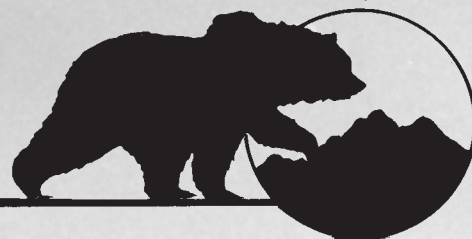


THE NORTHERN LINE

The Journal of the Northern Alaska Environmental Center

February 8, 2001

Volume XXIII, Number 1



Special Issue!

This Northern Line is dedicated to the challenges and issues we expect from the new federal administration.



NAEC File Photo © 2000.

Notes on the Gasline

by Arthur Hussey

Natural gas pipeline. If you've been around the Northern Center in the last few months, chances are you've heard those words. They're important to us and have led us into the debate on North Slope gas, if not to the middle, certainly well into the fray.

Natural gas started to be a big issue for the Northern Center late last summer when Governor Knowles announced his gas vision to the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce. Since then, we've talked a lot about gas, traveled to Anchorage more times than we can count to meet with our industry and environmental partners and contributed to many joint positions on "if" and "when." The short result is that we have decided, for the time being, to neither support nor oppose gas development. Rather we will focus on making any such development as environmentally sound as possible. The long of it is more complex.

On the surface, the government and oil industry's natural gas push ought to be our worst nightmare. The incoming Bush Administration openly disagrees with conservationists' concerns on this and on almost every other matter. The environmental community is divided on the gas pipeline's impacts. The Fairbanks community to which we also belong has yet to formulate gas development strategies. And, economics and politics suggest that the natural gas pipeline

will be built, no matter what the Northern Center thinks or does. A very dark cloud?

Perhaps. But I believe it has a silver lining, at least for programming in our Fairbanks base. I say this for three reasons:

- 1) Gas has led us to dialogue with disparate interests in the Fairbanks community, many of whom have not shared our interests recently. Most obvious here is the Chamber of Commerce, with which we recently met and will hopefully be meeting again. I left our recent meeting thinking that both the Chamber, of which we are a member, and the Northern Center increasingly recognize that we are best off working together, rather than in separate arenas. If I was correct, then gas should catalyze relationships that will augment our capacity to work with partners on other resource development issues.
- 2) Gas gives us the opportunity to make something better, rather than our traditional function of voting "Yes" or "No." We've taken up the challenge because gas presents a unique combination of a) compelling economics—who can argue about gas at \$ 5.00/1000 cft. in the Lower 48; b) equally compelling politics—it is difficult to conceive of Alaskan gas bypassing Alaska's demographic heartland and the already established Dalton/Alcan development corridors; and c) some degree of environmental friendliness through a relatively clean burning fuel.

This combination leaves us with almost no grounds to say "No." By default, therefore, we are excused from making an unpopular go/no-go recommendation, leaving us free to help improve the situation.

- 3) Perhaps most importantly, gas may give us the sound local relationships that we need to be effective in advocating local environmental concerns. At the Northern Center, we get questions daily from concerned citizens about how to address Fairbanks-specific issues such as where to find "green" dry cleaners, what to do about sightings of people dumping chemicals into storm drains, etc.. The solutions to these questions require strong local ties, such as we may develop through the natural gas pipeline.

These opportunities will not come without challenges. However, I believe they can be met and, if they are, that we will have an even more effective Northern Center as a result.

Again, three issues:

- 1) We will need to dull the misplaced image that we are obstructionists. This is not as easy as it sounds. After all, environmentalists are on the whole satisfied with the biophysical environment and don't want to change it much. Developers such as gasline proponents take a different view and see that Mother Nature can be improved upon quite a bit. They take our "status quo" stance to be obstructionism—which it is not: we're simply standing up for what we like. Whatever the case, we need to counter the inaccuracies of our ob-

Continued on page 5

THE NORTHERN LINE

Environmental News of Arctic and Interior Alaska

The Northern Line is published quarterly by the Northern Alaska Environmental Center (NAEC), 218 Driveway St., Fairbanks, Alaska 99701, <info@northern.org>, <http://www.northern.org>. Copyright © 2001 by NAEC. All rights reserved. Subscription rate is \$30 annually and includes membership. We encourage letters and articles to be submitted for publication. We reserve the right to edit all submissions.

NAEC is a not-for-profit, environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to preserving and protecting wilderness, natural habitats, and the quality of life in Interior and Arctic Alaska. NAEC has 1,126 members.

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The cover photo of a porcupine on a willow shrub was taken by Charlie Ott.

The back page photo of caribou tracks through the snow is an NAEC file photo.



Protecting National Forests

by Nancy Fresco

A few months ago, forest conservationists across the nation were wondering whether the Forest Service would come out with a truly meaningful plan for protecting roadless areas in our National Forests. Would wild character and untouched ecosystems be conserved? Would Alaska's vast Tongass National Forest be included? Now, the plan is out, the Tongass is part of it, and the questions have changed. In the aftermath of a highly contentious election, we are left wondering, "Will the new administration in Washington, DC undo all the

work that has just been completed, and erase the greatest land legacy since the creation of the National Parks system?"

President Clinton's plan will protect 58.5 million acres of non-roaded land in our National Forests, including 9.3 million acres of Alaska's Tongass National Forest—a move that would take us a huge step away from America's more typical treatment of public land. Industry has been pillaging our National Forests for years, and the government has heavily subsidized unsustainable extraction of natural resources. Drilling, mining, and clear-cutting have all been sanctioned in our National Forests, again and again.

The new plan wouldn't affect all our National Forest land, but it would ensure that about a third of it—including many of the wildest and least-spoiled areas—would have a chance to retain their value as intact ecosystems, harboring the ancient trees and healthy wildlife that have long fueled the American imagination.

However, because Clinton's plan cannot become law for 60 days after being introduced, there are no guarantees that it will actually be put into effect. Officially, President-elect George W. Bush does not claim that he will undo the work of his predecessor. But one of his aides has told reporters that "regulations can be undone through regulation." Why would Bush attempt such a thing? Admittedly, his own policies have been staunchly anti-environment, including pushing to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil drilling. But the Republican Party as a whole has some very meaningful conservation efforts in its past, including the tremendous legacy of Teddy Roosevelt. Eisenhower was the president who set aside the Arctic Range in the first place. Richard Nixon signed the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, the National Environmental Policy Act, and the Endangered Species Act. Nevertheless, Bush seems to view rapid exploitation of public lands as part of his platform.



© NAEC File Photo

Admiralty Island in the Tongass National Forest

Unfortunately, reversing Clinton's environmental work could in fact win Bush some friends in many Western states. Here in Alaska, Governor Tony Knowles is threatening a lawsuit against the roadless areas plan. Senator Frank Murkowski has called the plan "an outrageous exercise of arbitrary decision making," a position that is difficult to support given the detailed research that went into the Forest Service's assessment, not to mention the public meetings held all over the country and 2 million public comments received. Naysayers contend that the plan will hurt industry by limiting timbering and access to minerals and gas drilling rights. In truth, there will be only a small reduction in overall receipts for extractive industries, and there may be compensation, in the form of increased tourism income, increased quality of life, and cleaner air and water. In the past, many communities have found that the benefits of maintaining some pristine areas far outweigh the costs of protection.

In the end, the fate of our National Forests may hinge upon expediency and political maneuvering. If Bush and his aides suspect that the potential for public outcry and resulting embarrassment would outweigh the potential kudos from the plan's wealthy foes, they may decide to let things lie. The new President should, at the very least, consider that in the minds and hearts of millions of Americans, saving 58 million acres of untouched forest for countless future generations is worth more than a little outcry.

IN THIS ISSUE. . .

Annual Auction Most Successful . . 7

Boreal Shorts 9

Conservation Abstracts 16

Forest Facts—Climate Change . . 8

From the Woodpile 11

Future of Mining in Northern AK. . . 4

Membership Enjoys An. Meeting. . 9

Mine Dredgings 4, 5, 12, 13

Notes on the Gasline. 2

Protecting National Forests 3

Rest of World has Long Reach . . 12

Road from There to Here. 10

Struggle for the Arctic Refuge . . . 6

Thanks to Our Volunteers 14

Welcome to Our New Members . . 15

Winter Solstice. 10

The Future of Mining in Northern Alaska

by Mara Bacsujlaky



© NAEC File Photo

View of facilities at Cominco's Red Dog zinc-lead mine near Kotzebue, Alaska.

While oil drilling in the Arctic Refuge threatens one of Alaska's great wild places, it is important to recognize that another potent threat to Alaska's environment and communities exists: the Alaska mineral industry. This is a sleeping giant; its growth largely unnoticed by conservationists and environmentalists until recently. With few exceptions, mineral exploration and mine operations occur without public scrutiny, in remote, isolated places. If asked, few Alaskans would guess that Cominco's Red Dog Mine, near Kotzebue, is the world's largest zinc mine, or know that the mid-1990's witnessed a claim-staking rush greater than that of the Klondike. For multinational mining companies, Alaska is *the* Last Great Frontier in United States mineral development.

Out of Sight—Out of Mind

Escalating mineral development is less likely to produce public outcry or a flood of funds from foundations and private donors than is proposed oil development in the Arctic Refuge. Yet the advent of Republican-dominated government may result in significant loss of environmental capital gained by mining activists over the past eight years. President Bush won't be a champion of the new stricter federal mining regulations that will protect Alaska public lands from undue degradation, and that are already under legal siege by the industry. Further, Secretary of Interior nominee Gail Norton's avocation of voluntary compliance by industry could weaken already beleaguered environmen-

tal regulations, in mining as well as oil. Certainly hopes for much needed reform of the 1872 General Mining Law are temporarily damped by her confirmation hearings testimony.

Another unintended outcome of the new administration may be that the growing effectiveness of mining industry watchdogs, such as the Northern Center and Southeastern Alaska Conservation Council, will be diminished if financial and legal resources are funneled exclusively into fighting drilling in the Arctic Refuge. Yet in Alaska, policies of the Bush Administra-

tion are certain to encourage expanded and renewed exploration with resultant impacts to its communities and environment, to its people's health and welfare, and to its pristine and remote places—making the need for grassroots involvement all the more critical.

Not all Gold is Black Gold

Bush *pater familias* involvement in oil is well known; not as well known is the connection between Bush and gold—that metal which is at the heart of some of the world's most egregious human rights violations and environmental disasters. Barrick Goldstrike—a Canadian company bankrolled by Saudi arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi—truly struck gold during the final days of Bush Senior's administration when Barrick gained control of federal mining claims worth an estimated \$10 billion US, paying the US Treasury only \$10,000 for the privilege. Barrick returned the favor by placing former-President Bush on its payroll, and contributing \$148,000 to George W.'s campaign fund.

Barrick is a major player in the Alaska mineral scene, as are other Canadian heavies such as Placer Dome, Kinross Gold Corporation and Teck Resources. Add to that list the base metal giants, Cominco and Kennecott, as well as a plethora of mining juniors, and you have many players await-

Mine Dredgings

By Mara Bacsujlaky

Mining Reclamation Regulations Need Reform

Current Alaska mine regulations require only \$750 per acre bonding for the reclamation of a mine. Fairbanks Gold Mining, Inc., which wants to mine 459,000 ounces of gold from its True North project over the course of three years, proposed posting a \$250,000 bond for reclamation (at \$750 per acre, they would legally have to bond approximately \$184,000). The State, through negotiations with the mining company, increased the bond to \$1.29 million in the final permit decisions. \$1.29 million for reclaiming 245 acres of disturbance is a more realistic figure for the cost of reclaiming a modern

open pit mine. The large gap between the figure the mining company submitted and the one stipulated in the final decision highlights how vulnerable the state is to being left holding the bag for mine clean-up on its lands. Right now, the matter of who ultimately pays for reclamation on state lands is largely dependent on how well the state can finesse bond negotiations with a mining company, and how responsible a mining company feels itself to be. There are no regulations to insure otherwise—a \$750 per acre bond will barely pay the heavy equipment bill on a large mine reclamation project.



ing the right combination of circumstances to exploit Alaska's mineral wealth. These are not limited just to favorable metals markets and state economic incentives. An administration that favors increasing access and building infrastructure using federal dollars could significantly lower the cost of locating and extracting Alaska minerals.

Therefore, even if continuing low gold prices temporarily hinder Alaska gold exploration and development, there is plenty to keep mining companies and activists busy. The western Arctic contains what industry suspects is one of the richest polymetallic belts in the world. And Cominco's proposed expansion of its port facility on the Chukchi Sea stands to aid in not only increased zinc/lead production at Red Dog, but also future development of these copper, lead, zinc and silver deposits.

Federal Aid to Mineral Development

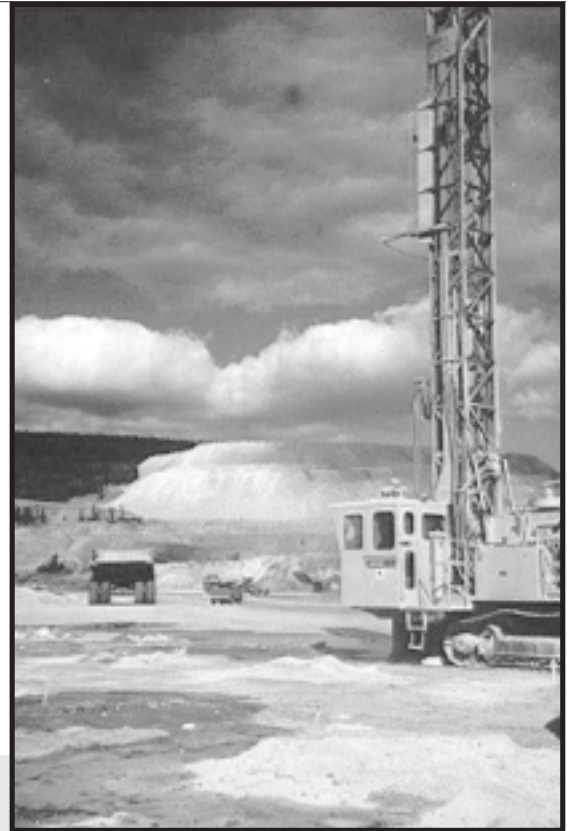
The port expansion, an expensive, risky undertaking given the amount of dredging and ongoing maintenance that will be required to make and keep a deep-sea port, was but a pipedream for Cominco a few years back until Senator Murkowski intervened. Claiming that national interest would be served by the establishment of a deep-water port (albeit one that is only ice-free on average, four months a year), Murkowski secured federal funding for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), thereby freeing Canadian-owned Cominco from the expense of the study.

Since then Murkowski has promoted his vision of a trans-Canada, trans-Alaska railroad. The first step of his "Rails to Resources" project is a rail link from Fairbanks to Dawson City, YT. \$6 million in government funds already has been allocated to establish a transboundary commission to conduct technical and economic feasibility studies. With Representative Don Young as the new Transportation Committee chair, we can ex-

pect rapid progress on this front, as well as increasing pressure and funding to develop infrastructure—roads, rails, power lines and gas lines—in Interior and Arctic Alaska.

To miners, infrastructure is only slightly less important than ore in the ground. So even if depressed metals markets keep mine development down, roads, rails and port projects could set the stage for a future mineral explosion. Indeed, in the last 8 years, under a Democratic administration, we witnessed a mineral boom not seen here for 100 years. It seems inevitable that in the coming years we will see another as the mining industry and our congressional delegation scramble to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the new administration.

Drilling blast holes at the Ft. Knox open pit gold mine—Fairbanks.



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Director's Notes

Continued from page 2

- structionist image. To do so, we'll need diplomacy and phraseology, like never before.
- 2) We will need to keep up and strengthen dialogue with business interests. It is one thing for the Center and the Chamber to meet once or twice. It is quite another to keep those contacts up (including during times when one party or another engages in a little bashing of the other), and come to appreciate, if not support, each others' legitimate concerns.
 - 3) Outreach efforts notwithstanding, the Northern Center will still play an advocacy role in promoting efforts to reduce energy demand in Interior Alaska and elsewhere and in developing a comprehensive Alaska energy policy. This will not be easy in a state and federal environment that focuses on balancing supply and demand primarily by increasing supply.

The bottom line: natural gas may well play an important role in the evolution of Fairbanks during the Bush Administration. It may also significantly affect the Northern Center, its relationships and its local programs. Our commitment to the community has never been higher. Neither have our interests in natural gas and environmental stewardship, local, state-wide and na-

tional. Your thoughts and comments on how we may best approach these multifaceted issues are appreciated!

Mine Dredgings

By Mara Bacsujlaky

Red Dog

To emphasize the importance of subsistence issues to their people, the Tribal IRA of Kivalina, seeking to deal with the US Army Corps of Engineers on a government-to-government basis, recently requested cooperating agency status on the upcoming environmental impact statement process for the Red Dog Port Expansion. Cooperating agency status on this type of process may only be granted to government (state or federal) entities. The Corps of Engineers denied their request—stating that the Kivalina Tribal IRA is not a federally recognized tribe because they don't "live on a reservation." Kivalina is examining options for further action on this matter.

The Struggle for the Arctic Refuge

by Deb Moore

There's an old Chinese curse that goes "may you live in interesting times." And so we shall—for at least the next two years. The Alaska conservation movement has never before experienced a national administration scenario like the one facing us now. Always in the past, we could count on at least one "firewall" to protect our last remaining wild places. For the past eight years, that firewall has been President Clinton. President Clinton was our ally against development within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and helped to hold off pro-development interests' most aggressive attempts to gut environmental protection legislation. Most recently, President Clinton provided additional protection to many areas of the western US and Alaska through monument designations and a new roadless policy for national forests.

However, we now face four years with a decidedly anti-environmental president along with a conservative-led House and Senate. Our firewall is gone. What does this mean for Alaska? What does it mean for the Arctic? For the Arctic Refuge, it signifies a pitched battle to keep pro-development interests from drilling on the coastal plain. *However, while the battle to protect the Refuge may be long and arduous, many signs indicate that the fight is definitely winnable.*

We believe that the United States and the world as a whole need to move away from fossil fuel technology into more sustainable, less polluting and less global warming alternatives. However, we understand that such a fundamental shift takes considerable time and effort and will not take place overnight. In addition, we acknowledge that while we make every effort to moderate our use of petroleum products, we are, in fact, consumers of oil. In this light, we encourage Americans to practice good conservation techniques and to demand improved efficiency measures from industry and government alike while also encouraging rapid development of alternative energy sources.

In 1995, Congress attempted to pass a budget resolution bill, which would have included revenues from drilling in the Arctic Refuge. The only thing standing between the Refuge and the drilling rigs was a veto

of the budget bill by President Clinton—shutting down our government until Arctic Refuge drilling revenues were dropped from the bill. However, five years later, when the Senate again tried to include drilling revenues in the 2001 budget, an entirely different scenario was played out. The budget resolution *barely* made it out of the Senate Budget Committee with the revenues intact. Several weeks later, the resolution *barely* passed the Senate (an

amendment which would have removed the revenues failed by a 51-49 vote). However, when House and Senate committee members met to reconcile their separate versions of the resolution, there wasn't enough Senate or House support to maintain the revenues in the face of strong opposition. Consequently, **all mention of Arctic Refuge drilling revenues was stripped from the budget.** In five years, the fight to protect the Arctic Refuge coastal plain had gained enough Congressional support to make a presidential veto unnecessary.

If the returning members of Congress vote consistently with their past practices, there will be enough support to block any Arctic Refuge drilling legislation, regardless of the interests of the President. But will their votes be consistent or will the moderate Republicans be pressured into voting the party line? That is the big question.

Less than half of the people who voted in the 2000 election voted for the presidential candidate who supported drilling in the Refuge. In addition, recent polls indicate that the majority of Americans are *opposed* to drilling in the Refuge. Coupling these facts with the extreme closeness of the Senate and the relative closeness of the House, voting for Arctic Refuge drilling could be the siren song for the conservatively controlled House and Senate during the next



© NAEC File Photo

Polygons—a common permafrost formation on the arctic coastal plain—are created from cracks in the Earth that fill with water and form ice wedges. As the ice freezes, pressure pushes up the soil around the cracks to form ridges. The polygon shape is outlined by these ridges.

election. Therefore, the threat of losing control in two years may keep many conservatives from voting for drilling in spite of George W. Bush's desires to the contrary.

Public pressure may win out over Presidential pressure in Congress but only if the public pressure is forceful and continuous. Attempts to allow drilling in the Refuge will probably come in many packages—as upfront drilling bills, as "solutions" within a national energy proposal, as revenues in budget resolutions, or as unobtrusive riders. The Northern Center will work diligently with the other members of the Alaska Coalition to monitor both the blatant and stealth attacks, to disseminate the necessary information to the public, and to encourage people to voice their opposition to drilling in the Refuge. For its part, the public will need to be ready to respond to each new threat as it appears—through letters, phone calls, visits to their representatives and through informing and involving their friends and neighbors.

The heat has been turned up on the battle for the Arctic Refuge. But we're not facing an impossible situation. Through dedication, cooperation and perseverance, we can protect the coastal plain from pro-development interests and ultimately achieve our goal of wilderness designation for this vital part of Alaska.

Take Action!

YOU CAN HELP PROTECT THE ARCTIC REFUGE COASTAL PLAIN

In preparation for the Congressional challenges to come, the Northern Alaska Environmental Center has developed an Arctic Refuge slideshow kit for use in communities around the country. Simply contact the Northern Center at 907-452-5021 or deb@northern.org and arrange for the kit to be sent to you. Then gather your friends, coworkers, relatives or neighbors together for an evening of education and discussion on protecting the Arctic Refuge coastal plain.

This slideshow kit will include:

- ◆ Up to 50 slides showing the values of and threats to the Arctic Refuge coastal plain.
- ◆ Two prepared scripts (one short and one long) to accompany the slides.
- ◆ Fact sheets on the Arctic Refuge and on current legislative threats to the coastal plain.
- ◆ A sample letter to help participants prepare personal letters to their congressional delegates.
- ◆ Additional information on how you can get involved in the fight to protect the Arctic Refuge.

Please get involved! There are many other ways to help as well.

- ◆ **Call or write** your Senators and Representative. Ask them to be an original cosponsor of legislation to protect the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge as Wilderness. Capitol Switchboard: (202) 224-3121 or send to: The Honorable ____, US Senate/ US House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20510/20515.
- ◆ **Lobby** in Washington, DC. Make the commitment to travel to DC and meet with your representatives in person.
- ◆ **Pass** the word along. Stage a rally or set up an information/letter writing table at your school, office or local community center.

For more information on any of these options, please contact Deb at 907-452-5021 or deb@northern.org.

Annual Auction Is Most Successful Ever!



© Mary Zalar, 2000

Auctioneers Susan McInnis and Merritt Helferrich demonstrate the best way to bid on an item at the Northern Center's annual auction.

The 2000 Northern Center annual auction, held in November, was our most successful fund-raiser in history! Over 150 Fairbanksans came to the Chena River Convention Center to show their support and bring home outdoor gear, certificates for trips, fancy desserts, massages, and a whole host of other great auction items. They were also treated to a night of delicious hors d'ouvres, delectable desserts, bluegrass music, and much joviality. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to raise over \$17,000—WOW. Plans are already underway for next year's auction, if you would like to help out or make a donation please contact the Northern Center (907) 452-5021 or [<info@northern.org>](mailto:info@northern.org).

Forest Facts—The Boreal Forest & Climate Change

by Nancy Fresco



Ox Bow bend of the Nenana River—Mt. Healy in background—near Denali Park.

The oceans are warming. Polar ice is melting. And the warming trend is accelerating. Human activities over the past hundred years—and especially the last 25—are increasing atmospheric carbon levels at an alarming rate. So-called “greenhouse gases”—including carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, and methane—tend to trap solar radiation, preventing the planet from normal cooling. Fossil fuel consumption releases these gases in vast quantities. But what role do forests play in the world’s carbon balance?

Biomass—the total mass of organic matter in an ecosystem—is largely composed of carbon, and plants “inhale” carbon dioxide; thus, plant growth of all kinds tends to help mitigate the greenhouse effect, while deforestation tends to worsen it. The world’s boreal forests have been touted as one of the most important “carbon sinks” on the planet. In part, this is due to sheer size and relative intactness; the boreal forest circles the northern part of the globe, and covers over 5 million square miles. In addition, because the boreal region is cold and sometimes quite dry, decomposition is very slow, and carbon remains sequestered in dead plant tissues for many years. Ironically, however, while the boreal forest can help mitigate global warming, it may also be one of the first ecosystems to suffer from its effects. Global weather patterns cause the changing climate to be felt most acutely near the poles, where a shift is already

becoming obvious. This could upset the balance of plant and animal species that can thrive in the boreal forest.

At the Sixth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in The Hague (November 13-24, 2000), there was a great deal of discussion of the role of forests in moderating or preventing climate change. Certainly, our awareness of the role the boreal forest plays gives us one more reason for protecting our northern forests. Unfortunately, however, it is too simple to assume that such protection can alleviate our other responsibilities. In fact, American presumptiveness regarding forest carbon sinks was the single most important reason why consensus was not reached at The Hague.

The United States is the world’s largest producer of greenhouse gases, and the world’s largest consumer of fossil fuels. In 1990, America emitted approximately 1.3 million metric tons of carbon. This figure rose to about 1.5 by 1997, and is forecast to rise to 2 million metric tons of carbon by 2020. As a wealthy nation, we have many resources at our disposal; we can impose stricter regulations on our factories, we can conduct extensive research into alternative energies, we can set aside land for conservation purposes. But we have not been living up to this potential.

The U.S. delegates at the conference showed up with a proposal that suggested credits for forests—not just forests reforested or afforested since 1990, as allowed for in the original Kyoto protocol—but 30 percent of *all* American forests. Other conference participants, as well as environmentalists worldwide, saw this as merely a means to weasel out of emission-reduction obligations. America does have more forested land than any European nation, but does this make us less culpable for our fossil-fuel emissions? At a scheduled press conference, Michael McCarthy of the London Independent asked, “Is it really the position of the United States that at least one third of the entire forest system of the country has either been afforested, reforested or deforested in the last ten years? Because if it is not your position, I cannot see how your proposal can be legal under the Protocol.”

Stay Informed!

Contact the Northern Center <info@northern.org> to subscribe to one or more of our email alert lists:

**Arctic Action ♦ Boreal Briefs ♦ Mining Memos
Denali Watch ♦ Camp Habitat Updates**

*Be sure to include your city/state information
if you don’t wish to receive local event information.*

All lists are free and open to anyone interested in protecting northern Alaska.

What is wrong with trading forests for emissions? First of all, as pointed out by Neil Sampson in the Autumn 2000 issue of *American Forests*, a study performed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found many different definitions of "forest."

Some were based on tree canopy cover or density; others were administrative. None was well suited to administration of the Kyoto Protocol. For example, it would be possible—when forest is defined as land with 10 percent tree canopy cover—to degrade a forest from 100 percent to 10 percent tree canopy cover without triggering any emissions calculation based on deforestation. In the reverse situation a good manager could take a degraded forest and restore it without getting credit for those actions.

Then there is the problem of what other values a forest has, apart from its value as a carbon sink. If forests become bargaining chips that high-profit industries can trade for the "right" to pollute, this won't necessarily protect natural, wild forests.

Many old-growth forests, because they have reached a biological peak, are no longer growing (gaining biomass) as fast as young forests. Replacing old growth with rapid-rotation tree farms might earn more carbon points, but it would wreak havoc on ecosystems. As any biologist can attest, planting trees is not the same thing as creating a forest. A single-species crop of non-native trees would do nothing to ensure habitat for insects, birds, and mammals; nor would it protect traditional human uses.

The boreal forest is indeed helping to store and absorb carbon, and as such, it plays a vital role in the maintenance of a precarious atmospheric balance. Human activity is upsetting that balance. While we need to recognize the important positive role of the forest, we cannot entirely rely on it to solve our problems. Instead, we need to halt pollution at the source, and protect our intact forest ecosystems. Perhaps then, photosynthesis within the world's vast boreal forests can slowly erase the harm we've already done.

Membership Enjoys Annual Meeting

On January 21, when the local membership of the Northern Alaska Environmental Center gathered to catch up on the current issues the Northern Center is tackling, they were met by a feast prepared by the board and staff. Arthur Hussey gave the crowd an overview of where we are and where we're headed, and then awarded our annual recognitions. Linda Benson was named Volunteer of the Year for her hard work surrounding our transition. Efforts to protect the Arctic Refuge earned Mary Shields Conservationist of the Year and the Gwich'in Steering Committee Activists of the Year. The GVEA Ratepayers Alliance as represented by Stacey Fritz, received the Community Service Award for its work to protect the Tanana Flats wetlands. At the end of the evening, we pushed the tables away and had a great time Contra Dancing to Lynn Basham's calls. Hope to see you all next year!

Boreal Shorts

by Nancy Fresco

The Northern Intertie

At long last, some answers may be forthcoming regarding the long-standing debate over the routing of Fairbanks' new power line. Golden Valley Electric Association continues to support the proposed routing across the sensitive wetlands south of the Tanana River. But nagging issues remained unresolved—and many local residents are far from pleased. Thus, spurred by advocacy efforts and public outcry, the new commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources has re-hired the engineering firm R.W. Beck to re-examine the route. Their new study will, at the very least, find answers to some of the following.

- ◆ Can Golden Valley Electric Association, as it claims, cheaply construct a high-voltage power line across floating-mat wetlands with-

out running into serious technical problems and maintenance nightmares?

- ◆ Can the old and new substation terminals be connected across town rather than via a circuitous 60-mile loop?
- ◆ If the loop is needed, what would be its real cost?
- ◆ Could minor rerouting along the existing power line allow for a parallel line without previously assumed property conflicts?

In cooperation with the GVEA Ratepayers Alliance, the Northern Center has met with Beck engineers to help clarify our concerns. How these questions will be answered—and how those answers will be used—remains to be seen.



Camp Habitat
Is Just
Around
the Corner!



Brochures will be distributed in February and registration begins in March. Be sure to sign up for our new e-mail list at info@northern.org for more updates, or contact Amy Turner at the Northern Center <amy@northern.org>.

The Road from There to Here

by Linda A. Paganelli

I was born and raised in the suburbs of the Garden State, New Jersey. Coming from a big family, a multitude of neighborhood kids to play with, and basically a good place to grow up, I was lucky. My grandparents owned property up in the Kittatinny Mountains of New Jersey and, as kids, we had the opportunity to experience cabin life resplendent with no running water, white-tailed deer, mixed deciduous forest, blooming mountain laurel, and the greatest little out-house. I believe those long ago childhood experiences fostered my love of nature, inspired my eventual exodus from the densely populated region, and prepared me for the lifestyle that I presently lead.

One other outstanding event contributed to my eventual arrival here in Alaska. In my late teens, I became very downhearted at the state of the state in which I was living and longed to see the west. I will be eternally grateful to my dad for his suggestion that I take the Traveling Dog, Greyhound that is, and pursue my dream. I took a two month solo trip around this great country and found what I was looking for in the Pacific Northwest.

After a two-year hiatus from college, I returned to school to earn a Bachelor of

Science Degree from Oregon State University in Corvallis. I started out in Forest Engineering, but the math didn't compute, so I enrolled in the Resource & Recreation Management Program. To this day, I value the multidisciplinary curriculum; from natural sciences, to communication skills, to examination of the philosophies of our land managing agencies, it has all proven useful to me.

Both during my college years and since graduation, I have strived to live and work in wild places. Some of the highlights include my winter internship at Yellowstone National Park where I lived remotely at Canyon, a position as a cultural resource assistant in the Mt. Hood National Forest, a job as a concessions employee at Stehekin, Washington in the North Cascades, and an eighteen month stint with the Park Service at Everglades National Park as an environmental educator. Each was a fabulous place to have lived and explored.

I came north to Alaska in the summer of 1982 to work as a Tour Driver in Denali National Park and Preserve. The vastness of the untrammelled landscape, the wildlife, and the aura of tranquility collectively captivated me and thus I chose to settle in the Interior of Alaska. With my ex part-

ner, I built my home and raised a baby. My son Lucca is now ten. My hope for him is that he will forever treasure the unique way of life he has lived and the land that has made it possible.

My interest in the Denali Watch position with the Northern Alaska Environmental Center is triggered by my desire to expand my horizons beyond environmental education to attempt to more directly influence decisions for the stewardship of our public lands on the local, state and national levels. This newly acquired position is challenging and offers me the opportunity to work creatively towards attaining a common goal. I appreciate the opportunity to join Alaska's conservation community and I hope to serve it well by keeping others and myself informed and up-to-date on issues affecting the Denali Region.

Meet our new office cat—Titus. Here he's hanging out in our mailboxes.



Winter Solstice

By Amy Turner



Lynx in winter.

In Fairbanks, December and January is dark, very dark. We are forced to think about that 23° angle of the Earth and how it affects our seasons on a daily basis. December 21 is the one day out of the year that we have the longest night and the sun moves at the lowest angle across the horizon. However, Solstice is

not only about the seasonal cycles, it is also about the traditional celebrations associated with this time of year.

People have been celebrating the solstices for thousands of years. Stonehenge marks both the winter and the summer solstices. Newgrange a 5,000 year old circular stone structure was built for its central chamber to be lit by the sun at dawn on winter solstice. Hundreds of other structures in Europe, Asia, the Americas, Indonesia and the Middle East are oriented to the solstices.

There is symbolism in the plants you decorate your home with in the winter season. Evergreen (pine, fir, cedar, juniper, spruce) symbolizes the continuity of life, protection, and prosperity. Hanging spruce boughs in your home not only makes a

lovely decoration, but according to our resident editor, Beth Caissie, it also invites the wood nymphs into your home. Holly symbolizes the old solar year, waning sun, protection and good luck. Oak symbolizes the new solar year, waxing sun, endurance, strength, triumph, protection and good luck. Candles, as well as the Yule log, symbolize the sun's return.

However the season is celebrated in your home, take time out of your busy winter day to think about the sun and all it provides for us.



From the Woodpile. . .

by Ginny Hill Wood,
founding member of NAEC, and regular columnist

The Florida Follies of 2000 A.D.: How the courts stole Christmas from the Democrats and gave it to the Republicans

It wasn't an election: It was a heist!

Just after Al thought he had Gored George W., when the Press prematurely proclaimed him the winner of the Presidential race based on early returns from Florida precincts, George W. ambushed Al—with the help of flawed voting systems and the Supreme Court.

To think that a year ago as the 20th Century was drawing to a close, we had anxiety attacks about the Y2K computer quirks. That all turned out to be a tempest in a teapot compared to the tender hooks the nation hung on during the twists and turns of vote recounting, the machinations of the Courts, and the candidate's final photo finish in the plot to capture the White House.

If an author or playwright had concocted a scenario similar to the farce played out between election day, November 7, and the Electoral College vote casting, December 18, 2000, the script would have been rejected as too far-fetched, contrived and corny; the characters and their relationships too overdrawn; and the drama a throw back to the Perils of Pauline of the silent, black and white movies in the early days of cinema.

So now we have the start of a New Year: and for better or worse, depending on your political persuasion, a new president, George W. Bush—even though he is not the candidate chosen by the majority of voters. I suspect that even his parents were surprised. I imagine they often said about this prodigal son; "Where did we go wrong?" It was younger son, Jeb, now Florida's governor, who they had picked to be a presidential heir apparent.

Actually it appears that the Vice President, Dick Cheney, is now the Captain of the Ship of State with George W. the figure-head on the bow. The President's Advis-

ers and chosen Cabinet Members seem to be Reagan Redux—mostly retreads from his father's, Reagan's, Ford's, and even Nixon's regimes. I wouldn't be surprised to see Henry Kissinger and James Watt be recalled for active duty in this new administration.

The Righteous Right Republicans are in a tizzy because those chosen are too moderate or pro-choice for their tastes. The liberal Democrats see them too corporate and big military. The Greens are shuddering over the *deja vu* of it all—back to the dark ages of corporate feudalism, easing restrictions on polluters, ridiculing global warming, getting government out of regulating uses of public lands, Greenie bashing—and opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil drilling. And we won't have Clinton around to veto the latter—or Al Gore.

During the bitter campaign, the pundits liked to claim there really wasn't much difference between the two moderates, Gore and Bush. But in the midst of their schoolyard epithet slinging, each made a definite, defining oral commitment. Bush bragged he would open up the Arctic Refuge to oil drilling—and he has picked

a cabinet from the ranks of Big Oil to prove it. Gore adamantly stated he wouldn't—and the book he wrote in the early 90's—*The Earth in Balance*, backs his commitment. He is very environmentally knowledgeable; Bush is totally ecologically illiterate.

Well, we endured the Reagan and Papa Bush regimes because there were enough good legislators on both sides of the political aisles to keep the coastal plain of the Refuge safe from development—a special place where the earth and its biota maintains its balance; where the hubris of humanity hasn't mucked up Nature's economy. We could learn much about the sustainability of our own species if we have the wisdom to control our own avarice. A couple of year's more of oil to squander would not solve our energy problems. It would only exacerbate them.

Refraining from this gross goof up just might trigger a paradigm shift in our ecological awakening. Mankind might yet redeem itself and return to being an integral participant in the Great Miracle of Life on this unique planet, not a plunderer of it. And we won't have to freeze or starve in the dark to do it.

Let us know what you think!

We are in the process of revamping the Northern Line.
Please let us know what you like and don't like about it.

Is it too long, not in-depth enough?

Would you like more updates, more action items?

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Contact Beth <beth@northern.org> or (907) 452-5021 to make your voice heard.

Rest of the World has Long Reach

By Julie Collins, Lake Minchumina

Julie Collins grew up in Lake Minchumina and writes a regular column for the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. A reprint of her 12/17/00 column appears here as an example of how the environmental policies of the new administration may effect the lives of rural Alaskans.

The tumultuous presidential elections gave us a strong reminder of how tightly connected we are to the rest of the world despite our isolated home. Although we live 100 miles from the nearest highway and harvest up to half of our food and many other supplies from the land, our lives are permanently entangled with world politics, culture, and economics.

My sister Miki and I voted for Al Gore with some apprehension. With his environmental record we were concerned that his policies would force us off the federal land where we trap or ban trapping altogether. However, neither of us could stomach the thought of George W. Bush demanding excessive oil development or working with Alaska Republicans to push roads and land sales.

It seemed better to give up our way of life than to give up the land, which truly to us is life itself.

The world economy affects us primarily because it affects the prices we get for our furs. When the Soviet Union fell apart and went broke, huge stockpiles of fur were dumped onto the world market to generate badly needed money. Fur prices were starting to tremble due to an over-supply and political pressure against wearing trapped furs. The specter of a total ban on trapped furs in Europe loomed up just as the Asian financial crisis hit. At the time, fur sales were still strong in Asia, but the price of furs plummeted during the crisis and has yet to recover.

When marten prices peaked in the late 1980s, one marten paid for four sacks of dog food. Now, one marten pelt will buy about two-thirds of one bag.

Of course we can dodge some of the pain by making hats, mitts and novelties from the furs and selling them that way. With the strong U.S. economy, tourism is booming; and while global warming might be hitting us, it seems to also pro-

duce severe winter storms making the hats more popular than they might be in mild winters.

Of course, tourism brings money, but it also brings problems, which we see even out here with increased traffic and trail use. On summer journeys to remote areas of Denali Park, the incessant snarl of flightseeing aircraft makes us welcome any weather nasty enough to shut down the constant stream of planes.

Should a recession hit hard enough to knock down tourism and decimate fur prices, we might not make much money, but at least we would have a little peace.

If the proposed gas pipeline brings in a bunch of people, the local demand for our work might give us a big boost, but I am not sure the trade-off is worth it. The country can't stand many more people, and neither can I.

The American culture demands superlatives. Everything must be bigger and faster and go farther. This means that even the most remote areas of the Bush are increasingly accessible to improved snowmachines and watercraft. The tram-

Mine Dredgings

by Mara Bacsujlak

True North Update



On December 20, 2000, just before the holidays, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources issued its final decisions on the proposed True North mine permits. These permits authorize Fairbanks Gold Mining, Inc. to construct the True North open pit mine and the roads necessary for ore transport to the Ft. Knox Gold Mine, and to process off-site ore from any source at the Ft. Knox Mill. Fairbanks Gold Mining's preferred road, and the one chosen by the state, will result in noise and light pollution impacts to residents and winter tourism businesses on Cleary Summit. Noise experts retained by the Department of Natural Resources and a private citizen both agreed that ore trucking 24 hours a day will severely impact residents. Yet the state disregarded these findings, issued the Right-of-Way and adopted noise levels suggested by Fairbanks Gold Mining as the noise standards the company will have to adhere to. Not surprisingly, these standards allow Fairbanks Gold Mining to build the road where it wants, and to truck around-the-clock, 365 days a year (averaging 340 100-ton ore trucks every 24 hours). Both the state and the company rejected proposals by residents that the company limit trucking to 12 hours during the day on grounds that it would make the operation uneconomic. As of January 9th, 2001, the deadline for filing, six requests for reconsideration of the final decisions had been received by Natural Resources Commissioner Pat Pourchot. The Commissioner declined to reconsider his decision and Fairbanks Gold Mining begin road construction on January 20th.



On January 20, Fairbanks Gold Mining began clearing the road for the True North mine.

pling and hunting makes it tough for those of us who live here. The desire for speed has changed sled dogs too, making them small and sleek, unsuitable for deep snow, rough rails, heavy loads and cold weather. It's increasingly difficult to find dogs that fit in our old-fashioned trapline team.

The Alaska wilderness is not immune to the effects of worldwide pollution, either. High-level winds can carry dioxins and other scary pollutants to the Far North where they fall to land with the rain and enter our food chain. Springtime often arrives with an extended period of high pressure that traps Arctic haze—pollution drifting over from Russia, China and other countries. We used to enjoy magnificent views of Denali in the spring, but now the sun often returns with a haze that can obscure the mountain for days.

We are almost lucky salmon do not reach Minchumina. The loss of salmon in the Yukon-Kuskokwim drainages might be caused by man or nature or both, but it hasn't hurt us the way it has other villages, although we have noticed a change. In the 1970s we caught half a dozen king



© Charlie Ott

Ade Murie takes a look at a beaver lodge during low water. Beaver are among the animals that Julie and Miki Collins trap at Lake Minchumina.

salmon and a few dog salmon each year. Now we are pleased to catch one or two of each.

In our area the permafrost is barely below freezing. As we move across the black spruce flats between here and the Alaska Range, we've noticed the swamps expanding as permafrost forests melt and settle. When we set traps on permafrost banks above swampy creeks, we move the traps back more often than in the past as the bank sinks into the swamp. In hilly country, drainages have made surprisingly deep gullies as frozen soil softens and becomes more vulnerable to erosion.

We also heard a rumor that even remote swamps and drainages now harbor exotic bacteria, carried northward by migrating waterfowl. Many of these diseases could be resistant to antibiotics due to overuse of drugs.

As a country gets increasingly populous, it needs more and more rules to keep people peaceable, and these rules often apply even to those of us who live in lightly populated areas. I recently heard that a federally funded village well was subject to the same clean water regulations imposed on the city of Chicago. After running a winter trapline for 20 years, we learned last summer that in the areas under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service we should have gotten a permit to run a chain saw, which we use frequently for cutting firewood and brushing trail.

On the other hand, many of the natural resources that we harvest are protected for subsistence users by the federal government. The whims of that government can overturn our lives, whether it bans trapping or promotes development. We can only hope the government does neither and nothing. Which, given the current state of affairs, is actually a pretty good possibility.

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Mine Dredgings

by Mara Bacsujiaky

Yellow Eagle—Abandoned

Most people tend to think of abandoned mines as leftovers of the past—100-year old shafts and tunnels that dot the ghost towns of the West. Mining companies go to great lengths to keep abandoned and unreclaimed mines safely in the past—saying that modern miners do things right. Yellow Eagle Mining Company, which began mining in 1996, has abandoned its operations near Ester, Alaska. Attempts by the Army Corps of Engineers to locate Frank Saunders, the original operator and permittee, have so far been fruitless. They want to serve him with a notice of non-compliance for abandoning Yellow Eagle and not fulfilling reclamation obligations.

Thanks to Our Hardworking Volunteers!

We could never do it without the undying support of our volunteers.

The following folks have significantly contributed their time to the Northern Center in the past few months. Thank you.

- ◆ Many, many thanks and appreciation to all the friends and supporters of the Northern Center who helped to make the 2000 Northern Center Fundraising Auction the most successful one ever. A big thank you to all our generous donors, people who brought fantastic food for the evening, folks who worked at the auction, and to everyone that helped in all the ways that are needed for such an event.
- ◆ Thanks to Cindy and John Adams and an anonymous friend for donations to cover the cost of the hall rental, and to the Carnarskys for use of their garage as storage space.
- ◆ Also, huge appreciation to our illustrious auctioneers, Merritt Helfferich and Susan McInnis who added so much to the evening.
- ◆ THANK YOU to the hard working auction committee who pulled it all together: Marie Beaver, April Crosby, Kerynn Fisher, Alice Mural, Bev Reitz, and Beth Spalding.
- ◆ During January, Ann Swift and Gar Pessel hunkered down at the Northern Center's database to enter the names and addresses of our new arctic supporters—a huge job well done.
- ◆ A new volunteer, Sue Fellingham came in to help mail a fund appeal and renewal letter—welcome on board!
- ◆ Dennis Gentleman spent an afternoon nailing up walls on the Dawg House's new arctic entryway. Thanks Dennis.
- ◆ Sean McGuire picked up some of the slack while Nancy was away by helping the staff write an alert about the Intertie and mailing it out. Thank you for your unfailing passion.
- ◆ Betsy Chronic continues to clip the newspapers for us when they start to pile up. Thank you Betsy.
- ◆ Our Annual Meeting was a success due to the hard work of a few generous individuals: Mary Zalar and Sarah Campbell helped out in the kitchen, Stan Justice stayed late to clean up, and Lynn Basham and a troupe of talented musicians provided the entertainment and contra dancing afterward—thank you all for your help.
- ◆ Many of you enjoy reading the Conservation Abstracts on the back cover of the *Northern Line*. Florence Collins has been compiling these for many years now and her hard work is appreciated.

Thank you to the following individuals and businesses who generously donated services and items to our annual auction:

Nancy Lewis, RobinMcLean/Little Granite Creek Pottery & Tile, Margaret Eagleton, Nina Tartakoff, Aldona Jonaitis, Patagonia, Jana Canary, Fairbanks Symphony Association, Chena Pump House, Richard Kemnitz, April Crosby, Aliy Zirkle, Lynn & Charley Basham, Don Ross, Ken Whitten, Mary Zalar, Fairbanks Drama Association, Stan Justice, Will and Ann Harrison, Judy and Buck Wilson, June Thomasson, Interior Yoga/Kay Hackney, Ralph and Cindy Wells, Tom DeLong, Merritt Helfferich, Camp Habitat, Marjorie Cole, Gail Mayo, Frank Keim, Dave Lacey, David Mollett, Arctic Wild, Alaska Alpine Club, Gary Peterson/New Horizons, Steger Mukluks, Mary Shields, Pam Groves, Pike's Landing, Mountain Sports/John Beers, North Star Golf Club, Sam Stoker, Tom George, Princess Tours, Ev Wenrick, Jen Wenrick, Jennifer Jolis, Alaska Railroad, Laurent Dick, Roger Siglin, Prince William Sound Cruises & Tours, Sharon Baring, Jim and Nancy Lethcoe, Sean McGuire & Suzi Lozo/Cloudberry Bed and Breakfast, Trudy Hefferman & Acoustic Adventures, Ballaine Vet Clinic/Cort Zachel, Alice Mural, James Davis, Alaska Wildland Adventures, Hidden Hill, UAF Outdoor Activities, Jan Lokken, Phillip Marshall, Arctic Circle Hot Springs, Beaver Sports, Michael Wald, Sled Dog Adventures/Kathy Lenniger, Water Wagon, Fairbanks Concert Association, Roger Siglin, Alaska Battery Supply, Coleman, Dierdre Helfferich, Mary Shields, Moose Mountain, Ron and Mary Teel, Alaska Tent & Tarp, Andy Reynolds, Ann Wood, Apocalypse Design, Charlie Whitaker, Debbie Miller, Jon Van Zyle, Diana Sparacino, Diane Perkins, Joanne Gates, Erik Holland, Phil Wildfang, Great Alaska Bowl Company, Iris Wood, Jean Lester, Laurie Walton, Mara Bacsujlaky, McRoy and Blackburn Publishers, Nancy Fresco, Pat DeRuyter, Country Kitchen, Pat Pearlman Designs, Todd Sherman, Dave Klein, Raven Vet Clinic/Jeanne Olsen, Roger Kaye, Sally Andersen, Sandra and Bill Stringer, Sara Tabbert, Sherry Lewis, Susan DeLisa, Sylvia Schultz, Trusten Peery, Yukon Willie & Jake's, Patricia Carlson/Call of the Loom, All-Weather Sports, John Adams.

Thank you to the following foundations and organizations that have generously supported our work:

Adobe Gifts in Kind
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Alaska Conservation Foundation
American Conservation Foundation
Elsberg Family Fund
Norcross Wildlife Foundation
True North Foundation
Wilburforce Foundation

- ◆ Thank you to Jonathan Solomon and the other members of the Gwich'in Steering Committee for their hard work to encourage President Clinton to declare the Arctic National Monument.
- ◆ Sunna Fessler helped Nancy and Amy brainstorm the possible future direction of the education and forestry programs—thanks for your work!
- ◆ Mara thanks Lisa Kleven at the Data Center for doing corporate research for the mining program at the drop of a hat.
- ◆ Pam Miller gets our kudos for helping to write the comments for the state's permitting of BP's Trailblazer project.
- ◆ Amy Crook has spent countless hours offering technical service to our mining program—you are appreciated.
- ◆ Thank you Ken Whitten for helping with the Arctic National Monument efforts by being our "point person" for the media.

Welcome to Our New Members...

...and welcome back to old friends. Thank you for supporting the Northern Center!

IN ALASKA:

Sally Anderson, Fairbanks
Mara Bacsujlaky, Fairbanks
Nancy Bale, Anchorage
Charles & Mona Bale, Healy
Nancy Behnken, Sitka
Rex Blazer & Sheri Hazeltine, Juneau
Mary Borchert, Fairbanks
Robin Brandt, Denali National Park
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Conservation Abstracts

by Florence Collins, member

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GLOBAL REDUCTION OF GREENHOUSE GASSES 15% below 1990 levels is the target of 7 major companies: Shell, Suncor, DuPont, Ontario Power, Alcan of Canada, and Pecheney of France have joined the Environmental Defense Environmental Partnership for Climate Change. They emitted a total of 360 million tons in 1990, and a reduction will have "tremendous impact." *Environmental Defense flyer* <www.environmentaldefense.org>, November, 2000.

AIR POLLUTION FROM URBAN SPRAWL is putting increasing amounts of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) into reservoirs from automotive traffic (exhaust, tires, soot, and road asphalt), and has "overwhelmed region-wide declines in pollution from fuel spills and seeps." Concentrations exceed the amount needed to poison aquatic life, and the EPA plans to define such thresholds next year. *Science News* <www.sciencenews.org>, Nov. 18, 2000, p.332.

ELECTRIC POWER IN THE CITY OF MALMO, Sweden, is generated entirely from renewable resources, using solar cells, heat pumps, and biogas from waste. *Living Planet* <www.panda.org/livingplanet>, Winter 2000, p. 9.

WILDFIRES IN 2000 ARE NOT LINKED TO REDUCED LOGGING in national forests—heavy logging in the past may have increased the fire hazard by removing large fire-resistant trees, and leaving behind excess brush and fuel. *FDNM* <www.newsminer.com> Dec 8, 2000, p. A-9.

DENALI NATIONAL PARK: The 2-millionth visitor to use the shuttle-bus system rode through the park on May 30, 2000. The Visitor Transportation System was established in 1972. *Denali Dispatch* <www.nps.gov/dena/bmp/index.html>, Fall-Winter 2000, p. 15.

FAMILY VEHICLES IN THE US, lined up bumper to bumper, would reach from the earth to the moon and back; they use enough fuel per year to cover a football field to a depth of 40 miles. *Ruralite*, December 2000, p. 18.

ORGANIC FARMS CAN SUPPORT 57% more wild plant species, 3 times more non-pest butterflies, and up to 44% more birds in cropped areas than conventional farms, according to a British soil association. *Audubon* <<http://magazine.audubon.org/index.html>>, November-December 2000, p. 21.

WALES NOW HAS 2 WINDMILLS which, when they are on line, should reduce diesel fuel use by about 60%. *FDNM* <www.newsminer.com>, Dec. 27, 2000, p. A-3.

THE ALASKA NATIONAL INTEREST LAND CONSERVATION ACT (ANILCA) was signed into law on Dec. 7, 1980; it named 25 Wild and Scenic Rivers, 16 National Wildlife Refuges, 15 National Park units, 2 BLM protected areas, 2 National Forests, and 2 National Monuments under Forest Service management. Its passage has protected 104 million acres of land. *FDNM* <www.newsminer.com>, December 7, 2000, p. A-1, A-6.

GREENS CREEK GOLD MINE on Admiralty Island may have a "toxic legacy," as its tailings facility and waste rock piles are "potentially acid generating and may be leaking heavy minerals;" the operator, Kennecott Greens Creek Mining Co., wants to enlarge their tailing facility. *Ravencall* <www.seacc.org> Fall '00 p. 7.

A PROPOSED ROAD TO JUNEAU was voted down by Juneau residents; they voted for enhanced ferry service instead, on Oct. 3rd, 2000. *Ravencall* <www.seacc.org>, Fall 2000, p. 1.

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