

Press Advisory: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PUTTING THE FUN IN FUNGUS: CORDOVA FESTIVAL CELEBRATES FUNGUS, FOREST & SEA Guided Forest Forays, Art & Cultivation Workshops, Gourmet Copper River Salmon Feast Scheduled

CORDOVA, ALASKA. July 30, 2018 - While Cordova's fishing fleet is out gathering nets full of Copper River & Prince William Sound salmon, its land-based foragers are hunting wild berries, yellow-footed chanterelles, and king boletes! Those swift salmon that make it past Cordova's keen fishermen will head upstream, spawn, and leave abundant nutrients on the creek shores. These nutrients are then picked up and transported by fungi to nourish the entire forest. At this time every fall, the community of Cordova welcomes fungus-pluckers, lichen-lovers, and friends of the forest & sea to the Cordova Fungus Festival. The 12th annual event will take place **August 30-September 2, 2018** and will be hosted at the *Cordova Center* meeting facility. Excursions will occur throughout the Chugach National Forest and surrounding lands. The weekend's activities explore the northernmost coastal temperate rainforest and celebrate the interconnected life-cycle of fungus, salmon, and the forest.

Festival activities begin Thursday evening at the Copper River Gallery with the scientific and fine artwork of Kristin Link. Friday night don't miss the Wine & Cheese Mushroomer's Mixer, The Great Mushroom Recipe Swap, and a presentation by Dr. Rick Van de Poll on fungi of Cordova and their ecosystem services. Saturday and Sunday are filled to the brim with guided forest forays lead by local and expert mycologists, mushroom display tables lined with locally plucked mushrooms, fiber art workshops, fungus classes, and kids' events. After a morning of foraging in the woods on Saturday, join mycologist and author, Noah Siegel for a presentation on local edible, poisonous, and dye mushrooms.

This year's festival will also feature a Home Cultivation Workshop with Gabe LeGrange from Far North Fungi and a Field Sketching Workshop with scientific artist Kristin Link. Those with an appetite for wild foods will enjoy the Wild Harvest Feast Saturday night featuring acclaimed Alaskan chef, Laura Cole, of 229 Parks Restaurant & Tavern located at the entrance to Denali Park. Cole is passionate about Alaskan ingredients and works closely with farmers, ranchers and fishermen alike to source the best Alaska has to offer. Two James Beard nominations attest to her exciting impact on Alaskan Cuisine. Laura Cole is the guest of the *Copper River/Prince William Sound Marketing Association* fall Coho Media Tour. A silent auction, at the feast, will be packed with artisan wares and handcrafted items including pottery, plant-dyed silks, jams, jellies, and hand-knits. Proceeds from the dinner benefit the festival and *Copper River Watershed Project*, a regional non-profit that promotes a salmon-rich, intact watershed and culturally diverse communities.

Cordova Fungus Festival is a partnership between the Cordova Chamber of Commerce, the Chugach National Forest - Cordova Ranger District, and others. Together partners work to promote conservation education and increase environmental literacy by inviting locals and visitors to explore and appreciate the natural world around them. Registration is required and is \$10/adult, \$5/student & senior. Kids 12 and under are free. Cultivation and Field Sketching Workshops require festival registration and have an additional fee. Sign up online at cordovafungusfest.com or by calling 907-424-7260. Fiber & Art workshops with *The Net Loft* also require pre-registration by calling 907-424-7337. Tickets for the Wild Harvest Feast, which will feature wild Copper River Coho salmon and mushrooms, are \$65/person (includes wine, dinner and dessert) and are available from the *Copper River Watershed Project* by calling 907-424-3334. To register and see a full schedule of Cordova Fungus Festival activities, visit cordovafungusfest.com or facebook.com/cordovafungusfest. Press passes and high resolution images available upon request.

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