Caring for the Kenai Ideas

Power Generation:

- Southcentral Alaska has a crisis in its power generation – most of the power is generated from natural gas, and gas supplies during the winter may not be sufficient to prevent blackouts or rolling brownouts during the winter months when temperatures are the coldest and demand is the highest. Power generation will become critical to Southcentral Alaska in the next decade as this crisis becomes worse.

  Issues to look at include: energy conservation, how to prepare yourself, home and school in the event of the blackout or rolling brownout, emergency supplies,…

- Hydro power generation is an issue currently being researched on the upper Kenai River watershed, with Grant Lake and Falls Creek as the most likely options for development. The estimated power generation capacity of this hydro power project is about 5 megawatts, or enough to power a Wal-Mart for a year. Ecological costs of the project as proposed would be to put a dam on Grant Lake with a capacity for a 30 foot draw down (envision a 30 foot ring around Grant Lake where water varies during the year), potential dewatering of Falls Creek, which would have negative consequences on an anadromous fish bearing waters, and a new road system to service the dam.

  Issues to look at include: How do I educate my neighbors and others where electricity is generated from, are there alternatives to hydro projects that require dams built on salmon stream that can produce electricity without the negative ecological consequences, what would be the electrical generation capacity of many small scale projects of solar, wind and run of the river projects, can electrical cooperative members generate power and contribute to that production to the “grid”.

- Alaska has half of the known coal resources in the United States. The Chuitna Coal project is slated for regulatory review in the next few years. What issues do we as borough residents need to know about in terms of possible consequences of coal mine development, and is coal a potential energy solution in the future of Alaska.

  Issue to explore: Can coal be turned into an environmentally clean burning fuel for energy production? Can coal be mined in an environmentally responsible manner? Good opportunity to discuss issues with industry, consumers, electrical generation cooperatives and environmental advocates.

Recreation and People:

- How do we provide recreational experiences for people in an environmentally responsible manner? Fishing is a popular recreational activity on the Kenai Peninsula. Are we providing responsible access and infrastructure for the personal use fisheries at the mouth of the Kasilof and Kenai Rivers? How can we

manage fish carcasses, trash and human waste in a responsible manner along our river systems that people use for fishing and dip netting?

Issues to explore – The Kasilof and Kenai Rivers offer an opportunity to compare and contrast how each is managed in terms of their respective dip net fisheries. What is being done well, and where can we improve in management? What can I do to effect a positive change, specifically at the mouth of the Kasilof River?

- Trails and fish platforms are a way to provide responsible access to fishery resources. What can I do to assist in the maintenance and upkeep of this type of public access, and in areas without such infrastructure what can I do to help in building the necessary infrastructure to allow people to fish without doing damage to riparian bank areas along the popular fishing rivers.

  Issues to explore: Can I volunteer my time or organize a trail building crew to assist cities, the borough and state agencies in building trails and help in their upkeep? Could I organize a team or school organization to help out in keeping our trails clean? Is there an opportunity for adopting a section of trail? Can I get sponsors to underwrite our actions, so that we could earn money for our group for school activities?

Education:

Education is an important aspect of environmental awareness. How can I participate actively in the environmental education process with various groups who live or visit the Kenai Peninsula? Is there a product I could produce for free or for sale that would help in the education process? A brochure, a video, a coloring book? How do people, such as landowners along our rivers, become aware of the important regulations to follow when developing their private property?

Invasive Species:

Invasive species, both plants and animals, can have a profound impact on the ecology in many ways, often with a negative effect on current species. What can I do to help promote awareness of invasive species, and what can I do to help eradicate them before they become a nuisance? Can I create or join in any volunteer efforts to control invasive species?

- Issues to explore: Is there a proposal I could make to the Alaska Board of Fisheries to deal with invasive pike in the waters of the central Kenai Peninsula, which threaten important salmon populations? Can I adopt a section of stream and organize a group activity to eradicate invasive plants along a riparian area or along a trail or road system?

Recycling

- No process to recycle/dispose of used oil filters
- Plastic waste is too costly to ship for recycling
- Not enough people participating in recycling
- Landfills fill up with used tires

Pollution

- Illegal disposal of used oil
- Accidental oil spills
- Improper disposal of hazardous waste
- Air pollution from auto, home and industry
- Leaks from cars, boats, etc. leading to groundwater contamination
- Bilge water from vessels causing water pollution
- Pollution from batteries leading to water contamination
- Vehicle emissions causing air quality problems
- Mining discharges causing water turbidity
- Hydrocarbon contamination in the Kenai River
- Disposal of fish processing waste

Development related issues

- Overuse of rivers causing bank degradation
- Bluff erosion
- Rampant development without planning
- Building too close to rivers; homes & condos
- Untested septic systems near and along river banks
- Culverts that block salmon passage
- Road dust from traffic

River Hydrology

- Creating common data base for stream/river parameters (discharge, fish passages, chemistry, boat usage, etc.)

Other issues

- Global warming and climate change
- Spruce Bark beetle infestation of trees
- Over use of packaging
- Poly fishing line, nets and other solid wastes in streams
- Invasive species – from pike to plants