

Inletkeeper's Monitor News

ISSUE 3

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Welcome new CEMP Volunteers!

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It has been a busy couple of months here at Inletkeeper—we're gearing up for a summer field season on the streams & beaches, hiring seasonal interns, had a visit from the World Bank and Homer High's Envirothon team, and most importantly training new volunteers! Welcome to Sara Thompson, Lee Dewees, Carla Milburn, Bob Burns, and Judy Nester! They will be sampling some of our top priority sites—upper Woodard Creek, Diamond Creek below the landfill, Ruby Creek, and Miller Creek above East End Rd. Many thanks to Dale Banks and Sue Mauger for joining us and helping out tremendously in the lab and the field. During training week, Bruce Macphail from the World Bank came up to Homer and participated in all of our training events. He will be using our CEMP as a case study for developing a citizens' monitoring program in West Africa as part of a community-based fisheries management initiative they are working on. In May we start sampling 2x per month—already we're in the summer schedule! **May 10th** will be our first Second Sunday Sampling. I'll be around the lab, and look forward to seeing you all!



Sara Thompson during Phase III of her training at Woodard Creek below the hospital

Watershed Summaries

What a wild past few months! We had 2 ash events following the eruption of Mount Redoubt, and although spring now feels like it's upon us, most CEMP streams were frozen solid through March. Beaver Creek, Woodard Creek by the Pratt, and McNeil were the only CEMP streams sampled in February and March (all three during February). Air temperatures ranged from 24°F in February at Woodard Creek to 38°F out at McNeil Canyon in March. There were no bacteria exceedences at any sites in February—only 1 *E. coli* colony at McNeil in the 5ml dilution (equivalent to 20cfu/100ml).

(continued on pg. 3)





Over 420,000 people live in the Cook Inlet Watershed—that represents more than 60% of Alaska’s population!

Field & Lab Notes

- Thanks to Mike Gracz and the Kenai Watershed Forum for donating 4 old digital cameras to CEMP! We’ll incorporate these into our quarterly photos in June.
- Make sure to **lock the building** when you come and go on the weekends if no one else is around!!
- Volcanic ash! Some questions have arisen about the potential effects of ash fall on our stream water. According to the USGS, the main parameters potentially affected by ash fall are turbidity (increased) and pH (decreased). Streams are considered to have “low to medium vulnerability” to changes in these parameters due to ash fall, and typically experience very short-lived fluctuations (a few hours to potentially a few days). Read more at: <http://volcanoes.usgs.gov/ash/water/index.html>

F.Y.I. BEACH Monitoring

Cook Inletkeeper has been working with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) since 2007 to monitor bacteria levels on Homer’s recreational beaches through the BEACH Program. The Beaches Environmental and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act of 2000 provides support to states via the EPA to decrease the risk to beach users of contact with fecal-contaminated water. Possible sources of fecal contamination include: sewage lagoons, storm water runoff, landfills, wildlife, septic tanks and leach fields.

Inletkeeper trains volunteers through a short 2-hour training (including sampling) to collect samples from the beaches on the Homer Spit (we currently sample at Mariner Park and Land’s End) once a week from May till September.

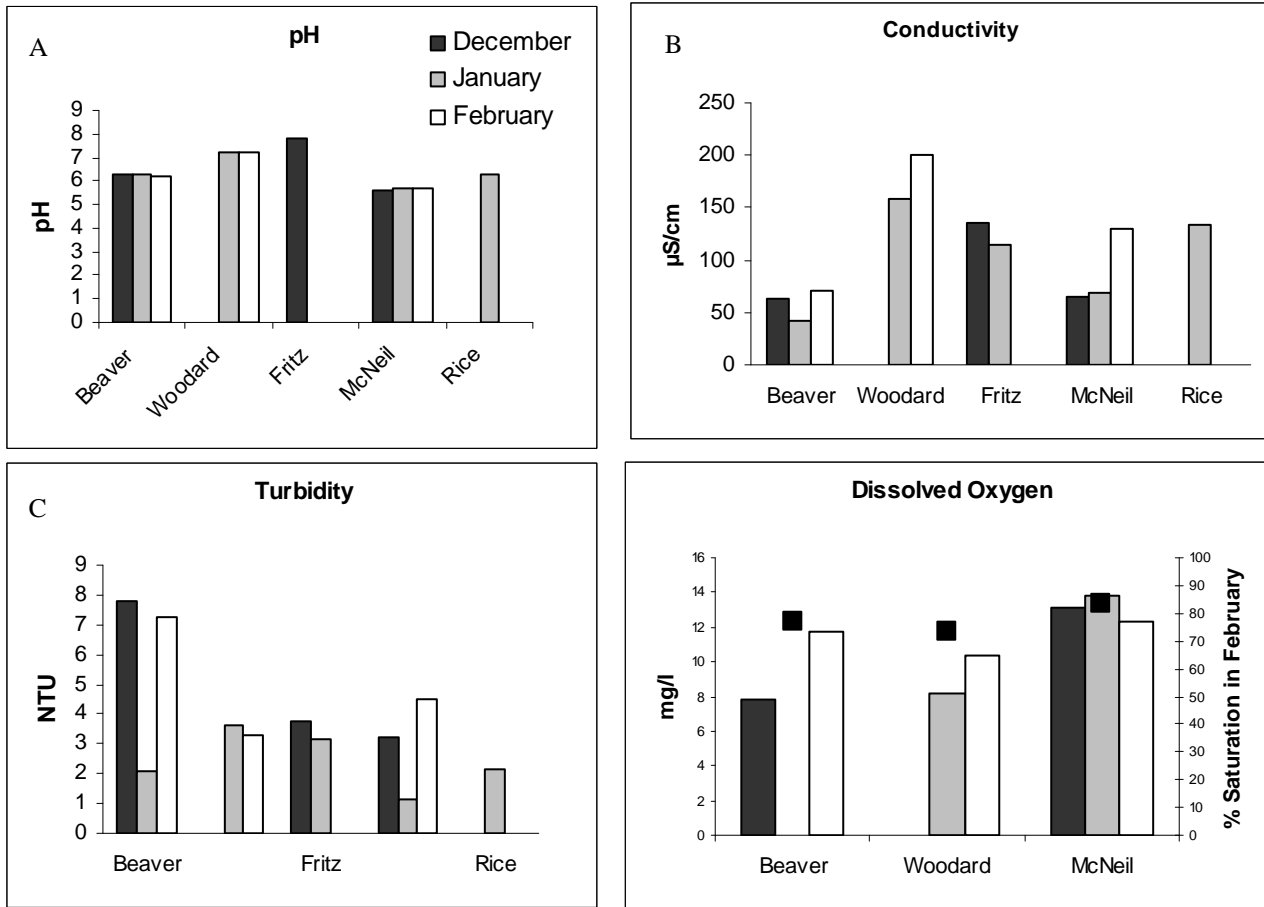
We’re looking for BEACH volunteers!

Time commitment: We sample once a week, on Mondays at 9:30am. Come and join us for some or all of the sampling!

If you are interested in becoming a BEACH Volunteer, call or email Rachel to sign up for a training. The training is about 1 hour long, immediately before the sampling time (so from 8:30—9:30am on Mondays).



Watershed Summaries (cont. from page 1)



In all above graphs, black bars show December, gray bars are January, and white bars represent February's data. pH values in Graph A fall roughly around the ideal range of 6.5—8.5, although McNeil has consistently lower pH values, remaining between 5.62 and 5.7 so far this year. Conductivity readings were above 100µS/cm in Woodard Creek and McNeil (Graph B). Conductivity values will decrease in the next month as snow melt increases and dilutes the influence from groundwater. Turbidity levels were all below 10 NTUs (Graph C) but with spring upon us we will probably be seeing higher turbidity in most streams through coming months. In Graph D we can see the ice melting and dissolved oxygen levels increasing in the 2 ice-covered streams from the winter, Beaver & Woodard. Although DO levels were slightly lower at McNeil, DO saturation (the amount of oxygen in the water relative to the total amount of oxygen it could hold at that temperature) was between 73 and 84% at all three sites (the black boxes on Graph D show DO Saturation values).

May 10th is a sampling day!

May 4, 11, 18, 25: BEACH Sampling days—let me know if you want to join us!

May 2nd: Homer Chamber Clean-up Day

May 7—10th: Homer Shorebird Festival!

May 21– 24th: K-Bay SeaFest

Dates to

remember:

