

March 13, 2015

At this time last year, thousands of Alaskans were mobilizing to defeat the Parnell Administration's Silencing Alaskans Act (HB 77), a bill that would have simultaneously stripped our rights to engage in permitting decisions and threatened our salmon and clean water resources. The defeat of this bill illustrated that Alaskans wanted a new approach—one that includes the voices of local communities and prioritizes our salmon in resource development decisions.

Fast-forward to the new Walker Administration, which appears to be incorporating lessons learned from 2014, including a transition process and leadership changes that reflect commitments to transparency and public engagement. And while initial moves are encouraging—like recommending cuts to wasteful spending on projects like the Susitna Dam—Alaskans must remain vigilant and continue to speak up for protection of our prized renewable resources, investments in clean energy and energy efficiency, and an intact public process.

Our staff are tracking activity in the capitol this session—you can stay engaged by subscribing to ACV's Conservation Watch email at [acvoters.org](http://acvoters.org) under "Join our Network".

One of the most critical issues for this Administration will be the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) decision between protecting our salmon resources or a coal strip mine, and their decision will set a precedent for how Alaska manages our salmon resources. Our team is working hard to engage Alaskans on this issue. Fill out the enclosed Chuitna comment card and we'll submit your comments to the Governor and DNR before the April 9th deadline.

Finally, with the U.S. chairing the Arctic Council this year, more people will be paying attention to Alaska and what we are doing to prepare for a changing Arctic climate, and it's refreshing to see the Administration acknowledge the importance of our role. Teens in our Alaska Youth for Environmental Action (AYEA) program have already decided it's time to act: with one of the warmest winters on record, and continued negative impacts to our land, waters, fisheries and wildlife—they're asking state leaders to re-engage on this issue and enact the work of the previous Climate Change Sub-Cabinet.

In addition to engaging Alaskan advocates on pressing conservation issues, we're continuing to build the next generation of stewards—last year, we engaged over 7,000 children with the outdoors through our Trailside Discovery Camp! Check out [akcenter.org](http://akcenter.org) to sign up your child up for a life-changing experience, and save the date for our Spring Auction Friday, May 8th—where we'll raise resources to support all of our youth programs and critical conservation work. I hope to see you there!

Best,



Polly Carr  
Executive Director



With the warmest winter on record, we all became good skaters this year!

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SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR SPRING AUCTION, MAY 8:  
[AKCENTER.ORG/SPRING-AUCTION](http://AKCENTER.ORG/SPRING-AUCTION)



# PROTECT THE CHUITNA RIVER: TELL GOVERNOR WALKER ALASKANS CHOOSE SALMON OVER COAL

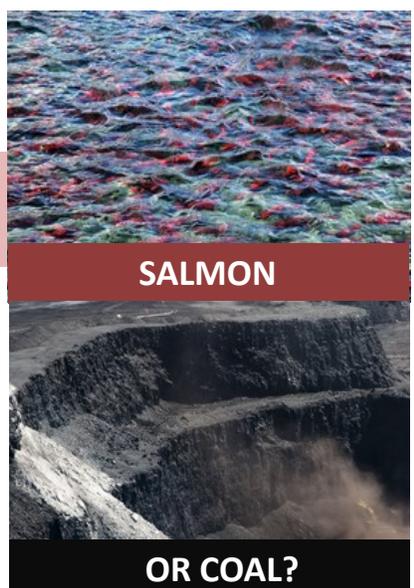
February 23rd, the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources announced that they will process the Chuitna Citizen's Coalition water rights application. The approval or denial of this application will determine whether water should be left in the Chuitna River for salmon, or diverted to allow an outside mining company to completely destroy the river for a coal mine.

**Before April 9th, Alaskans must tell the State that we choose salmon over coal exports to Asia. Submit your comments in support of water for salmon by filling out the enclosed comment card and sending it back to us. We'll deliver all comments to the Governor and DNR.**

This is the most important salmon protection decision in Alaska in years. The Chuitna River is a vital waterway, just 40 miles west of Anchorage, home to all five species of wild pacific salmon as well as rainbow trout and Dolly Varden. The upper reaches of this picturesque river are threatened by PacRim Coal's enormous open-pit coal mine, which would destroy nearly 14 miles of salmon streams in the first phase alone.

DNR's decision will set a historical precedent; never before has the State of Alaska allowed mining directly through a salmon stream. The State has a simple choice, keep water in the stream for salmon or give 100% of it to an Outside company that will use it to strip mine for coal that will be sent to Asia.

**The deadline to submit your comments on this vital issue is April 9th at 5:00 PM. After four years of waiting for this application to finally be processed, let's show the State what Alaskans really value.**



**SALMON**

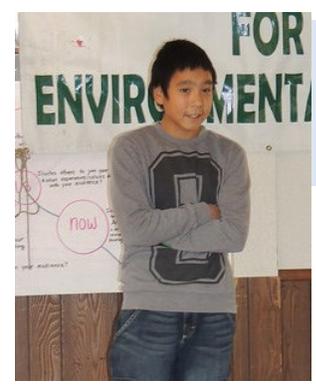
**OR COAL?**

Fill out the enclosed comment card, send it back to us, and we'll submit your comments to the Governor and DNR!

## TEENS TAKE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

As Alaskans throughout the state experienced, 2014 was one of the warmest, and strangest, weather years on record. It's fitting then, that our Alaska Youth for Environmental Action (AYEA) Youth Organizers made climate change their priority issue for their 2014-15 campaign.

In September 2014, Youth Organizers met to discuss how climate change is impacting their communities, and worked together to create a collective vision of a future without drastic climate change and the campaign necessary to make that happen. Through training and discussion, these teens determined that young people can revive the dialogue on climate change in Alaska and can be the most authentic and effective messengers on this topic.



*"There have been a big amount of berries where I come from for many generations. These past few years, the berries, geese, moose, and ducks have been missing because of climate change. Our traditional values are bursting and the solution is simple. The Governor has only one thing to do - decide what we live by. Make sense, make it work, make it right. Climate change won't stop without us." - Joseph Phillips, Chuathbaluk Village*

For the past six months, Youth Organizers have been working to inform Alaskans about climate change, develop bold policy to fight climate change, and inspire others to take action and make that policy a reality. They have been sharing and collecting petitions to ask Governor Walker to re-convene a Task Force to address climate change and its economic, environmental, and cultural impacts on Alaska, and review the final reports generated by the Climate Change Sub Cabinet that existed under Governor Palin.

Now, 22 AYEAs representing 11 urban and rural communities, will spend their spring break leading the discussion on climate change in Juneau! The AYEAs Civics and Conservation Summit runs March 9-13 and is the culmination of the year-long youth-led campaign.

During this intense week at the capitol, the Youth Organizers will present their petition to Governor Walker - signed by more than 700 Alaskans to-date! In addition, the teens will meet with their lawmakers, advocate for policy change on focus bills selected by the youth delegates, and build lifelong skills through trainings on civics, media communication, public speaking, and the legislative process.

Meet the youth delegates online at [akcenter.org/ayea/civics-summit](http://akcenter.org/ayea/civics-summit).



**Ask Governor Walker to create a Climate Change Task Force:**  
[akcenter.org/take-action](http://akcenter.org/take-action)