

INLETKEEPER®

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

www.inletkeeper.org Headquarters: 907.235.4068

Spring Quarter 2017



Pick.Click.Give. for Cook Inlet

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It was another record breaking year for Pick.Click.Give. here at Inletkeeper. With your support, we were again in the top 30 (of 674 participating nonprofits, statewide). We'll receive your names in the fall after the PFD distributions and we'll thank you properly then, in the meantime **THANK YOU!**

If you did not get to the Pick.Click.Give. step of filing your PFD, you can add a charitable donation through August 31:

pfd.alaska.gov

You can always give online:
inletkeeper.org/donate

**...because home is
where the habitat is.**

Lovalaska
Pick Click Give



Chuitna: We Won!

In early April we celebrated the news that developer PacRim walked away and halted the permitting process for the proposed Chuitna Coal Strip Mine on the west side of Cook Inlet. Because the coal under the Chuitna River was always intended for export to overseas markets, the Chuitna Coal Mine became less and less financially viable as global thermal coal demand continued to shrink.

If coal markets were ultimately the deciding factor for PacRim to walk away, it was your comments, your vigilance, and your voices that helped shine a huge spotlight on this egregious project during the past 10 years. Without the strong public opposition you demonstrated to this project, it is likely that PacRim would already be building a mine.

Because PacRim's plan called for mining through miles and

miles of salmon spawning and rearing streams at the headwaters of the Chuitna River, it was clear that this project would permanently impact the salmon runs in the Chuitna River. What also became clear in the permitting process was that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game was likely to issue permits anyway.

During years of talking to Alaskans about this project, we learned that most Alaskans thought it was impossible that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game could issue permits for a project that would literally mine through a salmon stream or permanently destroy large sections of salmon habitat.

What we learned through this process is that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game can issue permits to permanently destroy salmon habitat (called Title 16 permits) – and



Your help and persistence made this win possible. Thank You!

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Science Matters!

A key principle that drives our work here at Cook Inletkeeper is that scientific knowledge and facts are essential for guiding responsible and fair policy decisions. We were heartened to see so many Alaskans agree, after they took to the streets on April 22nd to join one of the many March for Science events around the watershed. From Little Tutka Bay to Anchorage and in Palmer and Homer, Cook Inlet residents raised their voices and their signs in support of scientific research and evidence-based policies.

We have now added our peer-reviewed research to the growing body of scientific evidence about how climate change is affecting Alaska's salmon habitat. Released this month in the Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, our research on summer temperatures in southcentral Alaska streams and the potential implication for Pacific salmon is hot off the press and available online at: www.nrcresearchpress.com/doi/abs/10.1139/cjfas-2016-0076.

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The Kenai Peninsula Food Hub Open for Sophomore Season

In April 2017, the Kenai Peninsula Food Hub opened its doors in Homer and Soldotna, with Seldovia and Anchorage (new location this season!) coming online later this summer. Following a successful inaugural year, Cook Inletkeeper's pilot food hub will continue to provide new market opportunities for local growers, fishers, and crafters by selling 100% local products in communities around the watershed.



Photo: Katia Boone

The food hub is an easy way to add healthy local food to your table. It also supports local farmers and fishermen, and reduces Alaska food miles!

The goal of the Food Hub is to create opportunities for Alaskan producers and consumers to connect in a way that will create benefits for both, as well as strengthen local economies, increase food security, and reduce the carbon footprint created from importing food. The Kenai Food Hub supports an Alaska food system that in turn preserves the landscape, water, soil and air vital to a sustainable community

Becoming a customer of the Kenai Food Hub is an easy way to support your fellow community members, while enjoying your region's delicious bounty. Purchasing products through this online farmers market means choosing community-supported local food, and supporting your community's access to local food. If you are interested in joining as a member, visit us at kenaifoodhub.org, click on "Buy Local Now."

We're always looking for new local products on the food hub! Whether you are a gardener who has a bumper crop of potatoes, a commercial fisherman who wants to provide their community with seafood, or a raspberry picker wants to share some of your harvest, the Kenai Food Hub is a virtual way to connect vendors of all sizes and types to local foods hungry consumers.



Science Matters!

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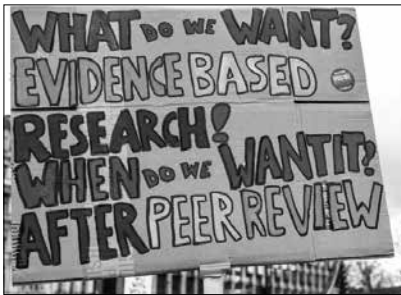


Photo: CNN.COM

You gotta love facts that can inform your decision about when and where to fish.

This work can guide future efforts to track climate change impacts and help fisheries and land managers prioritize streams for research and protection efforts to ensure Cook Inlet wild salmon endure; however, this requires that science and facts remain an integral part of decision-making. We encourage you to tell state and federal policy makers that Alaskans are tough enough to handle the facts about climate change and that it is time for them to get serious about addressing carbon emissions and supporting the science that will guide us to a prosperous, peaceful future fueled by renewable energy.

If you want some data to inform your decision making about when and where to fish this summer, please check out our real-time temperature sites on the Deshka, Anchor and Russian rivers: <http://inletkeeper.org/healthy-habitat/real-time-temperature-sites/>



Chuitna Win!

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what's worse, they can do it without any public notice. The same is true for other projects like the Sustina Dam or the Pebble Mine.

The Chuitna Coal Project highlighted for many of us just how broken the system is. We need an update to the law that governs salmon habitat protections. In Article 8, the Alaska Constitution states that, "Wherever occurring in their natural state, fish, wildlife and waters are reserved to the people for common use." The clear intent of the Alaska Constitution, unfortunately, is not reflected in the way current fish habitat protect laws are written.

Fortunately, Representative Louise Stutes introduced House Bill 199 this last session that attempts to update this law. We'll be watching this bill and paying attention to where it goes next, and we hope you will to. A lot has changed since statehood and with projects like the Pebble Mine, the Susitna Dam, and the Chuitna Coal Mine coming back like zombies every few years, it's clear that we need a better way to manage our fish, wildlife and waters for the people for common use.





INLETKEEPER is published by Cook Inletkeeper, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting the Cook Inlet watershed and the life it sustains. Newsletters are mailed free to members and available to others upon request. Headquarters are in Homer, with offices in Anchorage, and Soldotna.

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Clean Boating this Summer

What you can do around the boat

Our boats get us out on the water, fishing and enjoying Cook Inlet's incredible beauty. But if you run a boat, odds are you deal with oil, gas and other wastes such as antifreeze and batteries. Even in small concentrations these things can be dangerous for salmon and other aquatic life. Here are some tips for how you can be a clean boater and protect our clean water and healthy salmon!

Fueling

1. Stay with the nozzle when fueling.
2. Have another person monitor the sight glass and give ample warning when tank is nearly full.
3. Fuel docks often dispense fuel faster than at the gas station. Be slow and careful when filling up.
4. Place a bucket under fuel vents. Fill only to 90%, fill slowly and listen for change in tone.
5. Install a fuel/air separator to prevent fuel spilling from vents.
6. Keep absorbent pads within arm's reach.
7. When transferring fuel, use a watch alarm and backup alarm to prevent overflowing.
8. Wipe up spills; never hose them down or disperse them with soap.
9. Plug scuppers and build cofferdams around fuel intakes.

Maintenance

1. Prevent a mess; do not allow oil or fuel to get into the bilge.
2. Use drip pans and absorbent pads to collect oil and solvents during repairs.
3. Never mix paints and solvents or clean brushes and tools over water or near water's edge.
4. Inspect and replace worn out hoses, gaskets and fuel lines; adhere to checklists and logbooks.
5. Clean parts on land, not over the water.
6. Label valves and color code fuel and oil lines.
7. Build containment berms around possible spill areas, such as fuel intakes, vents and hydraulic banks.
8. Plug scuppers and drains to reduce runoff of dust and debris during maintenance.
9. Perform all work carefully and neatly – good housekeeping can prevent most spills!
10. Perform hull work over tarps to prevent toxic materials from reaching water.
11. Use dustless vacuum sanders where applicable.
12. Dispose of all wastes appropriately. If you don't know – ask!
13. Use high volume/low pressure sprayers for painting (this saves money and limits overspray).
14. Limit grid or in-water maintenance to mechanical tasks (propeller work, replacing zincs, hull inspection, etc).
15. Place tarps between dock and boat when working over water.
16. Choose less toxic products whenever possible and always dilute according to directions. More product = more money, but no better cleaning.
17. Never use soaps on spills.

Underway

1. Stash your trash to avoid anything blowing overboard.
2. Keep liquids such as antifreeze and oil in labeled and secure containers.
3. Always carry empty containers and absorbents in case of a spill.
4. Avoid nearshore wakes that can damage vegetation along the shore.
5. Keep your engine maintained and use the correct propeller for best fuel efficiency.
6. Avoid excess idling.



Hilcorp Leaks & Spills Highlight Aging Infrastructure

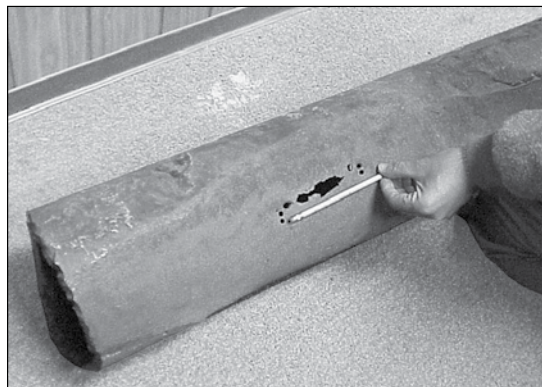
In early January, Hilcorp announced a “small” gas leak from one of the pipelines running out to Platform A on Middle Ground Shoal in Upper Cook Inlet. Inletkeeper obtained a video of the gas leak, and instead of a small leak, it revealed a gurgling cauldron of gas contaminating the water column and dumping methane into our atmosphere. Inletkeeper immediately contacted Governor Walker and relevant state and federal agencies, but despite considerable pressure and media attention, Hilcorp did not stop its gas leak until mid-April.

After the announcement of the gas leak, Hilcorp experienced various other problems with old infrastructure in Cook Inlet. Inletkeeper has long-advocated for enhanced oversight and maintenance, because many of the platforms and pipelines in Cook Inlet are over 50 years old. Inletkeeper wrote to Governor Walker to lay out our concerns:


“First, we must understand the status of infrastructure in Cook Inlet. In 2002, Inletkeeper produced a report on Cook Inlet pipelines, and in 2005, we updated it. These reports highlight the extent of infrastructure installed in Cook Inlet in the 1960’s, and provide a good starting point for conducting a comprehensive risk assessment or implementing an Inlet-wide integrity management plan. Regardless what we call it, we need a thorough audit of all pipelines and associated facilities in Cook Inlet to ensure they can protect our fisheries and support safe and reliable operations.

Second, we need to reviewelines in Cook Inlet to be well over \$ 1 billion dollars, while the amounts help in bonds and other sureties were a small fraction of that amount. Because much of the infrastructure in Cook Inlet is pushing past the 50-year mark, it’s only prudent for the state to make sure we have what it takes to address realistic DR&R scenarios.

Finally, on the west side of Cook Inlet lies the Drift River Oil Terminal (DROT). The facility was built in the mid-1960’s, and it gathers and stores oil produced in Cook Inlet before loading it onto tankers for transit to processing facilities on the east side of Cook Inlet and elsewhere. The facility is problematic for several reasons. For example, it is located at the base of an active volcano (Mt. Redoubt), and eruptions in 1989-90 and 2009 have created heightened risks to workers and local fisheries. The facility also necessitates oil tanker loadings, transits and unloadings in and around Beluga whale critical habitat, without the aid of escort tugs similar to Prince William Sound. Finally, the aging piping and other infrastructure at the facility are increasingly vulnerable to leaks and spills. A state-of-the-art modern pipeline across Cook Inlet would address all these concerns, while creating Alaskan jobs and providing a much safer alternative for our fish and whale habitat then continuing to rely on the Drift River Oil Terminal.”



Old pipe from the Dillon shows effects of “strudel” or “vortex” scouring, where external forces from tides, currents and abrasion erode steel pipe.

In late April, the state announced it would start the process of conducting the infrastructure audit. That’s good. Now we need to keep the pressure up to ensure bonding levels are adequate to address unwanted platforms and pipelines, and we need to stop storing oil at the base of Mt. Redoubt at the Drift River Oil Terminal. We have our work cut out for us. 

**Aug 4, 5, 6, 2017
Ninilchik Alaska**



Volunteer with Cook Inletkeeper this summer!

Call for volunteers! Cook Inletkeeper is currently recruiting volunteers for the upcoming Salmonfest music festival. We have all sorts of volunteering opportunities at the event from event/workshop setup, traffic control to zero waste program assistance. In exchange for four hours long volunteering shift we will present you with complimentary Salmonfest day pass!

For more information about volunteering at Salmonfest or to explore other volunteering opportunities within Cook Inletkeeper please contact Natalia@inletkeeper.org! The deadline for Salmonfest volunteer signup is July 15.

