

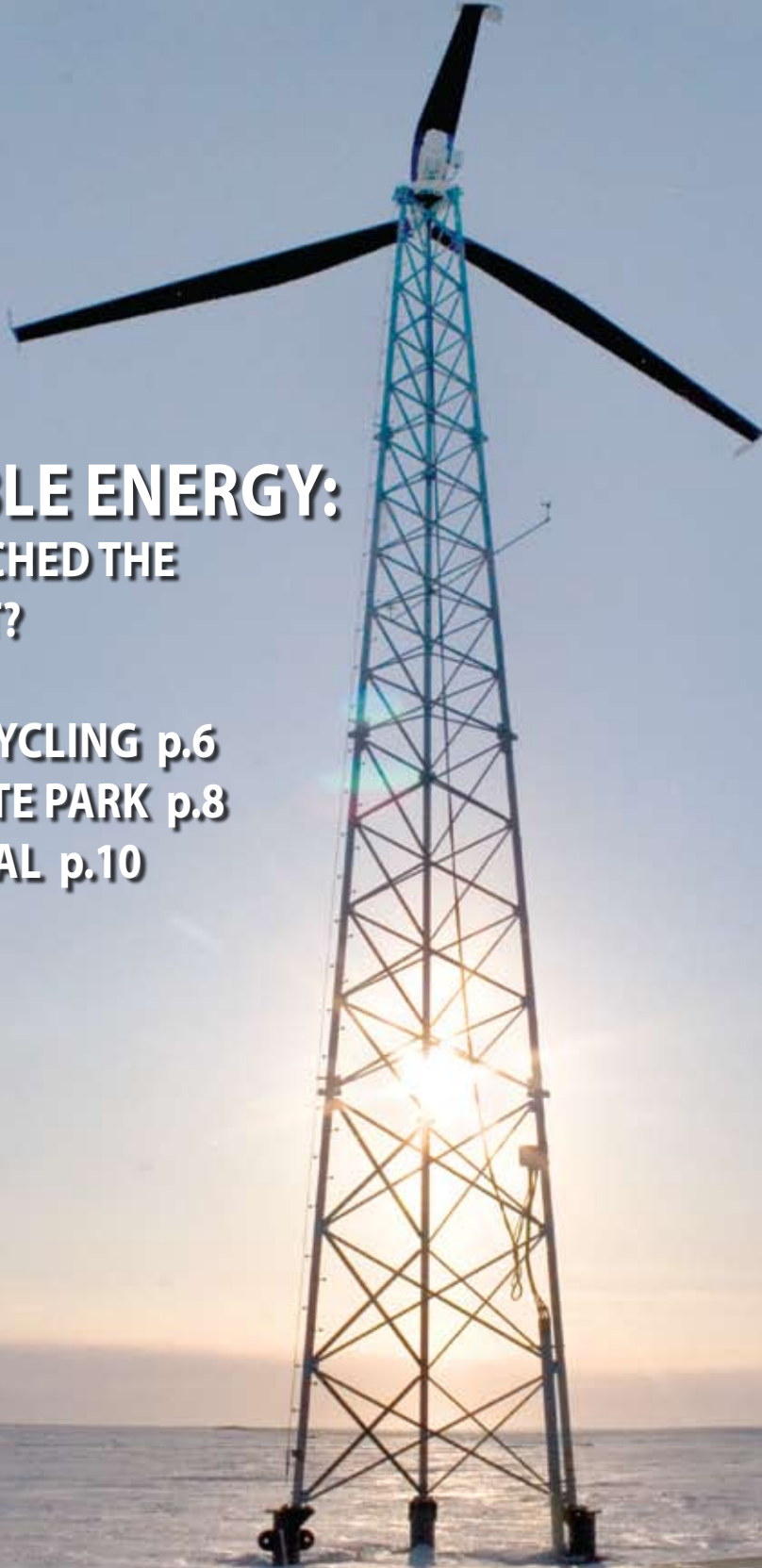


ALASKA CENTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

SUMMER 2008

Center News

BECAUSE YOU LOVE ALASKA



RENEWABLE ENERGY: HAVE WE REACHED THE TIPPING POINT?

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Note to our members: In ACE's Spring 2008 newsletter, we unfortunately did not list Valerie Waldrop as the author of the cover article, "March Madness." We want to give our sincerest thanks to Valerie for volunteering her time to research and submit the article for publication in ACE's newsletter.

Cover by Damion Kintz: One of the four wind turbines located in the village of Selawik.

Newsletter layout by:



from the **DIRECTOR**

THE GREEN MACHINE

As the green of summer envelopes us, energy is on everyone's minds. The rising cost of fuel is getting everyone's attention. It appears that we have reached a tipping point, leading many of us to make different choices in our daily lives. In the realm of transportation, "Bike to Work Day" recorded more participation than ever before, bus and van ridership is up, carpooling and walking are becoming more popular and some are just saying no to unneeded trips in the car. For many, however, the high cost of fuel is crippling. Literally everything we buy and consume is reliant on energy for manufacture, production and transport. In Alaska, the average distance our food travels from its origin to our plate is 5,000 miles.

With the ever-burgeoning population and increased demand for a limited commodity we are facing a huge global shift in our relationship with how we produce and consume energy. Here in Alaska we are fortunate to be rich in renewable energy options. Our choices are many and distributed throughout the state making locally-generated power a very real option for many of our villages, towns and cities.

Alaska is poised to be a promising leader in the energy field. Why not develop a world class university where students can study innovative ways to capture and store clean energy, build and maintain systems, address climate change issues, do research and development on the myriad ways we can become a more sustainable and equitable community with a smaller carbon footprint? Our northerly location has translated into greater impacts from global climate change, providing unique challenges and opportunities that need to be addressed by our decision makers.

The legislature and Governor approved several bills and appropriations this last session that will facilitate conservation measures and help fund renewable energy projects. At the same time, we need to continue to educate people about our warming planet and our role in it. Coal is not the answer to our energy woes and we must continue to pressure our decision makers to steer clear of coal-mining and combustion. In any case, the increasing cost of fuel should not precipitate a rush to develop more fossil fuel resources. We need to come up with a viable energy plan, one that will require some conservation measures. It would be irresponsible of us to continue down the path of squandering our precious resources when we have renewable alternatives.

We hope this summer newsletter will inform you about a few ways where you can reduce your energy footprint and inspire you to get involved in ways that are easy and work for you. Whether it's recycling, buying local, recreating in our backyard parks, weatherizing your home, or simply deciding to leave your car parked at home, we thank you for your efforts and continued support of ACE.

- Valerie Connor
Interim Director

RENEWABLE ENERGY

ENERGY LEGISLATION

Alaska is on its way to producing safe and reliable energy that is emission free, sustainable, and renewable. The negative impacts of rising energy costs around the state have led the legislators of the 25th legislature to unanimously pass two proactive energy bills. **HB 152 The Renewable Energy Fund**, which provides loans and grants to viable renewable energy projects around Alaska, and **SB 289 Home Energy Rebate and Weatherization Programs** encourages homeowners to take the initiative by making their homes more energy efficient. ACE, along with the unwavering support of our members encouraged the passage of both pieces of legislation.

Legislation History:

HB 152 began its two-year journey in the House. Introduced and sponsored by House Speaker John Harris (R-Valdez) and Representative Bill Thomas (R-Haines), **A Renewable Energy Fund** passed the House unanimously during the first session of the 25th legislature. In its final version, the legislature pledged \$50 million this year and another \$50 million for the next four years for a total of at least \$250 million to support renewable energy projects. Last summer, Governor Palin also pledged to support \$250 million for a bill like HB 152 after a poll conducted by the governor's office revealed that investing in renewable energy is the state's number 4 priority. The Governor kept her promise by signing HB 152 into law on May 23rd.

SB 289 Home Energy Rebate and Weatherization Programs had a much different journey in the 25th legislature. Introduced and sponsored by Senator



Damion Kintz

Lyman Hoffman (D-Bethel), SB 289 showed up in the middle of the second session and rapidly made it through

By Mikayla Saito

both the Senate and the House. SB 289 also has a significant commitment of \$300 million to expand the Alaska Housing and Finance Corporation (AHFC) weatherization and efficiency programs.

Why Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation?

HB 152 and SB 289 are serious commitments to Alaska's future energy needs. Both bills provide Alaskans with the necessary incentives to pursue clean and sustainable energy. Renewable energy provides Alaskans with more opportunities to develop increasingly affordable and efficient energy technology, which has the potential to convey significant economic, health and environmental benefits throughout Alaska. Power sources such as wind, solar, tidal, geothermal, biomass, and hydroelectric are all reliable, safe, and reasonably priced energy sources that are necessary in order to maintain Alaska's infrastructure, economic security and technological development. Alaska is fortunate to have unparalleled natural and renewable energy resources and has the opportunity to lead America and the world in the development of clean power.

Currently, Alaskan consumers are dependent on fossil fuel. The rising costs of these energy needs is creating many difficulties around the state, especially in rural communities where as much as one-third or more of rural families' annual income is

spent on electricity, hot water, and heating. New energy technologies will bring vitality to Alaska's economy and communities through new jobs and economic opportunities, as well as help to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels.

The Home Energy Rebate and Weatherization Programs helps to decrease household energy demands, provides short-term relief, and invests in long-term solutions for Alaska's energy needs. By expanding the AHFC's weatherization and efficiency programs, SB 289 helps the AHFC serve a greater portion of Alaskans. The 2005 Statewide Housing Assessment estimated the number of weatherization income-eligible households in Alaska to be 45,000 statewide. If two-thirds of these homes were weatherized we would prevent the creation of more than one billion pounds of carbon emissions and save more than \$227 million. This bill also increases the number of grants available to improve energy efficiency in Alaskan homes. Making your home more energy efficient allows you to become eligible for an efficiency upgrade of \$2,500 to \$5,000, according to the standards of the program.

Implementation

Of course, the key to any state or policy program is its implementation. The Alaska Energy Authority (AEA), is the lead state agency assigned to implementing HB 152. A seven-member advisory committee with five members appointed by the Governor, and one spot for both a senate and house member, will assist the Alaska Energy Authority in putting together the program's general and funding regulations. AEA is already taking the initiative by holding Energy Plan Town Hall meetings in twenty-five communities across the state.

The Home Energy Rebate and

Weatherization programs are already in place and are housed in the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation. The Home Energy Rebate Program is currently accepting AkWarm Energy Ratings performed by AkWarm certified energy raters. The costs for these ratings are covered by the AHFC for up to a total of \$500. In order to



Damion Kintz

qualify, the homeowner must have a home energy rater evaluate their homes before and after the efficiency improvements. The more a home's energy efficiency improves, the greater the possible rebate a homeowner may receive. The homeowner can receive up to a \$10,000 rebate for energy efficiency improvements. The Home

Energy Weatherization program differs from the Home Energy Rebate program in that it awards grants to non-profit organizations for the improvement of the energy efficiency of low-income homes statewide. To learn more about these programs or to see if you are eligible visit the AHFC's website at http://www.ahfc.state.ak.us/energy/weatherization_rebates.cfm.

You Made a Difference:

The letters, emails, phone calls, and discussions that you have had about renewable energy and home energy conservation helped to pass these bills. These programs provide Alaska with an encouraging start to a more comprehensive energy vision, while also relieving some of the current energy costs. Through your active participation, ACE was able to help support, encourage, and facilitate the passage of these bills. Alaskans now have more opportunities to be more independent of fossil fuels while reducing our carbon footprint and engaging in new innovative technologies. Our state legislators deserve a great deal of thanks and appreciation for their work to make these programs possible, and many thanks to ACE's members who demonstrated their support for these programs.

More Opportunities:

There are still many more opportunities to develop a sustainable energy policy for Alaska. Many of the renewable resources (solar, geothermal, wind and hydro) are located on private land and are ripe for private property owner development and investment. Representative Paul Seaton (R-Homer) introduced **HB 288 Net Metering**, which would require electric utilities to offer customers the option of installing a net metering system. This bill would allow consumers to get a credit on their bill for the energy they create through

alternative energy. Last session this bill heard overwhelming support from all regions of the state. This bill would provide incentives for homeowners to invest in small-scale renewable energy projects, thereby reducing their carbon footprint. Utilities may benefit from net metering through better

public relations built by allowing and encouraging customers to partner with the utility at an appropriate economy of scale. Alaska is on a roll in providing smart reliable energy; why not take one more step in the right direction and encourage individual renewable projects and production?

Please write to Representative Seaton at Rep_Paul_Seaton@legis.state.ak.us and encourage him to re-introduce 'Net Metering' in the 26th legislative session.

PALIN APPROVES \$25 MILLION FOR FIRE ISLAND WIND FARM

Located three miles southwest of Anchorage, across from the Ted Stevens International Airport, Fire Island is not an uncommon site from the air. Although the island does not look like much, it has vast potential for producing a significant amount of wind energy for the rail belt. Currently, more than 90% of Southcentral is powered by natural gas. By diversifying our energy resources, a wind farm on Fire Island could potentially generate enough energy to power 15,000-18,000 Anchorage homes, stretch the supply of natural gas, reduce our carbon

wind power to the city's grid, was an important piece in kicking off implementation of the project. Just last year, Governor Palin vetoed this very same appropriation. Certainly the rising costs of fuel coupled with a poll showing that a majority of Alaskans support renewable energy projects influenced the Governor's decision.

Although the appropriation was issued this year, it was passed with some strings attached. To begin with, no state money will be spent until the power sales agreements are legally established among all utilities. In

of the wind turbines and construction of infrastructure, totals \$175 million. The state's contribution of \$25 million helps to make this project economically viable for the private interests who will invest an additional \$100-\$125 million. Additionally, the federal government is also expected to help with the remaining \$15-\$20 million necessary to get the power off the island and into our homes.

With Cook Inlet's natural gas supply expected to run out in 8 years, wind energy could help off-set at least 7% of Chugach Electric's usage



Fire Island wind farm simulation. Courtesy of Chugach Electric, used with permission.

emissions, and stabilize energy costs. However, high initial infrastructure costs have delayed this project from going forward.

After years of support from ACE and our members, Governor Palin, in an unexpected yet pleasant surprise, approved a \$25 million appropriation for the Fire Island Wind Farm project in the 2008 Capital Budget. This appropriation, which will support development of the undersea transmission lines tying the island's

addition, the Alaska Energy Authority has been charged as the primary state agency in control of the appropriation and construction of the lines. Once the transmission lines are in place they will then be recognized as publicly owned assets.

The wind energy plan also includes training facilities for other wind projects in rural Alaska, making remote wind projects more affordable. The entire project, including the costs

of natural gas. If the project breaks ground this year, Cook Inlet Region Inc. officials forecast the project could be finished by 2009, helping to cushion the steep price increases as our natural gas supply diminishes. Governor Palin's support for this appropriation is greatly appreciated as the Fire Island Wind Farm will be a hopeful beginning towards a more sustainable energy future for Alaska.

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SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Anchorage has finally adopted curbside recycling and recycling in public schools. In this issue, we'll explore some of the recent victories ACE's Sustainable Communities Program celebrated, and highlight the challenges ahead. Myopic transportation proposals, however, still threaten our health, recreation, and way of life.

ACE VICTORY: CURBSIDE RECYCLING PLAN PASSES UNANIMOUSLY!

By SaraEllen Hutchison

On Tuesday, May 6, after three hours of testimony in front of a standing-room-only crowd, the Anchorage Assembly unanimously passed the curbside recycling ordinance. Not only that, but Alaska Waste responded to the overwhelming community demand for curbside recycling and in early June unveiled their plan to serve most of their neighborhoods with curbside. It is happening everywhere, sooner than we thought—and we can thank the citizens for demanding it!

City officials noted that May 6 was the largest turnout at an Assembly hearing they had seen in several years. Your volunteer efforts, testimony, postcards and emails to your Assembly representatives made the difference!

City curbside pickup will start before the end of 2008 for roughly one third of the Solid Waste Services (SWS) area. (For a curbside map with pickup schedule, go to <http://www.muni.org/sws/recycling.cfm>.) As the city acquires more of the new automated garbage trucks, curbside will expand throughout all of SWS in early 2009.

Here's how SWS curbside will work: The new garbage rates are “pay as you throw,” meaning that residents will be charged according to how much trash they put out each week. This is a great incentive to reduce waste and recycle more. Each SWS household will receive their choice of a small, medium, or large trash roll cart, which will be picked up weekly. For many households, the small container

is plenty of space and will be \$2.00 cheaper than the old garbage rate.

Recycling is included in the monthly garbage rate. Each household will have bi-monthly pickup of a large 96-gallon recyclables roll cart into which paper, newspaper, aluminum and steel cans, and #1 and #2 plastic bottles may be thrown together. Alaska Waste's curbside is similar; go to <http://www.alaskawaste.net/> for details.

Plastic bags and glass must still be taken to a drop-off location. Glass is an important commodity for local glass processor and manufacturer EK Industries, Inc. and your “contribution” goes to support an Alaskan business. Newspaper that is dropped off at the recycling center off Dowling will continue to go to the local business ThermoKool, Inc., a manufacturer of highly efficient building insulation.

After the new automated garbage truck picks up your recycling cart, it drops the materials off at the Anchorage Recycling Center on Dowling Road where it is baled together, unsorted. Alaskans for Litter Prevention and Recycling (ALPAR) coordinates the backhauling of materials from curbside and drop-off centers (other than glass and newspaper from drop-offs) to Seattle for processing at a negotiated reduced rate. The ultimate vision is to have a Materials Recovery Facility here in Anchorage. Recycling skeptics need not worry that valuable commodities will “go in a landfill somewhere in the lower 48:” the tipping fee (disposal fee) in Seattle is \$90, roughly twice what it is here.

Smurfit has every incentive to be paid for these commodities rather than have to pay to dispose of them in a landfill where the tipping fee is higher than it is in Anchorage.

Beyond extending the life of the landfill, recycling creates jobs for Alaskans. Smurfit-Stone, operator of the Anchorage Recycling Center off Dowling, employs 11 people and hopes to double that number if a MRF (Materials Recovery Facility) is built in Anchorage. Bob Tenge, Director of the Smurfit-Stone Anchorage Recycling Center, says that “industry is going crazy over things they never even gave lip service to in the past because they realize they save money” by going green. Smurfit-Stone is predominantly a paper company, so Tenge is in the best position to know what the recycled commodities are worth. Even a recession would not affect demand for recycled commodities. With the cost of fuel doubling over the last two years, the price of steel increasing tenfold over the past five years, and the growing industrial demands of China, recycled paper, plastic, and metals are in high demand because they take much less energy to remanufacture than it takes to make new goods from scratch.

ACE's vision is to make curbside recycling available to all neighborhoods. In the meantime, a Community-wide recycling plan that puts recycling in public schools, public places, and builds new drop-off centers in more neighborhoods is one of our top priorities here at ACE. On June 10, the Assembly voted 10-1 in favor of

school recycling and public space recycling. Thanks to citizen testimony at the May 6 hearing, including a tremendous showing by Alaska Youth for Environmental Action, the Assembly now knows that for many years school recycling had been an out-of-pocket volunteer effort. Students and teachers have burned fuel to haul materials to the Smurfit-Stone Recycling Center and PTA and teachers paid for recycling dumpsters. Fortunately, recycling services will now be located on school grounds.



We can't reuse gasoline, but we can reduce our dependence on energy and mining by recycling and reusing food and beverage containers. Just say no to that plastic bag!

2 m. tons of PET bottles not recycled in 2005
 = The energy equivalent of approximately 18 m. barrels of crude oil*
 54 b. aluminum cans + 7 b. HDPE bottles/jugs + 29 b. glass bottles not recycled
 = 4.8 m. tons of greenhouse gases = Energy of 53.5 m. barrels of crude oil*
 Every year we make enough plastic film to shrink-wrap Texas.**
 Manufacturing recycled aluminum cans results in an energy savings of 96%
 and reduces the need for mining bauxite in Australia, Guinea, and Jamaica.†
 The energy in one #1 PETE soda bottle can run a computer for 24 minutes.†

*Container Recycling Institute www.container-recycling.org, **www.oberlin.edu/recycle/facts.html, †Bob Tenge, Anchorage Recycling Center

UPDATE: KNIK ARM BRIDGE PROPOSAL MAY BE FALLING DOWN

The Knik Arm Bridge proposal represents the antithesis of sustainability and transparent government. This proposed “bridge to nowhere,” with a murky reputation as a pork project, offers an alternate route to the Mat-Su Valley that is actually longer than the route we already have and will have higher costs in fuel use and tolls - a round trip is expected to be at least \$10 and go up from there. Since the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority (KABATA) was created in 2003 during the Frank Murkowski Administration,

this agency has burned through almost \$40 million to lobby and rationalize for a bridge despite national ridicule, a possible moratorium on earmarks, and a convoluted financing scheme that could help foreign investors at the expense of Alaskans. During the legislative session, ACE supported the efforts of State Sen. Johnny Ellis and Rep. Les Gara to pass bills (SB 268 and HB 365) that would require a 60-day review period and legislative approval for a bridge, making KABATA operate with similar transparency and

accountability that Governor Palin champions in the Alaska Gasline Inducement Act process. While these bills did not become law, they brought needed attention to the project: the Palin administration is now taking a critical look and former Anchorage Mayor George Weurch resigned from his post as KABATA Board Chairman. Furthermore, a poll conducted by Hays Research in March found that over 70% of Anchorage-Mat-Su residents are opposed to a route that has high costs and would take longer to travel.

VICTORY: AIRPORT PLAN TO BUILD RUNWAY WITHDRAWN

The May 22 public meeting on the Anchorage International Airport Master Plan Update was a success for trail supporters as well as the airlines. In the face of strong airline and community opposition, the airport shelved a proposal that would have placed a second north-south runway parallel to the existing one, requiring rerouting of the Coastal Trail and possibly extend into Cook Inlet. The Airport claimed this was necessary to meet projected traffic demand, but based their numbers on an unconstrained forecast that did

not account for increased fuel costs or possible instability in the Far East, where much of the cargo traffic comes from. A coalition of airline carriers took the airport by surprise with their statement condemning the proposal, and nearly 200 trail supporters, many wearing “We [heart] the Coastal Trail” stickers turned out against the proposal.

ACE was extremely skeptical of the new runway idea from the beginning because of the significant impacts on Anchorage’s environmental and recreational assets and the lack

of an independent evaluation of the need for it. With the second runway plans shelved, our community is saved from the following negative impacts: more noise, more jet fuel in our air and water, and a loss of natural open space that provides wildlife habitat and a needed buffer between recreational uses and high-impact airport operations - not to mention the loss of almost 200 acres of dedicated Municipal Parkland (Pt. Woronzof Park) and the filling of over 150 acres of tidelands in the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge.

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WILDLANDS & RIVERS

CHUGACH STATE PARK: ANCHORAGE'S BACKYARD WILDERNESS

By Eric Uhde

Anyone who has lived in or visited Anchorage has heard the old adage “Alaska is only twenty minutes away.” Chugach State Park is more than a backdrop to our flourishing city of Anchorage. You don’t have to spend a lot of time or money on gas to get out and experience the wild side of Southcentral Alaska. Chugach State Park is so close to the city and it has it all-- wilderness, wildlife, and easy walks through the forest or challenging climbs and expeditions into the mountains.

At nearly 500,000 acres, Chugach State Park is one of the nation’s largest state parks. Whether you arrive by land, sea or air, the mountains of the Park leave a lasting impression, a stunning panorama from Eagle River to Girdwood.

Currently the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation is reviewing and rewriting the 1980 Chugach State Park Master Plan. It has been nearly thirty years since park users have had the chance to weigh in on comprehensive park management decisions. This summer ACE is working with users, local residents, and the Division of Parks to insure

that Chugach State Park stays wild. The highest care should be taken when planning for the future of Chugach State Park. A park designation calls for the highest possible land conservation for State of Alaska lands; therefore the park is not intended to provide all recreational opportunities to all users.



Damion Kintz

Protection of resources for future Alaskans should be the number one goal for the park.

Chugach State Park is our backyard wilderness and holds premier quality of life values for Southcentral residents. Alaskans value clean air, clean water, beautiful scenery, and wide open spaces. The park provides a relief from the rush of city living. Poor planning could shrink the park’s wilderness boundaries and allow inappropriate activities and unwanted development to degrade the park

experience. Maintaining our current park management is important; the wild character of our park should remain as it is today.

Preliminary planning documents from the Division of Parks that show revisions to the master plan have made

ACE take notice. The revised project’s goals and objectives lack details and specific needs for Chugach State Park. In addition, initial comments lead us to believe that planners hope to see more development in or around the Park. This development might not negatively affect the park if well

planned. It could mean more park facilities at trail entrances and perhaps more trails that would allow for more park users. If future development of the Park’s trails and facilities occurs, it will need to be closely monitored in order to prevent activities that threaten the park’s primary goal of natural resource protection.

This is why we have asked the Division of Parks to take great care in planning for the future of Chugach State Park. There are a number of Park management issues we are following

through the planning process. On the top of the list is access: if you can't get to the Park, then how can you enjoy it? Easy and equal access to Chugach State Park provides residents of Southcentral Alaska with a sense of freedom and independence, a feeling that only a community with a backyard wilderness can appreciate.

As a developing Anchorage pushes closer to Chugach State Park, ways of accessing the park are becoming harder to secure. The recent Stuckagain Heights access issue is one example of attempts to restrict traditional access points in neighborhoods bordering the park. Maintaining traditional neighborhood access and providing for more access points in the future is important to accommodate the growing interest in the park. We want to see the Municipality of Anchorage and the State Division of Parks work together to solve many of these access issues, taking into account the needs of neighborhood residents who live near trails and trailheads.

The opportunity to be inspired and challenged by unparalleled

outdoor recreation in a wild park makes Anchorage unique. Very few parks in the Lower 48 have legislatively designated wilderness



Damion Kintz

areas. The Park's wilderness zone is managed to perpetuate the wilderness characteristics of the land, protecting the values of solitude, challenge, study,



Damion Kintz

inspiration and primitive recreational opportunities. ACE believes all planning must preserve the integrity

of the wilderness experience.

In addition to recreation, Chugach State Park's wildlife is an essential and rewarding part of our backyard wilderness. It is a thrilling and satisfying experience for residents and visitors to experience animals in the wild. Irresponsible trapping, and possible habitat fragmentation, puts Park resources at risk. Park managers should take a close look at the appropriateness of trapping in the Park, and address the safety concerns of many users. We are promoting a plan that uses sound science and responsible decision making when addressing the management of wildlife in the Park.

In order to protect Chugach State Park's integrity, legacy, and wild characteristics, it is necessary to have a park plan that upholds our wilderness values. This includes respecting the delicate balance of maintaining a wilderness area so close to urban life. ACE believes that the current park management is sound, and consistent with the needs of Alaska's most treasured state park.

OCEANS & MARINE LIFE

ACE'S 2008 ALASKA OCEAN FESTIVAL WAS A HUGE SUCCESS!

ACE thanks all the volunteers and sponsors who helped make this year's Ocean Festival possible.



Havin' fun in the kayak pool



Many many ocean fans



The Seafood Olympics



Celebration puffin-style!



Climbing high



Jamming to Sun Volt



Help protect oceans for future generations!

Photos by Damion Kintz

TRAILSIDE DISCOVERY

ANOTHER GREAT SUMMER OF OUTDOOR CAMPS FOR YOUTH

A history of fun, friends, and learning in Alaska's great outdoors!



Photos by Trailside staff, 2002-2008

JUNEAU UNPLUGGED

As has been widely reported, even earning a story in the New York Times, an avalanche in April wiped out several powerlines connecting the Snettisham Hydroelectric Facility to the city of Juneau, forcing the local power distributor, Alaska Electric Light & Power (AEL&P), to fire up the diesel generators. With diesel costing AEL&P \$3.90/gallon, that translates to over 50 cents/Kilowatt hour for electric customers in Juneau, nearly five times the cost of electricity generated from hydropower.

Juneau residents have not taken this lightly (pun intended). Almost immediately after hearing of the disaster, electricity consumption dropped 30%. Despite Juneau's rainy

climate, laundry is hanging outside to dry instead of using electricity to power dryers, houses are dark and tips for reducing energy use are being shared everywhere from the radio and internet to local television programs and coffee shops.

Individuals are not the only ones doing their part. The windows of local businesses are dark with paper signs hung on the door advising both tourists and locals 'We're open but keeping the lights off to conserve energy!' If you want a cold beverage from the popular Silverbow Inn you have to ask – they've turned off their self-serve cooler. Even Juneau's large box stores are pitching in – Fred Meyer has turned off every other row

of lights and it is rumored that the TVs in Costco are turned off as well.

AEL&P has predicted that the power lines could be fixed as soon as late June – at which point we should see prices closer to the pre-avalanche rates of 11 cents/kilowatt hour. However, let's hope that when our energy prices return to normal – everything else does not. We can make some of the changes permanent and inspire others across the state to do the same. For example, if your appliances are plugged into power strips you can easily turn the power strip off at night and before leaving for work....

How will you unplug?

OCEAN RENEWABLE POWER

Ocean Renewable Power Company, LLC (ORPC) was founded in 2004 for the purpose of generating reliable, competitive, emission-free electricity from the virtually unlimited energy resources of the oceans. Ocean waters comprise nearly ¾ of the earth's surface. Since 70% of the world's population lives within 200 miles of an ocean, nearly ¾ of the world's electricity usage occurs within an economic distance from ocean energy resources. ORPC recognizes this enormous energy potential and is committed to converting tidal, river and deep water ocean currents into emission-free electricity and, thereby, making a difference for the world's environment and its communities.

ORPC has project sites with FERC Preliminary Permits in three of the worlds most robust and promising

tidal energy resources including Cook Inlet, Alaska. ORPC is also developing run-of-river application with plans to



Damion Kintz

test the Turbine-Generator Unit (TGU) in rural Alaska in the spring/summer of 2009. Because the TGU will be

Submitted by Ocean Renewable Power Company moored to the bottom of the sea or river, it is able to operate throughout the winter as it will be below the ice level and will operate in low water flow rates.

For tidal and deep ocean current projects, possible environmental effects include potential interference with fish and marine mammal migration, potential for fish and marine mammal impact, entrainment or interference with natural tidal and current flow patterns, etc. Potential impacts will be monitored for all projects, data will be collected on effects and adaptive management techniques will be used to deal with effects if observed.

This technology, though new, holds promise for yet another opportunity for Alaska to diversify its energy portfolio.



Goodbye Randy!

Randy Virgin has moved on after working at ACE for ten years, over seven of which he served as executive director. Randy was instrumental in guiding ACE through the rough waters of the Murkowski administration when being green was considered a serious offense. He worked tirelessly to find common ground with a broad range of stakeholders and gained the reputation as a trustworthy, savvy and respected ally. ACE and the Alaska conservation community will continue to benefit from his efforts as he continues his work from the Mayor's office as Anchorage's Director of Sustainability. We wish him luck on his new ventures and know that he will always remain a puffin at heart.

continued from page 7, AIRPORT

ACE will continue to closely monitor the airport's development activities. In a completely separate proposal, the airport plans to extend

the length of the existing East-West runway to the west. The proposal would require re-routing of Kincaid ski trails. A draft Environmental

Assessment should be out later this year. More information is available at www.anc7rrunwayextensionproject.net/.

EXAMPLES OF GREEN RETAIL ON THE LAST FRONTIER...

By SaraEllen Hutchison and Valerie Connor

Driven Auto Body (5011 Spenard Road #C) is just a normal body shop—normal except the approximately \$300 they save every month by recycling cardboard and metal, the \$500 saved each month in energy costs by installing glass doors, ceiling fans, and upgrading their light bulbs, and the kind of non-toxic water-based paints that are factory-standard on the finest European cars—but don't cost much more than old solvent-based paints.

Circular Boutique (320 W. 5th Ave, Suite 132, www.circularstore.com) feels very much like the upscale-bohemian Anthropologie, a retail therapy frenzy of hip clothing with a conscience and home décor that will fit nicely in any green home. Kim Stadler carefully selects products that are made from recycled and sustainable materials, including rock star-styled handbags made from tires, and placemats woven by a humanitarian cooperative overseas. Keeping with the sustainability theme, Kim would like to offer more work created by local artists.

Dark Horse Coffee is now serving beverages in 100% compostable Eco Hot cups and Corn plastic cups. The Eco Cup is a hot cup made of paper but unlike other hot cups, Eco Hot Cups are inner-lined with PLA, a compostable plastic derived from corn. Dark Horse also uses cold drink cups made from PLA plastic derived from corn. To be certified compostable, an item must disintegrate within 30-45 days in commercial composting conditions. Dark Horse Coffee has also made spent coffee grounds and tea leaves available for home composts or gardens.

Composting in Anchorage: The general public, landscapers, and horse owners are all welcome to bring leaves, grass, tree limbs and horse manure to Evergreen Nursery & Garden Center at 760 E. 120th, off Old Seward between Huffman and O'Malley. This site is open Monday through Saturday, 8am – 6pm. Rates for yard waste are \$20/pick-up load or \$25/yard for larger trucks or containers. Horse manure is accepted for \$30/yard. Call Evergreen at 344-2588 for more details.

Loopy Lupine Distribution LLC sells recycled, unbleached, chlorine free, biodegradable, and environmentally responsible products. Loopy Lupine specializes in products for food service, such as coffee cups and lids, napkins, cutlery, and to go containers. The company also carries a wide array of products for janitorial use, office, institution, and home. A large inventory is kept in stock. Visit <http://www.loopylupine.com>.

Denali Green Tags: Purchase green tags to offset carbon emissions. Visit <http://www.greentagsusa.org/greentags/denali.cfm> and click on "I Toured Green" to learn about the Denali Green Tags' Tour Green program, specifically designed for offsetting the carbon dioxide emissions from tourism activities in Alaska.

FEEDBACK

IT'S TIME TO RETHINK PLASTIC

Dear Editor,

We are living in the age of plastics. Anything and everything has plastic in it or around it. Computers, cell phones, water, and even apples have a relationship with plastic. So then why are cities, states, and even countries banning or taxing certain forms of plastic?

Why get rid of something that is cheap, extremely versatile, and in ample supply? It's easier to understand when you look at where plastics come from. Each year twelve million barrels of oil are used to make plastic bags just for U.S consumption alone. Almost all plastic products are petroleum-based by-products. After bags are created they go to the consumer, usually at no cost, except for those few but increasing countries and cities that tax the consumer. Occasionally, although not as frequently as you'd think, bags are recycled. Stores like Fred Meyer are implementing recycling programs for plastic bags.

In rural areas of Alaska, dumps are not maintained as well as they are in more urban locations which results in the scattering of plastic bags into areas that are not sanctioned for disposal of trash. These bags and other trash prove to be extremely unhealthy for animals. Besides posing health risks, these bags ruin the aesthetics of the area by being blown into trees, fields, and nearby water sources. Burning plastics is like burning fossil fuels. Recently, links have been found between plastics and the chemical Biphenyl A (BPA) that

is used in baby bottles, water bottles, plastic containers and more. BPA has been linked to multiple female reproductive disorders.

Our dependence upon plastics seems to be getting out of hand. The problem is that we aren't taking into account how these plastics are being disposed of, the costs associated with producing them, or how much of what we consume becomes waste. We need to rethink our use of this material.

The brighter side of this issue is that we can fix this problem hastily, inexpensively, and sometimes in a rather fun way. The easiest way to reduce the amount of plastic in our environment is to consume less of it. Disposable plastic bottles and bags can be easily replaced. If you purchase a reusable container such as a stainless steel canteen you can continuously use the container for an extended amount of time and fill it with whatever beverage you choose.

Teens in the Alaska Youth for Environmental Action (AYEA) group, a program of the National Wildlife Federation, have been working this past year with people to rethink the way they use and consume plastics. Their "R3: Think" campaign is entirely about our dependence on plastics and how we need to make a change.

AYEA teens suggest that plastic bags can be easily replaced, resulting in a reduction of plastic in our environment. Canvas bags and organic cotton bags, which are used

to replace the traditional disposable plastic bag, are in ample supply and somewhat trendy. Many major grocery stores (including Fred Meyer and Carrs-Safeway) are now offering plastic bag alternatives in their stores, some as low as \$.99. Canvas bags can also be found through different organizations with stylish logos on them; and some large apparel retailers are offering them.

As a society we must realize that our consumption is increasing, as are the consequences of our consumption. It's easy to consume less plastic and, with some effort, we can all make it a habit. When you go out during the summer take a hard look at how much plastic is in our environment. When looking at all of this plastic, think about how much of that could have been prevented by just reusing a container, getting a canvas bag, or drinking from a reusable container.

Let's all take a step back, rethink our consumption of plastics and then think of how we can make better more sustainable choices.



Megan Waggoner, 17 Yrs. Old, Alaska Youth for Environmental Action Intern

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- ACE Founding-Mother and member, Peg Tileston

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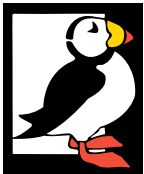


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