

Representing the citizens of Cook Inlet in promoting environmentally safe marine transportation and oil facility operations.

July 2016

Meet Scott Smiley, representing the Kodiak Island Borough

How do you go from being a Berkeley drop out in the '60s, to publishing *Zap*, a satirical comic book "For Adult Intellectuals Only," to becoming an expert on sea cucumbers?

For Scott Smiley, it probably started in 1964, immediately after high school graduation in a small suburb of Rochester, New York, when he moved with his family west to California, enrolled at UC Berkeley and became embroiled in the free speech movement that fall. Either in an act of rebellion or boredom, or both, he dropped out of college his first year. For the next ten years, Scott worked in an art reproduction and poster store in Berkeley that published *Zap* comics. For a free speech activist, so far, so good.



Taking a break from free-spirited San Francisco, Scott drove to Alaska with a friend in 1974. He boarded a ferry in Homer and sailed to Kodiak where he arrived on a foggy morning in May and figured he was home. In Kodiak Scott realized he was a little small—and it was way too late in the season—to commercial fish. He ended up at the high school working as a janitor, which convinced him he needed a plan B; he returned to the Bay area later that year to continue school. Scott could resume his studies at Berkeley provided he excelled in one semester of Junior College, which he did studying botany and learning how to dissect and cook a variety of plants (he boasts of being taught 15 different artichoke recipes). Back at Berkeley, Scott earned a Bachelor's Degree in zoology, went on to graduate school at the University of Washington, and earned a Master's and his Ph.D. He then headed to UC San Francisco for two post doctorate fellowships, the first in Biochemistry with the future head of the National Academy of Science. The second was in Molecular Biology, studying the genes that control early development in fruit flies.

During Scott's fourth year of fellowships he applied for a job opening at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks.



Now married, Scott and his wife, Kerry Irons, whom he met in graduate school at the University of Washington's Friday Harbor marine lab, drove the Alcan in a VW bus all the way to Fairbanks, where they lived for 6 years and had a son. When a position came open with the Fishery Industrial Technology Center in Kodiak in 1995, he applied for and was appointed director. After 11 years as FITC director, and another six as a faculty member, Scott retired in 2012.

Which brings us back to Scott's fascination with sea cucumbers, worm like Echinoderms which are related to star fish, sea urchins and brittle stars. In addition to being an avid fisherman, Scott enjoys staying informed on a variety of different science projects. He is part of a worldwide group of sea cucumber taxonomists that meet every few years, usually in Belgium, to review

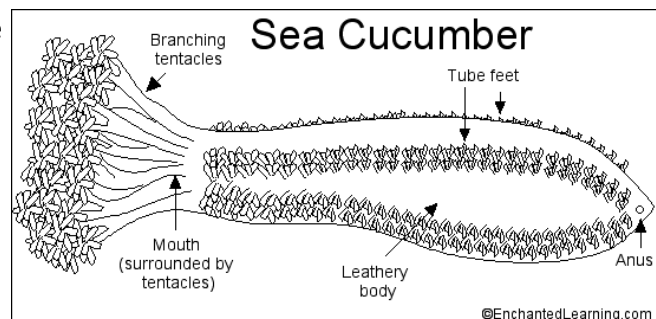
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the work accomplished on sea cucumbers, plan new work and recruit new grad students into the discipline to carry on their studies. When this group first started, there were about 4500 species of sea cucumbers that had been listed. Carefully reviewing each description, they found some species had been independently described as new species multiple times. The group has collected and posted their listings [online](#). According to Scott, a major advance in understanding the relationships between sea cucumber species has been through the use of DNA, which can be more informative than anatomic features. Sea cucumbers are important both ecologically and as a food source, particularly in the Indo Pacific region. Because they are relatively easy to capture and are a valuable export, especially when shipped to China, they also are easily over fished.



Scott's involvement with CIRCAC began when Board Members Jay Stinson, who represented Commercial Fishing Organizations, and Elizabeth Chilton, who was representing the Kodiak Island Borough, asked if he'd be interested in serving. At the time, Scott was mostly concerned about the Drift River Terminal and believed CIRCAC's oversight and work important to ensuring environmentally sound industrial development in Cook Inlet.

In 2012, the Kodiak Island Borough appointed Scott to replace Ms. Chilton who moved to Washington State. As a member of the Board, Scott brings his scientific knowledge and curiosity to bear on CIRCAC's Environmental Monitoring Committee, and his academic background as a member of the Scholarship Committee. Scott is also currently filling a vacancy on the Kodiak Island Borough Assembly. Scott is also focused on potential increases in shipping traffic through the Shelikof Straits in the future, should fully laden LNG (liquefied natural gas) tankers depart from Cook Inlet and empty LNG tankers return through the Straits to the Inlet to be filled.

Scott's journey from Zap to academia to CIRCAC is illustrative of his open-mindedness and intellectual curiosity, qualities that have created a welcome place for him on our Board of Directors.