Cooperative Extension Helps Preserve the Bounty of the Sea

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Anglers whose freezers are already full of fish can look to the University of Alaska in Fairbanks for alternative ways to preserve their catch. Roxie Dinstel is the extension home economist for the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service, a program that provides useful tools in preserving Alaska's bounty.

"In cooperative extension we work with folks on how to use resources that we have here in Alaska. So people who come in with their coolers full of fish and they're ready to do something with it, our job is to help them put it up for long term storage," Dinstel said. "We often have online canning lessons that are available that you can click on and it will go step by step. We also have DVDs that are related with this is how you do it. Also free publications on canning, freezing and even smoking fish."

For those who don't have a knack for following directions, Dinstel said the extension has a help line service where people can call in and get one-on-one help with their projects.

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-- (Fish Storage 2 :21 "We answer questions. And so someone will call me and say oh I messed up. I didn't process it long enough. I misread my timer and I did it for an hour and ten minutes and not 110 minutes and what do I have to do to fix it. My canner has black coming out of the top of it, what do I do? (Laughs).")

She said the point of this service is to encourage more residents to use the resources around them for food supplies throughout the year. The process of some of these preserving mechanisms isn't easy, which is why they have so many opportunities for help.

The program is funded through a variety of groups, particularly the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

-- (Fish Storage 3 :16 "We're a part of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the money comes from both the state and federal resources. We are actually a part of the USDA, and that's where a portion of our funding comes through. The majority comes through the state, through the University of Alaska Fairbanks.")

Dinstel said a variety of the teaching tools came from scientists with the Kodiak Seafood and Marine Science Center on Near Island.
She encouraged people to search "preserving Alaska's bounty" online to find other useful preservation tips for foods not from the sea.

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