

THE NORTHERN LINE

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Challenges

By Arthur Hussey, Executive Director

our offices at 830 College Road near Creamers' Field.

Location

Interior Alaska, our base, is politically now one of the most conservative areas of Alaska, despite it being home to a significant conservation-focused community. Indeed, many people with whom we share beliefs particularly about conservation live in or near Fairbanks. But few current Interior political leaders, from Borough to federal governments, seem inclined to take up issues that we feel to be of import.

Many of our leaders suggest that "Environment" is a bad word, one that impedes economic development. From our perspective, nothing could be further from the truth. I for one have no desire to live in poverty. Neither have I an abiding interest in living in environmental squalor. Nor have I interest in "blocking", "impeding" or "locking up", or any such pejorative. Compassion is way farther up my list—as, frankly, is a healthy, sustainable economy.

In these circumstances, the NAEC, including its members, needs to "reach out" like never before. Isolation will do us little good and instead do inestimable harm. "Preaching to the choir", may at times be cathartic, but will gen-

erally be non-productive. Please join me in strategically working with others who may not at first agree with us.

Litigation

Reaching out is the good news. There is, however, a downside...litigation.

In brief, social change organizations, the NAEC included, employ a variety of tactics worldwide. Some, left unnamed, effect change through the barrel of a gun, or by means outside the law. *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, famous among many activists, jumps to mind. Others, including the NAEC, work through the rule of the law.

This means, aside from communications to the public, we work with one or more of the three branches of state and federal government: Executive, Legislative and Judicial.

Herein lies the rub: state and federal executive branches have clearly indicted that they disagree with our approaches to conservation. So, too, have the state and federal legislative branches. None of these four gives our concerns much credence. If we are to remain within the law, we are left with the state and federal judiciaries, a.k.a. courts and bring to mind "sue" and "litigation". So I ask that when you hear this vis-à-vis NAEC, keep it in its context: we are staying within the rule of law, working through one of the three constitutionally enshrined branches of government. I

(Challenges, continued on pg 17)

The following pages leave no doubt that we live in challenging times.

We all do, no matter where we live on this planet. But few organizations are in as interesting positions as is NAEC. For us NAEC, four current issues make life particularly eventful: 1) membership 2) location; 3) litigation; and 4) finances.

Welcome to New Members

Since the last *Northern Line*, 180 people have joined our ranks as new members, following our first major membership recruitment exercise in a number of years. I extend my welcome to you who have just joined, as well as to our existing members. I hope we will represent your interests well and that you will find your association with NAEC to be educational and supportive. Our staff of professionals takes pride in working with all our members, and welcomes any and all suggestions. Email is our normal means of contact, but snailmail works well, too. Or if in Fairbanks, do stop by

THE NORTHERN LINE

Environmental News of Arctic and Interior Alaska

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The Northern Alaska Environmental Center promotes conservation of the environment in Interior and Arctic Alaska through advocacy, education, and sustainable resource stewardship. The Northern Alaska Environmental Center has 1,152 members.

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The Northern Line is produced by Paul Ollig.

The cover photo of skier in Gates of the Arctic National Park is an NAEC file photo.

The back page picture of a Dall sheep was taken by Charlie Ott in Denali National Park.



Denali Wolf Buffers

Consumptive and Non-consumptive User Needs Considered

By Linda Paganelli,
Denali Watch Coordinator

A special meeting of the Alaska Board of Game [BOG] convened on October 10 and 11, 2002, in Anchorage, to consider the issue of expanding protection for Denali National Park and Preserve wolves. Four proposals were under consideration by the Board, three dealt with wolf buffers on State land adjacent to the National Park. After hearing public and agency testimony and deliberating the issue, the BOG took the following actions:

✓ **Passed Proposal 53**, which permanently closes wolf hunting and trapping in Unit 20C, west of the Savage River [approx. 72 sq. mi.]. This closure was enacted in 2000 and modified in 2001, in order to continue protective measures for the East Fork [Toklat] Pack of wolves. Board members recognized the importance of the Toklat Wolf Pack for non-consumptive uses and noted the comparatively low level of trapping effort in the years preceding 2001 in the area.

✓ **Passed as amended Proposal 55**, which established a new buffer, 55 sq. mi., along the eastern boundary of the Park, along the Anchorage-Fairbanks Intertie Right of Way, in unit 20A. The Board determined that the Mt. Margaret Pack is subject to consumptive uses upon ranging beyond Park boundaries, and that providing a buffer will secure the viewing opportunities of this pack within the Park. The intention of the Board was to provide as small an area as was possible to protect the core range of the pack and also to minimize the impact to other uses of wolves in Unit 20A.



© NAEC File Photo

Denali's wolves have been at the heart of a debate over trapping in areas just outside the park's boundaries.

Multiple User Groups: The Debate

Proponents of expanded buffers cite the desirability of maintaining a population of wolves that offer Alaskans and Alaska visitors an opportunity to view these highly sought out mammals. According to the Alaska Wildlife Alliance, there are approximately 1500 individual packs of wolves ranging throughout the State. The Alliance argues that protecting two of these packs, the most highly visible in the State, is a small compromise to make. It is a fact that without the buffers Denali wolves that range onto State land are vulnerable to consumptive uses. Hunters and trappers have three times eradicated wolf packs inhabiting the eastern portion of the National Park and the East Fork [Toklat] Pack, which is highly prized not only for its viewability along the Park road corridor but also for a 60 year long ongoing monitoring program, has likewise been subjected to dangerously low numbers. The logic continues that establishing the pro-

posed buffers would negatively impact a handful of individuals vs. a hundred thousand plus who stand to benefit from the hope of viewing a wolf at Denali. Thus State and local tourism industries benefit from the wolf protection proposals. Many Alaskans and visitors travel to and throughout the State specifically to view wildlife and in so doing expend over half a billion dollars annually.

Opponents of expanded buffers claim that establishing buffers on adjacent State land is akin to expanding the size of the already amply large Park and that expansion is potentially never ending. Citing that the continuation of the 1976 closure to hunting the Denali Caribou herd has not resulted in an increase in the herd's population, hunters contend that the notion of protecting one of its primary predators runs contrary to managing for recovery. Hunters/trappers assert that they contribute the bulk of the money, via licensing fees, etc., towards wildlife management and as such their concerns should receive priority

(Denali Wolves, continued on pg 15)

Heating Efficiently

By Nancy Fresco, Local Issues Coordinator

Those who live in Fairbanks know that living or working in an inefficiently heated, insulated, or ventilated building can mean frost creeping through walls and across windows, or horribly icy drafts. But even for those who live in warmer climes, an efficiently heated home can mean a huge difference in energy consumption. Saved energy means cleaner air, lower costs, and less dependence on fossil fuels.

INSULATE, INSULATE, INSULATE

Even a great heating system can be wasteful if it's installed in a leaky, poorly insulated building. Extra insulation, particularly in your ceiling and attic, will pay for itself in a short time. It is possible to add insulation to almost any house. Depending on your situation, you can add fiberglass batts, rigid Styrofoam, or blown-in insulation. Good windows and doors are also worth the cost; look for the highest possible "r-value." For Fairbanksans, try triple pane windows or better. Cold-climate homes — even if they're not in Fairbanks — also require a good vapor barrier in the walls to prevent water from condensing in the insulation. For further information, check the Department of Energy fact sheet on insulation at http://www.ornl.gov/roofs+walls/insulation/ins_01.html

HEATING SYSTEMS

Electric

Most electricity is produced from oil, gas, or coal generators that convert only about 30% of the fuel's energy into electricity; further losses occur during transmission. Electric heat is polluting, expensive, and wasteful, and should be avoided unless the electricity is being generated from renewable sources.

Wood

If you are using wood harvested in an ecologically sound manner, your heat source is more sustainable than gas or oil. But wood stoves can be extremely dirty, releasing enormous amounts of particulates. To minimize this pollution, avoid older wood stoves. Use new models with catalytic converters, and make sure you purchase the correct size stove for the space you want to heat. Smoldering fires give off much more pollution than small, hotter fires. To encourage a cleaner burning fire, use wood that has been split and dried for at least six months. Try to use small pieces, and do not overload your stove. Always follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

Oil or gas furnaces

Furnace efficiency is determined by Department of Energy Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency standards (AFUE). The average existing home

heating system is only about 60% efficient when it's in top working condition, with a real efficiency of less than 50%.

For better results:

- purchase a system with a high AFUE, sized correctly for your home;
- test and adjust your furnace annually;
- clean or replace furnace filters regularly;
- seal leaks and repair disconnected ducts;
- insulate ducts in unheated areas; and
- keep your thermostat low at night and when you're not at home, using a programmable timer.

Other heating systems

Many Fairbanks cabins use Monitor or Toyo stoves, drip oil, or other heat sources. For the most part, these small units are highly efficient. Be sure to get them serviced regularly, and select one with a good thermostat and timer system.

Last issue: Driving Efficiently
Next issue: Saving Electricity



© NAEC File Photo

Increasing your home's heating efficiency can help reduce our country's dependence on foreign sources of fuel, and can ultimately help protect places like the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

North Denali Access: Study Moves Forward

By Linda Paganelli, Denali Watch Coordinator

Phase I Nears Completion

After one year, the Denali Borough's North Access Reconnaissance Study [NARS] has made progress towards satisfying the requirements outlined in Phase 1 of the Transfer of Responsibilities Agreement [TORA] between the Borough and the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities [DOT].

In January 2003, the Borough conducted three preliminary scoping meetings, one each in Fairbanks, Healy, and Anchorage. The primary purpose of these meetings was to solicit agency and public participation in the process of identifying the wide range of issues that need to be considered in order to determine the feasibility of constructing a second north access route into Denali National Park and Preserve. Although a long list of issues was garnered from prior north access studies, the latest scoping meetings resulted in an expanded inventory. The Borough is presently in the process of analyzing and compiling this information into a summary document, which will further efforts to define the "Preliminary Project Scope/Schedule/Budget" portion of Phase 1. The summary document will be made available to interested parties for review and further input after February 18, 2003.

The Borough foresees wrapping-up the initial phase of the work plan in the near future and is preparing to proceed to Phase 2 of the TORA. In order to advance from one phase of the agreement to the next, the Borough is required to submit a report verifying work completed to the DOT. The State will evaluate the documentation and, if all is in order, will issue a Notice to Proceed.

Phase 2 of the TORA will focus on "Consultant Selection." The selection process is initiated with the release of a Request for Proposals [RFP]. The Borough's RFP will outline specif-



© Charlie Ott

Rising 20,320 feet above sea level, Denali dominates the landscape throughout much of Denali National Park, but particularly in the Wonder Lake region, the terminus of the proposed North Access Route.

ics on what is expected to be accomplished by the consultant. Interested firms will submit proposals, which will detail their credentials, plans of actions, and price tags. The range of issues identified during the scoping meetings and prior studies should guide the Borough in selecting the consultant firm that is best qualified to address the gamut of concerns and questions that have been raised. In addition to experience working with state and federal agencies and rail and road access projects, the chosen firm should be practiced in assessing the constraints of and impacts to the social, economic, biologic, geologic, hydrologic, and cultural resources.

The Borough's new administration, with its open-door policy and encouragement of public and agency input into this process, is a welcome change and is to be applauded. The stakes are high, the political pressures enormous, and the eventual outcome uncertain.

Public participation throughout the process is paramount to ensuring that a non-biased study truly ascertains the feasibility of the proposed North Access project.

For more information on the NARS call Mayor Talerico at 683-1330 or visit the Borough's website www.denaliborough.govoffice.com/

Visit our website at www.northern.org to learn more about the issues facing Denali National Park!

While there, you can also stay informed by signing up to receive *Denali Watch* email alerts when these issues arise!

The Denali Country: It's Your Backyard, Protect It!

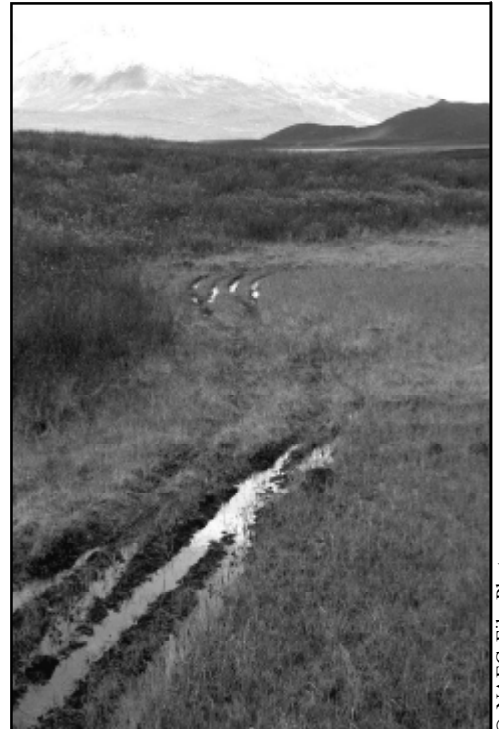
By John Schandelmeirer,
Paxson Resident

What do you think of when someone mentions the Denali Highway, Landmark Gap and Tangle Lakes? Fiery-red tundra in the fall bursting with blueberries and lowbush cranberries? A solitary grizzly ambling along a lateral moraine? The chance to glimpse an Arctic Warbler – one of the few places to do so in North America? Or maybe instead a hardrock drill rig silhouetted on a ridge above the Tangles?

Hardrock mineral exploration, with its temporary roads, heavy equipment, drills and trenches, is about to hit the Denali Country. In the midst of the most pristine high tundra accessible by road, Nevada Star Resources, a Canadian exploration company, is preparing to launch an aggressive drilling program. Once federal land, the Denali Block, as it was called during the land transfer process, stretches mostly along the north side of the Denali Highway from MacLaren River to Paxson. It includes a significant portion of the Tangle Lakes Archeological District, and except for the Delta Wild and Scenic River corridor, which remains under federal jurisdiction, surrounds the Tangles. Transfer of the Denali Block from federal to state own-

ership was completed in late 2002; it was initiated at the behest of hardrock mining interests – which prefer to conduct mining activities on state land under more lenient state regulations.

The east end of the Denali Highway has long interested geologists; small placer operations have come and gone, mostly in the Eureka and Rainy Creek area, some 20 miles north of Tangle Lakes. Few if any indications of mining have been visible from the Tangles or the Denali Highway other than the occasional claim marker. Now with the full blessing of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Nevada Star Resources wants to drill for platinum, nickel and copper. DNR doesn't see mineral exploration as a potential threat to the Denali Country's biological, cultural and visual resources – because, they maintain, public concerns about exploration impacts are overstated. And although Nevada Star, drawing upon existing geologic data, likens the Tangle Lakes prospect to that of the Siberian Noril'sk nickel deposit – the largest in the world with five underground mines and three smelters – DNR refuses to address the compatibility of a hardrock mine with existing uses until such time as



© NAEC File Photo

Even after an entire year, the tracks from a single passage of an ATV are clearly visible.

they receive a mine application.

But whether or not there are minerals under Tangle Lakes and the surrounding hills is not the issue – the issue is: should we even be looking for minerals there? Is DNR's premise that mineral exploration won't harm existing uses correct? I hunt, trap and run dogs in the Denali Country, and have done so for over 30 years. Already I've observed moose avoiding certain valleys where Nevada Star conducted intensive airborne geophysical exploration – and the company is not even on the ground yet. It's difficult to see how drill rigs won't adversely affect someone's backcountry experience, or disturb caribou, grizzlies, or nesting waterfowl.

More importantly, what follows successful exploration is a mine. While small placer operations have their place in the Denali Country, a large industrial complex such as a hardrock mine does not. Even if such a complex is strictly regulated, it would bring with it infrastructure (such as mills, roads, and power lines), and landscape alterations (open pits, rock dumps and tailings impoundments) that would forever alter



© NAEC File Photo

The MacLaren Glacier, as seen from the Denali Highway, is one of the many natural wonders along the road.

the wild nature of the Denali Country. Drive the Denali Highway, what you see now is the most pristine Alaska on the road system.

If the Denali Country has ever meant anything to you – as a place to camp out under the northern lights while caribou hunting, a destination for paddling or angling in clear alpine lakes, or an opportunity to enjoy huge views at every turn of the road – consider the following questions.

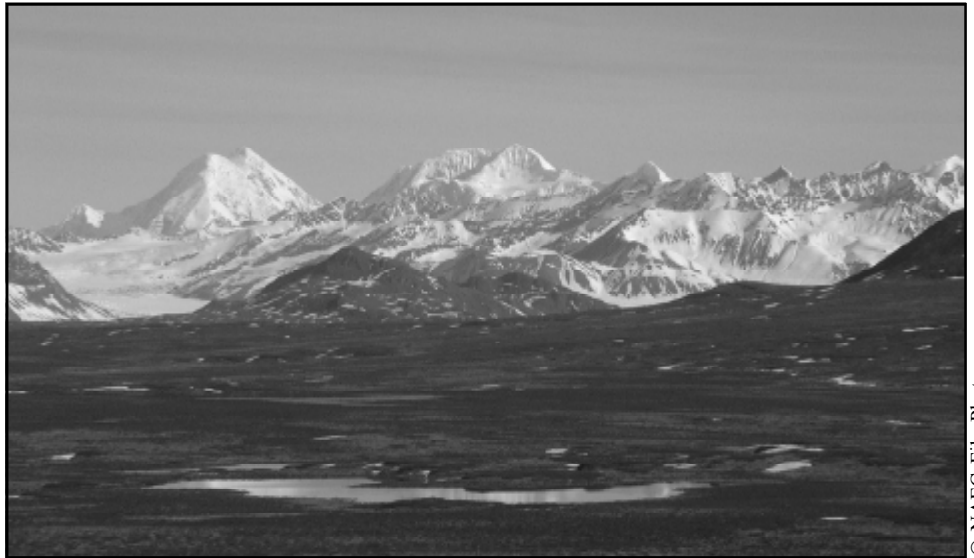
Do you want trails across the tundra around Tangle Lakes? They will never heal in your lifetime. Do you want a big mine, underground or open pit, in the middle of the most important recreational area in Interior Alaska? Hardrock mines, even after reclamation, permanently change the landscape. Is the extraction of nickel or platinum, the profits of which will be shipped offshore, worth the risk of environmental degradation? Heavy metal-laced tailings ponds and acidic run off are, despite environmental regulations, the common legacy of hardrock mines.

If your answer to any of these questions is no – the Denali Country needs your help. Now is the time to tell DNR that our hunting, fishing, hiking, canoeing, and recreation are more necessary than the minerals that may be underneath, not ten years from now when mining companies have upped the ante by sinking significant exploration capital. Personally, I am not opposed to min-

ing in general; however, if ever there was a spot to protect from mining – this is it. This is one backyard that should not be dug up – not because it's my backyard – but because it is all of ours...and it's a backyard full of resources more precious than metals.

For more information contact Ruth McHenry, Copper Country Alliance, (907) 822-3644.

John Schandelmeirer is a musher and trapper who has lived in the Denali Country for over 30 years.



© NAEC File Photo

The Alaska Range towers over the Tangle Lakes area along the east end of the Denali Highway, near proposed nickel, platinum, and copper exploration.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Released for the Northwest NPRA Planning Area

By Deb Moore, Arctic Coordinator

Following two lease sales in the 4.6 million acre Northeast Planning Area of the National Petroleum Reserve Alaska (NPRA) - the first in 1999, the second in June, 2002 - BLM is planning a much larger lease sale (up to 8.8 million acres) in the "Northwest Planning Area" for 2004.

The Northwest Planning Area encompasses most of the coastal wetlands of the Reserve not previously included in the Northeast area as well as cutting diagonally across the Reserve to include a section of the Colville River.

While the Northern Alaska Environmental Center is not opposed to some responsible development within the Reserve, we believe that there must be

a balance between development and protection. BLM must protect the most special places in the NPR-A and, in areas where development proceeds, ensure strong environmental safeguards are established and upheld.

On January 17, BLM released the draft Environmental Impact Statement (dEIS) for a 60-day public review and comment. The Northern Center is currently analyzing this document to determine our response. We will be sending out a separate alert encouraging your comments as soon as our analysis is complete. In the mean time, please check out our new NPR-A slideshow in the Arctic section of our website at:

www.northern.org



© Paul Ollig

Wolves, bears, caribou, and moose depend on the open and undeveloped areas along the Denali Highway.

Forest Facts – National Forest Policy

By Nancy Fresco, Boreal Forest Coordinator

Alaska's national forests, the Tongass and the Chugach, are coastal rather than boreal forests. Thus, they are generally somewhat removed from the attention of Fairbanksans. But recently they have been receiving attention not just statewide, but also nationwide. Three controversial new policies relating to National Forest management are currently being drafted, debated — and litigated. The outcome will affect millions of acres of Alaska's forests.

First, draft amendments to the National Forest Management Act are currently up for public review. These amendments would make a number of unprecedented and potentially unpopular changes — including exempting the National Forest Service from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Meanwhile, the Roadless Area Rule, written during the last administration, would protect large remote areas. It has been hung up in the courts for months,

but recently won a preliminary victory. Finally, the new Healthy Forests Initiative outlines a fire-management plan that has been questioned for its strong emphasis on timber harvesting.

Many Americans are understandably confused about the intended purpose of national forests. This role has changed dramatically over time. The founders of our first national forests, more than a century ago, envisioned them as multiple-use working forests. Until World War II, the Forest Service primarily focused on watershed protection, forest restoration, and wild-fire prevention and suppression. Since there were abundant supplies of private timber, very little national forest logging occurred during this period. But during the post-World War II housing boom, national forests were viewed as a ready supply of building material. The increased demand for timber from national forests led to more widespread use of clearcutting, with little or no thought given to sustainability or ecosystem protection.

In the 1960's and 1970's, concern over the environment increased, and several laws were enacted to protect forests and to formalize the concept of multiple-use. The National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA) requires the Forest Service to adopt land management plans for all national forests and to revise those plans every 15 years.

The 2000 version of the NFMA, like earlier versions, also requires the Forest Service to comply with NEPA in preparing plans, and to provide an environmental impact statement (EIS) whenever a plan is significantly revised or amended. However, the timber industry objected that the regulations gave too much emphasis to environmental protection rather than production. In May 2001 the Bush Administration suspended the 2000 regulations.

Now a new draft NFMA has been prepared, allowing for exemption from documentation in an EIS. The draft rule also eliminates the requirement to maintain viable populations of native wildlife species, offering two weaker, vaguer alternatives instead.

Meanwhile, under President Clinton, the Forest Service prepared a bold new plan to protect the largest remaining roadless areas in the nation's national forests. All told, the plan would place 58.2 million acres of some of our oldest, remotest forest off-limits to roads and most forms of development and timber harvest.

A total of six lawsuits have been filed by states, tribes, and various timber interests, challenging this rule. After months of court battles and an apparent unwillingness on the part of the current administration to defend the proposed rule, a court ruling on December 12, 2002 will allow roadless protection to take effect — at least for now.

Severe forest fires in the last two summers have heightened concerns about fire management. National forests, as well as other private



The Tongass National Forest, in Southeast Alaska, is a perfect example of a multiple-use forest, and, at least for now, road expansion in most of its 9.7 million acres of roadless areas is barred.

and public lands, face problems caused by years of over-zealous fire suppression, human development in fire-prone areas, and increased fire susceptibility in new forests growing up after logging. The Healthy Forests Initiative attempts to address some of these issues. However, the initiative places most of its emphasis on shortening public process and preventing environmental lawsuits related to timber sales. It does not even mention the need for additional funding to implement the National Fire Plan. Moreover, it fails to address many key issues in fire prevention, including actions to reduce fire risks in the wildland-urban interface in order to protect homes, property, and lives.

The picture may seem bleak, but there is still some hope for balanced, sus-

tainable management. Today's timber sale levels in national forests have dropped from their peak figures by two thirds (back to the pre-1950 levels). Clearcut harvests have been reduced by 80 percent over the last decade. The Roadless Rule has been upheld in the courts, protecting more than half the Tongass. And in a separate lawsuit, U.S. District Court in Anchorage found that the Forest Service failed to adequately review the Tongass' unroaded acres for their wilderness potential. Until the wilderness review is complete, road expansion in most of the 9.7 million acres of roadless areas of the Tongass is barred. For now, at least, our national forests are still national treasures.

The Northern Alaska Environmental Center is Online!

Visit our website at

<http://www.northern.org>

While at our site you can:

- ◆ Subscribe to our email lists, including Arctic Actions and Mining Memos!
- ◆ Learn more about environmental issues facing Alaska!
- ◆ Make a donation or renew your membership on our secure online server!

Arctic Time

By Frank Keim,
NAEC Board Member

Old days drift slowly into new days
and the white eye of the Arctic sun rolls
bright across the night,
as we trek inexorably

South
up the Hulahula River
named more than a century ago,
by stranded mariners on an ocean cold and frozen
before its time.

We stop at vestiges
of ancient Eskimo camps
where the only traces are
oil lamps made of pecked stone
and circles of rocks
where skin tents once perched.

We climb over tall rocky passes seen by few
in this harsh land
where musk ox and caribou wander free
from man's confining designs,
and so do we here.

There's no time in this wild place,
only the wind turning willow leaves white
and water bouncing and curling over primordial rocks
that gravity pulls ineluctably seaward
down
the rivers
helping carve the steep valley we're in now.

Rough limestone crags
are given life by Gyrfalcons
searching for unwary parky squirrels chattering
unwelcome
at our uninvited presence.

Sharp-angled slopes fragrant with early flowers
are speckled with wandering ewes and
capering lambs who
stay high from the prowling hunger of loping wolves
and the graceful hulk of grizzlies
ever watchful for an easy meal.

The verge of snow ridges and cirques
severs the earth abruptly from the blue midnight sky
where the sun dances across the horizon and
flicks light off the flowers of avens
tilting
yellow and white in the blowing breeze
in this high arctic valley of our refuge.

Time has no meaning here as it slides into itself
moment into moment
day into sunlit night
into misty mornings and
scintillating afternoons that fly endlessly
like the birds the fill them with endless life
for us here on the Hulahula.

-- While on the Hulahula River in the Arctic National
Wildlife Refuge, June, 1997

Energy Survey – A Rousing Success

By Deb Moore, Arctic Coordinator

Last October, the Northern Alaska Environmental Center sent out an energy survey to all of our members in interior and arctic Alaska. This survey was part of a larger campaign to foster better widespread understanding, support and usage of energy conservation practices, efficiency measures and sustainable alternative energy sources in the Fairbanks community. With the survey, we hoped to get a better understanding of how our members currently use energy as well as how we can best assist them in their energy conservation efforts. We are thrilled to announce that over 50% of those surveyed have responded!

We'd like to thank all of you who participated in this survey. The data provided will be extremely useful in shaping our energy efforts and monitoring our effectiveness in the years to come. Thank you also for the comments and suggestions provided on ways to improve the survey and activities to take on.

Below are some results from the survey and what it means for our future efforts. Please note that while the survey was directed toward our local membership (since this was the easiest group of people for us to contact), our energy-use efforts will be community wide.

Survey Results and Analysis

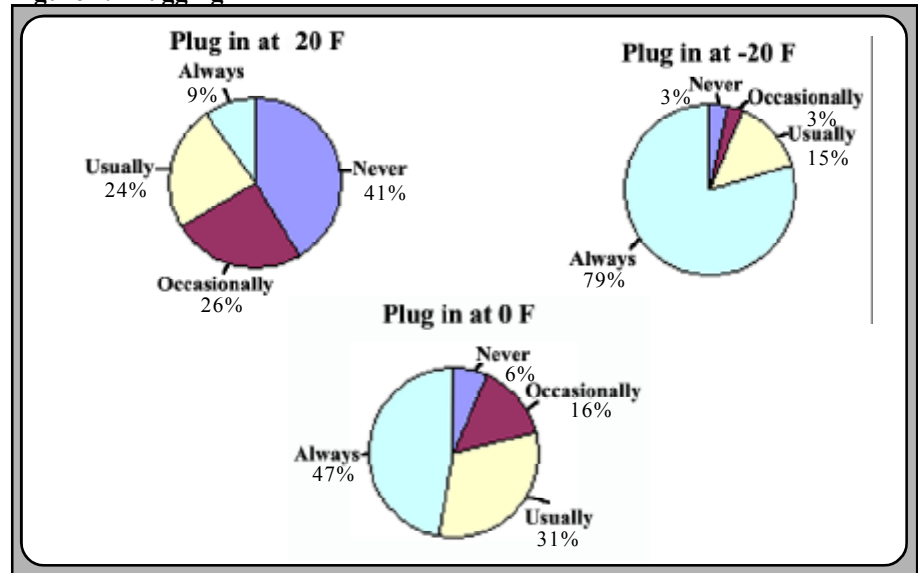
Transportation: 69% of respondents either never used another form of transportation besides the family car or did so only 1-2 days/month. However, most people (74%) carpoolled or combined a series of errands at least once a week in order to decrease their overall driving.

Unfortunately, the high amount of sprawl around Fairbanks as compared to the population makes the likelihood of improving the public transit system very unlikely. For that reason, while the Northern Center will work toward improvements in the system, the majority

of our efforts will be focused on other ways to decrease fuel use such as carpooling and organizing your errands in the most efficient manner possible.

Plugging in/Timers & Power Saver Cords: 79% of the respondents always plugged in their car at -20° F; however decreasing numbers always plugged in at higher temperatures: 47% at 0° F and only 10% at +20° F, respectively. 54% had timers while only 10% had power saver cords. The rest had neither – although several respondents explained they personally didn't need them because of garages at home and cycled power at work.

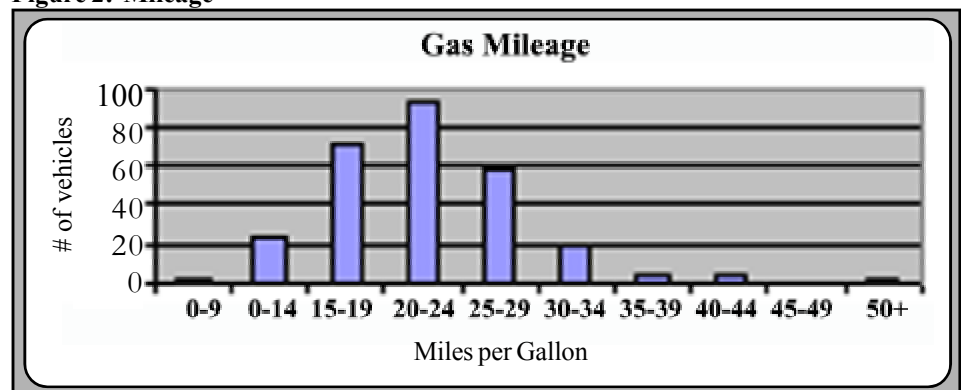
Figure 1: Plugging In



For information on why it's good to plug in up to +20° F, and how timers and power saver cords can save energy, please see our *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* Community Perspective piece, "It's time, temperature to plug in" on our website at http://www.northern.org/artman/publish/article_31.shtml.

Vehicles: The most common automobiles were sedan/station wagons and small pickup trucks with small cars, SUV and standard pickup trucks also being slightly less common. Average gas mileage was around 20-24 mpg with 7 respondents driving vehicles that got greater than 40 mpg. The most common vehicles outside of automobiles were snowmachines and small motorboats.

Figure 2: Mileage



Considering our weather and unpaved roads, the choices of vehicles are not surprising. Nor, with the reluctance of the auto industry to make improvements, is the gas mileage. While the Northern Center encourages everyone to make their next vehicle the most efficient one that's practical for their circumstances, the majority of our efforts will focus on ways to improve gas mileage through inflated tires, frequent tune ups, carpooling, and other similar activities.

Home electricity: 90% of respondents purchased all of their electricity from their local utility company – presumably GVEA. When asked whether “green energy” was available in their area, 64% did not know or had never heard of green energy.

Unfortunately, alternative energies such as wind and solar are of limited use in much of interior Alaska. Although some homes will be able to take advantage of one or both of these options, most will remain dependent on GVEA. Currently, GVEA does *not* have a green energy option. The Northern Alaska Environmental Center will continue to encourage GVEA to develop a green energy program; however, the majority of our efforts will focus on ways to use less energy through conservation and efficient appliances.

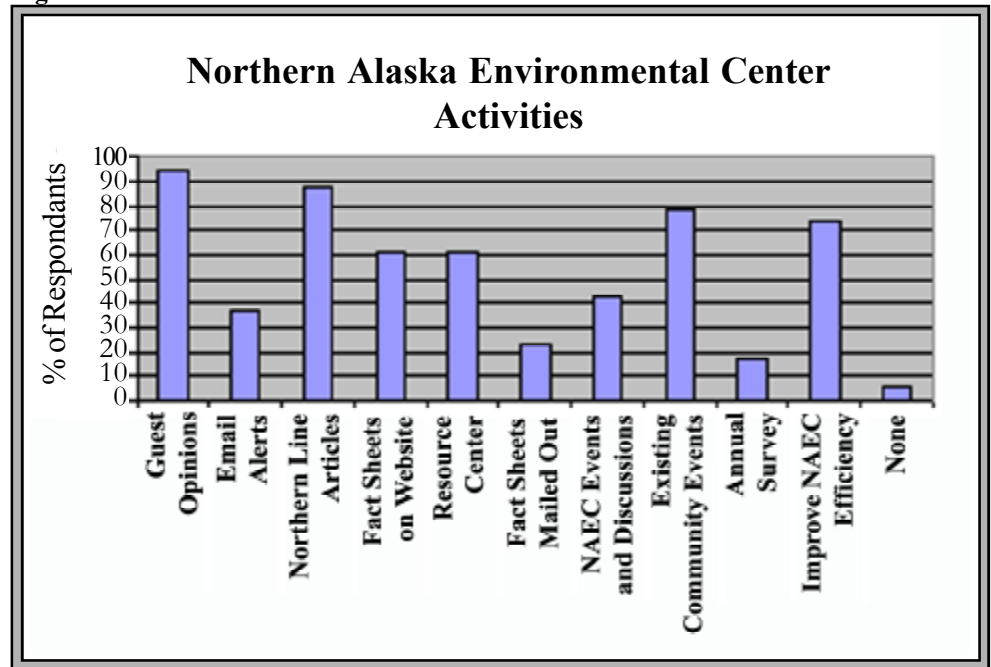
Home energy use: 61% of the respondents either frequently or always turned down their thermostat or allowed their house to cool while away for the day while a whopping 96% shut off idle lights, computers, etc. most or all of the time. In addition, 66% were using compact fluorescent bulbs in at least three of their light fixtures. A fairly large percentage of respondents (39%) either did not know about Energy Star® appliances or had none in their home. However, 25% actually had all or at least three such appliances.

Energy audit: Roughly half of the respondents have had either formal or informal energy audits done (or had their house built to be energy efficient)

while 82% planned to use energy efficient materials and/or appliances in future remodeling.

Current level of energy use/ NAEC activities: 53% of the respondents felt that they were already efficient but intended to try to do more to conserve energy. The rest were fairly evenly split between willing to make some easy, convenient and inexpensive improvements and wanting to improve but needing more information. Only 6% felt that they had cut back enough and didn't intend to do more.

Figure 3: Activities



The most popular ways in which respondents thought the Northern Center could help them improve their efficiency included printing guest opinions in the *News-Miner*, printing articles in the *Northern Line* and participating in existing community events. Other possible activities included making fact sheets available on our website, creating a resource center for information on local green businesses and improving the Northern Center's own efficiency. Additional activities suggested by respondents included running public service announcements on KUAC and KSUA radio, holding tire inflating events 1-2 times each year, providing “energy tips” in the newspaper and/or encouraging the paper to spotlight energy efficient homes & businesses, and working on a recycling program for the community.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Over time, the Northern Alaska Environmental Center hopes to build our energy-use program into an integral part of our overall operations where we can undertake all of the activities listed above. For the short-term, we have expanded the energy page of our website (www.northern.org) to include numerous helpful fact sheets and links, will continue to include energy-related articles in our newsletter and guest opinions in the *News-Miner* and will be available to answer (or find answers for) energy-related questions as they come up. In addition, we hope to organize a collaborative energy-use improvement fair in the near future and will continue to participate in existing community events such as the Tanana State Fair, Golden Days Parade and possibly, the Ice Carving Festival.

Thanks again for your help!

Mine Dredgings

By Mara Bacsujlaky,
Mining Coordinator



Draft Permits Expected Soon for Pogo

Late February is the new release date for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and draft permits for the proposed Pogo gold mine near Delta. The treatment/disposal of mine wastewater and access to the remote site are major issues in the permitting of the underground gold mine, which will be built and operated by the Canadian company Teck Cominco. The EPA's preferred alternative is the Shaw Creek route – a

62-mile all-season road on State land that would avoid the lower part of the Goodpastor River. Responsible for construction and maintenance costs, Teck Cominco wants exclusive use of the road and is willing to remove the road after mine closure. The public will have 60 days to comment on the document. Review copies will be available at the Noel Wein Library and at the Fairbanks office of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources.

Introducing Ruth Prokopowich, Camp Habitat Director

I am delighted to be the new Director for Camp Habitat. My son attended camp many years ago and was so excited by his experiences that after camp was over he gave me a personal tour of Creamer's Field. I was escorted around the trails through the Crane Pond and out to the Moose Stand. While enjoying ourselves with the sights, sounds and smells we also gathered bits of old wood, empty seedpods and feathers. We then made a mobile from these items that still hangs in my house, a reminder of a special time and place. Since that initial tour I have spent many years enjoying the seasons and migrations through the Creamer's Refuge. I look forward to new experiences in the Refuge and the opportunity to enjoy them in the company of children and their counselors!

My path to Camp Habitat has been an interesting and wiggly one. No straight lines here! I was a "non-traditional" student, translated that means

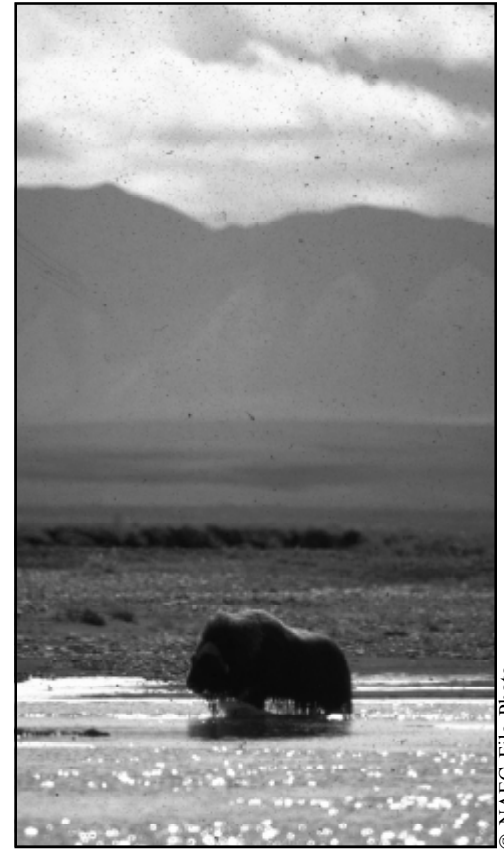
older with children, when I went back to school to earn a bachelor's degree in Social Work. Then I went on an adventure to Oregon with a new husband, returning to Anchorage to earn a master's degree in Social Work and finally home to Fairbanks. Last winter I worked at Big Brothers Big Sisters and before re-

turning to school I worked in several local small businesses the last being the late great Babs' 5th Avenue Bakery.

I view my new position with Camp Habitat as an opportunity to combine my lifelong interest in nature with my professional training. The adventure begins!



Ruth, with her son Ian, enjoying the view from the moose platform at Creamer's Field.



A lone musk ox crosses a stream in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

© NAEC File Photo

© Ruth Prokopowich



From the Woodpile

By Ginny Hill Wood,
Founding Member of NAEC and Regular Columnist

December 18, 2002—Contrary to Robert Browning's euphoric 19th century poem, "God's in his heaven and all's right with the world," now the year is almost 2003, and all's decidedly not right with this world—unless, of course, you are "extreme" Republican.

If this whole show is being orchestrated by a Supreme Being whom we have given a human image, then He or She must be asking, "Where did I go wrong?"

Bush the Shrub now reigns supreme in the White House, flanked by advisors Cheney, Rumsfeld, Ashcroft and Norton on his right—far right. Up here in Alaska the majority of our citizens just chose former Sen. Frank Murkowski, champion of opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling, as our new governor, and he chose his daughter to replace him in the Senate seat he vacated in Washington, D.C.

Rather than a season to be merry, this is one to be wary. First, there has been our weather—weird! Almost Christmas and in Fairbanks, Alaska, 90 miles below the Arctic Circle we still aren't wearing long johns! Neither are we skiing, dog mushing, or even snow-machining. Nor has it been safe to walk, jog, bicycle, or even drive your car. The eight inches of snow that accumulated in early October turned to slush, then sheets of ice everywhere as our temperatures fluctuated between just above freezing to just below. It's enough to convert skeptics to true believers in global warming.

Despite the holiday festivities there has been an underlying feeling of apprehension and insecurity. Our well being indicator is down as well as our economy and our trust in corporations and their CEOs, and yes, I must say it, confidence in wise governance. Our President seems determined to involve our country in a war against Iraq that could cost gazillions of dollars and lots of lives. "We have to protect our freedoms," is the warmongers' chant. And every day our country becomes more and more like a police state. What hypocrisy!

Like a patient with cancer is temporary remission, the aftermath of infamous Sept 11/01 has left us with a gnawing sense of uneasiness about how, who, and where "they" will strike again. And who can one trust?

Last fall's contentious political rhetoric was full of campaign promises to provide growth and prosperity in Alaska by more intensive development of our natural resources; building more roads to open up our backcountry to settlement; and encouraging more Outside corporate investment in develop-

ment by easing environmental regulations and taxes. Then in the next breath they condemned interference from Outside environmental organizations. Huh?

There were wiser and more perceptive candidates on the ballots—both state and national—but their platforms evidently didn't appeal to the majority of voters. Only Green Party candidates dared to address basic, environmental issues. In Alaska they were excluded from public debates until the closing days of the campaign season.

"Growing the economy," "jobs," and monetary "prosperity" were the major promises dangled by most candidates to lure voters. The bottom line, the ecological quagmire mankind has gotten themselves into was ignored. In a nutshell, our exponential ballooning population growth has exceeded Earth's capacity to sustain us worldwide. Don't gasp! I'm not proposing infanticide or abortion. Try family planning and women's rights.

We are running out of our basic life support systems—i.e., water, both in quantity and quality; pure air to breathe; fertile soils to feed us; forests and fossil fuels for energy and transportation; open space for viable ecosystems for people and other living things—and places to dump our garbage in this throw-away culture.

Barbara Kingsolver, in her recent book "Small Wonder", pithily asks, "If life must be a race to use up everything we have, who, exactly, will actually win?"

Perhaps the ultimate denouement will be that because of our own folly, denial and greed we will extinguish our own species along with many others. Then evolution (or God) can start the process to produce more intelligent life on a rejuvenated Earth all over again.

But wait! I have a daughter and a son-in-law. Just because I had the good fortune to arrive on this wondrous green planet before it got so crowded, polluted and dangerous, how can I be so cavalier about a gloom-and-doom scenario for them? If our species can be clever enough to send a man into space to walk on the moon, invent computers, and decode our genetic genomes, can't we be wise enough to live comfortably within our ecological means without killing each other off with our lethal technology?

We can! And we don't have to start a revolution, or a new "ism", or go hungry in the dark to do it. Primarily we

(Woodpile, continued on pg 17)

(Denali Wolves, continued from pg 3)

attention over those of non-consumptive users. The opinion, that maintaining wolves for viewing has lead to habituating wolves to humans, is maintained to be a negative end-result of mismanagement of wolves, in that the perceived domestication runs contrary to the wild nature of the wolf. It is a fact that wolves compete with humans for limited resources and that zero wolf harvest on State lands means less "meat for the freezer." As an increasing human population threatens the very essence of the hunter/trapper lifestyle, it follows that establishment of these buffers will not only exacerbate this dilemma, but will also alter historic use patterns established in the acreage under question.

It has been stated that the choice, to enact buffers on state land in order to protect Denali wolves, is not one of "scientific" necessity, i.e. the number of wolves taken in the region each year is low and their reproductive rates high so the population is not biologically threatened. As science was not promoted as a criterion for broadening pro-



© NAEC File Photo

With no fences to keep them in, Denali's wildlife, including wolves and bears, are free to roam outside of the park, where they are vulnerable to hunting and trapping.

tection, the BOG was faced with resolving what amounted to a philosophical debate on an allocation issue: protect highly viewable wolf packs for the benefit of non-consumptive users/viewers OR protect the right to hunt and trap

wolves within the parameters defined by the proposed buffers. The debate also drew attention to contrasting wildlife management protocols: maximize for sustained yield or maximize for the needs of all user groups. The BOG's decision, which was to enact buffers on approximately half the acreage requested, was a compromise that recognized the needs of both non-consumptive and consumptive users of our wildlife resources. This recognition is in keeping with a national trend toward expanding the realm of wildlife management objectives.

Buying a house is an investment!

Now you can invest in the future of the Northern Center by providing a one time only donation to buy part of our new building.

A \$50 donation will buy 1/2 square foot of 830 College Road.
All proceeds will go directly to purchasing our new home.

☐ **YES, I wish to buy 1/2 Sq. Ft. of the Northern Alaska Environmental Center for \$50!**

Please send your donation to:

Northern Alaska Environmental Center
830 College Road
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____

- ☐ Enclosed is my check for \$50 made payable to NAEC
- ☐ Please charge my donation to my Visa/Mastercard (circle one) Card

Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____

Changing Demographics

Until recently, wildlife management agencies focused on maximizing population numbers of certain game animals for harvest, but that single-minded approach is changing in Alaska as well as in the rest of the Nation. The evolving preference is for broadening the scope of management to consider a variety of related concerns that heretofore have not been on the table. This broader view of management expands the traditional focus of management practices to nontraditional areas, such as wildlife viewing, education and management of animals that aren't sought as game. In



Wolf tracks are an exciting find when hiking in Denali's backcountry.

large part, this refocusing of wildlife management has resulted from a changing demographic.

Nationwide, an increasing number of people claim wildlife watching as a pastime. They are traveling to do it and spending money for special equipment. A recent study by the U.S. Department of the Interior shows that Americans spent more on wildlife watching in 2001 than in 1996, while expenditures for fishing and hunting declined. The number of wildlife watchers also rose during the same period, while hunting and fishing participation fell. The Alaska Wildlife Alliance reports that 75% of Alaskans do not hunt or trap and the Division of Wildlife Conservation states that "most of the 1.2 million visitors who come to Alaska each year say that one of their primary interests is enjoying Alaska's natural beauty and abundant wildlife" and further notes that "many Alaska residents live in Alaska because of its wildlife resources, and most Alaskans enjoy observing all types of wildlife."

The Future of Wildlife Management in Alaska

Former Governor Knowles promoted the need for a balanced Board of

Game, one that would represent the diverse interests of the residents of the State and would recognize the importance of wildlife viewing opportunities for Alaska's tourism industry. Governor Murkowski, in making his recent appointments to the BOG, does not appear to be exhibiting the same sensitivity to the varying needs of Alaskan residents or the visiting public, as his appointees appear to be of like mind in the notion that managing for "abundance" of certain game animals supercedes all other uses of wildlife. The skewed composition of the Board runs contrary to Alaskans' stated desire to have an entity that more fully represents the views of all user groups. As Alaska's economy has become ever more dependent upon the tourism industry and as an increasing State population exerts evermore pressure on consuming our wildlife resources, wildlife managers will be faced with the complicated and controversial task as to how to best manage our wildlife resources to maximize the public's, not one user group's, best interests.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game - Division of Wildlife Conservation is on record as recognizing that wildlife is a public resource belonging to all Alaskans and that the public has ex-

hibited a growing interest in wildlife issues and "the varied approaches to managing it, and are making use of wildlife resources in ways other than hunting and trapping." The national trend, of a changing demographic, spurred Congress to increase funding for nontraditional wildlife programs to the States. Alaska received funding for such programs in 2001 and 2002 and in FY03, the division received \$4 million from this source. With this new funding, the Division intends to broaden its scope to a more full-service wildlife management agency. To this end the Division produced a Strategic Plan with much input from Alaskan residents, which could provide direction for future efforts in both the traditional and the newly expanded programs over the next decade. Let us hope that this effort has not been in vain and that public sentiment, from both consumptive and non-consumptive users, continues to exert an influence on wildlife management decisions on Alaska's public lands.

To view the Fish and Game Division of Wildlife Conservation Strategic Plan, go to:

<http://www.state.ak.us/adfg/wildlife/geninfo/planning/strap.htm>

Boreal Shorts

By Nancy Fresco,
Boreal Forest Coordinator



Local Voices and Forest Planning

On behalf of the Northern Alaska Environmental Center, Nancy Fresco is taking part of a stakeholder group that will meet between now and March to try to resolve contentious issues of forest management in the Minto area (Fairbanks Division of Forestry Region 2). Timber sales in this area have been on hold since 1997, due to protests from environmentalists and Minto residents. At issue are questions of access, stream protection, wilderness values, tra-

ditional Native values, fish and game management, habitat conservation, fire control, and tourism. Since this is roughly the same region in which an exploration license has been granted for oil and gas, timber sales add complications to the forest planning process. Thus far, the discussion has been largely informational. At future meetings, participants will try to reach effective consensus-based decisions.

New Congress, Increased Threat to the Arctic Refuge

By Deb Moore, Arctic Coordinator

With pro-drillers in control of both houses and a development-happy president, the threats to the Arctic Refuge have increased dramatically. In fact, efforts are already underway to include revenues from leasing in the Refuge as part of the 2004 budget. This is merely the first of many pieces of Refuge drilling legislation that may appear in the next few months.

However, there is good news as well. On January 31, six moderate Republican Senators - Olympia Snowe (ME), John McCain (AZ), Lincoln Chafee (RI), Susan Collins (ME), Mike DeWine (OH) and Peter Fitzgerald (IL) - submitted a letter to Republican leaders announcing their opposition to inserting into the pending '04 budget bill *any language that would give oil companies access to the Arctic Refuge*. With these six Republicans joining the Senate's one independent and most of the 48 Democrats who also oppose the drilling, president's budget will find it difficult to gain approval.

Plus, in a January 2003 national poll conducted for The Wilderness Society, voters rejected by a two-to-one margin (62% to 30%) an argument to open the Arctic Refuge to oil drilling, even in the case of impending war with Iraq and a possible cut-off of a portion of America's supply of oil from the Middle East. In addition, 55% of voters remain unconvinced that the need to reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil warrants allowing oil drilling in Arctic Refuge.

As you can see, the Refuge fight is far from over. In fact, support for protecting the Refuge remains strong

- both with the public and in the Senate. ***BUT WE NEED TO KEEP IT THAT WAY!***

How Can I Help?

Write to your Representative and Senators and tell them that you support full protection of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Urge them to oppose any attempt to pass legislation allowing drilling in the Arctic Refuge. Then call your friends and relatives and urge them to do the same.

* If you live in Alaska, please contact the six Republican Senators listed above and thank them for standing up for the Refuge. Remind them that many Alaskans oppose drilling in the Refuge and are completely unrepresented by our own delegation.

To contact your Senators or Representative, write to:

**The Honorable (full name)
United States Senate/House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510/20515**

If you prefer to call or fax, please call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 or visit our website at www.northern.org for a complete list of the Senators' DC phone and fax numbers. Your Representative's contact information can be obtained via the Switchboard or on the web at www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW.html.



© Ken Whitten

The coastal plain is the biological heart of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and the calving ground for the 129,000 member Porcupine Caribou Herd.

(Woodpile, continued from pg 13)

The Northern Alaska Environmental Center is looking for your help!

Over the next several months, the Northern Alaska Environmental Center will be sending a number of Alaskans to Washington, DC to provide hands-on help during the intense Arctic Refuge Congressional battles to come. These Alaskans will be on hand to lend assistance wherever needed - be it lobbying Congress or helping out in the larger conservation community efforts.

As you can imagine, sending these Alaskans to DC will require substantial travel funds at a time when our Refuge budget has already been overstretched by last year's battles!

Your assistance could make a significant difference in the number of Alaskans we can send back to DC and our overall effectiveness in protecting the Refuge. We ask that you please consider sponsoring a volunteer by donating enough frequent flyer miles to cover one round-trip ticket. A coach

fare ticket from Alaska to Washington, D.C. can be reserved for 20-30,000 Alaska Airlines miles or 25,000 Northwest miles, depending on the itinerary. Or, if you don't have enough miles for a complete ticket, you can also donate money toward the purchase of a ticket.

Last year, thanks to your frequent flyer donations, we were able to send three Alaskans to DC to help out at critical times during the energy battle! As the battle will be even tougher this year, we hope to send even more volunteers.

Your help is crucial!

If you can help us by sponsoring or helping to sponsor a volunteer, please contact Deb at (907) 452-5021 or deb@northern.org. Of course, any other assistance you can think of is welcome as well! Just give us a call.

need to switch our priorities around. A healthy economy is dependent on healthy ecosystems, not visa-versa. You can't fix a well that has gone dry with a bigger pump. You start conserving water before it dries. And this goes for oil wells, too.

Forget about the "prosperity" goal. We've already overshot our "credit card" account there. But we can still aim for sustainability as far as our standard of living goes and still have a higher quality of life. If we overshoot that goal we are left with coping with a dog-eat-dog survival mode. And that's not a pretty future.

This paradigm shift can start on a personal and community level. In fact, it already has. Don't wait for leadership from legislators, governors, or presidents. They are stuck in a rut of contentious party partisanship.

Hey! It's snowing! The winter solstice has passed and now the daylight increases daily until the summer one when it's never dark. Cheers!



(Challenges, continued from pg 2)

assure you that we'd rather work with a departmental commissioner or the public than argue through a judge. But the judge is what we have left.

Those members who have worked with us in the past and have grown accustomed to our reaching out should rest assured that we continue to seek proactive, constructive relationships with decision-makers at all levels. Confrontation, as litigation is known for, is our least-preferred style. Thus, I am truly hopeful that litigation will not be a significant part of our program in 2003. But if you do hear of us taking legal action, understand we only do so as a last resort.

Finances

I'd like to thank all of our supporters who generously contributed during our year-end fund drives. In doing so, you have helped us prepare for inevitable downturns in foundation funding, which provides some 60% of our resources.

In these circumstances, we are adopting cautious spending practices. We have eliminated certain magazine subscriptions, are reviewing service contracts for telecommunications and are generally traveling less. We are also endeavoring to improve revenues, reviewing prices charged our tenants downstairs, aggressively seeking cost recovery on grants, etc.

But few doubt that these will be tough times. Professionals estimate that it will be 2 to 10 years until foundations can become more liberal in giving. So please bear with us. And understand that our requests for funding from you, our members, are critical to us continuing to work on your behalf.

Conclusion

Again, we live in interesting times in an interesting state, Alaska. NAEC is here, as always, working to conserve those ecosystems and environments that make Alaska, well, special—to you as well as to countless millions worldwide. From us here in Fairbanks, all the best.

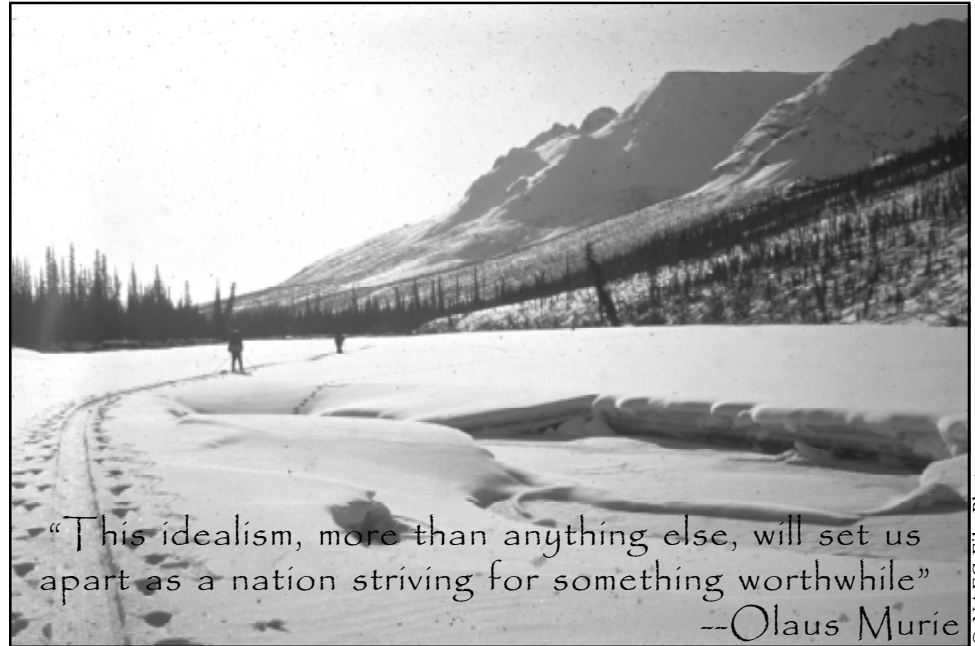
Keeping Gates Wild: an NAEAC Tradition

By Fran Mauer,
Northern Alaska Environmental Center Board Member

The Gates of the Arctic National Park is renowned as the nation's preeminent wilderness Park, a benchmark of naturalness and wildness. That it remains so did not come easily, nor without the effective advocacy of the NAEAC.

In the 1970s we participated in drafting the original Gates proposal and actively worked several years for its establishment. Soon after the Gates was established by the Alaska Lands Act of 1980 (ANILCA), we began our advocacy with the Park Service in a letter outlining some of the provisions necessary for what became our vision statement: **"the area's ecological integrity and intangible values should remain uncompromised."**

We told the Park Service, "The Gates must be a symbol of restraint, for administrators as well as visitors." We emphasized that "preservation of extraordinary values requires an unordinary management approach." We wanted to protect all the conditions essential to the



"This idealism, more than anything else, will set us apart as a nation striving for something worthwhile"
--Olaus Murie

© NAEAC File Photo

adventuring ground Bob Marshall experienced, a place where the wild has not been taken out of the wilderness. But just as important, we knew that for the majority of Americans who supported it, but would never come, the Gates stands as a symbol of our willingness to leave a special place alone, and pass it on as we

inherited it. Our vision had wide appeal and was formally endorsed by a majority of conservation organizations active in Alaska at the time.

When the Park Service began developing a General Management Plan, feature articles in the *Northern Line* stimulated many members to send letters urging the agency to adopt specific and stringent protective provisions. Among the points we emphasized: this park should remain free of facilities, ranger cabins, signs, and "recreational improvements;" group size should be limited; recreational snowmobiling and motorboating should be prohibited; where use must be limited, private users should have preference over commercial; and aircraft access should be supported, but limited. Other potential threats we addressed seemed small, but as we wrote: **"such intrusions may seem small and can be easily rationalized. However, the cumulative impact of incremental changes would betray the central symbolism of this whole area."** Our members' letters were critically important to the establishment of an administrative record of strong public support for an undiminished



© NAEAC File Photo

Wilderness areas provide valuable, undisturbed habitats for wildlife such as this red fox.

future for the Gates.

Now the Park Service is embarking on a new management planning effort which will update the original plan. And again, our members' commitment is needed to assure that the area's timeless qualities remain intact. Today we must also address threats posed by expanding tourism, the political influence of large-scale commercial operators, the opening of the Dalton Highway and related pressures for motorized access.

The Northern Alaska Environmental Center intends to continue its effective and highly regarded advocacy role in assuring appropriate stewardship of the Gates. We think it best that we focus on protecting the area's "Wilderness Character" – the concept that resonates throughout the Wilderness Act and provides the criteria for judging the appropriateness of agency actions, the types and levels of public use, and technologies used in the Park. Wilderness Character not only encompasses the natural and scenic condition of the land, natural numbers and interactions of wild-

life, and the integrity of ecological and evolutionary processes, but also includes intangible, spiritual, experiential, and symbolic values.

Members will soon receive an action alert describing issues and specific provisions of the 2003 backcountry management planning being done by the NPS, as well as a summary of the NAEC's 2003 position on Gates. We hope this alert will be of assistance in formulating comments for forwarding to the NPS and that members will uphold the traditions of NAEC as they do so.

Executive Director's note: the NAEC is currently formulating its position on the National Park Service's backcountry management planning program for Gates, particularly to include perspectives on issues that may have changed since the 1970s and 1980s. Fran's position, as articulated in the last two paragraphs above, is a possible, indeed probable, track. Members' inputs and suggestions are welcomed, preferably by 10 March, 2003. Please send any such comments to Deb Moore, Arctic Coordinator.



We would also like to take a moment to thank the following foundations, for their dedication and support of our work!

Thank you to the **Norcross Wildlife Foundation** for its grant that permitted us to buy a new, badly-needed photocopier.

Thank you to the **Alaska Conservation** and **True North Foundations** for rapid-response grants in support of our work on the Red Dog Port Expansion.

Thank you to the **True North Foundation** for funds to support the mining program.



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Thank you for your support. Please return to: NAEC, 830 College Road, Fairbanks AK 99701

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Conservation Abstracts

By Florence Collins, Member

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ALASKA HAS MORE than 70 sites listed in the worldwide Important Bird Areas program of the Audubon Society. It is organized to identify and protect essential bird habitat on the ground, and to protect birds and habitat by building alliances with land owners, government agencies and land trusts. There are now 1,500 areas in 46 states. Audubon, December 2002, pp. 50-56; Audubon Alaska News, Fall 2002, p. 4

OPENING THE ARCTIC REFUGE to oil exploration will be Sen. Stevens top priority when Congress reconvenes in January 2003. He says it will be a tough fight. FDNM, December 18, 2002, p A3

MANATEES IN FLORIDA had the most deaths by boat collision in one year since records began in 1974—there were 85 deaths in 2002. The population in January 2001 was 3276. Onearth, Winter 2003, p. 8

THE PROPOSED Juneau to Skagway highway will have its EIS re-opened, according to an order to the Dept. of Transportation from Gov. Murkowski (it was suspended 2 years ago by Gov. Knowles). Haines and Skagway oppose a road, and Juneau voters narrowly opposed it in October, 2000, in favor of better ferry service. FDNM, December 18, 2002, p. A3

MOST OF THE submerged federal land in the Tongass National Forest, the boundaries of which extend 60 miles seaward from the Alexander Archipelago, should belong to the state; the federal government kept title to some of the (as yet unidentified) submerged lands and some control over marine waters, and will probably retain Glacier Bay. FDNM, December 26, 2002, p. C1

SEVEN NATIONAL Monuments established by President Clinton under the Antiquities Act of 1906 have been upheld by the U. S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia and by lower courts, but challengers may ask the U. S. Supreme Court to review the decision. In Brief, Autumn 2002, p. 3-4

TRASH IN THE U. S. has increased from 3.2 pounds per person per day in 1970 to 4.5 pounds now, and 474.5 pounds of food is wasted per household per year. Between 1970 and 2000, office paper trash increased from 1940 thousand tons to 3,460 thousand tons, clothing and footwear trash from 1,560 to 5,560 thousand tons, and disposable diapers from 350 to 3,340 thousand tons; yard clippings and glass beverage bottles however, dropped from 23,200 to 12,960 thousand tons, and from 5,440 to 4,300 thousand tons, respectively. Onearth, Winter 2003, p. 10



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