

INLETKEEPER®

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

www.inletkeeper.org Headquarters: 907.235.4068

Fall Quarter 2016



Another Record year for Inletkeeper Pick.Click.Give. Donations

During the 2016 PFD filing period Alaskans gave generously to a broad variety of charities across Alaska. This year 640 organizations will benefit from Pick.Click.Give. Nearly \$3.2 million will go to nonprofit causes across the state. Cook Inletkeeper received 242 pledges totalling nearly \$18,000 for 2016 another record for us!

THANK YOU!

If you missed Pick.Click.Give you can always give online: inletkeeper.org/donate

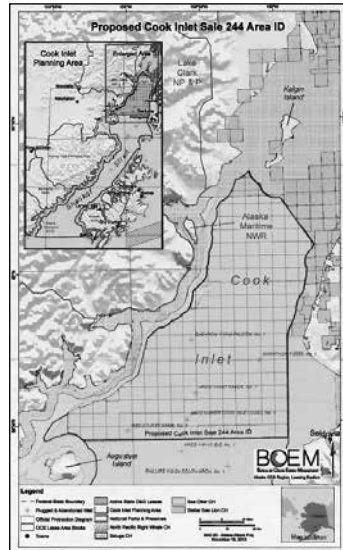
...because you love Cook Inlet.

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Feds Wasting Taxpayer Dollars with Endless Inlet Lease Sales

This past July, the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) sought comments on whether to lease over a million acres of rich fisheries in Lower Cook Inlet for oil and gas drilling. The feds have been holding oil and gas lease sales for decades in Cook Inlet, so you might think they would know not to solicit comments when Alaskans are out fishing and enjoying our long summer days. But that wasn't the case. And when Inletkeeper and other groups asked BOEM to extend the comment deadline to allow



The Feds want to lease 1 million acres of rich fisheries in the lower inlet.

more Alaskans to engage, BOEM said “no.” So Inletkeeper submitted a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, asking

BOEM how much money it had spent on the past three lease sales in Cook Inlet – none of which had garnered any bids from industry or resulted in any active leases (see chart, page 2). BOEM’s response? They didn’t have that information. Inletkeeper didn’t appreciate that cavalier response, so we traveled to Washington, DC, to meet with the BOEM Director – Abigail Ross-Hopkins. Ms. Ross-Hopkins had been in Alaska this past summer while the comment period on the Cook Inlet lease sale was open, but she opted to

meet with the Alaska Oil & Gas Association and its allies instead of everyday Alaskans who would be most-affected by oil and gas

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In Challenging Times, A Measure of Progress Community discussions help build resilience

If we were to measure forward momentum on addressing climate change by an increase in discussions around climate adaptation, then we are charging ahead. We have participated in three workshops focused on climate resilience and adaptation in just the past month.



Small group discussions during the Climate Resilience Workshop in Homer.

of potential solutions through a group brainstorming session related to food and energy security, fire management, and human health; and in a Homer workshop, we discussed new collaborations and better ways to communicate in order

In King Salmon, we joined Bristol Bay community leaders to identify tools and strategies for dealing with a rapidly changing coast. In Soldotna, we generated a long list

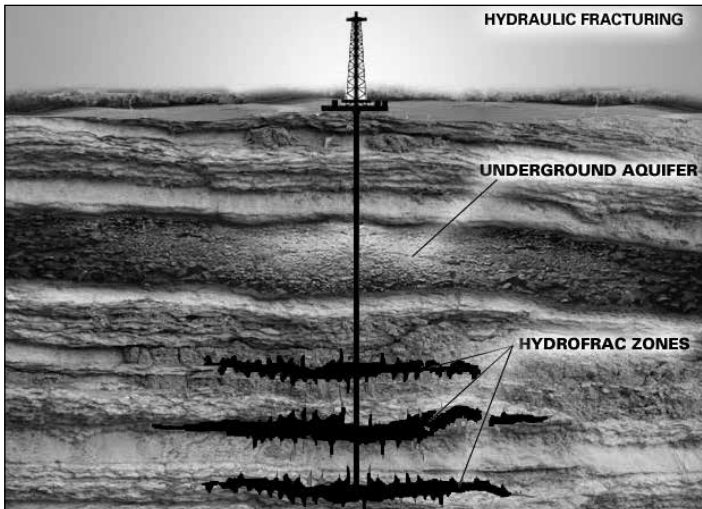
to develop more community resilience. Each discussion re-enforced our sense that there is no shortage of great ideas or inspired people thinking and caring about our future.

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Photo: Northern Latitudes

Public Hearing Set for Fracking Notice & Comment

Proposed hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) operations around Cook Inlet have prompted a strong public backlash. Yet under current rules, applications to conduct fracking do not require public notice or the opportunity for Alaskans to review and comment on them. In response, Inletkeeper petitioned the Alaska Oil & Gas Conservation Commission (AOGCC) to make fracking applications subject to public notice and comment. Now, AOGCC has agreed to hold a hearing on the issue at 9 AM on December 15 at their offices located at 333 West 7th Avenue in Anchorage. Check out www.inletkeeper.org or contact keeper@inletkeeper.org for more information.



Public comment should be part of Alaska’s fracking permitting process. (image not to scale)

Court Case Could Spell Hope for Cook Inlet Salmon Habitat

In a case that could shape fish habitat management in Cook Inlet for years to come, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals recently held that the North Pacific Fishery Management Council violated federal law when it removed Cook Inlet salmon fisheries from federal fisheries management plan requirements. While the dust has yet to settle on exactly what the state and federal governments will be required to do to comply with the court ruling, it’s likely they will have to conduct an essential fish habitat (EFH) analysis throughout the Cook Inlet watershed. Neither the state nor the feds currently takes a comprehensive, watershed-based view toward salmon habitat protection. As a result, Inletkeeper is encouraged by the prospect that fish habitat – rather than the ever-contentious issue of fish allocation – will finally start to get the attention.

Endless Lease Sales

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development in Lower Cook Inlet. During the meeting, BOEM promised to provide the cost figures for the lease sale, and conceded BOEM had likely spent tens of millions of dollars over the past decade for lease sales in Cook Inlet. But more importantly, Inletkeeper was able to tell the Director and her staff about our experience as Alaskans with climate change. As we wrote to her in our comment letter:

“When Alaskans around Cook Inlet talk about climate change, it’s not from some theoretical or esoteric perspective. Instead, we talk about the thousands of acres of dead and dying spruce trees all around us, infested by an aphid which is flourishing in our warmer temperature regime. We talk about mass die-offs of sea otters and common murre; we experience firsthand sea star wasting disease and never-before-seen incidences of toxic alga; we lament the fact we have had no real winter in three years; and we have years of data showing alarming warming trends in our cold-water salmon streams. Just last week, Anchorage broke its record high temperature by 7 degrees F.2

As climate change wracks our shores on a daily basis, oil and gas development remains highly controversial. That’s why it’s so important for BOEM to engage Alaskans in an authentic discussion about renewable energy on the OCS. Cook Inlet boasts world-class renewable power supplies— from the second highest tides in North America to prolific wind and solar potential— and BOEM can help make Alaska a leader in renewable jobs and technologies.”

Inletkeeper is not naïve enough to believe we can turn around BOEM overnight. But with steady pressure over the years, we’ve helped to put climate change on their radar, and to keep oil and gas infrastructure out of the waters of Lower Cook Inlet.

Resilience in Challenging Times

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In the year ahead we expect to remain actively engaged in adaptation discussions and exploring new technologies, like thermal imagery, to provide Alaska salmon the best chance of thriving in a warming future; however, we seek not just resiliency (i.e. the ability to bounce back from adversity) but sustainability and solutions to bounce forward to a future powered by renewable energy and fed by local foods.

While we applaud the attention climate adaptation planning is getting, if we measure forward momentum on addressing climate change by the number of climate-related questions asked during the presidential debates; or by the formation of a state-led climate task force; or by the elimination of oil and gas subsidies; then we see we are flat on our feet. Real progress requires similar attention to our carbon emission problem.

Kenai Peninsula Food: Thankful for Local Options!



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WATERKEEPER ALLIANCE

Local is growing! Through the funding of Local Foods Promotion Program, a two-year grant provided by the USDA, Cook Inletkeeper launched the Kenai Peninsula Food Hub this year with pick-up locations in Homer, Soldotna and Seldovia. In the first 3 months of operation, the Food Hub has distributed over to \$10,000 in 100% locally grown and harvested produce, seafood, oysters, meats, and crafts, and boasts 25 active producers and over 350 customers signed up. We are exploring the possibility of expanding the hub by partnering with other interested communities.

The Food Hub is a collaboration across many communities, organizations, and individuals. We are thankful to each and every contribution made. We are also thankful for communities who see the value in projects like this one that create new local economic opportunities.

The Food Hub plans to operate through Thanksgiving. Check out what's available locally when planning your holiday meals and gifts. Nothing tastes better than food made with love and local, fresh ingredients. Learn more at: www.kenaifoodhub.org

Holiday Recipe: Honey Glazed Root Veggies

Ingredients: (* - ingredients to locally source

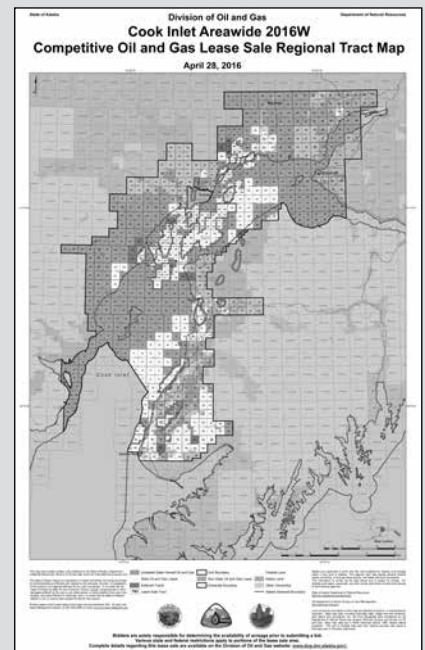
- 1.5 lb. parsnips*
- 1.5 lb. carrots*
- 1.5 lb. turnips*
- 1.5 lb. beets*
- 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup honey*
- 6 thyme sprigs*
- 6 rosemary sprigs*
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

How to Prepare: Preheat the oven to 425°. Dice all root vegetables into 1/2 inch cubes. In a large bowl, toss the root vegetables with the oil, honey, vinegar, and thyme and season with salt and pepper. Divide between 2 large, sturdy rimmed baking sheets. Cover with foil and roast for 40 minutes, shifting the pans once, until the vegetables are tender. Remove the foil and roast for 10 minutes longer, until glazed. Return them to the bowl and toss with salt and pepper. Serve right away.



Is Area-Wide Leasing in the State's Best Interest?

Under the state's so-called area-wide leasing scheme, DNR offers over 4.2 million acres of state lands and waters in Cook Inlet every year for oil and gas development. But similar to other divestments of state resources, the sale must comply with Article VIII of the Alaska Constitution and be in the best interests of Alaskans. For years, our agencies, courts and legislature have assumed oil and gas development was a positive force for the state. Today, however, as Alaska's economy continues a death spiral due to our undue reliance on oil and gas, and with new revelations about climate change and ocean acidification occurring on a daily basis, Inletkeeper is pushing back on the status quo. Now, with help from our lawyers at Earthjustice, Inletkeeper and its partners are pressing the state to think outside the oil and gas box, and to develop a renewable energy leasing scheme that will help us break our addiction to fossil fuels.



Staff Changes

We have 4 dedicated staff who will be moving on to new adventures. Our summer intern Maya Goudini returned to school in Hawaii. Our anchorage organizer, Matt Koenig and our Clean Boating Coordinator, Heather Leba are moving on to pursue new passions. And our long-time Clean Water Director Rachel Lord will be dedicating more time to her farm and family. Thank you for your great contributions!



Matt Koenig, Maya Goudini, Heather Leba, and Rachel Lord (and family)

Mobile Weather

The Weather Service responded to feedback from users that its new website, while full of great information, tools and images, is slow and difficult to load on mobile devices and in areas of low bandwidth. They responded with a fantastic alternative - stripped of all images, it is easy to navigate and quickly loads to give you the bare bones forecasts you rely on around the state! Check it out at: weather.gov/source/afc/mobile



Real-time on the Russian River

In mid-October, we hiked the Russian Lakes Trail with full backpacks, a shovel, 8 feet of metal unistrut, a solar panel, and two motorcycle batteries to set up our third real-time temperature monitoring station. Now along with the Anchor and Deshka rivers, we are serving up water and air temperature data online in real-time on the Russian River.



Jeff Sires and Branden Bornemann with the Kenai Watershed Forum and Inletkeeper's Sue Mauger install a new temperature monitoring station on the Russian River.

Visit our website to keep an eye on what's happening next spring during break up and how warm we get next summer. With access to real-time data, Alaskans will know where and when we have temperatures stressful to Cook Inlet salmon. Bookmark: inletkeeper.org/healthy-habitat/real-time-temperature-sites/



Alaska Clean Harbors Program Passes Over to Marine Exchange

Since 2009, Cook Inletkeeper has led the charge on developing and expanding the Alaska Clean Harbors program, working with diverse stakeholders around the state. During the fall conference of the Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators, Inletkeeper's Rachel Lord officially passed the reins of the program to the Marine Exchange of Alaska.

Alaska Clean Harbors is a voluntary program providing pollution prevention tools for local communities to protect the marine resources that support the state's coastal economies. We are extremely proud of the success of ACH, and excited about its future. The Marine Exchange is a statewide non-profit organization that provides information, communication, and services to the state's diverse maritime community from recreational boaters to fishing fleets to vessels engaged in



international trade transiting Alaska waters. They aren't new to the Clean Harbors program. Brett Farrell, Assistant Director of the Marine Exchange, is a member of the Advisory Committee that oversees ACH. The Advisory Committee also includes representatives from Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program, Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources, NOAA Fisheries Restoration Center, Green Star, and the Alaska Association of Harbormasters

and Port Administrators

Since its inception in 2011, ACH has certified four harbors: Homer, Seward, Haines and Sitka. The cities of Valdez, Whittier, Bethel, Kodiak, Juneau and Dillingham have all signed Clean Harbor pledges and are working towards certification. See more at www.alaskacleanharbors.org.

