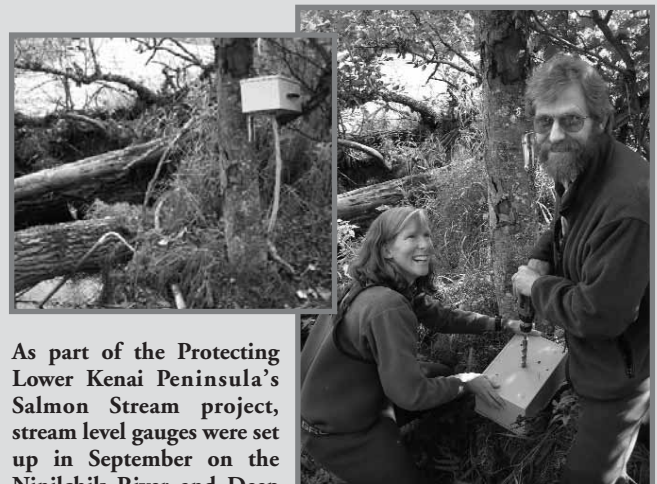
Lindsay Winkler with the Homer Soil and Water Conservation District instream in the upper reaches of the Anchor River.

Geophysical, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Stories at the end of the day included brown bears, muskrats, low batteries, chest-high water, and golden cottonwoods in the headwaters of the Anchor River.

Water samples are being analyzed in Keeper's Community-Based Water Quality Laboratory and another sampling event will take place next spring. This effort is part of the Protecting Kenai Peninsula's Salmon Streams Project, which is a Homer Soil and Water Conservation District program funded partially through an Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's Alaska Clean Water Actions (ACWA) grant.

Keeper's Laboratory Ranks High on Quality Assurance with Labs across the U.S.

Keeper's Cook Inlet Community-Based Water Quality Laboratory is wrapping up a busy summer for nutrient analysis and road construction projects. In addition, the lab continued to provide support and analyze samples for Keeper's Citizens Environmental Monitoring and Salmon Stream Monitoring Programs. Keeper's laboratory continues to maintain its high quality assurance record through enrollment in USGS's Standard Reference Sample Project and NOAA/NERRS Analytical Laboratory Intercomparison Study. These programs provide inter-laboratory comparisons with federal, state, municipal, and university laboratories. An analysis of these samples provides the means to alert participating laboratories of possible deficiencies in their analytical operations, and also provides reference materials for in-house quality control programs. Keeper's results on the last round robin for both programs ranked high with all labs across the country. To learn more about the USGS program and to see results for Cook Inlet Keeper's laboratory (lab# 389) visit <http://bqs.usgs.gov/srs/>.



As part of the Protecting Lower Kenai Peninsula's Salmon Stream project, stream level gauges were set up in September on the Ninilchik River and Deep Creek. Sue Mauger (Keeper's Stream Ecologist) and Ole Andersson of the Kenai Watershed Forum enjoy the day constructing the Deep Creek housing for the In-Situ miniTroll pressure sensors which records a stream level measurement every 15 minutes. Weekly turbidity samples will be compared with the stream level data to see how turbidity varies as stream discharge changes.

Farewell to Joel Cooper



Before Cook Inlet Keeper even hired its first permanent staff in 1996, Joel Cooper attended Keeper start-up planning meetings, worked to set up Keeper's first office, and coordinated Keeper's first public workshops. In 1997, Keeper hired Joel to develop our salmon stream monitoring program, and soon after, his tireless commitment, good humor and diverse skill sets led to his permanent employment running Keeper's water quality monitoring programs. Over the years, Joel has been a trusted confidant and a dedicated employee, but perhaps most importantly, he has given countless hours of himself to helping us all better understand and protect the public water resources that sustain us in Cook Inlet. Among many other things, Joel spearheaded the effort to ensure quality controls for citizen-collected data, brought groups together in a comprehensive volunteer monitoring partnership, and played a leading role making Cook Inlet the centerpiece for water quality monitoring in Alaska. Most recently, Joel has put in countless hours developing the Cook Inlet Community-based Water Quality Monitoring Laboratory – the first laboratory in the state designed to bring citizens and scientists together to promote responsible stewardship for Cook Inlet water resources. Joel will now take some well-earned time to work his land on the ridge above Homer, but his heart and commitment to Cook Inlet will keep him engaged in community issues for years to come. From the Board and staff at Cook Inlet Keeper, thanks, Joel, for forging an incredibly ambitious path, and leading us by your example.

A Volunteer Coordinating Pro!

While it may be belated, we don't want to miss this opportunity to welcome the latest addition to Cook Inlet Keeper's staff – Ingrid Harrald. In May, Ingrid joined Cook Inlet Keeper as the new volunteer monitor coordinator for the Citizens' Environmental Monitoring Program, after Edan Badajos moved into a technician position to help the Community-based Water Quality Laboratory meet an increasing demand for water quality analysis.



Ingrid came to Cook Inlet Keeper after several years conducting seabird research with the Alaska Maritime and Becharof National Wildlife Refuges. And Ingrid is no stranger to working with volunteers and citizen science. Prior to moving to Alaska, Ingrid worked with the Gulf of the Farallones Marine Sanctuary and the National Park Service to coordinate volunteers and manage citizen science and site stewardship programs in California. While Ingrid certainly keeps her hands full at Cook Inlet Keeper, she also manages another part-time job coordinating volunteers for the local public radio station KBBI. We're lucky to have her!

Thanks to 2005 Interns!



Jennifer Poindexter assisting with the road construction monitoring project



Intern Karyn Noyes measures flow as part of Keeper's Salmon Stream Monitoring Program.

Many thanks goes out to Cook Inlet Keeper's 2005 interns for helping the monitoring and laboratory staff through a very busy summer! The Alaska Conservation Foundation funded intern Ben Jones to work as a lab and field assistant for the summer. When Ben unexpectedly left midsummer to take another job, Jennifer Poindexter and Karyn Noyes stepped in to fill the void. Jennifer filled in for 3 weeks and then Karyn finished out the internship. Karyn continued on a part-time basis through October to help with the Salmon Stream Monitoring Program. Both hit the ground running when we most needed help. Thanks Jennifer and Karyn, we're for grateful for all your help! Additional thanks to the Alaska Conservation Foundation for funding conservation internships in Alaska and for working with Cook Inlet Keeper this year to ensure that our intern needs were met.



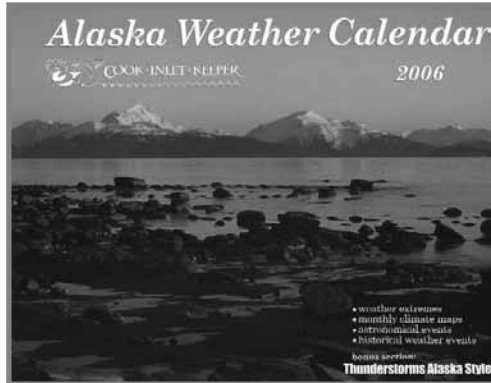
Keeper staff demonstrated strong teamwork at the 4th of July celebration in Seldovia, where Cook Inlet Keeper took first place in the fish toss competition.

A Great Gift Idea!

Weather and Earth Science Facts found in the Alaska Weather Calendar!

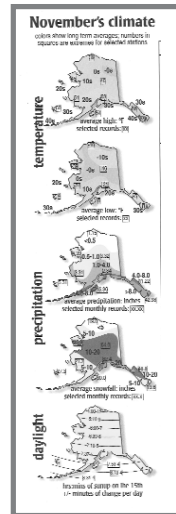
- Barrow's last sunrise for the year is on November 18. The sun will rise again in Barrow on January 23.
- In November, Anchorage has roughly 7 hours of daylight and is losing 5 minutes per day.
- 356 inches (nearly 30 feet) of snow was measured on Wolverine Glacier on the Kenai Peninsula on June 9, 1977.
- In 1912, Novarupta Volcano on Alaska's Peninsula erupted, burying Kodiak under a foot of ash.
- In 1987, a four-month rainy spell began in Yakutat – by its end, 147.85 inches (more than 12 feet) of precipitation had fallen.
- In 1995, 5 cars were damaged when a carport blew off its foundation in Southcentral Alaska from a 75 mph windstorm.

These are just a few of Alaska's fascinating weather and earth science facts that are peppered throughout Alaska's famous and beautiful weather calendar (©Williwaw Publishing). This year, you can support clean water in Cook Inlet by ordering a copy of your Alaska Weather Calendar from Cook Inlet Keeper. Keeper's commemorative edition features cover photo by local photographer Bill Scott, and includes 44 other



spectacular Alaska photos, in-depth and understandable weather explanations, historical weather and earth science events, monthly climate maps of averages and extremes, extreme tides and other astronomical events, and daylight hours and amount of change at a glance. The Alaska Weather Calendar makes an excellent gift!

Order your calendar by calling 907.235.4068 ext. 21, emailing marla@inlet-keeper.org, or go to www.inletkeeper.org. Or you can fill out the form on the back of the newsletter and return to Cook Inlet Keeper, PO Box 3269, Homer, Alaska 99603. Thanks for your support and we hope you'll enjoy this extraordinary calendar!



Thanks to the Mountaineers Foundation

Generous support from the Mountaineers Foundation recently helped Cook Inlet Keeper design and print a new brochure as part of Keeper's 10th Anniversary Celebration. For more information about the Mountaineer Foundation's and their work to promote the study, protection, and enjoyment of the Pacific Northwest's natural areas, please visit their web site at: www.mountaineersfoundation.org.

Thanks to Cook Inlet Keeper's Funders

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WestWind Foundation
Wolfensohn Family Foundation

And thanks again to all of Keeper's new and renewing members!



Technology Upgrade a Success!

Cook Inlet Keeper realized the advantage of having an efficient, networked computer system in its infancy. Approaching our 10-year anniversary, however, we realized that to continue to use staff and volunteer time most effectively we were overdue for a major upgrade. With the help of OneNorthwest, Keeper conducted a comprehensive technology audit in 2004, followed by a technology implementation plan. In 2005, Cook Inlet Keeper purchased new computers which run the latest software, and a new server to allow for a more reliable network connection. Keeper also installed the infrastructure to store and backup our files securely. We donated our old computers to allow them to be reused for less demanding applications and will recycled the remaining

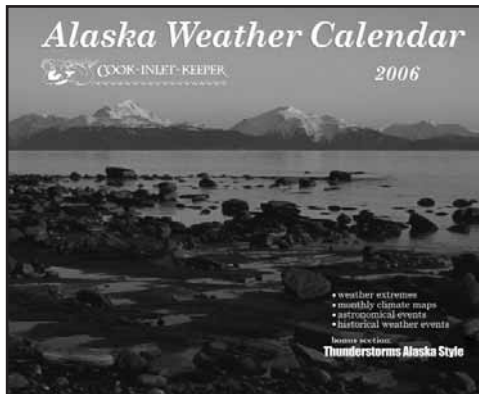
equipment at Green Star's recycling day.

Keeper's new monitors radiate less radiation for the safety of our staff and also consume less than half of the electricity of our old monitors. This allows us to make more efficient use of the solar energy generated by the panels at the Kachemak Bay Conservation Center. Also, as part of this upgrade, we traded in our ancient copy machine for a more economical model that can scan, fax, and most importantly, print double-sided copies to save trees. Thank you to the Homer Foundation, Brainerd Foundation, Norcross Wildlife Foundation and of course our wonderful membership for providing the funds needed for this timely upgrade!



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