



# CONSERVATION VOTER



Alaska Conservation Voters

www.acvoters.org

Winter 2008

## Legislative Priorities Set the Stage for Cooperation

This fall, over 52 individuals from 28 conservation groups attended the Annual General Meeting of the ACA. Participants interacted with an impressive group of guest speakers including DEC Commissioner Larry Hartig, DNR Commissioner Tom Irwin, DOTPF Commissioner Leo von Scheben, ADF&G Deputy Commissioner Ken Taylor, DNR Deputy Commissioner Dick Lefebvre, DOTPF Director Jeff Ottesen, OHMP Director Kerry Howard, and Special Assistant for Natural Resources Joe Balash. Leaders in the conservation community were able to have a dialogue with speakers on topics ranging from climate change and renewable energy to transportation and the housing of the habitat division at DNR. The conversations were enlightening for all participants and we hope to be able to continue this open communication throughout the coming year.

In addition to the opportunity to talk with these decision-makers, Alaska's conservation community set their priorities for the upcoming legislative session. After careful consideration, promoting renewable energy, providing pesticide-free schools and ensuring clean water in fish streams were chosen as the top three priorities.

### Renewable Energy

The Alaskan conservation community is dedicated to establishing a renewable energy fund through HB152. By joining fourteen other states with renewable energy funds, Alaska could become a leader in the generation of renewable energy. This is part of a vision to see Alaska retain prominence as an energy state. It is also an essential response to the energy crisis in rural Alaska.

This first priority is well underway as there is broad non-partisan support in the Alaska Legislature for HB152. Our most recent step toward this goal was an impressive pledge by Governor Palin to put \$250 million into alternative energy. We applaud her vision to see the symmetry of using oil tax revenues to fund our clean energy future.

### Pesticide-free Schools

Our second goal can be achieved by passing the Alaska Children's Health Protection Act. This bill would minimize exposure of Alaska's children to toxic pesticides while they are in school. Pesticides have been linked to cancer, birth defects, asthma and learning disabilities, as well as other serious ailments. Because of their small size and developing bodies, children are especially vulnerable to the negative effects of pesticides.

A leader in pesticide safe schools, the Anchorage School District has already implemented the use of least toxic alternatives to pesticides, joining 33 other states and over 400 school districts dedicated to protecting students and staff from dangerous exposure to pesticides. Children all over Alaska deserve these same protections.

### Clean Water for Alaska's Fish Streams

The third priority is to close a toxic loophole that was embraced by the Murkowski Administration in 2006. Under current regulations, mixing zones (areas where pollution and sediment discharge are allowed to exceed Clean Water Act standards) are allowed in salmon spawning streams provided spawning is not actively occurring. Salmon habitat is year round and our salmon protections should be as well.

The mining industry has blocked progress on HB74 by painting it as anti-mining. To our knowledge, no major mines were closed or prevented from operating before the Murkowski Administration altered the regulations. Furthermore, HB74 already includes some specific accommodations for existing placer mines. HB74 (sponsored by Republican and Democratic legislators) is an opportunity to restore year round, toxic-

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## Campaign Training

In the early days of 2008, Alaska Conservation Voters is already looking ahead to the elections. With the state of politics such as they are, Alaskans have an incredible opportunity for change; to elect ethical, reliable, pro-conservation officials to office.

To make sure that the candidates who

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Alaska Conservation Voters protects Alaska's environment through public education and advocacy, and supports pro-conservation candidates for public office.

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David Rogers

# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Alaska is not what it used to be. That's what we know for sure. But what we don't know is what Alaska will become. How will we right the corruption scandal and restore Alaska's political credibility? Can we become known for clean government *and* clean energy? Will Alaska also be ground zero for solutions to climate change? The 2008 elections will give us an opportunity to shape what Alaska will become.



There is no more critical time than now for Alaskans to come together for a progressive agenda from education to fiscal policy to the environment. To start, ACV is committed to delivering strong lobbying and grassroots support for the Common Agenda of our sister organization, the Alaska Conservation Alliance.

Additionally, ACV will ensure that climate change, renewable energy and clean water are election issues. ACV will be there to hold our elected officials accountable for their record on advancing well reasoned conservation policy.

As noted in our last newsletter ACV is also supporting the Clean Elections Campaign as there is indeed a connection between clean, accountable government and good public policy. In fact, we think 2008 is the year to stand and be counted as a "Clean and Green" candidate. Is this something that Alaska is ready for? I certainly hope so.

But before I get too far ahead about the year to come let's not forget that 2007 was a year of progress and achievement. On the legislative front we managed to get two conservation related amendments into Governor Palin's natural gas pipeline bill. From victories against Proposition 1 (a potential show stopper to community planning) in the Mat-Su to growing support for renewable energy, more Alaskans are standing up for their conservation values. These victories would not have been possible without the hard work and support of all of our member groups, our business allies, donors and volunteers across the state. Thank you all!

Governor Palin hopes to deliver "politically and environmentally clean energy". ACV will be there to help the Palin Administration define exactly what this means. Will we lead by example and unleash Alaska's vast resources of renewable energy or will it still be the same fossil fuel story? With your continued support, ACV can shape Alaskan policy and make a critical difference in the 2008 elections.

Exciting times lay ahead.

## Legislative Session *Continued from Page 1*

free protection for our salmon streams in the context of responsible mining.

By establishing these three goals, the Alaska Conservation Alliance recognizes that the decisions we make today will have a lasting impact for future generations of Alaskans to come. Together these efforts can light the way for a healthy, sustainable future. And it is only by working together as Alaskans that these measures can make it through a 90-day session. This is a challenge the conservation community accepts. Learn more and keep up-to-date on how you can help by joining the Conservation Watch email at: [www.acvoters.org/legislation/index.html](http://www.acvoters.org/legislation/index.html)

# Farewells & Welcome to ACV Staff & Board



*Bobi Rinehart with Baby GG!*

Farewell to Bobi Rinehart, ACV's Development Director who left to serve as the Executive Director of the Sitka Music Festival. ACV benefited from Bobi's years of experience in the funding world and she will be missed. Her hard work reshaped ACV's fundraising, membership tracking and cultivation.

Soon after her announcement to move-on from ACV she began training current staffperson Andre Camara to take over the role of Development Director. The board and staff wish Bobi all the best in her new position!

Hello to ACV's newest team addition, Legislative & Communications Manager Sue Ely. Sue recently joined ACV after working as the Field Organizer for Mat-Su Taxpayers Against Proposition 1, a group formed to fight the regulatory takings ballot initiative in the Mat-Su. Prior to this campaign work, Sue was the Juneau Watchdog and Mat-Su Coordinator for Alaska Center for the Environment.

Originally from Maine, Sue received her BA in Environmental Studies from Mount Holyoke College and a Master of Environmental Science from the Yale School of Forestry. In addition to working for ACV, Sue enjoys hiking with her hound Meg in her new home, Juneau. Welcome Sue!



*Sue, taking full advantage of the Alaska summer*

*ACV is proud to welcome four new board members to its ranks! New blood is vital for any organization, but we are especially pleased with the wealth of experience our new board members bring. As we head into an election year, their perspectives, energy and talent will be vital for making sure conservation is a top priority for all Alaskans.*

**Teresa Blume:** Hailing from Willow, Teresa was an obvious choice for the ACV Board. As Vice President of the Greater Wasilla Chamber of Commerce, Teresa brings with her campaign experience and a fresh perspective of Valley politics.

**Kat Pustay:** After successfully running Sen. Bill Wielechowski's campaign in 2006 and working for Defenders of Wildlife, Kat's commitment to conservation and knowledge of Alaska politics make her a great addition to ACV.

**Laura Schue:** Laura is a trained mental health clinician and a conservation champion. She currently works as a grants officer to the Alaska Humanities Forum. Laura's strategic assessment abilities have already proven valuable to ACV.

**Sally Smith:** Fairbanks, Juneau and Anchorage, oh my! Sally brings to ACV her incredible connections from across the state. As a former legislator from Fairbanks, former Juneau mayor and former Executive Director of the Northern Alaska Environmental Center, we are pleased to welcome her aboard.

*A special thank you to outgoing board members Tom Atkinson and Jason Bergevin for all of their commitment and hard work. ☑*

## Planning for 2008

The Alaska Conservation Assessment, a report commissioned by the Brainerd Foundation, recently outlined many of the opportunities and challenges facing the conservation community in Alaska. To capitalize on the insights offered by this report, ACV/ACA held a two-day joint strategic planning session of both boards to update its strategic plan. Executive Directors from Alaska Center for the Environment, Northern Alaska Environmental Center, Southeast Alaska Conservation Council and Cook Inlet Keeper all attended to lend their perspective and expertise.



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*Staff with ACA and ACV Board Members at the Strategic Planning Session in Girdwood this winter.*

## Fundraiser Success Story

*What do you get when you combine good food, great laughs and a worthy cause?*



*Vic Fisher with Mr. Whitekeys at the AVC Fundraiser in October*

*ACV's second annual fundraising event "The Future Isn't What It Used To Be"!*

The afternoon fundraiser featuring political commentary and insights by former State Senator and Constitutional Delegate Vic Fisher and former owner of the "Fly-By-Night" club and political humorist Mr. Whitekeys was a huge hit with the packed ballroom at the Hilton. In keeping with the current political climate, door prizes donated by well known artist Ray Troll were given to attendees who learned that their chairs had been bugged. We'd like to say 'Welcome' and 'Thank You' to the 38 new members who joined ACV at the fundraiser!

Planning for the 2008 annual event is underway and with the election right around the corner you're not going to want to miss it, see you there! ☑

## Campaign Training *Continued from Page 1*

embody these values are trained in the art of running a successful campaign, ACV recently hosted its annual campaign training to instruct the next generation of pro-conservation candidates. More than 21 candidates and campaign managers from across the state participated. Trainers Tom Novick and Liz Kaufman lead candidates on the skills they need to win. If the past performance of ACA trained candidates is anything to go by, 2008 should be very promising indeed. ☑

## Planning 2008 *Continued from Page 3*

The two-day session was facilitated by Brian Rogers, one of the co-authors of the Alaska Conservation Assessment. The results of the two-day session left us with a stronger, coordinated strategy for delivering conservation policy and electing pro-conservation candidates. The session also addressed the need to make better use of media and messaging. ☑

## Alaskans want a Renewable Energy Fund

Governor Palin recently asked Alaskans how to invest the potential \$1.6 billion in surplus revenue from the newly passed ACES legislation in her Voices Across Alaska Survey. The results were astounding with over 50% of respondents including a renewable energy fund in their top three priorities. In fact, a renewable energy fund was ranked third by Alaskan survey respondents. Thank you to everyone who took the time to fill out Governor Palin's survey.

Even more encouraging was the Governor's response to the survey results. Governor Palin included \$250 million in her 2009 budget for an alternative energy fund. While this is a great sign, our work is not over.

Last winter, the AK House of Representatives passed HB152, a bill that could encourage alternative and renewable energy, potentially lowering the cost of energy

for Alaskans. The bill has yet to pass the Senate and be signed into law by Governor Palin. If this fund is not created this session, we stand to lose the momentum for appropriating the \$250 million for renewable energy.

For those of you who have not done so already, please write to the Governor to thank her for budgeting \$250 million for a renewable energy fund and ask that she make sure that the Legislature passes HB152. Also write to your Senator and Representative and ask them to create and finance a \$250 million fund for alternative energy. ☑

*We can lead this nation...with a zealous energy plan which contains renewable energy components and cost-effective alternatives, especially for rural Alaska. We'll support real energy conservation efforts...and we'll show the way for the rest of the world - that we can be good stewards of God's green earth.*  
~ Governor Palin, State of Alaska Speech '07



**Governor Palin,**  
**Thank you for pledging \$250 million for an alternative energy fund!**

*ACV's postcard to thank Governor Palin for supporting renewable energy*



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