

# INLETKEEPER®

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

www.inletkeeper.org Homer: (907) 235-4068 Anchorage: (907) 929-9371

Summer 2012



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## Oil & Gas at Your Door? Know Your Property Rights!

**O**il & gas companies are undertaking an aggressive new round of seismic exploration around Cook Inlet to better understand hydrocarbon potential. These activities can entail land clearing, road building,

detonations, noise, dust and other impacts to private property. Cook Inletkeeper has fielded numerous calls from concerned property owners who have been asked by industry to sign a consent form to conduct seismic exploration on the landowner's property.



*Inletkeeper Bob Shavelson surveying one of the hundreds of blast holes on the Kenai River flats this spring.*

Under Alaska law, surface and subsurface property ownership are separate rights (called "estates" in property law). This is the law of "split estate." The surface estate is what we typically understand to be property ownership—i.e., the corners of your property and everything within them. The subsurface rights occur beneath the surface estate, and they're often called mineral rights. Not many people in Alaska own both the surface and subsurface rights to their property, but if you do, you have considerable legal authority

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## Why Cook Inletkeeper Needs You

**J**ack-up rigs, coal mines, tsunami debris, waste water dumping, boondoggles, coal mines, threats to fisheries. The list grows and grows. Our Alaskan way of life is under siege. Projects and issues pile up as the resources we depend on to power our homes and our cars, to move food into grocery stores and make the products we buy become more and more scarce and more and more valuable.

By living off a finite resource base, we can expect the political and physical conflicts over these resources will only continue to increase in frequency and intensity. Often we are asked: When corporations are considered people and seem to be immune from the law, when governments ignore the will of the people they are supposed to serve, and outsiders make billions of dollars on the broken backs of regular Alaskans, why bother fighting?

The answer is simple. We all love this place.

Face the facts. You have to want to live



in Alaska. Life here is not easy. The cold dark months are replaced by long days with not enough sleep. Food and fuel are expensive—it costs more to ship a child's toy than the cost of

*Continued on page 11*

**From the Director**

**D**ear Friends of Cook Inlet –

Occasionally it is useful to look back to inform the path forward. Hi, I'm your new Cook Inletkeeper Executive Director, penning my first "From the Director" letter. In preparation, I reviewed all our newsletters back to 2005. Whew! What a challenge we Alaskans have before us! What a litany of human foibles, presumption, hubris and lack of good information and planning in our approach to the use of our Inlet.

Rubber stamp permitting for mining and drilling.

Daily discharges of millions of gallons of unfiltered oil drilling wastes into Cook Inlet.

Large-scale oil storage and shipping facilities within active volcanic and seismic zones.

Hazardous docking and winter shipping of oil and other dangerous materials.

Proposals to coal strip-mine salmon streams.

Wasteful boondoggles like coal to electricity, bridges to nowhere, giant port expansions.

Climate change warming salmon streams and other effects.

Huge volumes of sewage waste piped into the Inlet from Anchorage.

Delays in protecting beluga whales and research to understand their continued demise.

Cook Inlet deserves a wholly different approach than our present "hope for the best" development strategy. Separately, each of these issues represents critical threats to the health and vitality of the Inlet that supports and provides benefits to most Alaskans.

Considered together, this is an overwhelming list, daunting in magnitude and depressing in scope. But we must face reality. We must figure out how to resolve these development pressures in favor of the Inlet's health and productivity if we want to avoid the shameful fate of other beautiful and abundant places around the planet.



Where to begin? We already have. Inspiringly, Cook Inletkeeper, with your support, continues into its 17th year educating, advocating, consulting, suing, partnering, using scientific research and community engagement for protecting our common resources. We have a vision for the future that champions the necessary shift to Alaska's abundant renewable energy resources, creates quality jobs based in local communities, cuts our dependence on climate change inducing hydrocarbon fuels and protects the beauty and health of our Inlet, the source of our unique fishing industries and Alaskan lifestyles.

Your role in this critical work is essential. Give me a call or email me with your thoughts so, working together, we can increase our influence and effectiveness in creating the better world our kids deserve.

And thanks for all you have already done!

Wayne Jenkins  
Executive Director



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WATERKEEPER ALLIANCE



## CLEAN ENERGY

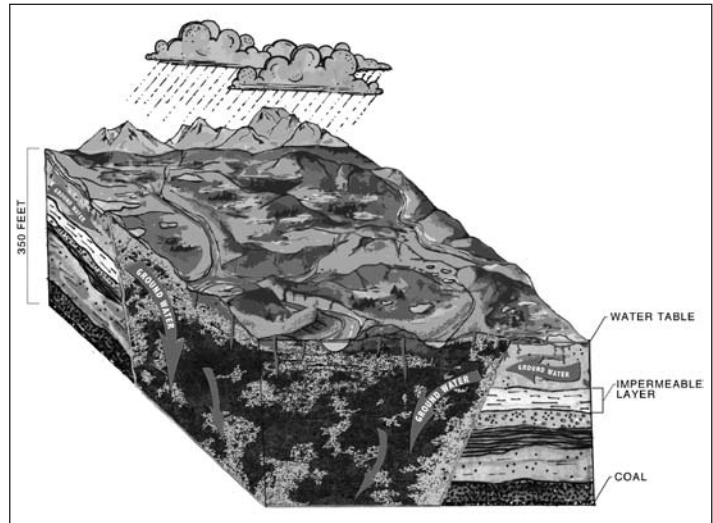
### How Do You Bond a Project that Mines through a Salmon Stream?

Recognizing the important precedent PacRim's coal strip-mining plan represents to the future of wild Alaskan salmon, the Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing to explore bonding projects planning to mine through salmon streams.


PacRim's proposed coal strip mine is within the Chuitna River watershed in the Kenai Peninsula Borough, on the upper west side of Cook Inlet. Rather than protecting wild salmon streams by leaving an intact natural buffer, as required in other development projects, PacRim will completely remove more than 11 miles of wild salmon spawning and rearing habitat to a depth of 350 feet.

Senator Hollis French, the Committee Chair, called the hearing to explore how the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) establishes a bond, what a bond is required to cover, and to explore the impacts on wild Alaskan salmon in the Chuitna watershed resulting from PacRim's mining plans.

Dr. Margaret Palmer, the Director of the National Science Foundation's Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center and a world-renowned expert on stream restoration, testified that PacRim's plan will "destroy 11 miles of salmon streams," that these impacts will be "irreversible," and "large scale failure at Chuitna is inevitable." Dr. Palmer reviewed more than 38,000 reclamation and restoration projects worldwide, and could not point to a single project that successfully restored salmon habitat after large-scale disruptions.



*After mining, PacRim can never replace the complex hydrology and organic materials necessary to support a salmon population at Chuitna.*

Should the Chuitna coal strip mine move forward, the DNR will have to establish a bond to assure reclamation of Middle Creek. The problem highlighted in this hearing is how do you set monetary value for something that is impossible? 

### Yet Another 'Near Miss' for Cook Inlet Oil Tanker

It's summer and Alaskans are busy preparing for salmon season. But imagine if Cook Inlet communities were mopping up the aftermath of a large oil spill. On January 13, 2012, the oil tanker *Overseas Martinez* experienced what industry officials labeled a "near miss" at the Tesoro dock in Nikiski, after heavy ice and tides pushed the vessel back roughly 100 feet on the dock during loading operations. The tug *Vigilant* had a line on the tanker, yet when the tug attempted to maneuver as tide and ice conditions worsened, the tug's cooling water intakes became clogged with ice, causing first one, then both engines to fail. The tug then became a massive weight, caught in the current and pulling back on the tanker. The force was so great the tug ripped off 45 feet of steel railing from the tanker, along with a massive chock used to hold the tug line to the tanker.

Despite the fact Tesoro violated its spill contingency plan by continuing to conduct loading operations in extreme



*In 2006, heavy ice and tides ripped the tanker Seabulk Pride from the Tesoro dock in Nikiski; the vessel ran aground in the heart of Cook Inlet salmon fisheries with over five million gallons of product aboard. A miraculous—and lucky—response prevented a major catastrophe.*

*Continued on page 4*

## Huge Government Handouts Prompt New Wave of Drilling in Cook Inlet



*Inletkeeper inspected Escopeta's Spartan 151 jack-up drilling rig this winter. The rig is old, rusty and ill-suited to the severe conditions often encountered in Cook Inlet.*

In late April, Escopeta Oil & Gas—now called Furie Operating Alaska—mobilized the Spartan 151 jack-up drilling rig from its winter storage location in Port Graham Bay in Lower Cook Inlet. The rig is now drilling for oil and gas on the offshore Kitchen Lights Unit to the northwest of Nikiski.

The Escopeta drill rig, and another rig proposed for Cook Inlet by Buccaneer Energy, are the first jack-up drill rigs in Cook Inlet in more than 20 years. They're here because the Alaska Legislature passed a bill (appropriately nicknamed the "Stampede Act") that gives tax credits up to \$25 million to the first three corporations that drill into deep Cook Inlet reservoirs. Here's the kicker: If a corporation discovers a producing well, it only has to pay the state back *half* the tax credit it received.

Escopeta has been playing fast and


loose with the rules. It started by violating a state law requiring it to develop its leases in a timely fashion. Then it left port in the Gulf of Mexico with its drill rig in violation of the Jones Act, an important federal law that protects U.S. jobs. When drilling started late last summer, Escopeta

violated state law requiring a survey of the bottom features to understand if it was safe to locate the rig where it did. Then, once drilling commenced, operations quickly ground to a halt when the drill bit got stuck in Cook Inlet's well-known coal seams. The whole scenario prompted an unusually strong rebuke from Alaska

Director Bill Barron, who wrote "I am gravely concerned about what I perceive to be Escopeta's apparent disregard for regulatory requirements." While Mr. Barron was "gravely concerned," however, his agency issued no penalty to Escopeta

***The Alaska Legislature passed a bill that gives tax credits up to \$25M to the first three corporations that drill into deep Cook Inlet reservoir ... if [one discovers] a producing well, it only has to pay the state back half the tax credit***

for its violations of state law.


So, at the height of our salmon fishing season—and in the heart of critical habitat for the endangered beluga whale—a renegade oil and gas company out of Texas will once again drill for oil deep below Cook Inlet. If they hit a pocket of gas or encounter unexpected formation pressures, a serious blow-out would be virtually uncontrollable. There have been several blow-outs in Cook Inlet over the years (one lasting for more than a year), and as the BP Gulf Disaster reminds us, even the best technology fails. So, we'll be keeping a sharp eye on Escopeta this summer, and if you hear or see anything we should know, don't hesitate to contact the Inletkeeper at 907.299.3277 or bob@inletkeeper.org 

### Oil Tanker 'Near Miss'

*Continued from page 3*

ice and tide conditions (among other breakdowns precipitating the incident), neither the State nor the Coast Guard issued any penalty. Instead, the state issued a "notice of violation," and joined the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council, the Coast Guard and industry in downplaying the severity of the incident.

In 1993, navigational safety expert Captain Dickson issued a report labeling the docks at Nikiski some of the most dangerous in the entire world. In 2006, heavy ice and tides ripped the tanker *Seabulk Pride* from the Tesoro dock and deposited it on the beach with five million gallons aboard. Yet Tesoro refused to invest in the additional safeguards a high-powered tug could provide. Only after the *Seabulk Pride* nearly got torn from the dock again in 2007 did Tesoro act, and when it did, it secured a tug designed for San Francisco—not the ice laden waters of Cook Inlet. So, once again, industry made a business decision (secure a cheaper tug) that puts Cook Inlet fisheries and the families who rely on them at risk.

To see the Notice of Violation and the Tesoro report documenting the violations, go to: [bit.ly/Vigilant2012](http://bit.ly/Vigilant2012) 



## Port MacKenzie Rail Spur: the Latest Gem in Cook Inlet's Boondoggle Crown

Cook Inlet is renowned for its massive tides, towering volcanoes, beluga whales and wild salmon. But it's also unique for a less compelling reason: Cook Inlet is the boondoggle capital of Alaska. And the latest black hole for public money is a rail link to connect the Alaska railroad to Port MacKenzie, in Knik Arm and across from the Port of Anchorage. Last year, project proponents called it a \$250 million project; now it's a \$350 million project and, based on Inletkeeper's experience with similar boondoggles around Cook Inlet, the capital costs for this project will surely top \$700 million when all is said and done. That doesn't even include annual operating and maintenance costs.

There are a few problems with the Port. First, it's not needed. We already have three tidewater ports (Anchorage, Seward and Whittier) connecting to the railroad. Next, the Port's location is extremely dangerous, and tides, ice and shoaling will make regular large-vessel transit a game of Russian roulette. Additionally, the rail will cross and fill hundreds of acres of wild salmon habitat, at a time when Mat-Su salmon runs are already failing. Finally, there's no demand for a new rail line to the port; instead, project proponents point to speculative ventures and ethereal developments to promote a "build it and they will come" philosophy.

"Build it and they will come" may have worked for Kevin Costner in the movie *Field of Dreams*, but it doesn't produce sound management or investment decisions. Just look at the track record in Cook Inlet. The Bill Sheffield railroad terminal—\$30 million and it sits empty. The Mat Su Borough's "fast" ice-breaking ferry—\$80 million and not a single passenger to date. The \$255 million Goose Creek jail—another Mat-Su Borough project—with annual operating costs of nearly \$70 million and no prisoners yet.

The list goes on. But Inletkeeper knows a boondoggle when it smells one. We raised the alarm on the Port of Anchorage expansion eight years ago; we critiqued the faulty design and the questionable financing of the project, to no avail. Project costs skyrocketed from \$150

million to \$1.2 billion, and the chosen design failed to work as proposed. Now our state's largest and most important port is limping along, waiting for a massive infusion of state or federal cash.

We cannot repeat the mistakes of the Port of Anchorage at Port MacKenzie. In an effort to bring some sanity to the discussion, Inletkeeper and its partners recently sued the federal agency that approved the Port Mac rail plan. Contact Bob at 907.299.3277 or [bob@inletkeeper.com](mailto:bob@inletkeeper.com) for more info.



One of the handful of vessels to dock at Port MacKenzie in the past six years. The dock's location creates significant navigational challenges to large vessels from ice, tides and shoaling.

## Oil & Gas at Your Door?

*Continued from page 1*

to determine if and how oil and gas will be developed on your land. However, if you only own the surface estate, anyone holding the subsurface estate has a legal right to access the mineral reserves under your property. Before you sign a consent form allowing industry to access your property, know your rights! See Inletkeeper's Fact Sheet at: [inletkeeper.org/resources/contents/oilgaspropertyrights](http://inletkeeper.org/resources/contents/oilgaspropertyrights)

Additionally, property owners located in or around oil and gas exploration or production areas should secure their water rights. If you already have your water rights, check with the Alaska Division of Mining, Land & Water to ensure your right is secured; if you do not have water rights, get them! For more information, go to: [www.dnr.state.ak.us/mlw/water/wrfact.cfm](http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/mlw/water/wrfact.cfm)



This spring, Buccaneer Energy violated the Clean Water Act over 850 times by illegally detonating seismic blasts around the mouth of the Kenai River. Despite frequent claims about "rigorous permitting" in Alaska, Buccaneer received no fine and an "after-the-fact" permit from the Army Corps of Engineers.

## CLEAN WATER

### Over 100,000 Pounds of E-Waste Collected Since 2006 *What's next for electronics recycling around Cook Inlet?*

Homer residents have faithfully demonstrated their commitment to keeping their waterways free from the

threat of pollution by collecting tons of electronic waste each year for recycling. Cook Inletkeeper was proud to carry on the e-cycling torch by coordinating the 7th Annual Electronics Recycling Event in Homer on April 28.

This popular event has grown to be a recognizable sign of spring, and not just in Homer. Over 18,000 pounds of e-waste was recycled this year, including items collected from across Kachemak Bay. For the second year, Inletkeeper partnered with the villages of

Seldovia, Port Graham and Nanwalek to host collection events across the bay and coordinated the transportation of their waste back to Homer for recycling.

Thanks to great community turnout, supportive sponsors, and an enthusiastic group of volunteers, Homer's e-cycle events have collected over 112,000 pounds since 2006. The success of this event demonstrates the on-going need for e-cycling programs in our Cook Inlet communities. To this end, Inletkeeper has committed resources to explore options for an expanded presence of e-cycling opportunities elsewhere on the Kenai Peninsula and in the upper Inlet. The focus will be to investigate ways to offer e-cycling opportunities year round, and also to collaborate with other trash removal and recycling systems already in place. 🐾



*Cook Inletkeeper Executive Director Wayne Jenkins and volunteers unload a truck full of computers and other electronic waste at Homer's 7th Annual Electronics Waste Recycling Event.*

### Big Lake is Polluted—You Can Help!



*This summer look for the Keep Big Lake Clean logo, developed in partnership with the Big Lake Chamber of Commerce.*

Did you know that Big Lake was listed as polluted by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation? Studies show high levels of petroleum hydrocarbons, gas and oils, specifically during high-use summer weekends. Through a series of meetings, the community of Big Lake created an action plan to ensure Big Lake is healthy for our families and fish. In 2010, Cook Inletkeeper began work with the

community to address two items on their action plan—pollution reduction at the private marinas on the lake and one-on-one boater outreach at the public boat launches. Mat-Su Conservation Services is leading the boater outreach through a volunteer program, coordinated with help from local businesswoman Randi Perlman.

When you head to Big Lake this summer, look for these volunteers handing out clean boating kits that include oil absorbent materials and tips on how you can help keep Big Lake clean. Top tips include using oil absorbent pads when fueling, fueling away from the lake, keeping an oil absorbent pillow in your bilge, avoiding idling and pulling your drain plug away from the launch ramp. By working together, we can help reduce the amount of fuel and oil entering Big Lake! 🐾

### Citizen Monitoring Updates


We made it through another winter, with heavy snow and deep ice on most of our water quality monitoring stream sites. Our dedicated volunteers trucked out to check on their streams throughout the dark of winter, with the rewards of spring and summer upon us finally. We recertified 11 volunteers during our spring session. Complete baseline water quality datasets are now available for nine stream sites around Homer and Anchor Point, with eight more to come by 2014.

Through this summer we will work on habitat assessments, aquatic insect sampling (bioassessment) and continued water chemistry monitoring at eight active sites. We still need volunteers to help with bioassessment in June and August! Contact Rachel at [rachel@inletkeeper.org](mailto:rachel@inletkeeper.org) or 907.235.4068 x29 for more information or to sign up. 🐾



## Alaska Clean Harbors Reaches Out to Boaters

For the past two years, Cook Inletkeeper has worked through the Alaska Clean Harbors program with harbor staff around Alaska on pollution prevention at our harbors and marinas. We recognized that in order to be successful, it was imperative that we connect with the customers in these facilities and get their input and feedback.

This winter, Cook Inletkeeper staff headed to Anchorage and Kodiak to talk with Cook Inlet recreational and commercial boaters about waste management and pollution prevention from their perspectives. We handed out more than 400 clean boating kits at the Anchor's Aweigh Boat Show and the Commercial Fish Expo (ComFish) in February and April. In return for these kits, we asked boaters to fill out a quick survey and we used those opportunities to better understand the concerns facing our recreational and commercial fleets when it comes to managing their various waste streams. Disposal of sewage, graywater, used oil, used antifreeze and bilge water are just some of the things facing vessel owners and operators around Cook Inlet. We will continue to work with harbors and increasingly with boating fleets to improve waste management services and education on best management practices to protect our fisheries and marine environment for all Alaskans. 




Last winter, Cook Inletkeeper staff and volunteers appeared at boat shows around Cook Inlet to hand out clean boating kits for the coming season.



For more information about the Alaska Clean Harbors program, visit

[www.alaskacleanharbors.org](http://www.alaskacleanharbors.org)

## BEACH Monitoring in 2012


Since 2008, Cook Inletkeeper has monitored beaches in Homer for bacteria through grant funding from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. After three years without exceedences of bacteria water quality standards, sampling ended in 2010 at Mariner Park and Land's End beaches. Sampling continues through June 2012 at Bishop's Beach in Homer and in Anchor Point, near the tractor launch at the mouth of the Anchor River. Fall sampling occurred at Whiskey Gulch beach, just north of Anchor Point. This is our last season of BEACH monitoring, with most state funds for this program heading to the Kenai River where persistent bacteria exceedences during the summer continue to be a concern. 

## Volunteer Spotlight: Jim Levine



Jim Levine has donated nearly 300 hours to water quality monitoring at No Name Creek—an anadromous tributary to the Anchor River. Thank you, Jim!

In 2001, Jim Levine signed up to begin sampling water quality as a volunteer with Cook Inletkeeper's Citizens' Environmental Monitoring Program (CEMP). Since that time, Jim has spent over 280 hours collecting baseline water quality data at an anadromous tributary to the Anchor River, located off North Fork Road. He also helps from time to time with another stream nearby, sharing monitoring duties to ensure consistent data collection at Ruby Creek.

Jim keeps plenty busy outside of his volunteer efforts with Cook Inletkeeper—he is an enthusiastic marimba player with the Shamwari Marimba Ensemble, former board president for KBBI and recently re-elected member of the Homer Electric Association's Board of Directors. Cook Inletkeeper applauds and supports Jim's efforts to increase transparency and generate renewable local power sources in his work with HEA. Thank you, Jim, for all that you do for water quality and for the community of Homer through your efforts! 

## HEALTHY HABITAT

### New Science-Based Land Conservation Project

*New ideas! New strategies! New partners!*


Cook Inletkeeper has been leading the way to increase understanding of climate change impacts on Alaska's salmon streams. In 2008, we started the Stream Temperature Monitoring Network, which was the first effort of its kind in Alaska to assess regional stream temperature patterns. Now in 2012, we begin a new project: Science-based Land Conservation, which incorporates new ideas and new strategies to protect salmon habitat in this time of rapid thermal change.

Because high temperatures make salmon more vulnerable to pollution, predation and disease—and because climate models show continuing warming trends throughout Alaska for the next 100 years and more—it's important to translate the science of salmon and climate change into a precautionary

approach to salmon management that permanently protects intact salmon habitat.


This project will address this pressing need by using infrared technology to identify important habitat that will then be targeted for permanent protections through acquisitions, easements or other agreements. The focus for this work will be habitats and areas that provide the critical cold water environments in which salmon thrive; these “cold water refugia” include the springs and upwellings that provide salmon with the cold-water stepping stones needed to make their way up and down otherwise warming streams, and they provide the best hope to embrace realistic climate adaptation strategies for salmon protection.

We are excited to integrate Cook Inletkeeper's science into a new partnership with Kachemak Heritage Land Trust—a

non-profit organization conserving lands for public benefit on the Kenai Peninsula since 1989. We will work with KHLT and the Kenai Watershed Forum over the next two years to identify parcels with key Chinook and coho salmon habitat which are the highest priority for permanent conservation. This forward-thinking project provides a unique opportunity to link state-of-the-art science with conservation planning and land protection strategies designed for perpetual habitat conservation to benefit salmon. 

*links state-of-the-art science with conservation planning and land protection strategies designed for perpetual habitat conservation to benefit salmon*

### Welcome Greg & Kelly!


In May, Kelly Barber and Greg Goforth joined Cook Inletkeeper's monitoring staff as our 2012 summer interns. Kelly just graduated from Unity College in Maine with a Bachelor of Science in both Ecology and Environmental Analysis. Greg, a recent graduate of Humboldt State University in California, spent last year in Homer working with the Kachemak Heritage Land Trust. We look forward to providing an exciting and interesting summer of water quality sampling, temperature monitoring, stream invertebrate and habitat assessments, and opportunities to spread the word about the importance of clean water and healthy habitats. Welcome Kelly and Greg! 

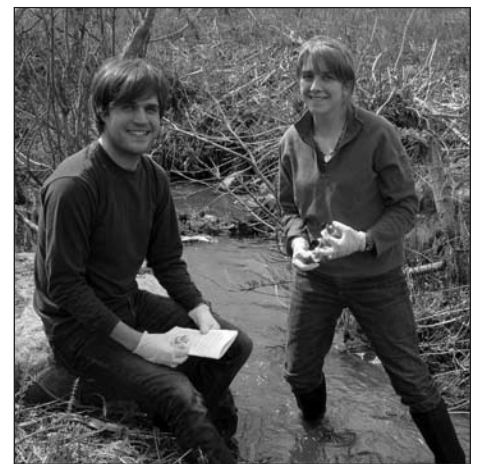
### Stream Temperature Monitoring Network

The good news: We were bracing for a dramatic and messy spring break-up this year after all the snow that fell last winter. Instead, it has been a very gradual melt. This welcome surprise makes our lives easier and also bodes well for our salmon this summer. With above-average water levels stored in our hills during the winter, and the slow release this spring, we'll have more in-stream flow this summer allowing better fish passage in smaller creeks and cooler water temperatures.

And we'll know what those temperatures are because this is the fifth year in a row that Cook Inletkeeper has coordinated the Stream Temperature Monitoring Network—a partnership of community organizations, Tribal entities,

federal and state agencies, and a cadre of wonderful volunteers working together to monitor temperatures in 48 local salmon streams.

The not-good news: Our winters are likely to get warmer due to climate change, so warm in fact that we'll have more rain than snow falling in the future winters. For our snow-loving salmon that need a deep snowpack to feed the rivers all summer long, the future looks warm and stressful. Our data will play an important role in identifying the most temperature-sensitive salmon streams in Cook Inlet. We can then prioritize our conservation and restoration efforts to give our wild salmon a fighting chance as thermal change continues. 



Greg Goforth and Kelly Barber, Inletkeeper's summer interns.



## Mercury in Your Food?

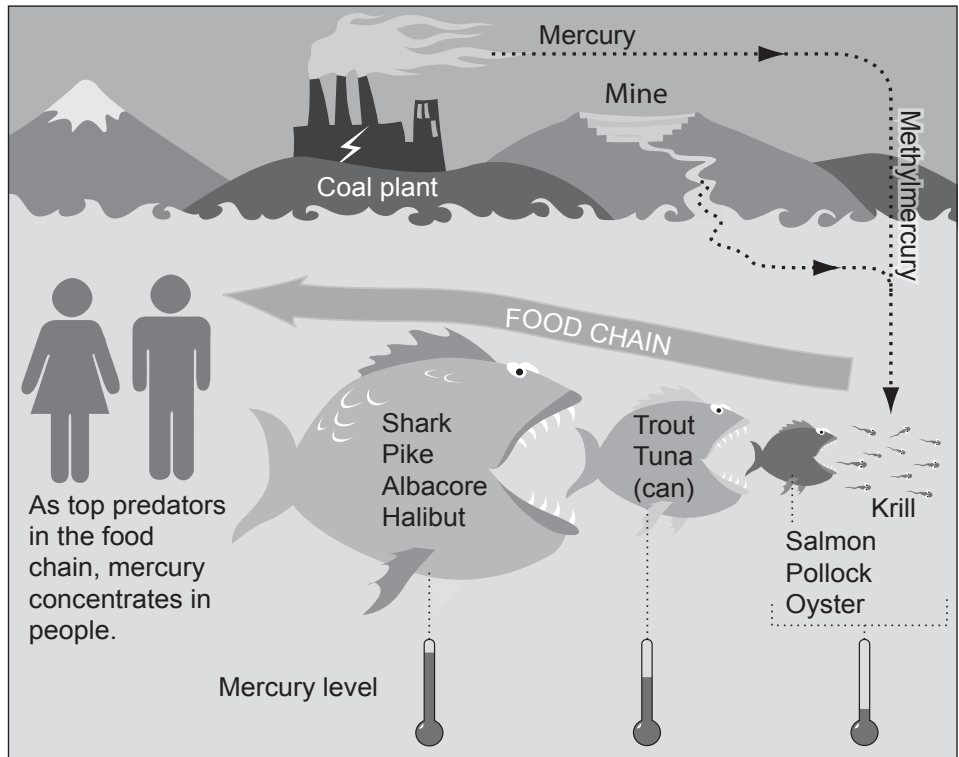
### *A basic primer on mercury contamination*

In 2007, then Governor Palin's Administration, issued consumption advisories for the consumption of Alaskan fish by women and children. The primary source of mercury in Alaskan fish is Asian coal combustion. Alaska contains 1/8th of the world's coal and there are several projects currently seeking permits to strip mine coal with the express purpose of exporting coal to foreign markets.

There is no question that mercury is bad for children and women. 1960s and 1970s, wheat treated with methylmercury as a preservative and intended as seed grain was fed to animals and directly consumed by people who exhibited "neurologic symptoms including paresthesias, loss of physical coordination, difficulty in speech, narrowing vision, hearing impairment, blindness and death. Children who had been exposed in-utero through their mother's ingestion were also affected with a range of symptoms including motor difficulties, sensory problems and mental retardation."

So how does mercury end up on your plate? Coal is mined; the fracturing of rock in the mining process causes the release of mercury that ends up in the streams, rivers lakes and the ocean where it turns into methylmercury. The mined coal is burned, releasing more mercury into the air. Global air currents carry mercury far and wide. Eventually the mercury falls to the ground, transforms to methylmercury and ends up in lakes, streams, rivers and oceans.

The methylmercury in the water is absorbed by algae. The algae are the start of the food chain. The algae are eaten by smaller creatures like krill; the krill are eaten by larger fish, which are eaten by even larger fish and so on. Because methylmercury is readily and completely



*Bioamplification of mercury in fish. Based on a diagram conceived by Ground Truth Trekking.*

absorbed by the gastrointestinal tract, it is concentrated at each step in the chain. Species on the food chain can amass body concentrations of mercury up to 10 times higher than the species they consume. For example, a small fish like herring contains mercury levels at about 0.01 part per million (ppm) while a top-tier predator like sharks contain mercury levels greater than 1.00 ppm.

At the top of the food chain are people, meaning we are very susceptible to consuming high concentrations of mercury contaminated fish. And that's how mercury ends up on your plate.



## Are Alaskan Fish Safe to Eat?

Alaska is blessed with amazing fish stocks that feed people all over world. Nursing women, women who could become pregnant and children should follow the guidelines for fish consumption. But if, as Alaskans, we allow coal mining projects, the days of safe-to-eat fish are numbered.

To view the Guide to Eating Fish Safely for Women and Children, go to: [bit.ly/SafeFish](http://bit.ly/SafeFish)

To view a detailed map of the coal-to-mercury cycle that shows how strip mining Alaskan salmon streams for coal results in increased levels of mercury in our wild food resources, go to: [bit.ly/MercuryMap](http://bit.ly/MercuryMap)

## Waters to Watch—The Anchor River

The National Fish Habitat Partnership has unveiled the 10 “Waters to Watch” list, a collection of the nation’s rivers, streams, estuaries and lakes that will benefit from strategic conservation efforts to protect, restore or enhance their current condition. Alaska’s Anchor River, which was nominated by the Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership, has been selected as one of the “Waters to Watch” for 2012.

The Anchor River has been the focus of a great deal of research, monitoring and restoration work over the last five years by members of the Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership.

Cook Inletkeeper’s Stream Temperature Monitoring Network and Science-Based Land Conservation projects, as well as other locally driven efforts, are supported with National Fish Habitat Partnership funding.

The 10 “Waters to Watch” list celebrates and highlights the best of the best, voluntary habitat conservation efforts in progress. We look forward to seeing the Anchor River in the national spotlight in the months ahead.



To learn more about the National Fish Habitat Partnership, see [www.fishhabitat.org](http://www.fishhabitat.org).

## ORGANIZATION

### Executive Leadership Transition: A Progress Report



As we announced in November 2011, Wayne Jenkins became Cook Inletkeeper’s new Executive Director. We’ve explained previously the rationale for dividing the duties carried for 16 years solely by Bob Shavelson, as both Inletkeeper and Executive Director, and the transition is well underway to complete the division of those positions.

Wayne is fully engaged and continues to “drink from the fire hose” as he gains experience using the crucial data systems necessary for his position, hones his relationships with staff and the Board of Directors, engages with members, and partners with just about anyone that will give him the time of day. As Bob and Wayne together work

through a carefully crafted transition process, Bob has gradually shifted away from administrative responsibilities to dedicate more of his time and energy to advocacy work.

When asked to comment on progress at the six-month mark, Wayne responded: “The transition was well planned (thank you Jim Abernathy, board and staff!) and, considering all that a professional and personal change like this means—moving to Alaska (in winter!), the sheer volume of new information, people to meet and get to know and basically putting together a new life—things have gone amazingly well, despite short winter days and occasional homesickness.

***Bob has gradually shifted away from administrative responsibilities to dedicate more of his time and energy to advocacy work.***

With something this complex, good planning is essential, but no guarantee of success. There are so many undefinables, ways to get off track. I would say that one obvious and necessary key ingredient is the close, respectful and clear communications Bob and I have insisted

on from the start, plus a commitment to work out everything that comes our way. We are both fully dedicated to success!”



### Giving the Gift of Stock


Recently, two of our longtime members and supporters, Jerry Brookman and Frank Mullen had a conversation. Frank is a financial planner in Homer; Jerry lives in Kenai and is an originating member of Cook Inletkeeper. Frank mentioned to Jerry that if he chose to do so, he could give a gift of appreciated stock to Cook Inletkeeper and avoid paying “post liquidation” capital gains taxes to the IRS. Cook Inletkeeper would receive the gift of stock at full value without a tax reduction due to capital gains taxation.

“When Frank described to me the benefit to myself and Cook Inletkeeper of gifting appreciated stock, I became very interested in the idea. I have been a longtime supporter of Cook Inletkeeper, and this seemed like a great way to leverage a contribution so that both parties come out as winners.”

Cook Inletkeeper is delighted to offer one more avenue for your support. It is important for us to diversify and expand our income in the face of increasing threats and challenges to our Inlet. Your financial gifts, no matter what approach you choose, are critical to sustaining the work vital to us all, ensuring a vibrant, health and abundant Cook Inlet! If you are interested in making a stock donation to Cook Inletkeeper, or have questions about how this works, call 907.235.4068 x30.




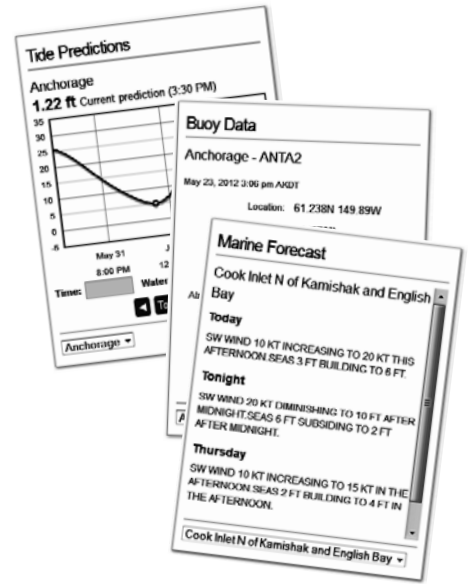
**It's Still Possible to Pick.Click.Give!**

We sincerely appreciate those of you who choose to contribute a portion of your Permanent Fund Dividend to Cook Inletkeeper through the Pick.Click.Give. program! These funds provide us with a very valuable source of funding. If you think you missed your opportunity, you are in luck. The charitable contributions program allows you to make deductions through August 31. Just select the myPFDinfo button at [www.pfd.alaska.gov](http://www.pfd.alaska.gov) and login to your account. Select Add or Change a Charitable Contribution from the home page, and choose Cook Inletkeeper from the list of options. We rely on supporters like you to continue our work for the Inlet. Please Pick.Click. Give today! 

**Pick.  
Click.  
Give.**

**Tides, Buoys and More at [inletkeeper.org](http://inletkeeper.org)**

Did you know the Cook Inletkeeper web site has weather and tide data? Just choose from the drop-down lists your preferred Cook Inlet location and see the latest tide, buoy, weather conditions, marine forecasts and more. It's easy to remember, and it's even optimized for smartphone viewing: [inletkeeper.org/weather](http://inletkeeper.org/weather) 



**Reflections**


*Continued from page 1*

the toy itself. To live in Alaska, you have to want to live here.

If you want to live here, if you love the long summer days and stormy winter nights, the salmon, bears, berries, moose and eagles and all that comes with them, if you can't imagine a world without these things, then you must speak up to ensure that the things you love are not destroyed. We must all stand up and be heard. If you don't speak up, who will? If you don't call foul on companies that

claim the impossible or ignore the rule of law, who will?


No one.

So the next time you hear "somebody should do something about that," maybe you should be that somebody. Pick up the phone, write a letter, do something to let the powers that be know that as Alaskans we will not sit idly by while Outsiders take from us with no regard for the impacts of their actions. 

***Cook Inletkeeper was founded by concerned citizens, just like you, who love this place. They sought a voice to counter industry claims and practices that harmed Alaskans. Now you must speak up. Without your eyes and ears, without your voice, Cook Inletkeeper could not do what it does—work tirelessly to ensure clean water for this and every generation to come. Without your voice, the only voices left will be those who don't love this place, and that would be a shame.***

*To learn more, visit [www.inletkeeper.org](http://www.inletkeeper.org)*

**Keeper News & Action Alerts**

If you aren't already getting your newsletter via email, please consider it. It helps us save money on paper, printing and postage. But it also means we can include you on timely updates about issues that affect the watershed via occasional Keeper News and Action Alerts. We can even send electronic membership renewal reminders. To update your membership record, email your complete contact information to [susanna@inletkeeper.org](mailto:susanna@inletkeeper.org). 

**Keeper News**  
**ACTION ALERT: Drift River Oil**  
**Why Salmon Love Snow**  
**EPA and Bristol Bay**  
**Inletkeeper Blog**

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Join Cook Inletkeeper at [www.inletkeeper.org](http://www.inletkeeper.org)

**WE NEED YOUR EYES & EARS ON COOK INLET!  
JOIN COOK INLETKEEPER & HELP PROTECT WATER QUALITY!**

YES! I want to support Cook Inletkeeper's work to protect the Cook Inlet watershed and the life it sustains.

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Student/Senior | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Patron       | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Benefactor      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Individual     | <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 Business     | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 Sedna's Court |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Family         | <input type="checkbox"/> \$365 Dollar-A-Day | <input type="checkbox"/> Other \$ _____        |

- I want to be a Keeper!  
I would like to give:  monthly  quarterly  other \_\_\_\_\_  
 \$25  \$10  \$5  other \_\_\_\_\_

Recurring donations help Inletkeeper save on administrative costs—so that each dollar goes even further to support our critical efforts to protect the watershed.

*I authorize Inletkeeper to make my gift a recurring payment that I may cancel or change at any time.*

Charge my    My check to Cook Inletkeeper is enclosed.

Please automatically renew my annual membership until I cancel.

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All gifts are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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- gifts of real or personal property
- including Inletkeeper in my will.

I'd like to occasionally volunteer my time for:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Water Monitoring | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____          |

*Thank you for your support!*

Save postage and do this all online at [inletkeeper.org/donate](http://inletkeeper.org/donate)

