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## Kachemak Bay Conservation Society 2019 Newsletter



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# Message from the President

By Roberta Highland

We probably have to agree, life is not boring — in fact, it's downright chaotic — coming at us from many directions. Environmentally, nothing going on there... we wish.

KBCS had their annual Earth Day meeting on April 22 at Islands and Ocean. The nominating committee forwarded the following people for the 2019 election, and these board members were elected:

- Martie Krohn
- Jim Stearns
- Elisa Russ
- Susan Kaplan
- Patricia Cue

We would like to give a huge THANK YOU to Teresa Sundmark for her service as secretary; she had to resign because of time constraints. The board appointed Penelope Haas to fill her board position as secretary. The board then appointed the following officers:

- Roberta Highland, President
- Elisa Russ, Vice President
- Martie Krohn, Treasurer

## Thank you to all the board members for their work.

Bjørn Olson has continued to do incredible work with Alaskans Know Climate Change, which has now become a statewide effort. He has shared their message with many communities around the state. We are so appreciative of his time and energy (see article in this newsletter). Bjørn is an inspiration to us all.

Penelope Haas has been our comment writer and continues to follow the important issues as they arise. She is following the Kachemak Bay State Park and Wilderness Park plan revisions and Kachemak Bay and Fox River Flats Critical Habitat Area revisions (see article in this newsletter).

Elisa Russ is the KBCS liaison with students in the Homer Alaska Youth for Environmental Action (HAYEA) organization, and they are working very hard to promote elimination of single-use plastic bags in the City of Homer. This question will be on the October 1st ballot.



Thank you, Elisa, for your extra efforts.

KBCS wants to give a special recognition to Jim Stearns and Salmonfest. This is an incredible annual event and will be done under the auspices of a new 501(c)(3) called ARCHES (Arts, Recreation, Conservation, Humanities, Education, and Science). KBCS has received funding from Salmonfest enabling us to obtain needed help through contracting.

Laurie Daniel led the Overlook Park hike during the Shorebird Festival. She has been doing this for KBCS for many years, and we so appreciate her continued willingness and enthusiasm.

In these tumultuous times, we must remember our successes and that there are millions of people who understand that Mother Earth, our planet and our home, continues to need our protection and stewardship. Conservation is one of many answers to our self-imposed dilemma.

As always, we hope you continue to assist us in our ongoing efforts to protect the beautiful environment on and around Kachemak Bay and greater Alaska. Together we can and do make a difference.

Thank you,  
Roberta Highland, President.

# Trump EPA Abandons Science in favor of Politics with Clean Water Act withdraw Bristol Bay left with the Toxic Consequences

Guest Post by Alannah Hurley of utbb.org

DILLINGHAM, AK – As the EPA announced it would withdraw the proposed Clean Water Act protections for Bristol Bay, the region was left with the clear message that under the Trump Administration, biased politics, and not science, rule the day.

The decision by EPA, which comes at the peak of the summer fishery when the entire region is consumed with salmon harvesting and processing, was made behind closed doors in Washington, D.C. with no input from the region's Tribes or communities. This blatant violation of the government's trust responsibility to Tribes runs counter to the EPA's January 2018 statement that additional public comment and tribal consultation would be held before a decision was made. Adding insult to injury, the decision came shortly after Bristol Bay representatives met directly with the agency requesting there be a public process prior to any decision.

The Proposed Determination, first requested by six Bristol Bay Tribes in 2010 and quickly supported by commercial and sport fishermen, would have offered science-based protections for the world's last great wild salmon run. Instead, the federal government is choosing to prioritize requests of mining lobbyists at the expense of Bristol Bay's future.

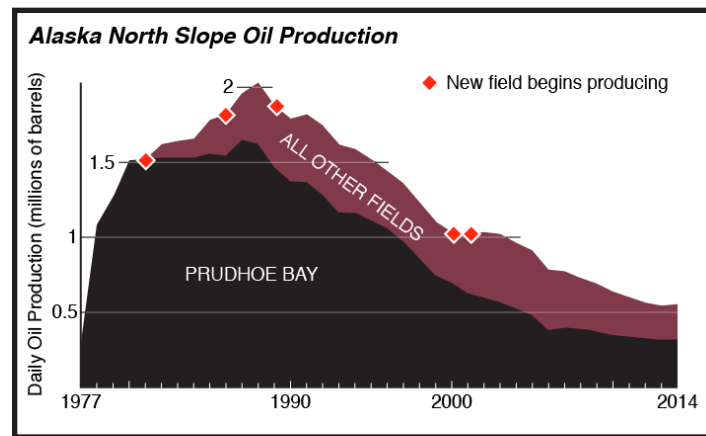
"The EPA's arbitrary withdrawal of these protections for Bristol Bay that our tribes fought so long and hard for is just another example of the Trump Administration working hand in hand with Pebble's lobbyists and paving the way for this toxic project to destroy the world's last great sockeye salmon fishery for the profit of a foreign mining company. This façade of a process by corrupt, politicized agencies has gone on long enough and it's time for elected leaders to stand up for our people

and stop this project from moving forward," said United Tribes of Bristol Bay Executive Director Alannah Hurley. "This comes as we are wrapping up the second-largest recorded salmon harvest in Bristol Bay of 42 million salmon and counting to feed not only our people but the world. Our people will continue to do whatever it takes to stop this mine."

"This summer, the Bristol Bay fishery has been breaking records, while Washington D.C. bureaucrats are working at recording-breaking speeds to dismantle the protections that would help ensure our salmon continue to feed the world for years to come," said Bristol Bay Economic Development Corp. CEO Norm Van Vactor. "It is time for our elected leaders to hold federal agencies accountable for the work they are doing and put people, science and the environment that our children will inherit, ahead of politics."

"The fact that the EPA would withdraw protections for Bristol Bay after the very same agency stated that the proposed Pebble mine could devastate our region makes no sense," said Bristol Bay Native Association CEO Ralph Andersen. "This is unacceptable, and a clear example of politics taking priority over science at the federal level. The people of Bristol Bay deserve more from the federal government."

Ironically, today's decision comes shortly after the EPA filed lengthy technical comments noting serious flaws in Pebble's environmental review. There agency found the Pebble project: "may have substantial and unacceptable adverse impacts on fisheries resources in the project area watersheds, which are aquatic resources of national importance."



## Price spikes can't make up for the loss in production

- Oil tax revenue is exquisitely sensitive to oil price. Jumps in oil price have saved us in each past budget crisis. Even if prices return to recent highs, they might not be high enough.
- North Slope oil production is continually declining. Our population has risen substantially. In 1988, Alaska produced over 1300 barrels of oil per person, per year. In 2016, it was around 220 barrels per person.
- To fund the government on oil into the future, we need oil prices to rise quickly, stay high, and continue rising steadily into the indefinite future at a rate that counters the decline in production.
- Almost certainly, this will not happen. The state's official forecast has oil prices slowly rising, reaching \$88/bbl in ten years – not even close to the level we'd need to fund the budget on oil taxes.
- Even this forecast is more optimistic than many (such as OPEC's) and almost certainly wrong. Oil prices are anything but steady, and have never matched the state forecasts. We are incredibly dependent on oil prices, and awful at predicting them.

## Increased production won't help if we have to pay for it

- Oil companies claim the large credits that are part of the current tax scheme have led to more development, which will eventually pay off for the state in increased tax revenue.
- Even if incentives do increase production (which is far from certain), they are unlikely

to make money for the state. Incentives are not an investment.

- Current credit structure means the state pays 35% of costs for new developments. (past credit structure was more generous)
- New developments cost many billions of dollars. It takes a huge amount of oil, or very high prices, for the state to make that money back in taxes.
- An example: Let's take the biggest new discovery of recent years – Caelus Energy's Smith Bay discovery in 2016. According to the oil company, this will cost \$8-10 billion to develop, and could produce up to 200,000 barrels per day. At a \$65 per barrel oil price, it would take 8 years of that high level of production for the state to break even on its \$3 billion (35% of the cost) investment. It would take much more than that for the state to actually make money for the general fund.
- If the state has \$3 billion to invest, it would be far better to put that in the stock market.
- Reality may well turn out to be less rosy than oil company press releases. The state has sought to promote new oil development for decades, while production has steadily declined.

## Other industries can't fill the gap unless we add an income or sales tax

- We have no broad-based taxes (income or sales) on the majority of our population, and low taxes on other industries.
- As a result, any new jobs in non-oil industries cost the state more than they bring in in taxes, due to the increased need for schools, health care, and other services.
- One economist estimated that each new job costs the state an average of \$1000. Since that analysis (in 1999), we have not added any significant taxes on non-oil industries or the population as a whole.
- With oil as the major revenue source and other industries as revenue sinks, the state is perversely incentivized to discourage non-oil businesses.
- An income or sales tax is the only way to reverse this.

# Alaskans Know Climate Change

By Bjørn Olson

**"We need to focus every inch of our being on climate change, because if we fail to do so than all our achievements and progress have been for nothing and all that will remain of our political leaders' legacy will be the greatest failure of human history. And they will be remembered as the greatest villains of all time, because they have chosen not to listen and not to act."** - Greta Thunberg

In the fall of 2016, Kachemak Bay Conservation Society began to fill a void in Alaska – a homegrown climate change education and advocacy campaign. Alaska, along with the rest of the Arctic is warming at twice the rate of the mid-latitudes. Anyone who has lived here for any amount of time has first-hand experience with this rapid and unnatural warming. Alaskans know climate change.

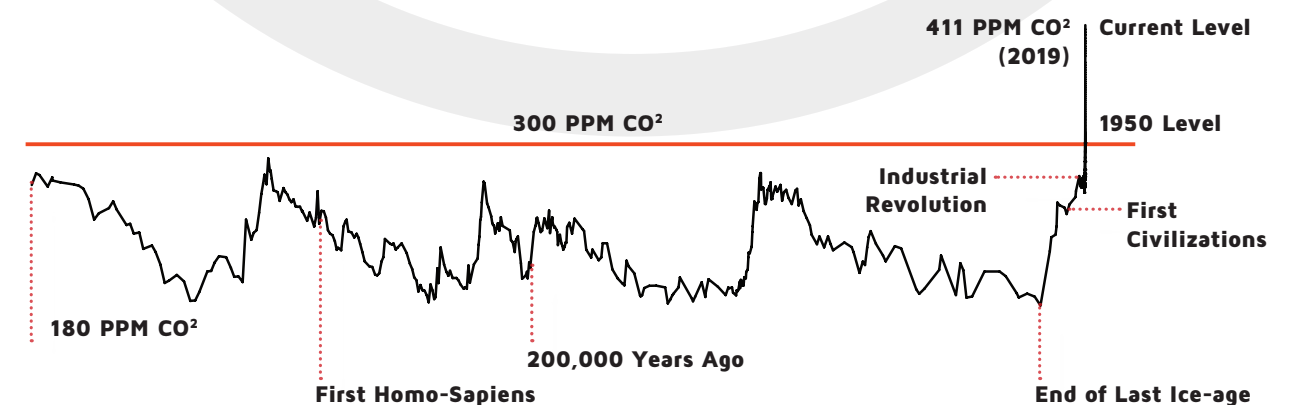
Over the last 400,000 years, atmospheric concentrations of CO<sup>2</sup> have never been above 280 parts per million. In the 1960s, due to our civilizations newly-formed reliance on fossil fuels, we measured, for the first time since humans have been evolved upright species on the planet, CO<sup>2</sup> concentrations over 300 parts per million. Scientists have concluded that in order to enjoy a stable climate system we must remain at or below 350 parts per million. We have long since blown past that benchmark and are now, as of July 22, 2019, over 411 parts per million of CO<sup>2</sup> and climbing. Geologists say that the planet has not seen greenhouse gas concentrations this high in over 4 million years.

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued their 5th Climate Assessment Report last fall. The findings? Our civilization has little more than a decade to radically decarbonize our economy or face the reality of a 1.5° C warmer world. In order to achieve this target, by 2030, we must reduce our emissions by 45%.

Annually, we are currently producing over 40 billion tons of greenhouse gases. Every year, despite the education, state, national and international reports, real-world observations of a crumbling climate system, climate talks and agreements between nations emissions continue to actually increase.

Summer 2019 has been a wake up call for many Alaskans who have relegated climate disruption to a back-burner issue. Reports of our seas being 5° to 15° F warmer than usual; dead marine mammals, birds and shellfish; salmon dying before spawning all over the state from heart attacks due to warm water; salmon riddled with parasites; record number of forest fires that have dimmed our skies; droughts in Southeast; and record breaking temperatures are a few of the sobering examples of what we are seeing – all of which are harbingers of the grim reality that awaits us. Climate change is not a backburner issue; it is the issue of our lives. Climate disruption is an existential crisis and we must respond accordingly.

**Alaska is a canary in the coal mine. We are beginning to understand what a 1.5° C warmer reality looks like.**





Attitudes and comprehension about the climate crisis are still incredibly varied. Some people stubbornly remain in denial, some believe we can adapt our way through this crisis without addressing our carbon footprint, and others have given up entirely. However, a small but unflinching number of people have appraised the situation and are not willing to give up. If we do nothing, it is estimated that 1 million animal and plant species will be threatened with extinction, within a few short decades, more than ever before in human history. Our planet's incredible biodiversity, we believe, is worth fighting for. Do you?

As a society, we have done a terrible job discussing the problem and, more importantly, the solutions. The fossil fuel industry has understood since the 1970s that the use of their products would increase the greenhouse effect and cause global warming. Instead of sharing this body of knowledge with the rest of the scientific community and the media, they suppressed their internal findings and instead funded anti-science think tanks to help sow doubt. It worked.

Alaskans Know Climate Change (AKCC) is attempting to remove this veil of deceit. The science is irrefutable — our civilization's reliance on fossil fuels is causing climate disruption and ocean acidification.

One profoundly important resource that provides solutions to the climate crisis is **Project Drawdown — The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming**. This blueprint is an antidote to our collective deficit.

Project Drawdown is described as, "a world-class research and communication organization which serves as a non-partisan, non-commercial, highly-trusted source of solutions to reverse global warming." It is a book, a manual and an online resource for governments, communities, entrepreneurs, and individuals looking for zero regret solutions in our struggle for a livable climate system.

As an education and advocacy campaign, AKCC is attempting to encourage and inspire better understanding of the crisis we are in and actions we can and must take to avert the worst-

case outcomes. Over the last year, we have written many articles, letters to representatives, and opinion pieces for various media outlets; we have produced our first podcast, which we intend to make more of; supported Erin McKittrick for Homer Electric Association's board of directors as well as Mitch Roth for Chugach Electric Association; quantified and offset the carbon footprint of the Kachemak Bay Conservation Center through the use of voluntary carbon offsets; maintained a strong social media presence; hired a consultant to analyze various Alaskan investment portfolios to tease out how much is invested in hydrocarbon assets; supported the 'Divest the APFC' campaign; petitioned the DNC to host a 2020 presidential debate solely focused on climate change; and thrown our full weight behind the national 'Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act,' and more.

Just as summer 2019 has been a sobering wake up to the climate crisis, Alaska has also been slapped with a cruel budget crisis. There is a common foe at the core of both of these crises' — the fossil fuel industry.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) released a report in May of 2019. Their research found that globally (191 countries) fossil fuel subsidies are costing taxpayers, \$5.2 trillion a year. The largest subsidizers in 2015 were China (\$1.4 trillion), United States (\$649 billion), Russia (\$551 billion)... All told, coal and petroleum together account for 85 percent of all global subsidies.

This year, here in Alaska, we will pay \$1.26 billion to the fossil fuel industry through the per-barrel oil tax credit program. If we do not soon repeal this wrongheaded subsidy, our state will lose tens of billions of dollars over the coming decade.

Ending this fossil fuel subsidy, however, is only the first step. In order to arrest the climate crisis and protect our rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, we must make consuming fossil fuels more expensive to account for the harm they are causing to our communities, state, nation, world, and biosphere.

It has been estimated that 1 ton of CO<sup>2</sup> costs the planet nearly \$1,000 in damages. The

# Why Oil Won't Save Us

## The Need for New Revenue Sources

Guest Post by Erin McKittrick of GroundTruthTrekking.org

### Executive summary

Since the discovery of Prudhoe Bay, oil revenue has funded most of state government, but this cannot continue indefinitely into the future. Since the 1980s, oil production has been steadily falling, while the state population has grown. Tax schemes cannot make up the difference but complicated rules open the tax system up to additional risk and gaming potential. The state has attempted to reverse this trend by heavily subsidizing the oil industry with cash-back tax credits. Regardless of subsidies, finding another Prudhoe Bay is extremely unlikely, both geologically and economically. Even large new discoveries may not help the state treasury if large incentives are required to bring them on line. Despite our heavy dependence on oil money, past department of revenue predictions have shown us that we have no ability to accurately forecast future oil revenue, so complicated arrangements that are partly based on particular production scenarios are extremely risky. The state government needs to shift to other revenue sources.

Alaska revenue and spending - per capita: When Alaska has more money, it spends more, but the basic agency spending related to public services like school and health care have remained fairly constant over time. Until now, revenue has been sufficient to cover or nearly cover agency spending, and deficits were related to more discretionary activities like large capital projects. However, in 2015 and 2016 revenue has plummeted along with oil prices, and is now far below the cost to provide services.

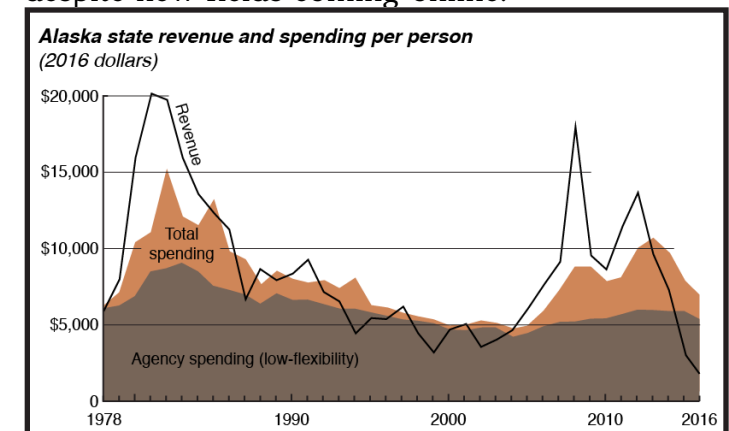
### Why are we broke?

- Basic government services costs at least \$3.7 billion/year at our current population.
- This number is based on the lowest inflation-adjusted state budgets from 1978 to the present, around \$5000 dollars/person.

- Health care and retirement costs and obligations have increased, making any realistic budget higher.
- The budget for fiscal year 2016 was \$5.2 billion, and the budget enacted for 2017 is \$4.4 billion.

### Our oil is not worth enough to fund that – regardless of the tax plan.

- In fiscal year 2016, the oil produced on the North Slope had a wellhead value of around \$6.2 billion.
- Between royalties and property taxes (other taxes were negative) the state got 18% of that – around 10% for the general fund, and 8% for the permanent fund, giving us \$600 million to spend on government services.
- Historically, the state has gotten about a third of the wellhead value, but that would still be only \$2 billion.
- To fund the 2017 budget on 2016 oil revenue would have required a 70% tax rate.
- That would leave the oil companies with nowhere near enough to cover costs. Their recorded expenses were already higher than wellhead value (\$6.6 billion recorded expenses, \$5.1 billion of which were deducted in taxes).
- Alaska North Slope Oil Production: Alaska's North Slope oil production has declined nearly every year since it peaked in 1987, despite new fields coming online.





# Earth Day 2019

By Elisa Russ

The Kachemak Bay Conservation Society annual meeting on April 22, 2018, Earth Day, was a great success!

It was held at Islands and Ocean Visitor Center in Homer and nearly 200 people walked through the doors. Dr. Rick Steiner was the headliner and, as his reputation promised, he was a compelling speaker and he delivered an important presentation on the Imperiled Arctic. Along with KBCS, other local non-profits conducted educational outreach tabling in the lobby including Cook Inletkeeper, Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies, Kachemak Advocates for Recycling, Homer Chapter of Youth for Environmental Action, Citizens Climate Lobby, Citizens AKtion Network, and the new Yes To Better Bags partnership.

Food was served as attendees perused the booths and learned about local advocacy efforts. Thanks to Two Sisters for soup and bread and to Loopy Lupine for compostable service ware.

Next the annual meeting was led and elections conducted by President Roberta Highland followed by a few short talks.

Bjørn discussed the KBCS education campaign that is having statewide impact, Alaskans Know Climate Change, and made a rousing and impassioned plea on taking action now before time runs out and offered some solutions, including passing the bipartisan Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act and purchasing carbon offsets.

Elisa gave an update on the Yes To Better Bags partnership of local non-profits (YTBB) and announced Earth Day was the kick-off of the campaign for a Yes vote on October 1 for the Homer ballot measure to prohibit single-use plastic bags being distributed by retailers.

Next, Summer McGuire took the stage to give an update on Alaska Youth for Environmental Action (AYEA), including activities of the Homer Chapter and working with YTBB and AYEA on the statewide plastic bag ban campaign, as well as her educational and

impactful experience attending the AYEA Civics and Conservation Summit in Juneau where she learned more about advocacy, grassroots organizing, and how to lobby the legislature.

Then a raffle was held thanks to generous prize donors Homer Saw and Cycle and Dancing Man knives and Ulu.

The finale was Dr. Rick Steiner, a marine conservation biologist who works internationally on marine environmental issues including Arctic conservation, offshore oil, climate change, shipping, oil spills, seabed mining, and marine biodiversity.

Dr. Steiner was a marine conservation professor with the University of Alaska for 30 years, first stationed in the Arctic.

The Imperiled Arctic is a non-profit, public education initiative and the presentation uses over 300 spectacular professional photographs from across the Arctic, mostly from the National Geographic and Greenpeace International image collections to help the general public better understand and engage in current issues in the Arctic.

The presentation was organized into three sections — first discussed was the place, included the beauty, natural history, and uniqueness of the Arctic; marine and terrestrial biodiversity, and human communities. Next Issues discussed climate change, oil and gas, mining, shipping, fisheries, territorial disputes, contaminants, military proliferation, socio-economic challenges. Finally, Solutions offered opportunities to shape the future Arctic through policy decisions that will be made by the U.S., the Arctic Council, industry, and the international community.

Following the presentation, Dr. Rick Steiner allowed time for a Q&A for the engaged audience. It was an excellent and educational evening!

University of Alaska's Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) calculate that climate change in Alaska will have an annual net cost of \$340-\$700 million above normal wear and tear. The average American, for reference, produces roughly 20 tons of CO<sup>2</sup> every year.

Alaska State Senator Bill Wielechowski and Senator Gray Jackson have sponsored a bill — SB-14 — to repeal the per-barrel oil tax credit. The passage of this bill would end the egregious and wasteful subsidy, would temporarily solve

Alaska's fiscal crisis, and help us confront the hard fact that fossil fuels can no longer be the silver bullet for Alaska's economy. What we are currently doing is backwards. Fossil fuel consumption must become **more** expensive to account for the negative and costly effect this habit has on our planet, not cheaper by artificially propping these products up in the marketplace.

Over the last few years, despite the \$5 trillion fossil fuel subsidies, renewable energy has become less expensive to install than it costs to run existing coal fired power plants, and ratepayers, where renewable energy has been implemented, are saving money. Alaska has world-class, grid-scale renewable energy assets that other states would kill to have. Furthermore, Alaska has fantastic renewable energy storage, like pumped hydro. Our energy storage assets solve the thorny issue of what happens when the sun isn't shining and the wind isn't blowing. (See our article "[100% Renewable Alaska](http://alaskansknowclimatechange.com)" at [alaskansknowclimatechange.com](http://alaskansknowclimatechange.com))

It is time to come together as Alaskans to fight climate change, defend our way of life and embolden the industries of the future. By throwing our full weight behind Alaska's untapped renewable energy potential, we will become a desirable place for businesses to invest, communities to prosper, and innovation to occur.

As we hurl toward the deadline to cut our emissions by 45%, we must demand more from our elected leaders and our elected leaders must be well informed by climate science. Every one of us must become climate literate, but we can no longer allow ourselves to be led by people that don't understand physics and chemistry — because these are the true governors of our society, and they don't care which party you belong to or how rich your donors are.

Bjørn Olson  
Director of Alaskans Know Climate Change

## A "PFD" to Fight Climate Change?

A simple way to encourage a low carbon economy

- 1 Place a small and steadily increasing price on fossil fuels.



- 2 Divide that money by the number of residents.



- 3 Equally distribute the money\* back to every resident — like the PFD.



\*The entire collection of money would be dispensed to residents, minus administrative costs.





# Alaskans Know Climate Change...

## Alaska's climate is changing.

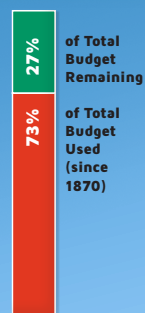
These changes are happening more quickly than ever recorded. Elders observe that conditions are unlike even the oldest stories. Scientists conclude that the global climate is warming because of rising emissions of gases like carbon dioxide and methane (the consensus on this is similar to the consensus that cigarette smoke causes cancer).

Alaskans know climate change because we are living it.

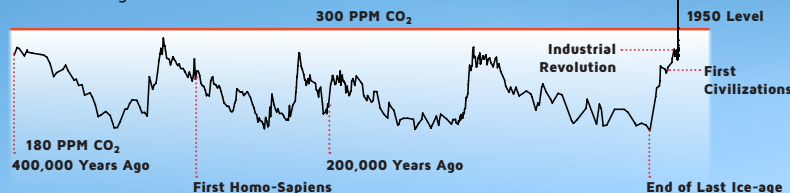


## Thinking of Carbon Emissions as a Budget

To reduce catastrophic effects on both humans and ecosystems, we must prevent average global temperatures from rising by more than 2° C above pre-industrial levels. To do this there is only a finite amount of carbon pollution the world can emit—this amount can be thought of as our carbon budget. At our current rate, we have about 20 years remaining.



By drilling for ice cores and analyzing the trapped air bubbles, scientists have found that at no point during at least the past 400,000 years have atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels been as high as they are now—404 parts per million (PPM). In the entire history of humankind, CO<sub>2</sub> levels have never been this high.



## Actions you can take to mitigate climate change...

- Advocate for carbon pricing.
- Demand an end to fossil fuel subsidies.
- Support renewable energy projects
- Divest from fossil fuels.
- Reduce your carbon footprint.
- Offset your personal contribution to climate change by buying inexpensive carbon offsets.

For more information please visit: [AlaskansKnowClimateChange.com](http://AlaskansKnowClimateChange.com)

The Alaskans Know Climate Change education campaign is working to develop non-partisan climate change resources to help our citizens recognize the scope of these changes and to see why they are driven primarily by human activity. We are working to inspire action toward climate change mitigation to preserve our beloved state of Alaska.



Information will also be provided about the CACS Boomerang Bags project where t-shirts are repurposed into reusable bags and provided for free via distribution at businesses in Homer. YTBB also supports the AYE campaign for a statewide ban on single use plastic bags. Donations to YTBB may be made by check directly to KBCS with YTBB in memo. Bjørn will be creating YTBB ads with images of plastic bags polluting the environment and coordinating Letters to the Editor prior to the vote. If you would like to get involved, contact Elisa Russ directly at [elisa.russ68@gmail.com](mailto:elisa.russ68@gmail.com) or 907-399-1721.

Please remember to bring your reusable bag while shopping!

# Wild and Scenic Film Festival

By Elisa Russ

Kachemak Bay Conservation Society and Citizens Climate Lobby (Homer Chapter) hosted the 16th annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival (WSFF) held on January 24, 2019 at the Homer Theatre .

The Wild & Scenic Film Festival is the largest film festival of its kind, showcasing the best and brightest in environmental and adventure films from around the world. This year's series of films was curated by the Citizens Climate Lobby and premiered in Homer, AK with our

event!

Also shown was the world premiere of Bjørn Olson's award winning short film, Alaska Thaw. Bjørn's film took first prize in the national film competition, 'Witnessing Change' from the 'Climate Cost Project.'

There was a raffle for an Alpaca raft and door prizes provided by WSFF sponsors. Thank you to everyone who attended - it was a huge success - the Homer Theatre was filled with about 200 people and it was a

great fundraiser for KBCS and the Alaskans Know Climate Change campaign.

KACHEMAK BAY CONSERVATION SOCIETY AND CITIZENS CLIMATE LOBBY (HOMER CHAPTER) PRESENTS...

16TH ANNUAL **WILD & SCENIC** FILM FESTIVAL  
WHERE ACTIVISM GETS INSPIRED

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HOMER THEATRE

WORLD PREMIER OF THE AWARD WINNING FILM BY BJORN OLSON  
**ALASKA THAW**

10 FILMS • RAFFLE • FOOD & DRINK

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TICKETS \$15 ADVANCE, \$20 AT THE DOOR  
AVAILABLE AT OUR WEBSITE OR THE HOMER BOOKSTORE

Logos for sponsors: CLIF, KBCS, Ground Truth, Inletkeeper, and others.

One million sea birds and 100,000 marine mammals are killed annually from plastic in our oceans.





# Yes to Better Bags Partnership

By Elisa Russ

In 2018, the Homer City Council approved a measure placing an ordinance on the 2019 ballot asking voters if they want to prohibit retailers from providing thin (single use) plastic bags. Residents of the City of Homer will be voting on October 1, 2019.

Several local non-profit organizations have partnered on a Yes To Better Bags campaign to garner support for a Yes vote October 1. Partners include Kachemak Bay Conservation Society (KBCS), Cook Inletkeeper (CIK), Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies (CACS), Homer Chapter of Alaska Youth for Environmental Action (HAYEA), Kachemak Advocates for Recycling (KARe), Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL), and Citizens AKtion Network (CAN).

Within Alaska, 19 communities no longer allow retailers to provide single use plastic bags to customers and it is time for Homer to join them. Stores in these Alaskan communities have adapted easily; the positive effects include lower cost to retailers and increased revenue from the sale of reusable bags, with the biggest benefit that there is less plastic pollution. Most plastic is made of polypropylene, a non-renewable material manufactured from petroleum and natural gas; greenhouse gases are created through their extraction and production, which further contributes to global climate change. These single-use bags are lightweight, scatter easily, and contribute to land and water pollution, including devastating effects to marine animals that ingest and become entangled in them. Plastic bags never degrade completely and, as production continues, the amount of plastic pollution in the environment increases.

As a coastal community, Homer is concerned about the health and welfare of Kachemak Bay. The bay provides vital financial, recreational, and cultural resources for a host of users including residents, tourists, and indigenous peoples. A Yes vote on the ballot measure will help keep the land and waters surrounding Kachemak Bay pristine.



The Yes To Better Bags (YTBB) partnership supports a vote of Yes to Better (reusable) Bags in order to reduce plastic pollution in our community and keep Kachemak Bay clean. The YTBB outreach campaign kicked off on Earth Day with tabling and a talk at the KBCS annual meeting. Then YTBB joined with former Representative Paul Seaton and CAN to clean up plastic bags and trash adjacent to the Homer landfill site for the Homer Chamber of Commerce Clean Up Day in May and won for first prize for non-profit group that picked up the most trash. YTBB made a splash at the July 4th Parade with a Yes To Better Bags banner made of a gillnet filled with plastic bags thanks to Dan Lush; there was much cheering from the crowd that it is about time!

Yes To Better Bags has been meeting frequently and is currently raising funds to purchase reusable bags with the YTBB and partner logos. The YTBB logo was created by Conrad Field with initial design concept by Dan Lush and design work by Shenandoah Lush. Thanks to Lynn Spence for coming up with the name and positive message Yes To Better Bags. Thanks to Satchel Pandolfino CIK, Bjørn Olson KBCS, and Henry Reiske CACS for work spearheading YTBB. YTBB will be conducting extensive outreach in Homer during September at local businesses and will be handing out reusable bags and educational information on plastics.

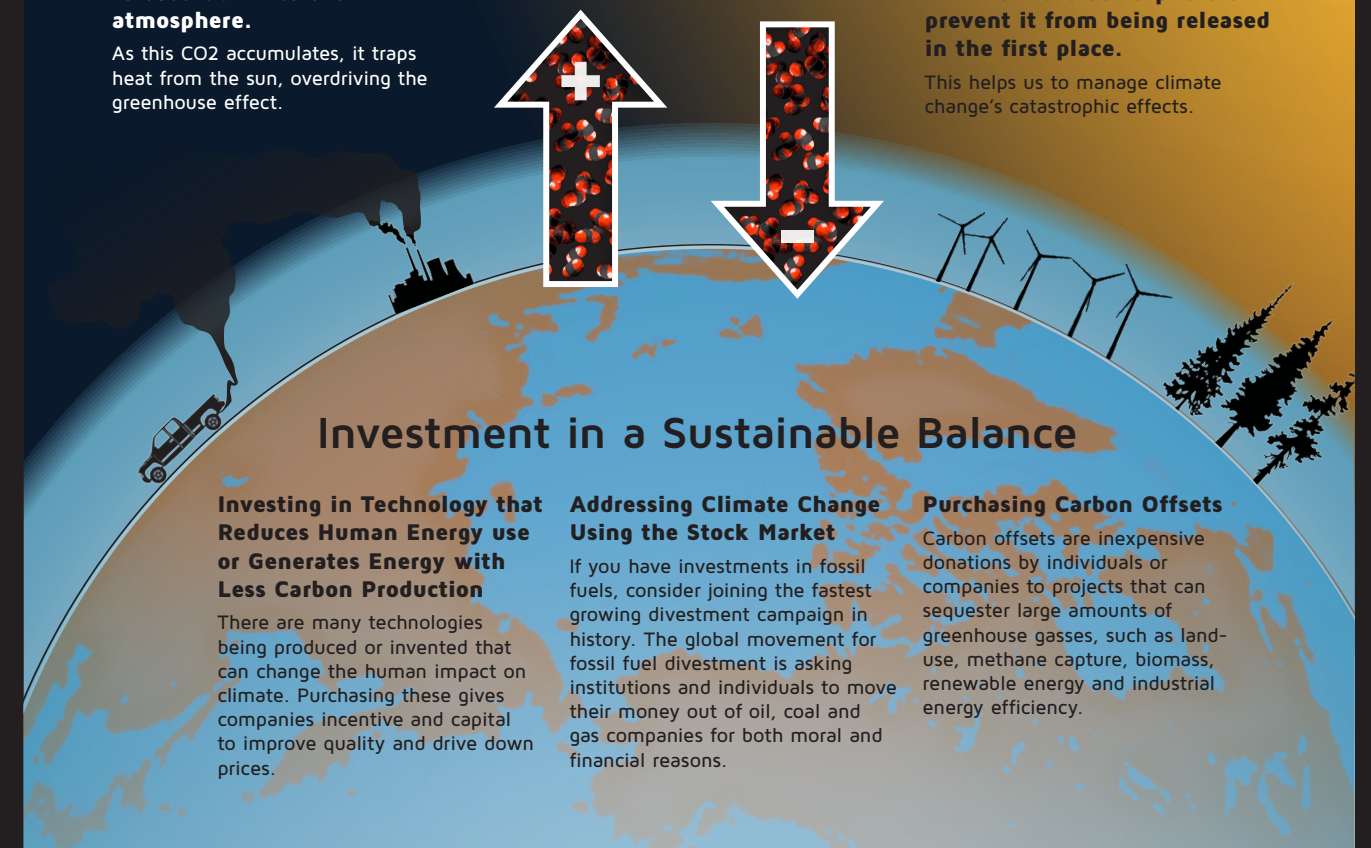
## Addressing Climate Change Through the Voluntary Marketplace

**Some human activities release CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere.**

As this CO<sub>2</sub> accumulates, it traps heat from the sun, overdriving the greenhouse effect.

**Some human activities remove CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere or prevent it from being released in the first place.**

This helps us to manage climate change's catastrophic effects.



**Investing in Technology that Reduces Human Energy use or Generates Energy with Less Carbon Production**

There are many technologies being produced or invented that can change the human impact on climate. Purchasing these gives companies incentive and capital to improve quality and drive down prices.

**Addressing Climate Change Using the Stock Market**

If you have investments in fossil fuels, consider joining the fastest growing divestment campaign in history. The global movement for fossil fuel divestment is asking institutions and individuals to move their money out of oil, coal and gas companies for both moral and financial reasons.

**Purchasing Carbon Offsets**

Carbon offsets are inexpensive donations by individuals or companies to projects that can sequester large amounts of greenhouse gasses, such as land-use, methane capture, biomass, renewable energy and industrial energy efficiency.

### The 3 Basic Steps of Carbon Offsets



**Using a Carbon Calculator**

Use an online carbon calculator to find out how much you are contributing to climate change. The average American produces 20 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually. How much do you produce?



**Decreasing Your Personal Impact**

Assess where you can make personal reductions to your contribution to climate change by modifying your lifestyle and consumer habits.



**Purchasing Carbon Offsets**

No matter what, you will never be able to become carbon neutral through lifestyle changes alone. Currently, the most effective action an individual or business can take to combat climate change is to purchase inexpensive carbon offsets.

#### Verifying Carbon Offsets

In order to ensure that the offsets are robust, credible and precise, projects must demonstrate to independent oversight that the emissions reductions meet a specific set of measurement and verification criteria. This includes showing that the reductions would not have been generated without the project — meaning that they are additional to a business-as-usual scenario.

The Alaskans Know Climate Change education campaign is working to develop non-partisan climate change resources to help our citizens recognize the scope of these changes and to see why they are driven primarily by human activity. We are working to inspire action toward climate change mitigation to preserve our beloved state of Alaska.



For more information please visit: [AlaskansKnowClimateChange.com](http://AlaskansKnowClimateChange.com)



# A Message from Penelope Haas



KBCS has been advocating and educating on a number of local issues this year and there is a lot stacked up for the fall and winter. We would love your support and participation on any and all. Stay tuned with our blog at [www.kbayconservation.org](http://www.kbayconservation.org), facebook, and the newspaper. Please get in touch with us if you want to get more involved!

## Kachemak Bay

In collaboration with Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park, we hosted public meetings about changes to Kachemak Bay State Park Management Plan. Hundreds of public comments were submitted on the draft plan, and they are having an impact! Some of the big issues are balancing visitor access with protecting the wild places, heli-skiing, drone operation, as well as the Tutka Bay Lagoon hatchery—particularly its location, the scale of fry releases, and carcass dumping. This past spring, State Parks denied Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association a permit to continue dumping carcasses into Tutka Bay, citing public comments as well as the underwater shelf that prevents carcasses from being flushed out of Tutka.

We have been attending draft meetings for the new Kachemak Bay-Fox River Flats Critical Habitat Areas Management Plan. The draft plan is supposed to be released this fall-winter and your comments will be key to the creation of a solid plan.

## What can you do?

- Read the talking points for State Park Management Plan on our blog and stay tuned for the next round of comments this winter.
- Read the current [Kachemak Bay-Fox River Flats Management plan](http://adfg.alaska.gov) (adfg.alaska.gov) and think about what changes you would like to see. Should there be a plan in place for community docks as more people want to build on Kachemak Bay? What can be done to rehabilitate shrimp and crab? Should the number of fish released from the Tutka Bay Lagoon Hatchery be proportional to the wild run that was there? How can we realistically step up protections for the Fox River Flats? How should discharges into the Bay be regulated? What can be done to mitigate the harm of climate change?

## Alaska's Salmon Hatcheries

We successfully advocated for the reinstatement of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Board of Fisheries Hatchery Committee. This committee is an important public forum to discuss the impact of the annual release of 1.6 billion hatchery salmon on Alaska's wild fish. KBCS is advocating for evidence-based, precautionary management of our wild salmon. We need research on impacts of competition, predation, and straying (genetics) of hatchery fish on wild fish populations. We also need to use existing extensive research from Oregon, Washington and many European countries that has led those places to determine that large-scale hatcheries harm wild fish.

Alaska salmon are certified Sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), and as a result comments submitted by KBCS asking for more evidence to show that the scale of hatchery releases are sustainable, MSC will be auditing Alaska's Sustainability Certification this November (a kinda big deal).

## What can you do?

- For general information on the hatcheries, you can go to [hatcheryreform.us](http://hatcheryreform.us). You can also get in touch with us for access to more local info, and stay tuned for the release of a new website [alaskahatcheryreform.org](http://alaskahatcheryreform.org).
- Follow along with hatchery proposals at the December ADF&G Lower Cook Inlet Meeting in Seward. The next Board of Fish Hatchery Committee Meeting will be in March 2020.
- As members of KBCS, you can participate in the MSC audit, so please get in touch with us if you would like to participate in the audit any way.

## Homer Development

As more people move to and visit the Homer Area, our community needs to ask itself how it wants to develop.

How do we protect critical habitats like wetlands and travel corridors for moose and bears? Much

of the wetlands along the north side of Kachemak Drive are zoned for commercial-industrial development. This wetland is also key moose and migratory bird habitat; and is also key to flood prevention.

KBCS is pushing back against filling those valuable wetlands and advocates the use of uplands for commercial development. We need to make changes to the zoning of this area, and we need to have a community conversation about development plans.

KBCS recently challenged a DNR Commissioner's decision to close public access to a right of way between Bear Canyon and Skyline (Dorothy Drive Section Line). More



than 100 signatures were gathered, and the decision was reversed because there was no evidence to support the claim that the right of way was a threat to public safety. There is currently an application in to KPB to vacate the section line easement.

The development of the Pebble Mine will hurt the Kenai Peninsula. The economies and lifestyle here are deeply tied to the Bristol Bay salmon fishery; Cook Inlet tourism and commercial fisheries—all of which stand to be significantly harmed by Pebble. Check out our blog for talking points related to Kenai Peninsula.

## What can you do?

- Attend planning commission meetings and talk to your local representatives about development plans in Homer's wetlands and wildlife corridors. Tell us what you think should be done.

• Comment to the Kenai Peninsula Borough on the Mary Lane Section Line Easement by August 9. Please send a letter or email about the vacation petition, due to the Commission by August 9. The application to vacate does not include an alternate access for an existing use (hiking) as required by State law and Borough code. Send written comments to the attention of Jordan Reif, Kenai Peninsula Borough Planning Department, to [jreif@kpb.us](mailto:jreif@kpb.us).

- Use your local right-of-ways! They are a great way to explore this fantastic place; also be sure that you do not trespass.
- Tell Senator Murkowski that you strongly oppose the Pebble Mine.