

**News Release**

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**Gary Fandrei announces retirement after 27 years with Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association**

Executive Director Gary Fandrei is retiring after a 27-year long career with the Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association (CIAA). He will stay on as the Executive Director until the Board of Directors finishes a recruitment process to find his replacement.

Gary began his career at CIAA in 1990 as a biologist with experience and skills in fish biology, limnology, and statistics. He hit the ground running in Alaska after moving up from Minnesota where he worked for the Pollution Control Agency. As a biologist, Gary was involved in every aspect of field projects from planning to evaluation to hiring seasonal staff and supervision. He loved to be in the field and work on many different projects such as the sockeye salmon enhancement project at Hidden Lake, which continues today.

After seven years in this position, Gary was promoted to the Executive Director in 1997, only the third Executive Director CIAA has had in its 41 years of operation. Since then Gary has worked diligently to serve CIAA and fulfill its mission of providing and protecting the salmon resource of the Cook Inlet region. He was not only a skilled administrator, managing a multi-million dollar budget and orchestrating the operations of several salmon hatcheries and field projects, he has also been a great ambassador for all things salmon on a local, national, and international level. Gary volunteered to represent aquaculture on many organizations such as the Public Advisory Committee to the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Council and cultivated numerous working relationships throughout the decades.

Gary worked tirelessly for CIAA. It was not unusual for him to work seven days a week, especially if he could still dip his toes into field work with an occasional trip to one of the remote project sites such as Packers Lake. Gary's professionalism and dedication will be deeply missed.

"Gary's 27 years of dedicated service to CIAA is much appreciated. He has gained the confidence and appreciation of the community, the Board of Directors, Fish and Game personnel, and other organizations he serves, such as Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council and the United Fishermen of Alaska's enhancement committee. I'm proud to have served with Gary and wish him a happy retirement," said Brent Johnson, President CIAA, 2005 to present.

The Board of Directors is working with Gary to ensure a smooth transition to new leadership. Gary has agreed to stay on until a new Executive Director is on line to take over the administration of CIAA. Recruitment for a new Executive Director will begin in January of 2018.

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