

# INLETKEEPER®

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

www.inletkeeper.org Headquarters: 907.235.4068

Spring Quarter 2016



## Pick.Click.Give. for Cook Inlet

Our latest pledges are in and we're feeling your Loyalaska Love! Inletkeeper is in the top 30 (of over 630 participating non-profits statewide). Wow!

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 didn't get to the Pick.Click.Give. step of filing your PFD, you can add a charitable donation through August 31.

[pfd.alaska.gov](http://pfd.alaska.gov)

You can always give online:

[inletkeeper.org/donate](http://inletkeeper.org/donate)

...because you  
love Cook Inlet.



## Chuitna Coal: Keep it in the Ground

For over a decade, Cook Inletkeeper has been sharing the story of the proposed Chuitna Coal Mine near Beluga and Tyonek. This massive open-pit strip mine would be unlike anything seen in Alaska before. The first phase alone would completely remove 13.7 miles of salmon spawning streams, de-water the surrounding wetlands, and build massive export infrastructure 2 miles into Cook Inlet. All to export low-grade coal overseas.



*Thank you for fighting with us for Fish First policies in Alaska!*

The project has been in permitting purgatory for nearly a decade, wasting untold

resources from our already overburdened state and federal agencies and holding the surrounding communities hostage with an unknown future.

Chuitna developer PacRim continues to drag its feet in completing a state coal mining permit application that would detail reclamation plans and determine how the company will provide bonds for the risky endeavor of reclaiming a functioning salmon stream after 25 years of strip mining. The

application submittal would also officially start the public review process and finally let Alaskans

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## Giant Subsidies Mean Cook Inlet Oil & Gas Alive & Well

While low oil and gas prices are crippling Alaska's economy – and forcing cuts to seniors, kids, schools, roads and beyond – massive tax credits and other subsidies continue to make Cook Inlet an attractive investment for smaller, independent oil and gas corporations.

On the Lower Kenai Peninsula, BlueCrest Energy has started producing oil at the Cosmopolitan Unit; the target reservoir lies about 3 miles from shore and a mile and a half down, and BlueCrest will produce it using extended-reach directional drilling from an onshore facility on the bluff on the south side of Stariski Creek. Pennzoil drilled the first well in this area in 1967, and several companies made a go at it over the years before BlueCrest made its commitment to produce. A zero production tax on oil in Cook Inlet, combined



*What if alternative energy was subsidized at the same level as oil & gas? Kodiak's model could be Alaska's!*

with tax credits that can pay producers upwards of 65-85% of their costs, makes the Cosmopolitan Unit a profitable venture, even at low oil prices.

Controversy has swirled around the Cosmopolitan development for the past several months after BlueCrest announced it would employ hydraulic "fracking" to produce more oil from the reservoir. In 2014, the Alaska Oil

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**Spill-Free Fueling for your Boat**  
*Filling a boat is different than a car.*

Fueling your boat is different than your car. Boats have outside vents that allow air to enter and fuel vapors to escape, but this can also allow fuel out of the tank. When fueling on the water, boats often move so that the fuel tank is uneven, making it more difficult to know the level of the fuel. Marine fuel pumps also often dispense fuel at a faster rate which may make stopping the fuel pump before a leak occurs difficult. Some tips to prevent spills when fueling include:

- Fuel on land whenever possible to ensure your tank is level during fueling
- Know the capacity of your tank and only fill to 90%. Watch your fuel gauge and estimate how much fuel you need prior to fueling
- Always use absorbent pads around the nozzle when fueling
- Place a fuel catchment device over the fuel vent during fueling to catch any spills
- Never leave the nozzle unattended and do not use the hands-free locking mechanism on the nozzle
- Listen carefully to the sounds coming from the vent, which can often indicate when the tank is near full. A fuel vent whistle makes a loud sound to alert you when your tank is almost full!



**Inletkeeper Staff Changes**



**Wishing Will Schlein the Best!**  
 Long-time GIS and IT Guru Will Schlein has left inletkeeper to explore the more remote regions of Alaska. Will has been a steady and reliable anchor for all things technical, and we will greatly miss being able to count on him for his total availability to the cause!



**Thanks Eric Booton:** Our Anchorage presence is changing with Eric Booton's departure for Trout Unlimited - a passionate fly-fisherman we know we will continue to work with Eric to fight for fish first!



**Welcome Matt Koenig:** We'd like to welcome our new Anchorage Organizer Matt Koenig. Matt is an outdoors enthusiast turned conservation activist. He graduated from Northern Arizona University in 2012 with a B.S. in environmental studies with an emphasis in landscape interpretation and conservation. After two seasons working on backcountry trail maintenance teams after college, Matt felt it was necessary to not only facilitate access to natural wonders, but to work to protect them as well. In 2014, he moved to Anchorage to work on various conservation campaigns as a field organizer, progressing to a deputy canvass director for a few seasons. Matt is looking forward to working to foster personal connections to place.

**Chuitna Coal: Keep it in the Ground**

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weigh in on the project.

The Chuitna coal mine was a bad idea in 2005, and it's a worse idea today. US coal giants like Arch and Peabody are declaring bankruptcy and leaving destroyed landscapes and struggling communities in their wake. And states like Wyoming, Arizona and Kentucky are left with the expensive task of cleaning up after coal companies while Arch and Peabody CEO's get massive payouts.

Operating mines are closing in the Lower 48 and new mines and export facilities are being shelved. Here in Alaska Usibelli is struggling to ship the coal they already have from their permitted, operating mine to overseas markets. So why are we even considering a new coal mine in Alaska, especially one that

would permanently destroy a healthy salmon spawning stream?

Over the past decade, our energy investments in the US and abroad have shifted dramatically away from coal. And it's not heavy handed regulation that is changing the mix in our energy portfolios, it's the market responding to cleaner, safer energy options.

In Alaska we sit on the frontlines of climate change. We should be leaders in transitioning away from coal, not moving forward with a risky investment around a fuel of the 18th century. It's time for our state agencies and elected officials to draw the line. The Chuitna Coal Mine should be put to bed and the coal under the Susitna-Beluga coal field should stay in the ground.



## Oil and Gas Alive and Well

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& Gas Conservation Commission issued new rules on fracking, in an attempt to counter the numerous public health and water quality issues posed by fracking in the Lower 48. In response to these concerns, **Inletkeeper will moderate a fracking panel discussion on May 17, at 6:30 PM, at the Islands & Ocean Visitors Center**, where the public can get answers from representatives from AOGCC, BlueCrest, ADEC and conservation interests.

On a separate note, Furie Operating Alaska – a subsidiary of Deutsche Oel & Gas AG, a German holding company – brought the jack-up drilling rig Randolph Yost into the Kachemak Bay Critical Habitat Area, and moored it at the Homer Dock. Despite concerns about invasive species introduction with other jack-up rigs in the past, ADFG didn't get around to inspecting the rig until a month after it had been in port (and to be fair, Furie did try to communicate with ADFG prior to bringing the rig into Alaska, and even sent samples from the rig's origin in

Indonesia last year. But the fact remains, nothing can protect our resources like an onsite inspection when a rig enters Alaskan waters). The jack-up rig will soon be towed to the Kitchen Lights Unit, in Upper Cook Inlet northwest of Nikiski, where it will engage a multi-well drilling program looking for more gas and oil (importantly, Furie's pursuit of oil will take it nearly 5 miles deep into little-explored Jurassic era formations, which some believe to hold the source-rock for most of the oil produced in Cook Inlet to date; this effort presents significant questions – and risks – about formation pressures and the potential for well blow-outs).

Since its inception in 1995, Inletkeeper has sought to reduce the risks of oil and gas exploration and development in Cook Inlet. But with climate change and ocean acidification the greatest threats posed to a livable planet, Inletkeeper knows we have to stop nibbling around the edges, and to embrace a new paradigm that takes us to a post-carbon economy.



## Two Special Oil & Gas Events Coming Soon

**40TH Anniversary; Kachemak Bay Oil & Gas Leases Buyback**  
*Islands & Ocean, Homer, May 25, 6:30 PM*

In December 1973, the State of Alaska leased tracts in Kachemak Bay for oil and gas exploration and development. Then, in May 1976, the jack-up rig George Ferris caused a spill that ignited a heated community backlash. Two days later, the Alaska Legislature took up Governor Hammond's bill to buyback the oil and gas leases, and to make Kachemak Bay a state critical habitat area. The bill passed, and the rest is history. On the 40th anniversary of these historic events, Cook Inletkeeper will host a panel discussion, to hear stories about the early struggles to protect Kachemak Bay, to bring forward lessons learned from this era, and to connect the dots to present day oil and gas activities in and around Kachemak Bay.

**Oil & Gas Fracking Panel**  
*Islands & Ocean Center, Homer, May 17, 6:30 PM*

In response to concerns about proposed hydraulic fracturing in the Cosmopolitan Unit along the bluff north of Anchor Point, Cook Inletkeeper will moderate a panel with representatives from BlueCrest Energy, the Alaska Oil & Gas Conservation Commission, and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. Panelists will provide brief presentations on fracking plans and rules, followed by an extended question and answer session.

**Both events free to the public.**

Contact [keeper@inletkeeper.org](mailto:keeper@inletkeeper.org) or 907.299.3277 for more information.



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WATERKEEPER ALLIANCE

## I Want Local Fish!

Depending on where you live in Cook Inlet, it can be really difficult to find wild Alaskan seafood for your dinner table! There are a lot of factors that play into how our fish are moved and sold from the ocean to tables around the world. More often than not, our fish are going from our fishermen through processors and then to brokers or other large movers of seafood before they end up at grocery stores and restaurants. We're excited that the Alaska Marine Conservation Council is working on an expanded seafood hub based in Anchorage, growing from the success of their Catch of the Season program. At Inletkeeper, we're focusing on the Homer-front and working with fishermen who are able to direct market their fish and are interested in the new Food Hub! Stay tuned as we work with AMCC and others for more answers and outlets to get local fish on to your dinner table!

## Summer's Coming

*Do you know how to handle your salmon?*



*Salmon are a precious resource, care for your catch and get the most out of this local food.*

**W**e've all seen it – someone catches a salmon, proceeds to club it like a caveman, then tosses it aside in the sun in the zest to get another. That fish isn't going to taste as good as it can before it's frozen, and it's certainly not going to do well after several months in the freezer.

That's why it's so important to properly handle your catch the moment you take it out of the water. The first thing to know is that salmon build-up lactic acid when stressed, and lactic acid makes the flesh tougher; just hooking and landing a fish creates stress, but inordinate handling and tossing around only compounds the matter. So always

bleed the fish immediately – either by popping a gill with your fingers, or by cutting into the gill plate with a knife (some people think keeping the fish alive – on a stringer in the water or in a live tank – is the way to go, but those methods only aggravate the lactic acid stress problem).

Next, get the fish on ice, preferably in a cooler – shaved ice is the best, but if you don't have any, open bags of ice will do. The key is to keep the fish below 40 F degrees because the muscle cells will begin to degrade as soon as the fish is dead, and cold temperatures will reduce cell damage. And make sure to drain any ice-melt, blood and gurry from your fish periodically so none of the fish are soaking in it.

From here, you can process the fish anyway you want – fillets for BBQ or the freezer, steaks for the canner, strips for the smoker. There are countless ways to process your fish, and countless ways to enjoy it. But the important thing is to handle your fish properly from the start. Good luck out there this summer, and remember, our salmon need healthy habitat to thrive.



## Cook Inletkeeper Launches the Kenai Peninsula Food Hub



**T**his past fall Inletkeeper was awarded a Local Foods Promotion Program grant by the USDA to “improve and stabilize local food systems by increasing marketing opportunities for local producers and expanding access to and purchasing of local foods on the Kenai

Peninsula through an online food hub.”

A food hub is a third-party entity that works to aggregate and distribute locally-grown products to consumers from a variety of producers, including products like vegetables, fruits,

fish, shellfish, poultry, and value-add items like jams and breads. In essence, a food hub is an online farmers market.

Cook Inletkeeper embarked on the food hub concept because it helps reduce the greenhouse gas footprint of importing foods from outside, and it promotes food security for a region that is heavily-reliant on the vagaries of transporting imported foods. The project has been overseen by Cook Inletkeeper staff, and guided by an Advisory Council made-up of members representing a wide range of interests including agriculture, aquaculture, commercial fishing, local community health, and soil and water conservation.

The Kenai Peninsula Food Hub opened officially in early May, with pick-up locations in both Homer and Soldotna. Sign-up and keep informed at: [www.kenaifoodhub.com](http://www.kenaifoodhub.com). 

