

INLETKEEPER®

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

www.inletkeeper.org Headquarters: 907.235.4068

Winter Quarter 2016



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www.pickclickgive.org

You can always give online:

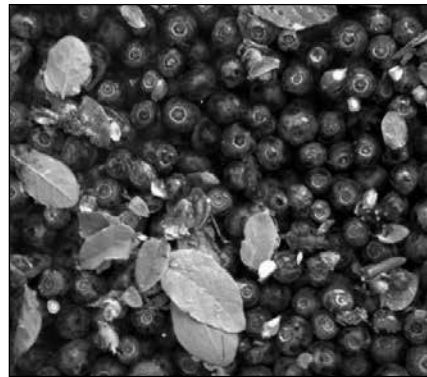
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Local Food, Local Fish, Local Change

It's often difficult to find hope in the barrage of bad news, especially when the headlines are right in our backyards. Thousands of common Murres washing ashore show us one example of massive marine animal die-offs. Another year of record temperatures and another cancelled Tustumena 200 dog race show us how fast our local climate and snowpack are changing. Yet facing adversity has never stopped us from coming together, seeking solutions, and finding reason for hope. Even if that hope is in a garden.



Consuming local foods helps increase our food security and decrease our food miles.

This past fall, legendary activist Grace Lee Boggs died at the age of 100 after seven decades of activism in Detroit. Traditionally focused on social justice issues, Boggs had also recently found connections between the ecological chaos and social chaos facing our local communities. In fact, in her most recent book *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for*

the 21st Century, she highlighted food security as a critical issue for our time.

Here in Alaska, "food security" has a meaning unlike that of any other place. A single

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Investing in Data to Protect King Salmon

When we began putting out temperature loggers in Cook Inlet streams 15 years ago, we were interested in some specific questions: Which streams run hot? Which streams run cold? Does that change year to year? Our investment in equipment and time setting up monitoring sites has paid off in ways we couldn't have anticipated. Now, not only do we have answers to those questions, but the robust, long-term dataset we created allows us to ask so many more questions. For instance, what is going on with Chinook salmon stocks in Cook Inlet? We now have the data to hindcast stream temperatures for the past 35 years and look at how summer temperatures might explain variation in Chinook productivity over that time period. With new funding for Cook Inlet Chinook Salmon Disaster Research in 2016, we will be working with colleagues at UAA and UAF



Building datasets will help us ask the right questions to protect the future of these Chinook.

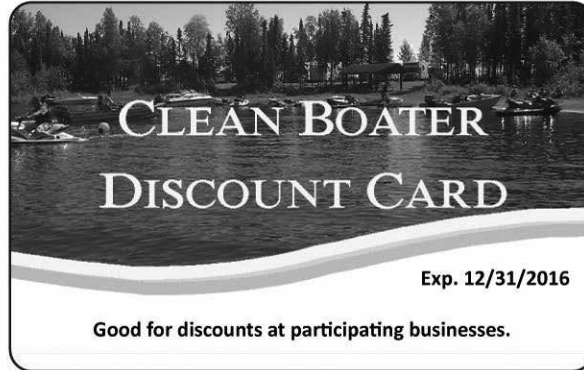
to address how summer temperature and fall flooding might affect freshwater habitat suitability for Cook Inlet Chinook. Among the answers we will uncover through this research will be new questions that impact our salmon streams and our salmon economy. We will continue to build the datasets now to answer those future questions. We consider this a strong and socially responsible investment strategy.



Clean Boating Discount Card Program

Since 2010, Cook Inletkeeper and partners have been educating boaters and fishermen in the Susitna Valley on the importance of clean boating practices. Our Clean Boating campaign has been successful at reaching boaters at several priority waterbodies in the Susitna Valley that are listed or at risk for being listed as polluted, including Big Lake, the Little Susitna River, and Deshka River. Our goal for this outreach is to provide tips and tools boaters can use to reduce the amount of hydrocarbons (oils and gas) in these and other regional waters. This coming year we hope to engage more boaters in clean boating practices throughout the Cook Inlet watershed and we hope that you can help us in this effort. In January 2016 we are launching a new program to promote clean water and clean boating in the Mat-Su, Anchorage and the Kenai Peninsula by partnering with local businesses. This program provides incentives for boaters to practice clean boating by offering

them discounts at participating businesses. By participating, businesses and the community acknowledge that clean water is important and that you appreciate the work that boaters do to keep the water clean.



Help spread the word about our new Clean Boater Discount Card. Ask your favorite businesses if they're interested in participating.

In order to make changes to water quality statewide, it is important for everyone to be on-board. The availability of clean water affects our lives, not only through the salmon we eat, but also in the beer we drink, the food we make, and the rivers and lakes we swim in. Help us keep these important waterbodies safe from oil and gas pollution by supporting boaters' efforts to do so. If you are a business interested in participating, please

contact heather@inletkeeper.org. To learn more about this program, see a list of participating businesses, and find out how to get your Clean Boating Discount Card, visit us at: <http://inletkeeper.org/clean-water/clean-boating/clean-boating-discount-card-program>



Alaska's Next Pebble Mine?

The Donlin Gold Mine will be a massive project.

The proposed Donlin gold mine is a massive proposed project that rivals the Pebble mine in terms of size and potential impacts. The project is backed by Canadian mining corporations Barrick Gold and Novagold on land owned by the Kuskokwim Native Corporation and subsurface rights held by the Calista Corporation. The Donlin deposit lies 277 miles west of Anchorage, just north of the village of Crooked Creek, 120 miles above Bethel, in the salmon-rich Kuskokwim River watershed.

The project as proposed will cover over 16,000 acres, and its massive tailings pond and earthen dam alone will be over a mile long, covering more than 2,300 acres. According to its permit filings, the project will destroy between 7,000-10,000 acres of wetlands and other surface waters. And



Watch for our call to action in April to oppose the Donlin Gold Mine.

according to a technical report, the mine could release 700-1,800 lbs of mercury into the air every year in an area where subsistence harvest is a vital way of life. Cyanide will also be used, in a heap-leach process to extract the gold, and acid mine drainage remains a serious concern. While this project lies far from the Cook Inlet watershed, the impacts to southcentral Alaska will be significant because proponents want to build a 315 mile-long gas pipeline from Cook Inlet to the site – much of it traversing the Iditarod

Trail - to power the mine. The draft EIS is now available (see www.donlingoldeis.com), and comments are due by April 30, 2016. Inletkeeper will be weighing-in on the gas line aspects of the project, and will provide support for people and groups in the region concerned about it.



Dear Friends of Cook Inlet



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, Soldotna, and Talkeetna. Contact:

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WATERKEEPER ALLIANCE

When I took the Executive Director/ Inletkeeper job in 1995, I told our Board of Directors I could commit to 5 years. In December, we celebrated Cook Inletkeeper's 20th anniversary, and to say it's been a fun and crazy and challenging ride would be an understatement.

Now, we're moving into 2016 as a transition year, and we're excited about some new staff additions and a new direction for our projects and programs. First, we'll be bringing Carly Weir – who has been heading up the statewide coal campaign – onto staff, where she'll lead our Chuitna coal fight, and as 2016 unfolds, she will assume a variety of leadership responsibilities which will allow me to focus more on advocacy.

We'll also be bringing onboard two other folks from the coal campaign – Brandon Hill & Laura Bartholomae who will focus on digital organizing and data management, respectively. We've also been fortunate to bring Robbi Mixon on board to run our new local fish/foods program, and we have a wonderful new addition to our Board in Pat Dougherty, who spent 34 years at the Alaska Daily News and brings a wealth of communications knowledge to us.

Aside from personnel changes, Inletkeeper is also changing how it does business. After 20 years, we've learned a lot, and in 2016, we will embark on nothing short of re-inventing our relationship with the people and the landscape around Cook Inlet. With a nice USDA grant, we're in the process of setting up a novel food hub to connect buyers and sellers, and as we move forward, we'll be focusing on local organizing "nodes," and connecting people around local energy and local fish/foods. We'll work throughout the year on these issues, and we'll plan to share our new direction with you after our December 2016 Board meeting.

So, after 20 years at the helm of Cook Inletkeeper, I just wanted to say thanks for your friendship and your support. 2016 is going to be an exciting year and I look forward to working with you to protect the things we all love about Cook Inlet.

Yours for Cook Inlet –

Bob Shavelson
Inletkeeper

Inletkeeper Hears from Alaska LNG, Poses Tough Questions

In December, representatives from Exxon and the Alaska LNG project gave a presentation to Inletkeeper's Board and staff on the massive project to bring north slope gas to Cook Inlet for export as liquefied natural gas. Attempts to commercialize Alaska's north slope gas have been on the books for decades, but the Alaska LNG project has the most momentum and the greatest chance of construction compared to past efforts. That said, the project faces enormous challenges, and Inletkeeper Board and staff raised important questions about climate change impacts, beluga whale conflicts and increased shipping traffic in Cook Inlet. Equally important, Inletkeeper

raised questions about depressed natural gas prices, a glut of natural gas in the Pacific Basin - which is expected to persist well into 2030 - and the state's continued reliance on a single resource – fossil fuels – to support our state government. Not surprisingly, few of Inletkeeper's questions received direct answers – many because they are simply unanswerable, which is another problem. Inletkeeper appreciates the dialogue with Alaska LNG representatives, but until some of the questions asked get answered, we'll continue to see this project as a distraction from our need to develop the world-class renewable resources all around us.



Special Thanks to Our Institutional Funders

- Alaska Conservation Foundation
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- True North Foundation
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
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- Alex C. Walker Foundation
- Westwind Foundation
- Wildlife Forever Fund

Local Food, Local Change

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cargo ship delayed from Seattle impacts the amount food on our grocery store shelves. A changing climate is impacting migration patterns of caribou and moose and the delicate temperatures of our salmon streams, ultimately changing how we fill our freezers.

With all of our bounty, we are also very vulnerable. Because of this, and our ability to work together to find solutions to the problem, we are excited to take on this challenge as part of our work to protect the Cook Inlet watershed and the life it sustains.

The Kenai Peninsula Food Hub is one part of the solution. This pilot project will help source and distribute local food on the Kenai Peninsula and serve as a model for other regions. Strengthening our local foods system will reduce overall food miles and our collective carbon footprint, and it will help us build more food security in our communities.

But what else can we do? This is where we need to hear from YOU! Do you think local food is a critical issue for the Cook Inlet watershed? What do you think are the most pressing issues facing our communities? How do you want to get involved? From community greenhouses to local Keeper Councils, there are countless ways we can gather and create solutions that work for our own communities.



Increase food security and decrease food miles with local foods.

Grace Lee Boggs wrote, “We can begin by doing small things at the local level, like planting community gardens or looking out for our neighbors. That is how change takes place in living systems, not from above but from within, from many local actions occurring simultaneously.”

As the light returns, and many of us thaw our salmon and begin to dream of next season’s gardens, take a minute and let us know how you’d like to get involved, or about the local actions you’re taking. Contact Robbi Mixon: robbi@inletkeeper.org



2015: A Year in Review

Your support in 2015 is helping to achieve lasting impacts, a few key highlights for the year:

Clean Energy

- Secured first-ever instream flow reservation in Alaska for a non-governmental entity in the Chuitna watershed.

Clean Water

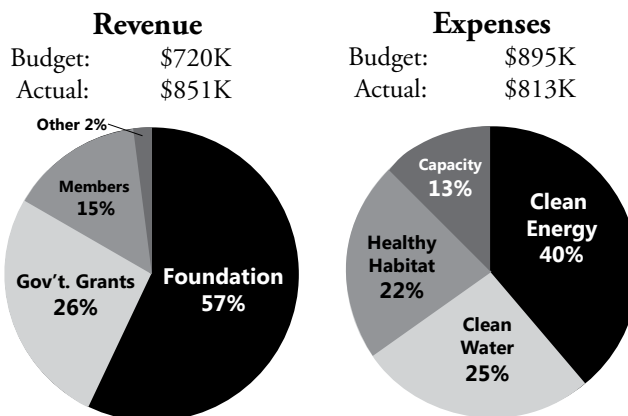
- Certified Sitka Harbor, the fourth Alaska Clean Harbor in the state, and received pledges from Whittier, Dillingham and Kodiak.

Healthy Habitat

- Cold water stepping stones project on the Anchor and Ninilchik Rivers has engaged landowners on 13 parcels that will result in the permanent protection of approximately 400 acres of key salmon habitat.

Capacity

- Maintained a balanced budget, added another board member, doubled membership income, and surpassed 5000 Facebook likes.



We are committed to spending your dollars wisely. In 2015 we came in under budget on expenses and over budget on income, continuing our strong record of setting conservative goals, and spending carefully.

