

RC 23
Joanie Nininger

I am in support of HQ-F-16-082 Cook Inlet Keeper's proposal to hold public hearings on anticipated fish habitat impacts related to the Chuitna coal strip mine and to ensure that permits for the proposed coal mine truly protect fish and fish habitat.

As a former resident and neighbor to the village of Tyonek, 36 years ago I experienced the fruits of the Chuitna River, or as we used to call it, the Chuit.

I learned from the indigenous people of Tyonek to respect food resources that the fish and animals brought to us.

It is imperative that the Board of Fisheries take every legal step to protect the river from coal strip mining. By the Board not taking action in protecting the fish and their habitat, will only result in a catastrophic domino effect impacting the wildlife, waterfowl, birds, all the way down to the insects and food web the decomposing fish and vegetation provides. The Chuitna River is the lifeblood for many species in the water and on land.

Our first priority as Alaskans, should be the responsibility to keep our resources respected and protected for our children and grandchildren.

The gifts we all receive from the river should come in second and lastly, Outside investors should not ruin it for all of us because this is our home.

Please enact proposal 082 to ensure a healthy future for the Chuitna River.