



# Up Ship Creek: Winter 2006

News, Events, and Opportunities from the Sierra Club's Knik Group

## Help Wind Power Come to Southcentral Alaska!

There are many benefits to wind energy. Wind energy is clean and can help reduce global warming. Wind energy is renewable. Wind energy is local. Wind energy is cheap: it is



now cost competitive compared to energy from natural gas, plus wind is a free fuel and thus it can provide a stable long-term price for power production, hedging our bets against rising natural gas prices. Short construction lead times mean it can provide low cost, clean energy quicker than traditional power plants. Wind energy is reliable and efficient. Unlike other power plants, wind energy systems require minimal maintenance and have low operating expenses. Wind turbines are reliable and are available to generate electricity 99% of the time (on par with other generating sources).

Alaska's statewide wind energy potential is large, especially in the winter, which is also the time of peak demand. Wind energy is already powering Alaskan homes. For example, Kotzebue Electric Association (KEA) installed ten small wind turbines in 1997, and is working to expand its wind generation greatly.

The Fire Island wind power project just west of Anchorage is the largest proposed wind project in the state. Currently, southcentral Alaska relies on natural gas for about 79% of its power generation, hydroelectric for about 19%, and oil for the remaining 2%. Fire Island wind power would displace perhaps about 7% of the natural gas used for power production, a significant achievement. However, as only 16% of the total gas production in Cook Inlet is used to generate railbelt electricity this would add up to a insignificant (~1%) effect on Cook Inlet gas demand.

So any way you look at it, it looks good for our health and our economy - personal and state-wide!

### What you can do:

Please contact your electricity provider now and let them know you support the development of the Fire Island wind power project.

### Tell the new board at Chugach Electric that you support Fire Island Wind!



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**Ray Kreig**  
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Come to a Conservation Meeting or Email michelle.wilber@alaska.sierraclub.org to get involved!

# Volunteers are at the Heart of the Sierra Club

## Save These Dates and Get Involved Today!

### Potlucks

Bring a dish to share and mingle with other Knik Group members. Please join us!

**Friday, January 27th 6:00 -9:00 pm**

at Carl's house downtown-276-4078

**Friday, February 24th 6:00-9:00 pm**

at Mary Grisco's on Gov't Hill-276-4078

(lots of cats and not child-proof)

**Thursday, March 30th 6:00-9:00 pm**

at Bayshore Community Clubhouse

organized by Jennifer-276-4078

Call the Sierra Club for information: 276-4078

or visit [www.alaska.sierraclub.org](http://www.alaska.sierraclub.org)

### Attend A Local Meeting

All Sierra Club members are encouraged to attend or to conference call in. All meetings are at: 333 West 4th Ave, third floor in the Ship Creek Center. Please arrive a bit early as the building closes at 6pm.

**Knik Group Excomm planning and organizing meetings** focus on conservation priorities, and upcoming

events. Contact: Will 688-5288

[will.taygan@alaska.sierraclub.org](mailto:will.taygan@alaska.sierraclub.org)

**Monday, February 13: 6-7:30**

**Monday March 13: 6-7:30**

Stay after the excomm meetings for the **Knik Group Conservation Committee meetings**. They will focus on the Cool Cities campaign, energy awareness, commuter rail, and other local issues. Please join us to get involved!

Contact: Michelle 770-6710

[michelle.wilber@alaska.sierraclub.org](mailto:michelle.wilber@alaska.sierraclub.org)

**Monday, February 13: 7:30-8:30**

**Monday, March 13: 7:30-8:30**

## **Register Today for the Alaska Sierra Club Conservation Activist Training**

Learn how to take effective action! Our training will help you to expertly assess your conservation goals, choose the best strategies to achieve them, maximize your volunteer time and energy, and get the word out in the media. You will hear from experienced organizers from around the country, network with fellow Alaskan activists, and get hands-on experience developing a written plan that gives you both the skills AND the confidence that you can organize in your own community to protect and preserve wild Alaska!

Where: Sheep Mountain Lodge ([www.sheepmountain.com](http://www.sheepmountain.com))

Location: Sheep Mountain Lodge is located on the Glenn Highway between Palmer and Glennallen and features home cooked meals, scenic beauty and easy access to wintertime outdoor adventures.

Starts: Friday, February 10. Check in begins at 6pm, dinner is 7-8pm. Opening program starts at 8pm sharp.

Ends: Sunday, February 12, 2pm

Cost: \$50 - includes lodging, meals, transportation.

For more info and to register, please contact Mayellen: 276-4068, [maryellen@sierraclubalaska.org](mailto:maryellen@sierraclubalaska.org)

# Keep Hatcher Pass Wild!

**A commercial subdivision development at Hatcher Pass associated with a proposed ski resort threatens to put a strip mall on the banks of the Little Su River, at the base of Hatcher Pass.**

The Mat-Su borough is currently negotiating a \$41 million contract with JL Properties to build the often-proposed ski resort at Government Peak. This latest proposal is different from earlier efforts because it's not just a ski hill. JL's plan proposes only one chair lift, while investing heavily in a 450-family subdivision, and a 20-acre strip mall along the banks of the Little Su River.

Hatcher Pass is a recreation and wildland jewel. It receives over 100,000 visitors each year, mostly local Alaskans. The Little Su River's pristine headwaters recharge Palmer's aquifers and support strong Coho and King salmon runs. The area slated for development is also critical moose and bear habitat. It was set aside for water, wildlife, and public recreation. State law prohibits sale of land in this area.

On December 8, the state DNR decided to give riverside public land to the Mat-Su Borough, for commercial development.

The proposal has drawn fire from a wide range of residents and interest groups. This conveyance depends on HB 306, introduced by Rep. Bill Stolze, R-Chugiak, which would circumvent existing law to remove land from the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area.

**Hatcher Pass needs support!** The Borough, state legislature, and JL Properties need to hear that people value Hatcher Pass as a free, public recreation wildland. Hatcher Pass is not for sale.

For more information or to get involved, contact:

[will.taygan@alaska.sierraclub.org](mailto:will.taygan@alaska.sierraclub.org)  
or  
Friends of Mat-Su,  
[foms@mtaonline.net](mailto:foms@mtaonline.net)  
(907) 746-0130  
POB 116 Palmer, AK  
99645



Hatcher Pass - Photo by Carl Johnson

## Knik River Public Use Area Legislation: a good idea gone wrong.



Knik River - Photo by Carl Johnson

Legislation has been introduced to create a Knik River Public Use Area for approximately 400 square miles adjacent to and just north of Chugach State Park. This includes the area along the Knik River from the Old Glenn Highway bridge up to and past the Knik Glacier. Known for out-of-control off-road use, air-boating and burned-out cars, there is a definite need for more enforcement of current regulations.

This area is not all subject to motorized abuse, however. Along the north side of the valley is a wonderful canoe route, great birding areas, and low-elevation dall-sheep habitat. Over the past years, however, ORV use has steadily encroached on these wetlands and quieter use areas.

The Knik River Valley is just a small part of the proposed Public Use Area, but it is the only part accessible from the road system. A state designation, as a public-use area, or as a state recreation area or state park could bring needed enforcement and highlight this fabulous area.

Unfortunately, the current legislation seems to have been written by the Off-Road Vehicle lobby. It legalizes all the currently illegal trails, and prohibits regulating ORV and other motorized use when in conflict with non-motorized use. In essence, it creates a 400 SQUARE MILE ORV PLAYGROUND!

**Take Action:** Contact your State Representative and Senator and tell them that although this area needs better management, the current bill is not acceptable. For more information see [www.knikriver.org](http://www.knikriver.org).

# Knik Outings: Adventures in Our Backyard

Everyone is welcome—but leave your dog at home!  
Bring water, food, and appropriate clothing for the weather.  
For more information email Paul - paul.fuselier@alaska.sierraclub.org



## Thursday, January 19: Anchorage Snowshoe Outing

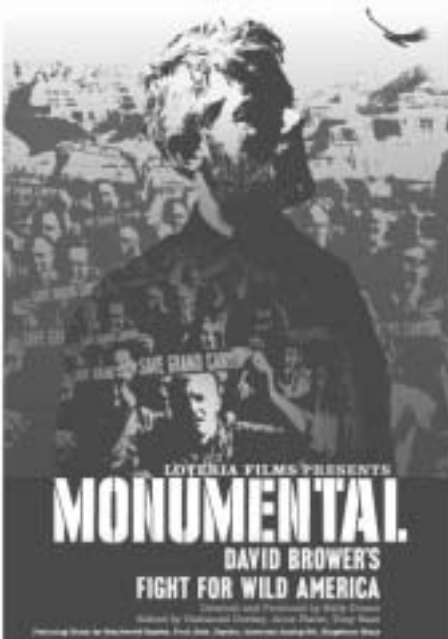
Meet at the South Bivouac trailhead on the Campbell Airstrip Road at 6:30 p.m. for a snowshoe outing in the Far North Bicentennial Park. We will meander through the park for 60 to 90 minutes, spending a small part of that time on the Spencer Loop trail. Bring snowshoes, headlamp, water, snacks and warm winter gear. Be sure to leave your valuables at home, NOT in your car. For more information, contact Amy at 338-3979 or via e-mail: amurphy@alaska.sierraclub.org.

## Sunday, January 22: South Fork Eagle River Ski

Join the Sierra Club for a 4-5 hour ski up the South Fork Eagle River Vally. Be prepared for winter weather and be proficient in off-trail skiing, bring extra clothing, and food. Metal-edged skis are recommended. We will meet to carpool at 9:30am in the Eagle River Carrs Parking Lot near the post office. For more information, contact Paul - paul.fuselier@alaska.sierraclub.org

## Saturday, February 4: Eklutna Lake Family Ski

Ski (snowshoe or walk depending on conditions) along the shore line of Eklutna Lake for a few hours. Anchorage folks meet at the Mulddon Carrs at 10am, for Eagle river folks meet at the Carrs in Eagle River (near the post office) at 10:30am otherwise at the Eklutna Lake parking lot at 12:00pm. Contact michelle.wilber@alaska.sierraclub.org for more information 770-6710.



## Monumental – David Brower's fight for wild America

March 1st - 7 pm - Free

A Movies and Speakers Program at the Anchorage Museum

Monumental is the story of a true American legend, an artist, a publisher, a filmmaker and a zealous crusader whose fiery dedication and activism inspired the environmental movement.

If you've ever wondered what a single person can do against the relentless onslaught of development, wait until you see the charismatic and enigmatic David Brower push the 1964 Wilderness Act through Congress, and then go on to save the Grand Canyon from damming and help create Redwoods National Park and Point Reyes National Seashore. With a playful visual aesthetic, a cool alt-country soundtrack, and hand-held wilderness footage from as far back as the 1930s, Monumental documents the golden age of American environmentalism, when Brower took the Sierra Club from a regional hiking group into a national political force.



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## **UPCOMING MOVIE/SPEAKER NIGHT Hosted by Knik Group**

All events are **FREE** and open to the public

### **Pebble Mine and the Bristol Bay Mining District**

Join **Scott Brennan**, Campaign Director of Alaskans for Responsible Mining, to learn more about the proposed Pebble Mine and Bristol Bay Mining District and the threat they pose to Alaska's clean water, salmon habitat, human health and existing jobs.

This multimedia presentation will include an overview of proposed mining development, Native testimonials in opposition to the mine and information regarding what you can do to promote responsible mineral development in Alaska.

To learn more, please visit [www.bristolbayalliance.com](http://www.bristolbayalliance.com) or contact Scott Brennan via [scott@reformakmines.org](mailto:scott@reformakmines.org).

**Wednesday, February 1st at 7pm**

**Anchorage Museum**

**121 West 7th Ave.**

**Downtown Anchorage—Free.**