

Chichagof Conservation Council

Box 621

Tenakee Springs Alaska 99841

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What is the Chichagof Conservation Council ?

The Chichagof Conservation Council (CCC) is a non-profit network dedicated to providing information about conservation issues, especially those that affect Tenakee Inlet and Chichagof Island.

In this period of rapid political and climate change, we are keenly aware that maintaining the integrity of Tenakee Inlet's vibrant salmon streams is the most valuable legacy we can offer future generations.

Until passage of the Tongass Timber Reform Act in 1990, management of the entire Tongass National Forest was dictated by 50-year contracts that guaranteed profits to the voracious pulp mills located in Sitka and Ketchikan. The Chichagof Conservation Council grew from the efforts of Tenakee residents to change the direction of Tongass management toward sustainable timber harvest and protection of critical fish and wildlife habitat. Persistent local voices called for permanent protection of **Kadashan, Trap Bay and the fish-rich watersheds of Upper Tenakee Inlet.**

The original version of the Tongass Timber Reform Act included all of those areas, but the eventual compromise legislation dropped Upper Tenakee Inlet. CCC's primary goal remains finishing the job and gaining permanent protected status for **Seal Bay, Long Bay, Goose Flats, the head of Tenakee Inlet, and Saltery Bay**, while guarding the Legislated LUD II status of Kadashan and Trap Bay enacted by the Tongass Timber Reform Act.

Many local observers have commented how the steep, densely forested streams of Upper Tenakee Inlet seem cooler and appear to benefit from deeper, longer lasting snow pack than lower Inlet streams. **CCC has been**



monitoring stream temperatures in cooperation with **University of Alaska researchers for the past decade.** We hope to determine whether Upper Tenakee streams will be more resilient as atmospheric temperature rises.

Over the years CCC has sponsored numerous other local projects including replacing energy-hungry appliances, supplying poop-scoops for the Tenakee trail, removing hazardous waste, maintaining membership in the Alaska Stranding Network, and supporting sustainable local businesses and local food production.

It is CCC's job to let members know when our voices can make a difference in Washington DC or Juneau.

Asking for your support is not about raising money. CCC's costs are low, and all donations are frugally conserved. **What's important is that CCC maintains our list of well-informed and deeply concerned members.**

CCC's membership information and address list is never shared, but the overall number of CCC members is an important statement. Email is now our primary method of communication with members. Please consider joining or re-enlisting today, and please be sure to include an email address .

Keep public lands in public hands!

CCC is a registered 501 (c) (3) non profit organization.

All contributions are tax-deductible.

John Wisenbaugh (President)

Joan Mcbeen Vice-president)

Megan Moody (Treasurer)

Molly Kemp (Secretary/communications)

Sam McBeen (Board)

Steve Lewis (Board)

That Sinking Feeling

Seven Women in Alaska Learn the Facts of Rising Seas

By Kathleen Dean Moore and Megan Moody

At low tide, the sea is still a quarter mile away across a broad expanse of wilderness beach in Southeast Alaska. On the far side of the inlet, green mountains turn grey as a squall skids through. Seven women walk toward a pinnacle of rock on the beach – sharply eroded limestone, pocked and pocketed, three meters high. A bald eagle flaps off as we approach. The air temperature is 55 degrees. Water temperature, 51. High tide predicted for 3:08 PM.

We are going to climb that pinnacle of rock and perch there until the tide rises over it.



How? It won't be easy. Randomly distributed among us, ages thirty to eighty, are three damaged eyes, two cranky knees, one sore back, and in my case, a deep aversion to drowning. But we help each other clamber up, each deciding for herself how deeply she is willing to be submerged.

Why? Scientists generally agree that unless the world acts fast on climate change, warming water and melting continental ice will raise sea levels about three meters, almost ten feet, by 2100. Yet, in the current political climate, it's easy to dismiss the scientific predictions. Even for those who believe the science, it's hard to imagine three meters of rising water. So the seven of us are going to provide a shivering, living example of that rise.



Although rising tides are very different from rising sea levels, in one respect, they are the same. The tide will rise whether we deny it or not. The same with rising sea levels. No attack on science, no denial of global warming, no alternative facts, will hold back the sea.

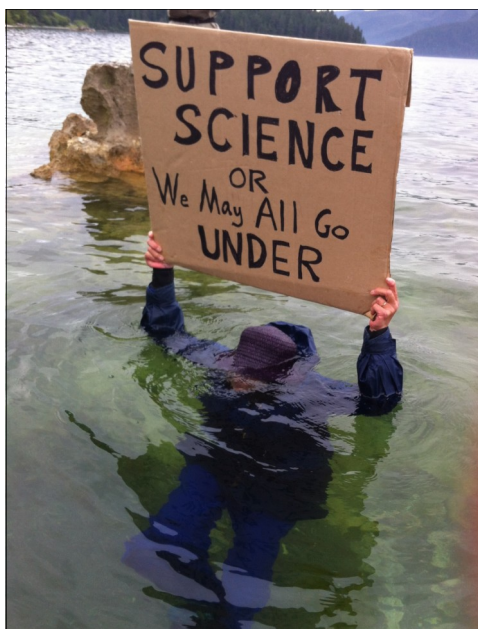
So what does three meters of sea level rise look like? How does it feel?

When you hear the tide rush up the beach, you feel unsettled, as if someone were sneaking up on you in the dark. When the tide rises to your knees, what you feel is pressure, as the sea presses your waders to your calves. When the tide rises to your waist, you start to feel cold, and you spread your arms to keep them dry, the way eagles do. When the water gets to your chest, your float-coat begins to lift, and you drive your fingers into cracks to hold yourself in place. You laugh, but it's a nervous laugh. There are weak jokes about the Greek hero Prometheus, condemned to spend eternity chained to a rock in the sea – his punishment for stealing fire from the Gods.



Soon Molly, standing on the gravel, is engulfed to her shoulders. She holds her sign higher. *SUPPORT SCIENCE* or *we may all go under*. I lift my sign higher too – *How high can the water go?* – and learn the answer to the question as water begins to pour over the top of my waders. Before I know it, my socks are sloshing in cold saltwater.

“Take the picture and let’s get off this rock.” By now, Molly is entirely underwater, bobbing up and down to grab quick breaths. Her hat floats off and sinks. The hem of Megan’s skirt is floating up to her armpits and she begins to sputter.



Take the damn picture,” I say again, and now the question is, *Who has a plan to get us off this rock?* I tighten my grip. Our photographers turn rescuers, poling in a skiff as we help each other climb higher on what is now a narrow pinnacle. Finally, we heave and flop into the boat, graceful as walrus.

It may be that Alaskans are especially nervous about sea-level rise because climate change is coming fast and furious here. With little sea-ice to protect the shores, severe storms are already threatening to wash 31 Native Alaskan villages into the sea.

But we want to call attention to more than Alaska. Already, rising salt water driven by fiercer storms is swamping land from Bangladesh to Louisiana, ruining agricultural fields, flooding homes, scabbling at the foundations of great cities, contaminating drinking water, driving climate refugees inland.. There’s no denying the danger and the damage.

So here’s the biggest question: *What deeper understanding, what sinking feeling, what shiver of cold up the spine is required, before people will rise like the tide against politicians and petrochemical industrialists who chain our future to the rock of fossil fuels?*



CCC supports community projects

Although CCC's main focus is watershed-scale land management, we applaud and support efforts to make our community more sustainable and secure. Last year CCC donated funds to purchase a cart for the Community Garden. Carlene Allred provided the artwork!

This year CCC is supporting the stalwart efforts of Recycle Tenakee to clean up our community and come up with practical solutions to subdue Tenakee's trash problem.

Tenakee is a fishing town

If you live in Tenakee, think about how many of the wage earners in our small town are commercial fisheries permit holders, deckhands, fishing guides or connected to support industries. In addition, we all benefit by direct sport and subsistence harvest of salmon for healthy food on our tables.

Abundant salmon are the key to sustainability in Southeast Alaska, and Tenakee Inlet salmon streams are a world class resource.

To ensure that democracy works, our representatives in government need to hear from us. Call our delegation often to let them know that we are watching what they are doing and that we demand that they take our concerns with them to Washington—not just the demands of big corporations and their lobbyists.

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