The Cook Inlet watershed is the most populated and fastest-growing region in Alaska; it is also home to the state’s renowned wild salmon runs that are at greatest risk to the effects of climate and land-use change. For the past five years, Cook Inletkeeper has spearheaded a novel research program that has documented alarming warming trends in local salmon streams, with summer temperatures routinely exceeding state water quality standards established to protect spawning and migrating fish. Fisheries scientists warn that high stream temperatures make fish increasingly vulnerable to pollution, predation and disease. Yet despite the association between warming water temperatures and reduced salmonid survivorship - there is little or no consistent, long-term temperature data for salmon streams in Alaska. Without such basic information, it is impossible to gauge the health of Cook Inlet’s salmon habitats and resources, and equally difficult to develop management responses to improve watershed resiliency to climate change.

Cook Inletkeeper is now moving forward to tackle this momentous problem. First we are developing standardized, transferable protocols for continuous temperature data-logging to foster local, community-level participation in stream temperature monitoring. Partners actively
A Note From Your Cook Inletkeeper

Dear Friends of Cook Inlet —

The Chuitna River is a spectacular salmon stream on the west side of Cook Inlet near the communities of Beluga and Tyonek. The Chuit, as locals call it, produces incredible king salmon, and supports important sport, commercial and subsistence fishing opportunities. In April, Inletkeeper and its supporters successfully listed the Chuitna as one of the nation’s ten “Most Endangered Rivers” for 2007. Why? Because a Delaware corporation backed by Texas investors is moving to develop a massive coal strip mine that will destroy the surrounding watershed and dump billions of gallons of mine waste into the river each year.

Corporate developers and government agencies tell us not to worry, because Alaska’s permitting system will ensure there’s no harm. But nothing could be further from the truth. It is a persistent myth that environmental reviews and permits actually safeguard the environment and the people who rely on it. Coal strip mining is an inherently intensive land use. Once you destroy 30 square miles of fish, bear and moose habitat to extract the underlying coal, you can never put the egg back in the shell. Laws and rules adopted in the past to provide some semblance of environmental protection have been systematically dismantled. For example, in just four short years, the Murkowski Administration: gutted the Alaska Coastal Zone Management Act, cutting citizens and local governments from any meaningful role in coastal development; neutered the biologists in the Alaska Department of Fish and Game by moving them to the state’s resource development agency (DNR); and rammed through new rules that allow polluting “mixing zones” in salmon spawning areas, despite thousands of comments to the contrary statewide. At the federal level, the Bush Administration changed the definition of “fill” under the Clean Water Act so mining corporations can reduce costs by using our lakes and streams as private dumping grounds.

Our politicians and agencies are charged with managing our public lands and waters in the best interests of current and future generations. But well-heeled corporations have “captured” our decisionmakers, and they count on the fact that everyday citizens are too busy with their own lives to know about or to act upon these outrageous rollbacks. That’s where you come in. Not only do we have a fundamental right to clean water and healthy salmon, but we also have an obligation to protect them for our kids. So don’t get discouraged, get active. It’s our only choice. With climate change unraveling the very biological systems that support our planet, an active and engaged citizenry is our only chance. So please take 20 minutes from every week to write a letter or to call an agency official or politician, because they cannot ignore our collective voice.

Yours for Cook Inlet,

Bob Shavelson
Executive Director

Coal Mine Cont. (from page 1)

wards toward coal, especially when such investments would preclude interest in Cook Inlet’s world class wind, tidal and geothermal energy supplies. Opposition to the Chuitna mine is mounting, as Alaskans increasingly recognize the dead end road represented by a future of coal. See other stories in this issue for other coal work unfolding across the state.
Cook Inlet is unique for many reasons, but perhaps the most infamous accolade is this: Cook Inlet is the only coastal waterbody in the nation where oil and gas operators may legally dump toxic drilling and production wastes directly into important subsistence, commercial and sport fisheries. When Congress passed the Clean Water Act in 1972, it envisioned pollution discharge permits that would be issued on a five-year basis, and with each permit renewal, standards would be ratcheted down to account for new and better pollution controls. A central goal of the Clean Water Act was and remains to eliminate water pollution discharges. But when the draft permit for oil and gas discharges in Cook Inlet came up for review in 2005, the Environmental Protection Agency proposed massive rollbacks, significantly increasing the amount of toxics industry could dump into Cook Inlet. In 2006, Inletkeeper published a landmark study showing how “zero discharge” of industry wastes could be employed in Cook Inlet (see http://www.inletkeeper.org/energy/production.htm). At a time of record high oil and gas prices, industry can afford the basic technologies needed to stop treating Cook Inlet like a private dumping ground. As this newsletter goes to print, EPA is preparing to issue the final Clean Water Act permit for oil and gas operations in Cook Inlet. Inletkeeper is working closely with local Tribes and fishing groups to ensure the strongest possible permit. If EPA proposes a permit that continues to allow toxic discharges in Cook Inlet’s rich fisheries, as expected, Inletkeeper and its allies will be left with no option other than to challenge the permit in federal court. For more information, contact Bob at 907.235.4068 x22 or bob@inletkeeper.org.
Oil Tankers Finally Get Needed Tug Support in Cook Inlet  
But Long Term Outlook Remains Uncertain

For the past 12 years, Inletkeeper has worked tirelessly to improve navigational safeguards for laden oil tankers in Cook Inlet's notoriously rough and icy waters. In 1987, the tanker Glacier Bay struck a rock in Cook Inlet and the resulting spill shut down important commercial fisheries. After the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, Prince William Sound received state-of-the-art systems to ensure safer oil transport. Yet Cook Inlet remained in a regulatory backwater, with no suitable tug vessels to assist with vessel docking or to respond to powerless tankers. Things changed, however, on February 2, 2006, when the Seabulk Pride broke from its mooring at the Nikiski docks in heavy ice conditions, and ran aground laden with more than 5 million gallons of oil product in the heart of Cook Inlet salmon and beluga whale habitat north of Kenai. Less than a year later, the same vessel, at the same dock, parted lines in ice conditions, but avoided a major incident. In response, Tesoro Alaska announced in early 2007 - for the first time ever - a dedicated stand-by tug vessel to assist with tanker docking and related activities. Inletkeeper commends Tesoro for taking action, but it also recognizes the long-overdue need to upgrade navigational safeguards at one of the most dangerous docks in the world. Two recent studies confirmed that the mere presence of ice during mooring operations – which is not unusual – presents unreasonable risks. But again, these were not new revelations: in 1992, maritime specialist Captain Dickson penned a definitive report, noting the unique hazards in Cook Inlet, the lack of adequate tug support vessels, and finding the region severely under-equipped to prevent and respond to a major oil spill. Inletkeeper has been carrying the mantle of the Dickson Report for the past decade, and this year, Inletkeeper Bob Shavelson was selected Vice President of the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council (CIRCAC), one of two such oversight bodies formed in the wake of the Exxon spill. Bob represents the conservation community on the Board, and works hard to press for the basic safeguards needed to bring Cook Inlet in line with other ports in the nation. But the oil and gas producers, shipping industry, and the marine pilots - who are required to accompany vessels in the Cook Inlet trades – maintain an insular environment where public scrutiny and opinion are discouraged. For example, in the wake of the 2006 Seabulk Pride grounding, the Southwest Marine Pilots – in conjunction with the U.S. Coast Guard – formed a select committee to address Cook Inlet navigational safety, and closed the meeting doors to citizens, tribes and fishermen concerned about the safe transit of oil and other products. Inletkeeper will continue to work to bring accountability and transparency to navigational safety issues in Cook Inlet, and will focus on ensuring a dedicated and adequately equipped tug is available for tankers at the docks in Kenai all year round.

Lower Cook Inlet Oil & Gas Project Heeds Local Concerns  
Cosmopolitan Unit Off Anchor Point Moving Forward

The offshore waters of Lower Cook Inlet near Anchor Point have long been known to contain sizable hydrocarbon reserves. Pennzoil discovered oil there in 1967, and in the late 1990's ConocoPhillips and other companies looked to develop the site, creating the Cosmopolitan Unit off Stariski Creek. Inletkeeper met regularly with ConocoPhillips representatives, and stressed two critical points: the prospect should not be developed using an offshore platform located in the middle of important fisheries and habitat, and the oil transport should occur through an onshore pipeline, and not entail the creation of a new tanker loading facility at Anchor Point. Because the reservoir straddled state and federal waters beyond three miles from shore, ConocoPhillips drilled the prospect from onshore, which required it to contract the largest drill rig ever brought to Cook Inlet to perform a technically challenging directional drilling operation. Now, independent producer Pioneer Oil has taken the operating interest in the Cosmopolitan Unit, and will drill additional wells this fall. Inletkeeper recently met with Pioneer representatives, and they said they planned no offshore platforms or tanker loading facilities. Inletkeeper puts oil development just above coal in the preferred hierarchy of energy resource development, where climate change is an increasing concern; but if oil development occurs, Inletkeeper will work to ensure the highest degree of habitat and water quality protection possible. That means keeping drilling facilities onshore, and reducing shipping navigation hazards by favoring onshore product transport.
Alaska Coal Working Group Takes Shape to Press for Sensible Energy Options

Coal. Alaska has a lot of it – roughly half the nation’s total – and with high oil and gas prices, local utilities, foreign markets, and outside investors want to develop it. But coal is an ancient fuel that puts mercury in our fish, requires huge strip mines that devour fish and game habitat, and produces the most greenhouse gases of any traditional fuel. In just the past two years, a half dozen major coal projects have ignited concern from citizens and groups from the Mat Su Valley to the Kenai Peninsula. Now, we’re working together under the Alaska Coal Working Group, an ad hoc alliance of local people and a dozen groups focused on promoting clean energy and jobs. The group has identified the Chuitna coal strip mine as an imminent threat and a top priority; some of the group’s other priorities include:

“Blue Sky” Project Would Add Coal-Fired Power Plant on Kenai

Since its construction in the late 1960’s, the ammonia and fertilizer plant in Nikiski has played a substantial role in the Kenai Peninsula economy. In 2000, Unocal sold the facility to the Canadian corporation Agrium. Soon after, Agrium faced rising prices and tight supplies for natural gas, which the plant uses to produce urea and ammonia. It subsequently reduced production, announced lay-offs, and this past winter, temporarily ceased production until natural gas supplies materialize in the warmer summer months. In an effort to maintain the facility, Agrium has turned to a coal gasification project using the Fischer-Tropsch process to provide the feedstock to make its products. Homer Electric Association has partnered with Agrium to build a 200 megawatt coal-fired power plant at the facility, and coal would tentatively be shipped down from the Usibelli coal mine in Healy on the Alaska Railroad (unless the Chuitna coal mine comes on line, then supplies could change). Because the project cannot attract traditional financing on its own right, Alaska Representative Mike Chenault introduced HB 229 this session, which would grant the Alaska Railroad Corporation the authority to issue nearly $3 billion in tax-free bonds to build and operate the facility, which would include a rail spur to Port MacKenzie across from Anchorage to ship the coal. The four Phase project is now in Phase 2 (Front End Engineering & Design – “Packaging & Permitting”), with start-up schedule for 2011. For a good overview of Agrium’s coal gasification plans, go to: www.gasification.org/Docs/2006_Papers/22JOHN-Paper.pdf

Coal Fired Power Plants for HEA & MEA

As local utilities struggle to find energy sources in the face of high natural gas prices, coal is gaining increasing attention. For example, the Matanuska Electric Association has sparked a widespread backlash in the Mat Su Valley with its recent plans to build a 100-megawatt coal power plant at an undecided location. Similarly, the Homer Electric Association has proposed two new coal-fired power plant options: one at the defunct 50 megawatt Healy “clean coal” plant near Denali, and another 200 megawatt facility adjacent to the Agrium’s proposed coal gasification plant in Nikiski (see above). Aside from the direct impacts of coal mining to local ecosystems and communities, coal combustion will add mercury to our local environment, aggravate climate change through the generation of greenhouse gases, and preclude investments in cleaner, smarter renewable energy options. If you want your energy coming from sources other than coal, let MEA and HEA know. Contact MEA at: 907.761.9300 or mea@matanuska.com; or HEA at: 800.478.8551 www.homerelectric.com/Contact-Ush.htm

Mental Health Trust Pursues Chickaloon Coal Mine

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority put up nearly a quarter of the Matanuska Valley Moose Range for lease in 2006. Soon after, Vancouver-based Full Metal Minerals leased over 22,000 acres of prime moose habitat surrounding the quiet community of Chickaloon for coal exploration and development. But when the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) sought comments on a proposed coal exploration permit, they got an earful: local citizens with the Castle Mountain Coalition united to educate members of the community and key decisionmakers about the project, and organized a series of meetings that has galvanized opposition to the proposed mine. Their efforts were so effective that Full Metal Minerals turned away from the project in May. But the Alaska Mental Health Land Trust has not relinquished its plans, and citizen-led efforts remain underway to stop a massive coal mine from straddling the Matanuska River. For more information, contact the Castle Mountain Coalition at 907.745.7714 or go to: www.castlemountaincoalition.org/coal.htm

Coal Dust Smothers Seward; Alaska Railroad Cited for Air Quality Violations

The Usibelli Coal Mine in Healy uses the Alaska Railroad terminal in Seward to ship its coal to foreign (mostly Asian) markets. This past winter, Usibelli increased its Seward throughput of coal, and in the process, created a nightmare for local residents concerned about the human health effects of blowing coal dust. Huge plumes of coal dust coated the town and harbor, as winter temperatures and poor design made the Alaska Railroad’s dust suppression equipment ineffective. Local citizens with the Resurrection Bay Conservation Alliance moved quickly to document air quality violations, educate the public, and engage agency enforcement personnel. The result: for the first time in memory, air quality violations and fines were proposed against the Alaska Railroad for improper operations. This is not the first coal-related victory for the small but effective RBCA folks; last year they killed a short-sighted proposal to build a 20 megawatt coal fired power plant in Seward. Inletkeeper will continue to work with RBCA and similar local groups to elevate the concerns over coal production, transport and use. For more information, contact RBCA at info@rbca-alaska.org or go to: www.rbca-alaska.org/index.html
Inletkeeper Report Helps Prompt Better State Oil Pipeline Rules

In 2006, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation issued pipeline safety rules that Inletkeeper worked hard to establish. ADEC initiated this rule-making following Cook Inletkeeper’s studies showing the high rate of spills from these pipelines, and after the federal government made clear that it would not regulate oil and gas field pipelines.

When oil is pumped up from a production well, it’s typically a mixture of oil, gas, and produced water— a briny waste liquid with a small concentration of hydrocarbons. Pipelines transport these mixtures from wells to separation facilities, where the oil, gas, and produced water are separated and transferred to transmission (or wastewater disposal) pipelines. The new state regulations cover the pipelines carrying the multi-component mixtures from the wells to the separation facilities; these pipelines now will be known as “flowlines” in Alaska. The new state regulations remove all references to “gathering” pipelines, a confusing term which is not defined clearly and comprehensively in federal regulations.

Inletkeeper Instrumental in Federal Pipeline Safety Law Renewal

BP’s pipeline corrosion problems on Alaska’s North Slope (see Winter 2006/2007 newsletter) gave momentum to passage of a renewed pipeline safety law, H.R. 5782, during the lame-duck session of Congress in December 2006. Cook Inletkeeper Senior Engineer Lois Epstein testified in DC on this bill several times in 2006, negotiated a strong provision to address pipelines like BP’s, and helped convince Congressman Don Young and Senator Ted Stevens – both committee chairman with authority over pipeline legislation -- to accept the strengthened bill. The President signed H.R. 5782 into law on December 29th, 2006.

Among the items addressed in H.R. 5782, also known as the Pipeline Inspection, Protection, Enforcement, and Safety (PIPES) Act of 2006, are:

- Requiring that low-stress transmission pipelines like BP’s failed pipelines on Alaska’s North Slope meet the same requirements as higher-stress transmission pipelines;
- Ensuring that information on federal enforcement actions is available to the public via the Internet, including the reasons why penalties have been reduced if they have been;
- Providing technical assistance grants to community and other pipeline safety organizations to increase involvement by these organizations on safety-related technical issues; and,
- Ensuring implementation of National Transportation Safety Board recommendations.

The new pipeline safety law will be in effect through 2010. In describing this law, Epstein said “The PIPES Act of 2006 clearly will move pipeline safety forward. There are no provisions in this bill that backslide on safety, and numerous beneficial provisions. Ironically, BP’s pipeline corrosion problems this past year helped federal legislators improve pipeline safety overall.”

The Waterkeeper Alliance
The Fastest Growing Environmental Movement in the Nation

Many Alaskans are familiar with the work Cook Inletkeeper pursues to protect water quality and habitat quality in Southcentral Alaska. But fewer people know that Inletkeeper’s work is strengthened by a growing network of fellow Sound, Bay and Riverkeepers across the U.S. and beyond. The Waterkeeper Alliance is a grassroots organization led by its President, Bobby Kennedy Jr., that is dedicated to supporting local Waterkeeper programs in their efforts to confront water pollution and to build stronger local communities. Inletkeeper was the twelfth organization to join the Alliance in 1995, and today, the Alliance includes 157 Waterkeepers in the U.S., Canada, Australia, India and China. Inletkeeper Bob Shavelson has served as Treasurer of the Waterkeeper Board since 1999, and he represents the 25+ Waterkeeper programs west of the Rockies on the Alliance Board of Directors. In addition to Inletkeeper, Alaska now has another recognized program in the Prince William Soundkeeper (www.pwsoundkeeper.org). If you want to start a Waterkeeper program in your watershed, contact the Waterkeeper Alliance: www.waterkeeper.org
On April 20, 2007, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) formally proposed the Cook Inlet beluga for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act. The listing proposal came in response to a petition filed by Trustees for Alaska on behalf of Inletkeeper and other conservation groups.

Marine mammal specialists say the Cook Inlet beluga is literally teetering on the edge of extinction. From a population once numbering more than 1300 whales, today experts estimate around 300 belugas remain. Just last year, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) put the Cook Inlet beluga whale on its “Red List” for critically endangered animals. One massive stranding event or oil spill and the whimsical, white whales of Cook Inlet may never recover.

Yet corporate interests and local governments have fought the beluga listing, arguing it will stifle economic development. Inletkeeper rejects these emotional arguments, and believes the beluga’s recovery should be guided by facts and science, not rhetoric. For example, according to a paper published by the Project on Environmental Politics and Policy at MIT, the Endangered Species Act has not had a negative economic impact on states, despite the claims of its detractors. Nonetheless, the Mat Su and Kenai Peninsula Boroughs, the Municipality of Anchorage, and the Knik Arm Bridge and Transit Authority have spent taxpayer dollars to hire lawyers to fight the beluga listing, and to persuade politicians to intervene in the proceedings. Listing opponents have resorted to scare tactics, saying a beluga listing will hamper commercial and recreational fishing in Cook Inlet, but Inletkeeper knows fishing and belugas have co-existed successfully for generations. NMFS will take public comments on the proposed rule to list the Cook Inlet beluga under the ESA until June 19. Please take a moment to visit our web site and submit comments: www.inletkeeper.org/watershedwatch/beluga.htm. Or see NMFS web site at: www.fakr.noaa.gov/protectedresources/whales/beluga.htm.

Inletkeeper Continues Work on Marine Debris & Clean Boating

Marine debris remains a pressing concern for people and sea life alike. Plastics pollution presents unique concerns: it physically strangles and chokes marine life, but it also acts like a magnet for persistent toxics in the water column, creating highly concentrated “poison pills” for sea life that ingests it. This past February, Inletkeeper joined the Center for Alaska Coastal Studies, NOAA and other partners to host the Alaska Coastal Stewardship Workshop, to empower communities across the state to address the growing concerns around marine debris. While beach clean-ups are an important tool to educate communities and remove marine debris, Inletkeeper knows the best way to address the problem is through pollution prevention – by stopping the discharge of unwanted plastics in our marine environment. As part of this effort, Inletkeeper created a new marine debris educational poster (see inset), and revamped its annual tide book to include more information on marine debris, beluga whales and invasive species. Now, Inletkeeper is teaming up with local partners to address pollution from harbors and marinas. To obtain copies of the poster or a tide book, contact keeper@inletkeeper.org.
In March, Cook Inletkeeper released an important new report, entitled *Mapping Impervious Cover to Correlate Land Use Activities with Salmon Health & Habitat on the Lower Kenai Peninsula*, which documents how much impervious cover exists in lower Kenai Peninsula’s salmon-rich watersheds. The amount of impervious cover in a watershed provides a good estimate of potential development pressures on local waterbodies and fish habitats: the higher the amount of impervious cover, the greater the impact on water quality and quality to local receiving waters. The watersheds studied on the Lower Peninsula have less than 2.6% impervious cover based on high quality satellite imagery from 2002-2003. This percentage of impervious cover is less than the level associated with water quality and habitat degradation. Importantly, Inletkeeper’s analysis provides evidence that increasing air temperatures, rather than land use activities, are having a greater influence on water temperatures because impervious cover percentages are still quite low. This type of analysis needs to be done again in 5-10 years to keep track of development pressure in this fast growing region. Inletkeeper worked closely with the Kenai Watershed Forum on this important endeavor. Check out the report at: www.inletkeeper.org/salmon/impervious.htm

Citizens Environmental Monitoring Program
*Rolling Up Our Sleeves to Protect OUR Water Resources*

For the past year, 36 volunteers in Cook Inletkeeper’s Citizens’ Environmental Monitoring Program have been testing streams on the Lower Kenai Peninsula. Last March, Cook Inletkeeper released the results that flowed from 475 volunteer hours and almost 200 observations in 2006.

The 2007 CEMP Annual Report presents the citizen-collected data by watershed, summarizing the findings of the volunteers and emphasizing high-priority parameters such as fecal coliform, turbidity and temperature. Data are compared to state standards, and exceedances are presented and discussed. The 2007 Annual Report includes data for nine watersheds, and over twenty three sites. Continuous temperature monitoring and macro invertebrate surveys on six streams are also included.

Findings include increases in E. coli bacteria at Woodard Creek in downtown Homer and Miller Creek on East End Road near Kachemak Drive. Potential sources of fecal coliform in streams include septic tanks and outhouses, sewer overflows and concentrations of animals. High turbidity was also documented on Woodard Creek and Miller Creek. Turbidity is the measure of water clarity in a stream and can be increased by a lack of vegetation, culverting, and construction runoff.

Cook Inletkeeper has the oldest and most established citizen-based monitoring program in Alaska, and we coordinate citizen monitoring efforts with groups throughout the watershed under the auspices of the Citizens Environmental Monitoring Program for Cook Inlet. For more information, contact Ingrid Harrald at 907.235.4068 x37 or Ingrid@inletkeeper.org. To see Inletkeeper’s latest CEMP report, go to: www.inletkeeper.org.

Clean Water Week in DC – Taking Our Message to the Hill

Cook Inletkeeper joined clean water advocates from around the country to bring our message of clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and renewable energy to our Alaska delegation in Washington DC. Inletkeeper's Sue Mauger and Dennis Gann attended The Clean Water Network's biennial conference: Clean Water Week, from February 25-27th. The event was a whirlwind of activity, culminating with a very successful visit to Capitol Hill. Sue and Dennis spoke with Lisa Murkowski as well as staff from Senator Stevens’ and Representative Young’s office. The conversations focused on warming salmon streams due to climate change, the need for investment in renewable energy instead of coal, and the Clean Water Network’s number one legislative priority, the Clean Water Authority Restoration Act. This bill would reaffirm the historical jurisdiction of the 1972 Clean Water Act and ensure all "waters of the United States" that have been covered by federal safeguards against pollution for more than 34 years retain Clean Water Act protection.
Inletkeeper Laboratory Provides Unique Platform for Monitoring Community

The Cook Inlet Community Based Water Quality Laboratory continues to serve as a valuable resource for the entire watershed. By providing analytical services, quality assurance, equipment, training, and facilities to our volunteer monitors and partners alike, the Inletkeeper lab supports many different water quality monitoring projects. Currently, freshwater and marine samples collected by Inletkeeper's CEMP volunteers are analyzed for turbidity and nutrient concentrations. The lab also conducts sample analysis for Inletkeeper's salmon stream and road construction monitoring projects. By providing support services, the Inletkeeper lab is able to partner with organizations throughout the watershed. Samples collected monthly in Kachemak Bay by the National Estuarine Research Reserve are analyzed for chlorophyll and nutrient concentrations. The lab also analyzes samples for the Kenai Watershed Forum and the University of Alaska. For all analysis conducted, quality assurance is provided through participation in USGS inter-laboratory comparison studies. Not only does the lab provide analytical services, it is also used by volunteers, staff, and partners as a work space and training facility. The lab is utilized by CEMP for the training and recertification of volunteer water quality monitors. Freshwater macro-invertebrate identification is also conducted in the lab for CEMP and the Salmon Stream monitoring programs. By training volunteers and providing services, facilities, and quality assurance, Inletkeeper's lab is helping the community to monitor water quality in the Cook Inlet watershed. For more information on laboratory services, contact Edan at 907.235.4068 x 23 or edan@inletkeeper.org.

Inletkeeper Volunteer Spotlight

Scott Miller joined Cook Inletkeeper's CEMP program in the spring of 2003. Since that time he has monitored at both Bridge Creek and Rice Creek. He has dedicated well over 100 hours to monitoring and has collected data for over 50 site visits in the last four years. Scott has one of the smaller streams in our monitoring program, but never seems discouraged by its frozen state during the winter season. He can always be counted on to stop by the lab, data sheet in hand, and a smile on his face. When Scott is not volunteering his time with Cook Inletkeeper, he is busy creating handmade necklaces and carvings out of local wood and shells. His creative energy and his compassion for the environment make him a wonderful addition to the Inletkeeper family. We are lucky to have such dedicated and inspirational people on our team!

Thanks Scott!

World Water Day

A Time to Recognize the Most Vital Resource

The 15th Annual World Water Day unfolded on March 22, 2007, with a focus on the world’s dramatic water scarcity, and the need for sustainable and efficient water resources management. Most of the Earth’s water (99%) is contained in its oceans, icecaps and glaciers; only 1% is available for human consumption. This freshwater is a vital resource, yet today, more than 2 billion people worldwide lack safe water supplies. (In America, we use more water every year, averaging 80-100 gallons per person per day.) Continued population growth will increasingly strain our water environment and its critical ecosystems. For more information on water conservation and tips on how you can conserve water, go to: www.inletkeeper.org.
Inletkeeper’s Website Gets a Facelift!

Inletkeeper has always received positive comments on our website, but since we started it back in the last century, we realized it was time to update. We’ve kept the grassroots feel to it but after analyzing the information you access most frequently, we streamlined it to make that information more readily available to both new and veteran Inletkeepers alike. We balanced all the bells and whistles now available for high speed internet access with keeping download times reasonable for those of you who find that slower paced surfing still works fine. Drop down menus make navigating the site easier as well. We’ve worked most of the wrinkles out of the transition and hope you’ll take a look. As always, check our homepage for the latest updates on what’s going on at Inletkeeper, in the environmental community, and with Alaska’s looming climate change issues. We always welcome your comments! For specific comments or suggestions, contact Will at 235.4068 x28 or will@inletkeeper.org. And of course, see: www.inletkeeper.org

Anne Wieland

Earth Day 2007 – Helping our Next Generation Discover Water

Cook Inletkeeper hosted one of the most popular tables at this year’s Earth Day Discovery Lab at the Islands and Ocean Visitor Center in Homer. Children and adults of all ages learned about water quality by participating in two different activities. Participants were able to gain a better understanding of pH by measuring the acidic and basic qualities of various household products. Several of the younger participants spent their time coloring images of freshwater macro invertebrates that were then made into “bug mobiles.” The kids learned about biological monitoring and how quantifying and identifying these indicator species can help determine water quality. Most importantly we all learned that Earth Day is everyday and we must work together to protect and preserve our planet.

Computer Recycling Keeps Toxics Out of Our Landfills

As a society, we take computers, cell phones and other electronics for granted, always excited to be getting the newest technology. We tend not to think about our outdated electronics ending up in landfill. E-Waste is the fastest growing part of the waste stream. Just like batteries, electronics seem safe to use, but if we throw them out, they can leak toxic chemicals like lead, mercury, and cadmium into our water and air. One computer monitor can contain 4-8 pounds of lead, which if released can hurt an entire community. On Saturday, April 28, Homer hosted the second annual computer and electronics recycling day giving people the opportunity to dispose of obsolete electronic equipment properly. All recycled items were shipped to Green Star in Anchorage, which is working with Anchorage’s Total Reclaim, Inc. to recycle and reuse electronic components in a socially and environmentally responsible way in the U.S. Over 10,000 pounds of electronics were recycled that would have otherwise been brought to the local landfill. Thanks to Nina Faust for organizing this event as well as the dozens of sponsors and volunteers that donated time and money. Inletkeeper is proud to be a sponsor and participant in this important annual event. Remember: Inletkeeper collects old cell phones all year round – contact us for more info: 907.235.4068 x21.

Cook Inletkeeper’s Truck & Upcoming Cash Raffle

Walk the Talk? We Need New Wheels!

In 1998, Inletkeeper purchased a 1990 Ford F-250 pick-up truck to support its monitoring and field work, and to tow the organization’s skiff. While the truck is getting on in years, it’s still functional. However, in light of rising fuel costs, the vehicle has become increasingly expensive to run. Additionally, Inletkeeper’s work on climate change and related issues presents a need for the organization to “walk the talk” by purchasing a vehicle that consumes less fuel and emits fewer greenhouse gases. This year Cook Inletkeeper is planning a cash raffle to raise funds for the new vehicle, preferably a hybrid that combines fuel efficiency with the rugged demands of field work. Funds from the raffle will be combined with grant writing efforts and negotiated discounts from the dealer/manufacturer to complete the fund raising package. Please stay tuned and help Inletkeeper “walk the talk!”
THANK YOU MEMBERS FOR YOUR WONDERFUL SUPPORT DURING 2006!


THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS BUSINESS CONTRIBUTIONS IN 2006!


Thanks to Cook Inletkeeper’s Major Funders

Alaska Center for the Environment • Alaska Community Share Foundation • Ben and Jerry’s Foundation • BoatUS Foundation • Braided Foundation • Bullit Foundation • Center for Alaska Coastal Studies • Clean Water Network • Combined Federal Campaign • Defenders of Wildlife • Endurance Fund • Environmental Support Center • Fund for Wild Nature • Fosley/Frishcock Wildlife & Conservation Fund • Homer Foundation and City of Homer • Lighty Foundation • Mountaineers Foundation • Giles W. and Elise G. Mead Foundation • New-Land Foundation • NOAA Marine Fisheries Service • Norcross Wildlife Foundation • Oak Foundation • Patagonia • Skaggs Foundation • True North Foundation • Unitarian Universalist Funding Program • US Environmental Protection Agency • US Fish and Wildlife Service • Wolfensohn Family Foundation
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Bike-to-Work Week, May 14th-19th, 2007 (Statewide): The biggest week for biking in the nation is just around the corner. Cook Inletkeeper encourages all members to help reduce our carbon footprint by joining us as we cruise, sprint, skip and roll to work. The communities of Anchorage and Homer are organizing special events for national Bike to Work Week (contact ingrid@inletkeeper.org) and Anchorage (contact beth@greenstarinc.org).

REAP Presentation, May 18, 8:30 PM (Homer): Chris Rose of the Renewable Energy Alaska Project (REAP) will present on the renewable energy potentials for Cook Inlet and beyond at the Islands and Ocean Visitors Center in Homer. Sponsored by Inletkeeper and the Alaska Conservation Foundation. Admission is free.

Celebration of Giving, May 20, 5:00 PM (Homer): To be held at Land’s End Resort offering a waterfront condominium on the Homer Spit in an auction to benefit local non-profits. The auction, sponsored by Generous Adventures Travel Auctions, is also being conducted online: www.generousadventures.com/detail.lasso?tripid=020711
Live music, appetizers, a full-course dinner, dessert and two drinks are included in the event ticket price of $55. For more information contact michael@inletkeeper.org.

Alaska Oceans Festival, June 2, 2007, Noon-10PM (Anchorage): At the West Delaney Park Strip in Anchorage. The primary focus of the annual festival is to educate the public and raise awareness about the importance of healthy oceans and to celebrate the bounty of Alaska’s many marine resources. Come see us at the Cook Inletkeeper booth and help us save the Cook Inlet beluga whale! For more information see: http://www.akcenter.org/programs/oceans/ocean_festival.html

Kachemak Bay Sea Fest May 25-June 3, 2007 (Homer): This 10-day festival combines the Kayak Fest, Wooden Boat Show and the Seafair Safety Rodeo featuring events, seminars, demonstrations, workshops and fun for all ages & skill levels. Call 235-7740 or see http://www.kachemakkayakfestival.com for more information.

National River Cleanup Week, June 2-10, 2007 (National): Cook Inletkeeper will be organizing cleanups on local streams. If you would like to participate in a hands-on way to help protect the rivers you love, or pitch in at one of their cleanups near you. Call Ingrid at 907-235-4068 x 29 or email ingrid@inletkeeper.org for details.

Kenai River Festival, June 9 & 10, 2007 (Soldotna): At Soldotna Creek Park in downtown Soldotna, AK. Visit http://www.kenaiwatershed.org/kenairiverfest.html for more information about this free event that celebrates the magnificent Kenai River.

Cook Inletkeeper’s 10th Annual Splash Bash, Volunteer Appreciation Party. See www.inletkeeper.org for time and date.