

# INLETKEEPER®

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

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## CONTENTS

Cook Inlet Gets High-Powered Tug	1
Inletkeeper Gets Greener with Hybrid Vehicle	1
Letter from Your Inletkeeper	2
Outside Investors Still Pressing Massive Chitna Coal Project	3
Inletkeeper Leading Effort to Keep Alaska Coal in the Ground	4
Agrium Cites High Costs, Drops Coal Gasification Project	4
Inletkeeper Investigates Sterling Car Crushing Operation	5
NMFS Caves to Politics, Delays Beluga Listing Decision	5
The Emperor Has No Clothes: Port of Anchorage Expansion	6
Salmon Protection Falls on Deaf Ears in Juneau	7
Stream Temperature Monitoring Network for Cook Inlet	7
Citizens Environmental Monitoring Program (CEMP)	8
Well Water Testing	8
Cook Inletkeeper to Monitor Homer Beaches	8
Local Action to Address Global Climate Change	9
2008 Raffle	9
Electronics Recycling Day	9
Volunteer Spotlight	10
Mark Your Calendars	10



## Cook Inlet Finally Gets High-Powered Tug

*Inletkeeper Advocacy Helps Secure Needed Asset But Coast Guard Continues to Roll-Back Safeguards*

The ice, tides, currents and winds in Cook Inlet pose some of the gravest navigational hazards in the world. After many years of strident Inletkeeper advocacy - and in the wake of a grounded oil tanker in 2006 - Tesoro Alaska formally christened the new high-powered tug *Vigilant* for use in Cook Inlet on April 21, 2008, during a ceremony in Homer. On a related note, however, the U.S. Coast Guard recently announced a proposal to halt consideration of additional tug safeguards

for oil tankers plying Cook Inlet's notoriously rough and icy waters.

"Inletkeeper applauds Tesoro's investment in navigational safety in Cook Inlet," said Inletkeeper Bob Shavelson. "But let's not forget - there have been calls for years to take this step, and it took a tanker grounding in the heart of our salmon habitat to prompt action."

Inletkeeper has played an active role pressing for high-powered tugs and other safe-

*(Continued on page 3)*



Photo: CIRCAC

The tug *Vigilant*'s twin z-drive engines can rotate 360 degrees to provide optimal escort and assist capabilities, and are rated up to a maximum of 6,772 horsepower.

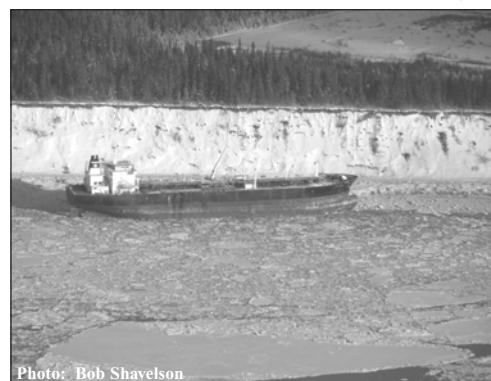


Photo: Bob Shavelson

2006 grounding of the oil tanker *Seabulk Pride* was a wake-up call, highlighting the need to get additional safeguards in place.

## Inletkeeper Gets Greener with Hybrid Vehicle!!

*Leading by Example to Push Alternative Technologies*



Sue Mauger in Inletkeeper's Ford Escape Hybrid

engaged in program initiatives for clean water and healthy salmon, with efforts to limit the polluting effects of fossil fuels and promote the use of clean, renewable energy alternatives. Now,

*(Continued on page 2)*

## ENERGY

## Letter From YOUR Cook Inletkeeper

Dear Friends of Cook Inlet -

In 1995, a group of scientists, artists, Natives and fishermen formed Cook Inletkeeper, largely in response to their concerns about oil and gas impacts in Cook Inlet. Since then, Inletkeeper has been a strenuous advocate for safer navigation and water quality protection. And one lesson we have learned time and again is obvious but important to repeat: industry will act in its own best interest, and the industry interest is frequently not the public interest. For example, Cook Inlet has long been considered one of the riskiest waterbodies to navigate in the world. A 1993 report by maritime expert Captain Dickson confirmed that no other major port in the western hemisphere allows laden tankers to routinely transit radical ice and tides without the aid of high powered tugs. In 1987, the tanker *Glacier Bay* struck a rock, spilled over 200,000 gallons of oil and closed local fisheries. There have been many (many) near misses. Nonetheless, industry refused to act. Why? Because it was more profitable to assume the risks of a huge spill than to invest in the cost to deploy a tug. Until February 3, 2006. That's when heavy ice and tides ripped the tanker *Seabulk Pride* from the docks in Nikiski, and pushed her aground in the heart of our salmon and beluga habitat with 5 million gallons of oil product aboard. Industry got the message. And we applaud Tesoro for investing now in a state-of-the-art tug - it's a major improvement and we'll all benefit from it. But along similar lines, Inletkeeper is still fight-



ing hand in hand with commercial fishing groups and Native Tribes to force Chevron to stop dumping billions of gallons of toxic waste into our fisheries from their Upper Inlet production facilities. The technology exists to reinject the wastes, oil prices are skyrocketing (making investments in control equipment easier), and the discharges contain billions of gallons of known toxic chemicals. But the industry interest is not the public interest. So we've been forced to go to court, and spend our time and money to fight for our collective right to clean water and healthy fisheries. And this trend will continue until industry and government begin to serve the public interest, and recognize that every citizen in Cook Inlet has a constitutional right to clean water and healthy fish.

Yours for Cook Inlet -

Bob Shavelson  
Executive Director

### CookInletkeeper Gets Greener with Hybrid!! (cont. from page 1)

with the advent of hybrid technology and the price of gas over \$4.00/gallon, it makes more sense than ever for Cook Inletkeeper to walk the talk. For each tank of gasoline, Cook Inletkeeper is now saving over \$112 due to the additional mileage gained from fuel efficiency. THANK YOU from Cook Inletkeeper to everyone who participated in the 2007 Cash Raffle, as well as to the individual donors who contributed to this fundraising effort. Your generosity continues to pay off every day!



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## Cook Inlet Gets High-Powered Tug *(cont. from page 1)*

guards in Cook Inlet. Among other things, it has worked with the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council to draft resolutions calling for strong action, and it played a central role highlighting problems around the 2006 *Seabulk Pride* grounding. But it has been a tough haul. In 1993, CIRCAC commissioned a study from a shipping safety expert who found Cook Inlet to be one of the most unsafe moorages in the western hemisphere. Yet despite repeated attempts to install tugs and additional safeguards, industry routinely fought the proposals and the Coast Guard regularly acquiesced.

The 1989 *Exxon Valdez* oil spill (EVOS) raised serious questions about navigational safety in Alaska. But few recall that two years prior to the EVOS – in 1987 – the tanker *Glacier Bay* hit a rock and spilled over 200,000 gallons of crude in Cook Inlet, closing fisheries and oiling local beaches. In response to these concerns, Congress passed the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, which required the Coast Guard to identify areas needing tug vessel escorts for oil tankers. In 1993, the Coast Guard formally proposed a rulemaking to address

this important issue, and subsequently received thousands of public comments urging them to act. Nonetheless, on April 15, 2008 – more than 15 YEARS after the rulemaking began – the Coast Guard announced it's intent to withdraw the effort.

The addition of a high powered tug is a huge asset for navigational safety in Cook Inlet. But the fact remains that in certain conditions – such as during heavy ice and tides – docking and loading operations can be inherently unsafe at the industry docks in Nikiski. For example, just this past winter, tanker vessels experienced two forced departures due to parting lines. That's why it's critical for the Coast Guard to finalize a rule mandating tug escorts in Cook Inlet when conditions are especially dangerous.

The Coast Guard comment period ends on July 14, 2008. For more information contact Inletkeeper at 907.235.4068 x22 or [keeper@inletkeeper.org](mailto:keeper@inletkeeper.org). To comment on the USCG proposal, go to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) and type in the docket number: USCG-2006-23556.

## Outside Investors Still Pressing Massive Chuitna Coal Project *Alaskans Would Get More Habitat Destruction, Mercury & Climate Change*

**S**nowbird Ski Resort owner Richard Bass and Texas Billionaire Herbert Hunt continue to move forward with plans for the proposed Chuitna coal strip mine on the West side of Cook Inlet, despite overwhelming local opposition and ample science showing they cannot protect wild salmon streams. While the State of Alaska continues to shepherd this project forward, efforts to slow and extend the timeline have been successful; the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement is now expected to be released in the first quarter of 2009.

The cost to Alaskans couldn't be higher. Likely markets for the low-grade sub-bituminous coal would be Asian coal-fired power plants. Aside from devastating thousands of acres of prime fish, moose, and bear habitat just to feed the growing energy demands of booming Asian economies, this project would result in millions of tons of CO2 emissions at a time when Alaskans are already feeling the dispro-

portional effects of global climate change.

On March 17, 2008, local citizens and property owners – comprising the Chuitna Citizens NO-COALition – were forced to file an appeal in Alaska Superior Court after Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Commissioner Tom Irwin refused to consider the merits of the 'Unsuitable Lands Petition' originally filed with DNR by Trustees for Alaska on behalf of Inletkeeper, local citizens and others in 2007.

As a result, once again, Alaskans have been forced to go to court to protect their rights to safe water, healthy fish and clean air. But now – under new rules rammed through by the Murkowski Administration – citizen groups that sue in the public interest can be liable for huge court costs and attorney fees if they do not prevail. Alaska is the only state in the nation with this "loser pays" rule.



Photo Credit: Dennis Gann

Local fisherman near the proposed Chuitna strip mine know that coal will kill their way of life.

## Inletkeeper Leading Effort to Keep Alaska Coal in the Ground

### *Groups, Tribes Come Together to say "No Coal, Yes Renewable Energy"*

Elders in the Native Village of Chickaloon north of Anchorage describe coal as the liver of the earth, because it filters and cleanses our aquifers – much the same way charcoal filters purify water. As a result, there are strong arguments for leaving coal in the ground. In November 2007, Inletkeeper played a key role bringing 25 Alaskan groups and Tribes together under the auspices of the Alaska Coal Working Group to do just that.

Since November, the Alaska Coal Working Group has been busy – publishing a primer called the *"ABC's of Coal in Alaska,"* hosting workshops, making presentations, conducting research and supporting local groups fighting coal projects in their backyards. And the task in front of this group is formidable. Alaska possesses over half the nation's coal reserves, and as energy prices soar, so too have the demands for Alaska coal, especially in fast-growing Asian nations. Two large coal mines – one at Chitna in Cook Inlet, the other in the Western Arctic near Point Hope and Point Lay – would set Alaska on the path as a coal export province, and marshal in an era of devastated fish habitat, aggravated climate change

and increased mercury in our fish and water.

Inletkeeper's newest staff member – Dennis Gann – will be coordinating the Alaska Coal Working Group. Feel free to contact him in our Anchorage office if you want to get involved at [dennis@inletkeeper.org](mailto:dennis@inletkeeper.org) or 907.929.9371



Groups & Tribes from across the state came together in November 2007 to unite in their opposition to coal production and use in Alaska

## Agrium Cites High Costs, Drops Coal Gasification Project

### *Jobs, Tax Base Take Hard Hit From Non-renewable Energy Supplies*

On March 13, 2008, the Agrium Corporation announced it would not proceed with a coal gasification project at the Nikiski nitrogen fertilizer plant. After a 2-1/2 year feasibility study to replace diminishing natural gas supplies with coal from the Usibelli mine near Denali, company officials deemed the coal gasification plan as an 'uneconomical option' to extend the life of the plant. State and federal government contributed \$7 million toward engineering and planning costs, and the state legislature offered \$2 billion in tax-exempt railroad bonds to aid financing. But even with significant government financial assistance, the project still did not pencil out. While the closure is devastating to the Kenai area and the Borough economy, it highlights the instability of local economies based on non-renewable resources, and affords us an opportunity to redirect our future energy and economic needs on more sustainable models. In response to the announcement,

Inletkeeper released the following announcement:

"The fertilizer facility has been an economic mainstay on the Kenai Peninsula for many years, and Agrium's decision today to forego the coal-gasification option to re-start the plant will have significant ramifications for the local community. With that said, everyone knew this closure would one day materialize, because the facility relied on a non-renewable feedstock. Our thoughts are with the workers and families who have relied on the fertilizer plant for their jobs and their livelihoods, and we encourage federal, state and local governments to work with forward-looking corporations and investors to promote more sustainable economic opportunities on the Kenai Peninsula. Cook Inlet possesses world-class renewable energy resources, including massive tides, strong winds and prolific geothermal sources, and Alaska is well-positioned to lead global markets in creating

the jobs and technologies needed to ensure a strong Cook Inlet economy for years to come. Importantly, Agrium's decision today highlights the true costs of coal development and use, and from climate change and habitat destruction, to mercury contamination and human health impacts, coal is the most expensive fuel on earth. In light of these concerns, investors, utilities and consumers are increasingly aware that coal is neither cheap nor clean."



The Agrium Fertilizer Plant recently decided not to pursue a coal gasification process due to high costs.



## WATERSHED WATCH

### Inletkeeper Investigates Sterling Car Crushing Operation *ADEC Asked to Clarify Site Assessment*



Inletkeeper is working with local residents to stop a car crushing operation in Sterling from contaminating local drinking water supplies.

With the large number of crushed vehicles at this Sterling facility, substantial volumes of oil and other hazardous substances have been discharged into the shallow aquifer that supports domestic water supplies for local families in the area. As a result, Inletkeeper is respectfully requesting ADEC to immediately clarify its site assessment, cleanup and disposal positions for this facility pursuant to state law, and institute a rigorous oversight process that will ensure local property owners continue to have access to safe drinking water.

### NMFS Caves to Politics, Delays Beluga Listing Decision *Mega-Projects Proceed in Critical Whale Habitat*

On April 21, the National Marine Fisheries Service bowed to industry and local government pressure, and postponed a listing decision under the federal Endangered Species Act for the Cook Inlet beluga whale. NMFS will now conduct summer surveys to provide an updated population estimate, and must render a listing decision by October 8, 2008. In the meantime, various large-scale projects are moving ahead in some of the beluga's most sensitive habitat.

The listing proposal came in response to a petition filed by Trustees for Alaska on behalf of Inletkeeper and other conservation groups. Cook Inletkeeper has never before utilized the Endangered Species Act, preferring instead to focus on water quality and habitat protection under other laws. But the plight of the beluga is so dire, Inletkeeper had no choice, and in response, Inletkeeper worked with its partners to prompt over 800,000 comments to the NMFS calling for an immediate beluga whale listing under federal law. Inletkeeper also spear-headed attendance at public meetings in Anchorage, Kenai, Homer and Washington, DC, where the overwhelming majority of commenters supported additional protections for the Cook Inlet beluga.

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.

In the meantime, several massive projects are proceeding apace in habitats critical to beluga feeding, birthing and mating, including:

- *Port of Anchorage Expansion:* This massive boondoggle will fill 135 acres of prime beluga whale habitat for an expansion that's not needed. The Army Corps of Engineers issued the key permit over the strong objections of the all the federal resource agencies (i.e. EPA, NMFS & USFWS) (see related story on page 6.)
- *Knik Arm Bridge:* One of Alaska's infamous "bridges to nowhere," this project would bisect perhaps the most important beluga habitat in all of Cook Inlet. See Alaska Transportation Priorities Project for more info: <http://www.aktransportation.org>
- *Port MacKenzie Expansion:* Directly across from the Port of Anchorage, the Mat Su Borough is plowing millions of dollars into a plan to expand the deep water docking facilities at Port MacKenzie. Based on available information, NMFS has said the project will have substantial and unacceptable impacts. For a look at the proposed dock and expansion, see <http://www.matsugov.us/Port/documents/011808PortPresentationShort.pdf>
- *Mat Su Ferry:* In another boondoggle funded by Senator Stevens, the Mat Su Borough is proposing to run an ice-breaking catamaran ferry between Port MacKenzie and Anchorage. The military rejected the experimental design, and costs have skyrocketed to over \$90 million. The high speed ferry would transit habitats with high beluga concentrations, and increased ship strikes are a virtual certainty.



Photo: Kalen Deatherage

Cook Inlet belugas capture the imagination of thousands of people each year along Turnagain Arm outside Anchorage

For more information on projects NMFS believes pose a risk to the beluga whale, see:

<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/protectedresources/whales/beluga/-development.htm>. For more detailed background on the Cook Inlet beluga, see: [www.inletkeeper.org/watershedwatch/beluga.htm](http://www.inletkeeper.org/watershedwatch/beluga.htm). Or see NMFS web site at: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/protectedresources/whales/-beluga.htm>.

## The Emperor Has No Clothes: Port of Anchorage Expansion

*Mayor, Assembly look the other way as massive project moves forward*

On April 15, the Anchorage Assembly voted unanimously to approve \$75 million in debt to move ahead with the proposed Port of Anchorage expansion, the costs of which have ballooned from \$146 million to over \$700 million in a few short years. Prior to the meeting, Cook Inletkeeper sent detailed information on the project to the Assembly – which included four newly elected officials who are unfamiliar with the project's history – and during the meeting, Inletkeeper Bob Shavelson urged the Assembly to consider the need for the expansion has never been established. Remarkably, several Assembly members were completely in the dark about project specifics. Some believed an in-depth Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) had been prepared for the project (wrong). Others believed the project's "phases" mean it can be halted at any time (wrong). Still others believed that Port revenues could support the debt issued (wrong). To make matters worse, Port Director Bill Sheffield did nothing to correct these false assumptions. All this for the largest capital project in Anchorage history.

To highlight these and other shortcomings in the decision to move forward on this project, Trustees for Alaska, on behalf of Inletkeeper and other groups, filed a request for reconsideration under the federal Data Quality Act with the Army Corps of Engineers. The request – dated March 28, 2008 and numbering more than 300 pages – asked the Corps to stay the permit it issued, under the federal Clean Water Act that allows the Port of Anchorage to fill 135 acres of important salmon and beluga whale habitat near Ship Creek as part of a major expansion project at the port.

The Port of Anchorage plays an important role in statewide commerce, and Inletkeeper supports responsible Port development. However, this project has been heavily politicized and comments on the project from Inletkeeper and expert federal agencies have been wholly ignored. At the most basic level, the Port has failed to demonstrate the need for this massive project, which proponents claim will now cost \$700 million but which will likely run to over \$1 billion once rising construction costs are factored in. In fact, tonnage crossing the Anchorage dock has actually decreased since a peak in 2005. Furthermore, directly across Knik Arm, the Mat Su Borough is engaged in a major expansion at Port MacKenzie, and the two ports will invariably compete with each other for limited shipping opportunities.

Agency experts with the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service all raised strenuous objections to the proposed Port design, arguing that a partially pile-supported structure – instead of a sheet pile fill design – would allow greater water movement and less habitat impact. But the Army Corps and MARAD chose to ignore the federal agencies, and the agencies lacked the political will to force the issue.

Alaska has been down this road before. In 2003, economist Ginny Fay reviewed Alaska's failed government-subsidized mega-projects, including the Delta Barley Project, the Susitna Hydro Project, the Healy "Clean Coal" Plant, and the Alaska Seafood International Plant.

In assessing why they failed, Fay found marked similarities between the various projects:

- The disregard for economic feasibility and the belief that an infrastructure project is "economic development;"
- A belief that if subsidized enough, a project will become viable;
- Rather than relying on markets to determine economic feasibility, these projects reflected the "vision" of a small number of "visionaries;"
- The perception that a current windfall would last forever (such as high oil prices or congressional earmarks); and
- Significant influence by parties with vested interests in a project in its planning and development, thus the lack of an arm's length economic viability test.

Unfortunately, all these trademarks for failure are evident in the proposed Port of Anchorage expansion. The only difference is this project alone could cost as much as all the others combined. After spending more than \$125 million on the defunct Alaska Seafood facility in Anchorage, former AIDEA Board Chairman Mike Barry said in 2005, "We can look backwards and see that [public] agencies are at some peril when they go against the laws of economics."

The proposed Port of Anchorage expansion is bucking the laws of economics. As Governor, Mr. Sheffield signed-off on a tariff agreement for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline that cost Alaskans billions of dollars, leading the Anchorage Daily News to label it perhaps the "most expensive governmental mistake in Alaska's history." Can we afford a similar mistake with the Port of Anchorage?

So, once again, it falls to citizens to protect our tax dollars and public water and habitat resources from short-sighted development, and Inletkeeper is looking closely now at the final Corps permit and MARAD's decisionmaking process. For more information on the Port of Anchorage Expansion Project, see [www.muni.org/port/](http://www.muni.org/port/) and <http://portofanchorage.org/>. To see the Trustees for Alaska Data Quality Act letter, see <http://trustees.org> or contact [keeper@inletkeeper.org](mailto:keeper@inletkeeper.org)



Photo: Port of Anchorage

The Port of Anchorage will directly fill 135 acres of beluga and salmon habitat – yet there's been no Environmental Impact Statement.

## Salmon Protection Falls on Deaf Ears in Juneau

### Rep. Craig Johnson Key Road-Block to Mixing Zone Bill

Shortly after entering the Governor's mansion, Frank Murkowski and his Chief of Staff Jim Clark set out to dismantle Alaska's coastal habitat protections. Under the phony rubric of "permit streamlining," Murkowski and Clark rammed through numerous changes to state law that remain highly problematic (for an excellent overview, see former state biologist Lance Trasky's powerful testimony at <http://www.renewableresourcescoalition.org/TraskyForWeb.pdf/>). One of the most short-sighted proposals, however, included a move to amend Alaska's Water Quality Standards under the Clean Water Act to allow "mixing zones" in salmon and resident fish spawning areas. Mixing zones embrace the long-discounted notion that dilution is the solution to pollution, and with little or no state oversight, they result in large scale dumping in Alaska's prized spawning areas. The Murkowski Administration rammed through a rule in 2006 - over the

objections of thousands of Alaskans - allowing mixing zones in spawning habitats. In response, Rep. Paul Seaton and Senator Gary Stevens introduced legislation to undo the rule, and make it illegal to dump toxic pollutants in salmon spawning areas. In the 2008 legislative session, HB 74 passed out of only one committee - the House Fisheries Committee chaired by Seaton - and got bottled up in the House Resources Committee -chaired by Rep. Craig Johnson (R-Anchorage). Johnson ignored letters, emails and phone calls from countless Alaskans. But when our legislators refuse to hear the will of the people, the ballot initiative process is available to make them listen. This summer, stay tuned for signature gathering for a ballot initiative to make it illegal once again to dump toxic pollution into our sensitive fish spawning areas. For more information or to help with this effort, contact Bob at [bob@inletkeeper.org](mailto:bob@inletkeeper.org) or 907.235.4068 x22.

## RESEARCH AND MONITORING

### Stream Temperature Monitoring Network for Cook Inlet

Alaska's salmon are experiencing the effects of global climate change across the full range of their habitat - from streams to sea and back. Water temperature plays a critical role in all phases of the salmonid lifecycle, especially in freshwater systems where fish hatch from eggs and later return to spawn. Warm stream temperatures are frequently associated with increased stress in fish, making them increasingly vulnerable to pollution, predation and disease.

As early as 2002, Cook Inletkeeper measured water temperatures consistently above Alaska's water quality standards set to protect egg and fry incubation on lower Kenai

Peninsula streams. Temperatures even soared above 21°C in the summers of 2004 and 2005 in the Anchor River. In response, Cook Inletkeeper has spearheaded an effort to better understand stream temperature trends and the connections to climate patterns, and to empower communities with monitoring tools to protect salmon habitat and watershed health.

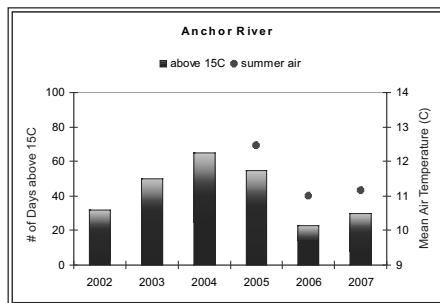
This winter, Cook Inletkeeper developed a standardized field protocol: *Water Temperature Data Logger Protocol for Cook Inlet Salmon Streams*. This protocol is intended to promote water temperature data collection efforts, reduce the variability of water temperature data quality due to sampling techniques and contribute to a standardized process for collection of water temperature data using data loggers in Cook Inlet salmon streams.

This summer, Cook Inletkeeper will begin implementing a Stream Temperature Monitoring Network to collect consistent, comparable temperature data in more than 40 salmon streams across Cook Inlet. We will work with data-collecting partners and community-level groups throughout Cook Inlet to implement the monitoring design which includes sites throughout the Mat-Su Basin, Kenai Peninsula, Anchorage Bowl and the west side of Cook Inlet. Inletkeeper will work with its partners to generate regional water temperature maps which will be a valuable tool to see temperature patterns inherent in multiple datasets that can be very difficult to see when the data are not spatially organized.



Cecil Rich, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and Jeff Davis, Aquatic Restoration and Research Institute, consult Cook Inlet watershed maps during a design meeting for the Stream Temperature Monitoring Network.

These data will allow fisheries managers and land-use planners to identify which streams are most vulnerable to the effects of rising air temperatures due to climate change, and provide the knowledge and data needed to prioritize research, protection and restoration actions. As a result, this project will play a vital role helping state resource managers protect salmon habitat and enhance adaptive management schemes to ensure Alaska wild salmon endure as thermal change continues. See [www.inletkeeper.org](http://www.inletkeeper.org) for more information about CookInletkeeper's salmon stream monitoring program or to download the temperature protocol.



The chart illustrates the numbers of days that water temperatures were above 15°C on the Anchor River in the summers of 2002-2007. Mean summer air temperatures are noted for 2005 - 2007. Alaska's upper limit for water temperature in rearing areas and fish migration routes is 15°C.



## Citizens Environmental Monitoring Program (CEMP)

Throughout 2007, 38 CEMP volunteers spent a total of 458 hours collecting 200 field observations at 28 different sites located on the lower Kenai Peninsula. CEMP asks volunteers to participate in 16 monitoring days per year (twice a month May, June, July and August and once a month for the rest of the year). CEMP volunteers need to be a hardy bunch to complete what they are asked to do. Sampling occurs regardless of weather conditions (with some exceptions: chemicals can begin acting strangely once the temperature drops below 10 degrees and if a creek is frozen solid, water testing is not an option). In the summer months, frozen creeks are not an issue, but mosquitoes and biting black flies certainly can be.

Water temperatures continue to be an

issue of concern. Temperature dataloggers were installed in 7 CEMP streams in 2007, providing water temperatures at 15-minute intervals from June through September. CEMP has discontinued collecting data on some parameters. Since the sale of the lab's Technicon AAII Auto Analyzer, nutrient data are no longer routinely collected, but can be added if a situation indicates the need. There were no exceedances found during the two years of nutrient monitoring at CEMP sites. Currently, CEMP is exploring the possibility of adding a site assessment component which would capture erosion occurring at sites and development happening at or nearby monitoring sites. Given the inherent instability of the area's soils and the rapid development occurring in the

Homer area, this is vital information to gather with the intent of protecting our local streams.

To participate in Inletkeeper's CEMP, contact Tori at [tori@inletkeeper.org](mailto:tori@inletkeeper.org) or 907.235.4068 ext 29.



Volunteer Monitor Lynda Elaine sampling a local stream

## Well Water Testing

Safe drinking water is a fundamental right. But all too often, Cook Inlet residents - especially those on well water - don't know if their water is safe to drink. In response, Cook Inletkeeper's Project Well-Safe will work with Analytica, a local lab in Anchorage, to supply low-cost, ADEC-certified, private well testing to residents in the Lower Kenai Peninsula. In the fall of 2008, Cook Inletkeeper will provide a one hour class on health risks and water

sampling procedures as well as a follow-up class to help explain the results. By organizing, collecting, and shipping all samples to be tested at one time, Cook Inletkeeper will provide a means to lower the overhead costs. As a result, Analytica is offering a 20% discounted rate for its "Well Safe I" package. This test package analyzes private well water samples to provide safeguards against major health risks and includes testing for arsenic, coliform bac-

terium, and nitrates. According to Analytica, this project is a unique outreach effort to local residents in need of a frequently requested, but expensive, service. Registration begins now and water sample collection will occur after the Homer Health Fair in November 2008. For more information about this project please contact Tori Lentfer at 907-235-4068 ext. 29 or email [tori@inletkeeper.org](mailto:tori@inletkeeper.org).

## Cook Inletkeeper to Monitor Homer Beaches

Lower Kenai Peninsula beaches are heavily used by residents year-round and by tourists during the summer months. Popular water-based recreational activities include fishing, sea kayaking, scuba diving, kite surfing and tide pooling. Beach-based recreational activities encompass camping, dog walking, and horseback riding. Other activities include educational programs conducted on the beaches by local schools and non-profits and subsistence activities such as gathering seaweeds, clams, and mussels.

Recognizing that Homer beaches are under pressure from increased use, Cook Inletkeeper applied for and received an

Alaska Clean Water Actions Grant to develop a plan for monitoring bacteria levels on public beaches on the lower Kenai Peninsula. Using a template developed by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Cook Inletkeeper designed a monitoring plan, detailing the frequency and location of bacterial monitoring; a Beach Sampling Handbook, outlining the sampling methods to be used; and a detailed Quality Assurance Project Plan.

The monitoring plan calls for collecting water samples from local beaches on a weekly basis and shipping the water samples to an Anchorage lab for analysis. If an exceedance is detected, a more frequent sampling sched-

ule will be triggered and samples will be collected daily until the bacteria levels drop to a safe level. We are working cooperatively with DEC and the City of Homer on this project and hope to establish a procedure for the City to close beaches for specific activities if stated bacteria levels are exceeded. Cook Inletkeeper will begin monitoring activities in July of 2008 and is currently recruiting for volunteers to assist with this new program. Time requirement is only one hour a week during July and August. For more information, contact Tori Lentfer at [tori@inletkeeper.org](mailto:tori@inletkeeper.org) or 907.235.4068 ext. 29.

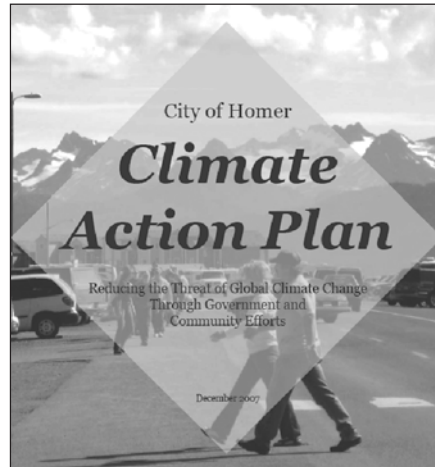


## Local Action to Address Global Climate Change

The City of Homer took an important first step recently to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and to take local action to address global climate change by adopting a Climate Action Plan. The Climate Action Plan is the result of a year of discussions and research by Homer's Global Warming Task Force, which was established in January 2007 by Homer Mayor Jim Hornaday. The 12-person Task Force included Cook Inletkeeper's Stream Ecologist, Sue Mauger and Board Member, John Lemons.

The Climate Action Plan, which was adopted by the City in December, lays out recommendations for the city to lower its greenhouse gas emissions from many sectors, such as energy, transportation, waste management and land use. The plan can be downloaded from the City of Homer's webpage: <http://www.ci.homer.ak.us/>. The City is now in the process of hiring a coordinator to help the city implement

the plan. Kudos to Homer for leading by example and encouraging other Alaska communities and individuals to follow. Action is needed now by all levels of government; we congratulate the City of Homer for stepping up to the challenge.



View the plan at <http://www.ci.homer.ak.us/>

## 2008 Raffle – Get Ready

In 2007 Cook Inletkeeper held a cash raffle to raise funds for a new hybrid vehicle that combines fuel efficiency with the rugged demands of field work. The raffle was very successful and provided much needed matching funds for our recently acquired 2007 Ford Escape Hybrid field vehicle. This year Cook Inletkeeper will conduct another cash raffle to raise funds to purchase equipment and supplies for our salmon stream temperature monitoring network. This network is expanding to include over 40 Cook Inlet salmon streams! The raffle tickets will go on sale in June and will be sold throughout the year until the first week in December, so keep your eyes and ears posted for the opportunity to support Cook Inletkeeper and win some CASH!

## Electronics Recycling Day

As the volume of electronic waste (e-waste) continues to grow, so too does the need to create environmentally safe ways to recycle the wealth of raw materials contained within it, and keep the toxic constituents out of our landfills and waters. Citizens of Homer did their part Saturday, April 26th by hauling in over 10,000 pounds of electronics at the third annual Electronics Recycling Day.

Despite inclement weather, many volunteers – including 85 families and over a dozen businesses and non-profits – gathered computers, printers, CD burners, scanners, televisions, telephones and VCR's in an attempt to minimize toxic contaminants in our landfill. Compact fluorescent lights (CFL) – which provide excellent energy savings

but also contain mercury – were also collected. Items were sorted, weighed and palletized for delivery to Anchorage where Total Reclaim will process the goods even further. Lead, glass, copper wires and circuit boards are separated as well as aluminum, steel and plastics and shipped to Seattle for smelting and minute disassembly. Most people know that lead and mercury can damage the nervous system, circulatory system, and brain development, but just as many people do not know that they personally contribute to the problem when they dispose of their everyday electronics without regard to recycling.

Yes, there is a cost for proper disposal and in Europe manufacturers are required to address the financial burden; some implement "Take-back" pro-

grams while others adhere to limits for allowable levels of lead, mercury and other materials. The United States has yet to consider e-waste a legislative priority, so at this point it is left up to each state and to individuals to push for local regulations.

Cook Inletkeeper recycles cell-phones year round with drop-off boxes at local businesses. The phones are shipped to the non-profit Collective Good where they are dismantled or refurbished. Approximately ten percent are re-usable and will be donated to non-governmental and educational organizations. To recycle your cell phone, or to obtain a cell phone collection box, contact Joan at 907.235.4068 ext 21 or [joan@inletkeeper.org](mailto:joan@inletkeeper.org).

## Volunteer Spotlight



Mary Frische and Tom Collopy

Since undergoing training and certification as CEMP monitors in January, 2003, Mary Frische and Tom Collopy have completed a total of 51 monitoring days at site KB-1150, a critical site on Diamond Creek just before the creek

passes the Homer Landfill. Mary and Tom operate as a finely-tuned machine in completing their observations. Using the ski trail bridge which crosses Diamond Creek at their site, the Mary and Tom Team create an outdoor lab from which they efficiently gather their data. A very special THANK YOU to all Mary and Tom have contributed to the program over the years, particularly the consistent manner in which they embrace the work.

Other obligations have unfortunately forced several volunteers to relinquish their sites in the past year. CEMP extends a reluctant farewell to Heather Beggs who had monitored Woodard

Creek for the past 3 years and to Derek Reynolds who was a member of the Fritz Creek Squad for the past 3 years. Laura Brooks, a monitor at Palmer Creek since 2005, has temporarily relocated to Boston to return to school and complete a degree she had started many years ago. Many thanks to these volunteer water quality monitors for all of their efforts. If you have any interest in water quality monitoring for creeks and streams in your area, Cook Inletkeeper will be happy to train you. For more information please contact Tori Lentfer at 907-235-4068 ext. 29 or email [tori@inletkeeper.org](mailto:tori@inletkeeper.org).

### Mark Your Calendars for the Following Dates:

**Saturday, June 7th, Noon – 10PM:**

Alaska Oceans Festival in Anchorage at the Delaney Park Strip to promote public awareness of the ecological, cultural, and economic importance of Alaska's oceans.

**Tuesday, July 29th, 6PM – End:**

Cook Inletkeeper Splash Bash at Homer's Bishop's Beach honoring volunteers and members.



Nancy Wainwright, Cook Inletkeeper Board Member extraordinaire (left), looks down upon the world from Mera Peak in the Himalayas at 21,400 feet. Congratulations Nancy!



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## Thank You for your Generous Business Contributions in 2007!

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## Thank You Members for your Wonderful Support During 2007!

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