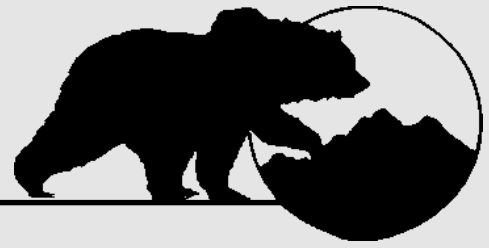


THE NORTHERN LINE



IN THIS ISSUE...

Alaska Mining Roundup	10
Auction Plans & Thanks	16 & 17
Calendar of Earth Friendly Events	16
Camp Habitat	14 & 15
Coal Bed Methane	3 & 9
Conservation Abstracts	20
Director's Message	2

Denali Backcountry Plan	11
Denali Southside Development Revived	6
From the Woodpile	18
Glass Recycling Comes to Fairbanks	7
Interior Forestry	12
Legislation to Watch	4
Then and Now: NAEC's 2nd Director	19
Western Arctic Under Attack	8



What Do We Stand For?

by Arthur Hussey, Executive Director

“What *does* NAEC stand for?” So asked the late Bev Reitz, former NAEC Board member, a few months ago. Honestly, I thought the answer was obvious. But perhaps she was correct and our mission is

not as focused as it should be. I’ve been asked the same question a few times since then.

Being clear about our organization is important. Therefore, I offer a collection that taken together describes today’s NAEC. I have culled it from a variety of NAEC publications, documents, and presentations. It is not “policy” per se. Rather, you might think of it as an anthology of 12 viewpoints of NAEC. Briefly...

- 1) ***We are Alaskans who value healthy and intact ecosystems, Wilderness, quiet rights, clean air and water, and multiple and varied land uses.*** Simply put, these values are why we exist, our *raison d’être*.
- 2) ***We believe that a healthy environment leads to a healthy economy.*** We recognize the inherent value of responsible, directed economic development and the benefits it brings. “Economic development” is NOT a “four letter word”!
- 3) ***We believe in development corridors.*** We support focusing development in concentrated areas, and otherwise leaving ecosystems intact.
- 4) ***We espouse stewardship, not management.*** We recommend that wildlife stewards resort to active intervention in wildlife management only in true emergencies.
- 5) ***We are uncompromising in principle, yet flexible in strategy.*** No single *modus operandi* serves all situations, so we adopt approaches that vary but are effective at the given time. These can include litigation, information dissemination, lobbying, and education. But whatever the strategy, our beliefs are granite-like and unshakeable.
- 6) ***We work within the rule of the law.*** We believe that all

branches of the government are equal. We do not support efforts to limit access of citizens to one or more elements of the government. Neither do we support or engage in illegal activities.

- 7) ***We seek diversity.*** Our membership includes various ethnic groups, nationalities, professions and political viewpoints. We value the different attitudes that these various groups contribute to our work. Some members do not live in Alaska, but they are Alaskans at heart.
- 8) ***We enjoy and appreciate the Alaska we work to conserve.*** We take pride in visiting and relaxing in Alaska’s treasured places. We do so in ways that leave them as we found them, preserved for future generations.
- 9) ***We value and respect Fairbanks.*** We are Alaskans and Fairbanks is our home. We like Fairbanks and seek to improve it, just as we value places further afield such as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.
- 10) ***We want to be at the table.*** Wherever possible, we contribute to local, state and federal debates on conservation, even if doing so means dialoguing with parties that do not share our views.
- 11) ***We believe in public involvement in natural resource use decisions.*** We understand and support the rights of all citizens to meaningfully participate in decisions relating to publicly-held natural resources.
- 12) ***Finally, we value our members’ expertise, energy, and enthusiasm.*** We know that members’ work augments that of the staff and Board and enables members to more fully participate in a cause they value than would be the case without NAEC.

These, in a nutshell, characterize the Northern Alaska Environmental Center. I find they describe an exciting, caring, appropriate, and effective organization. I trust you agree with me. If you don’t, I want to know.

All the best.

THE NORTHERN LINE

Environmental News of Arctic and Interior Alaska

The Northern Line is published quarterly by the Northern Alaska Environmental Center (NAEC), 830 College Rd., Fairbanks, Alaska 99701, <info@northern.org>, <http://www.northern.org>. Copyright © 2004 by NAEC. All rights reserved. Subscription rate is \$33 annually and includes membership. We encourage letters and articles to be submitted for publication. We reserve the right to edit all submissions. The Northern Alaska Environmental Center is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization.

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 1,127 members.

STAFF

Arthur Hussey, Executive Director
Mara Bacsujlaky, Assistant Director/Mining Coordinator
Sara Elzey, Bookkeeper
Nancy Fresco, Boreal Forest Campaign and Local Issues Coordinator
Kelly Hill Scanlon, Arctic Coordinator
Linda Paganelli, Denali Watch Coordinator
Juliana Dapice, Camp Habitat Director
Brodie Anderson, Legislative Relations Coordinator

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dan Adams (President) Sarah Campbell (Vice President), John Hagey (Treasurer), Bill Holman, Kerynn Fisher, Stan Justice (Secretary), Frank Keim, Marin Kuizenga, Fran Mauer, Jeff Merkel, Franz Mueter, Ritchie Musick, Ken Whitten, Phil Wildfang. This issue of *The Northern Line* was produced by Mary Zalar.

The cover photo by Dan King is the Chena River near Granite Tors. The back page photo by Ken Whitten is a Denali Park caribou.



Coal Bed Methane...

Regulating the Canary in the Coal Mine

by Kelly Hill Scanlon, Arctic Coordinator

If you have been following the activities of the State Legislature or are keyed in to Anchorage area politics, you'll know that coal bed methane is the current environmental buzzword. Although it may seem that all the activities surrounding coal bed methane occur to the south of Fairbanks, don't dismiss the issue as irrelevant to those of us in the Interior.

What is coal bed methane (CBM)? Methane itself is a gas that when burned for energy has cleaner burning emissions than oil or coal. That can be a plus because methane is used much in the same way as natural gas. However, concerns arise around the extraction of methane from coal seams (hence the term coal bed methane) due to possible impacts on water quality, wildlife and property owner rights.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, the in-place CBM resources in the Lower 48 are estimated to be more than 700 trillion cubic feet (Tcf), but less than 100 Tcf may be economically recoverable. Alaska is predicted to have 1,000 Tcf of CBM. Many of those potential resources are in Interior and Arctic Alaska.

A recent Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) study identified three areas of high CBM potential in Alaska:

- 1) the western North Slope Basin including the northern half of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska,
- 2) the Alaska Peninsula near the village of Chignik, and
- 3) the Yukon Flats Basin northeast of Fairbanks.

Other potential CBM areas include the Tanana Basin south of Fairbanks and the Holitna Basin in the Upper Kuskokwim river drainage (see accompanying article on page 9). DNR's Di-

vision of Oil and Gas is the state agency charged with issuing leases for CBM exploration and drilling. CBM falls into the shallow natural gas program because it is found within 3,000 feet of the surface.

Controversy surrounding Alaska's CBM exploration efforts arose in spring of 2003 when residents in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley became aware that public and private lands around Sutton were being leased by DNR to Evergreen Resources, Inc. What many of the residents did not understand was that although individuals own the surface rights to their property, the state of Alaska owns the subsurface and mineral rights and, under state law, must issue the lease if it would provide a "benefit to residents of the area." Area is not defined and

...don't dismiss the issue as irrelevant to those of us in the Interior.

the law does not state if the benefits must outweigh the costs. "Benefits" are almost exclusively determined to mean financial gains. Under existing law, one lease may encompass up to 5,760 acres (nine square miles). One lease may also contain multiple private properties.

Property owner rights were taken even further out of local control by 2003's House Bill 69 which stated that local land-use regulations couldn't be imposed on companies tapping coal beds for methane if DNR could demonstrate an "overriding state interest" in the gas development.

Because of the outcry over this backdoor process of leasing subsurface rights, in October 2003 DNR issued a moratorium on all shallow gas leases

in the State. They also held public meetings in January and February intended to produce recommendations for standards guiding decision-making related to CBM leases in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Meetings covered topics such as private property rights, surface impact and water management, and drinking water protection issues. Northern Alaska Environmental Center staff participated in many of these meetings.

While it seems as if DNR is making a genuine effort to rework the CBM leasing process, concerns from those of us in the Interior have arisen because these procedures only address leases in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. So, in reality, the rest of the state is still dealing with poor disclosure laws, a non-existent regulatory and enforcement regime for CBM exploration and development, and lack of local control. Once the moratorium is lifted, areas in the state that are less populated and carry less political clout must take on the state regulations all over again, likely with less effectiveness than Mat-Su residents.

The Northern Center is working to make sure communities don't become the proverbial canary in the coal mine. We are building relationships with organizers in the Mat-Su, getting up-to-speed on CBM issues, regulations (and regulators) and pending legislation. We're sharing that collective knowledge with individuals and communities that are beginning to face the same issues as those in the Mat-Su. As the realities of CBM exploration and development move beyond the Mat-Su, our goal is to make sure the State examines all aspects of this issue, and move forward only after taking into account a wide range of environmental concerns and addressing those concerns in state-wide regulations.

For more information on CBM in Alaska and the nation, look for the upcoming CBM section on the Northern Center's web site (www.northern.org).

State Legislation to Watch

by Brodie Anderson, Legislative Relations Coordinator

Alaskans can participate in the legislative process most effectively by a) voting; and b) expressing opinions and viewpoints to their elected representatives and senators. Doing so increases public involvement in civic affairs in a myriad of ways. As Legislative Relations Coordinator, I am available to facilitate and improve Northern Center staff's and members' access and contact with those elected officials in Juneau by providing current information on bills, legislators, and ways to make contact. (An article introducing Brodie appears on page 13.)

Numerous environmental topics being discussed in Juneau are summarized below. I encourage NAEC members to exercise their ability to influence the legislative process and will coordinate letter-writing campaigns, sending Public Opinion Messages (POMs), and other forms of interaction and provide talking points for testimony at the local Legislative Information Office (LIO). I am also looking for members interested in being on a direct contact list for legislative mobilization. This list serve will provide weekly notification of issues of concern to the Northern Center and invite members to take action during that week.

To sign up for the list serve or to contact me about any legislative issues, call (907) 452-5021 extension 23 or email at brodie@northern.org.

SB 27 Pesticide Registration and Tracking Bill (Sen. Johnny Ellis)

This bill requires companies that use pesticides in public areas—such as schools, parks, and municipal buildings—to provide notification when they will be spraying chemicals. The bill sets up a tracking system and requires companies to pay a fee to register for pesticide use.

NAEC was successful in bringing in a UAF Professor to testify to the harmful effects of DDT in the Noyes Slough and the current inability of the State to track the causes of pesticide present in the water. His testimony included support for SB 27 so this type of hazard would not go unmonitored in the future, preserving the health of the Interior waters. We were successful in organizing a POM campaign in favor of SB 27.

HB 395/HB 420 Coal Bed Methane (Reps. Richard Harris, Carl Gatto, Bill Stoltze, Paul Seaton, and Vic Kohring)

These bills attempt to address concerns over coal bed methane development, but do not go far enough to ensure adequate protections for landowners and water quality. Rep Kohring

intends to combine HB 420 and HB 395 prior to moving the bill from the House Oil and Gas committee.

On a statewide level major testimony has been heard in Committee meetings on these bills. A majority of the efforts of Defend Alaska Now has been directed towards these bills. Letters to Editors, phone calls, POMs, and constituent calls have been a major source of grassroots response.

SB 312 Shallow Gas Bills (Sen. Scott Ogan)

Senator Scott Ogan introduced legislation through the Senate Resources committee on special shallow gas leasing program. Under SB 312, future shallow natural gas and coal bed methane leases would be covered by the traditional area-wide competitive leasing program, which requires a best interest finding and more expansive public notice.

The current leasing process for shallow gas has been blamed for the poor public notice and distasteful nature of leasing on the Kenai Peninsula and in the Mat-Su Valley. SB 312 does little to ease concerns of residents

in the Mat-Su and Kenai areas with existing leases because there is a large loophole in the bill that exempts all existing leases and leases with applications pending from the provisions in the bill. Issues relating to water quality, property rights and local government oversight are absent in this legislation.

HB 364/SB 250 Kachemak Bay CBM Buyback

(Rep. Paul Seaton, Sen. Gary Stevens)

These identical bills direct the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources to buy back leases in Kachemak Bay and establish a moratorium on further leases. SB 250 has had one hearing in the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Committee.

SB 298 Dalton Highway Ban Removal Bill (Sen. Ralph Seekins)

This bill would lift the ban that restricts ATV use in the Dalton Highway Corridor. Lifting the ban could affect issues such as hunting through decreased bag limits, permits for all hunters in the region, and shorter seasons since the area is already close to the limit of sustainable yield. Other alternatives are recognizing certain trails already established through traditional use and approved roads such as Alyeska gravel pit roads, the Hickel Highway, and others.

HB 498 Sale or Trade of State Land (Rep. Paul Seaton)

When the state acquires private land for habitat protection or public recreation, this bill requires that an equal amount of state land must be sold in that region. The bill aims to ensure that a stable amount of private land is available for development.

HB 319 Remote Cabin and Lottery Sale Bill (Rep. Bud Fate)

HB 319 allows people to identify and then have priority on the purchase
continued on page 5

Introducing the New Board President

by Dan Adams, NAEC Board President

I am pleased to be serving as the recently elected Executive Board President of the Northern Alaska Environmental Center. It is a pleasure to work with the NAEC Board in this new capacity, as they are a great group of people who are sincerely dedicated to NAEC's mission and to serving the members and staff.

Board and staff recently conducted an intensive two-day training/work session on improving our governance practices, and setting short and long term goals for the organization. Currently we are working on a new strategic plan to guide us. NAEC's talented and industrious, but limited number of staff, face the daunting task and struggle of keeping up with the barrage of assaults on the environment. An outcome of this work session was realizing that the Northern Center has to reevaluate, focus and concentrate its efforts.

My background is in healthcare quality management, which has the basic tenet of continuously improving an organization. One of the principles underlying this management approach is to encourage people at all levels of the organization to contribute their ideas and to lend their support. Combined efforts will continue to improve the Northern Center's



Dan Adams, NAEC
Board President

effectiveness, and we'll have a vibrant organization of which we can be proud.

The Board recognizes and greatly values the contributions that our members make to the Northern Center by lending their financial support and encouraging like-minded friends to join NAEC. We thank everyone who supports and contributes to NAEC's efforts to preserve

Alaska's priceless natural beauty. If you have thoughts or suggestions on how we can improve capacity or effectiveness, we would like to hear from you.

Thank you all very much for your continued support of NAEC's work.

State Legislation

continued from page 4

of remote parcels of state land. Questions about the cost of the program, duplication of the existing remote land sale program, and the systematic unfairness of giving individuals preference on state land sales are concerns.

Other Bills of interest from Interior Delegates

SB 318, sponsored by Sen. Ralph Seekins, calls for a policy change in the Department of Fish and Game stating that "consumptive use of wild fish and game resources by individual Alaska residents is a very important and fundamental individual right when considering the management and allocation of those resources." The bill directly challenges the rights of non-consumptive users of Alaska's fish and wildlife resources.

Also introduced by Senator Seekins, SB 297 initiates a mechanism for brown and black bear control in areas identified by the Board of Game as "intensive management" areas. The state could allow "same day airborne" hunting, use of motorized vehicles, bait stations, killing of sows with year-old cubs, the killing of year-old cubs and mandate a year-round "open season" on bears in selected areas.

HB 344, introduced by Rep. Hugh Fate, reduces fees and royalties on mining operations during the first three years of production.

Harriman Expedition Bookset Available

by Mary Zalar

For those interested in first edition Alaskana books, the Northern Alaska Environmental Center is pleased to offer the two-volume set **Alaska: Harriman Alaska Expedition; Volume I: Narrative, Glaciers, Natives and Volume 2: History, Geography, Resources** by John Burroughs, John Muir, and George Bird Grinnell. Longtime member and conservationist Ginny Wood donated the books to the Northern Center, and each book has a handwritten inscription to Ginny in the front.

The text consists of Burroughs' anecdotal official narrative, Muir's essay "The Pacific Coast Glaciers," and lengthy reports by other expedition personnel. They are prolifically illustrated throughout with 85 superb photogravure plates, of which 45 are by Edward S. Curtis. There are 39 chromolithographs of landscape and natural history subjects, five maps and 240 illustrations in text. Published in 1901 by Doubleday, Page and Co., New York, the books have green cloth bindings with a gilt-stamped arctic vignette on the front.

The Northern Center will consider a minimum donation of \$1,500 for the two-book set. If the Northern Center receives multiple requests for these books, we will hold a sealed-bid auction amongst interested bidders. For more information or to express interest, contact NAEC at (907) 452-5021 or email info@northern.org.

South Side Development Plan Revived

by Linda A. Paganelli, Denali Watch Coordinator

A new push for developing the South Side of Denali has emerged. This latest effort, the South Denali Implementation Plan, is a continuation of the collaborative effort between the National Park Service (NPS), the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, and the State of Alaska based on the 1997 South Side Development Concept Plan (DCP). The stated intent for development is to enhance recreational and access opportunities throughout the region for the benefit of Alaskans, independent travelers, and package tour groups.

Background

In 1997, the National Park Service completed work on the Development Concept Plan. A Record of Decision was made that same year and promoted development in the Tokasitna Area of Denali State Park. The site is located about 40 miles west of the Parks Highway off the Petersville Road. A public outcry resulted with 90% of respondents—miners, hunters, snowmobilers, conservationists, and others—opposing development of the Tokasitna site. As a result of this controversial determination, then-Governor Knowles appointed a South Side Consultation Committee to review the South Side DCP and make recommendations. In 1999, the Committee's final report recommended moving the development site from the Tokasitna area to the Peters Hills; the minority view was to not develop along the Petersville Road at all and called for development to occur along the Parks Highway Corridor. Until now, no significant actions have advanced the south side development.

Renewed Attention—South Denali Implementation Plan

The 1997 Record of Decision for the South Side DCP along with the 1999 final report of the Consultation Committee provide the basis from which the

collaborative team is reviving the effort to develop South Denali. The intent of the South Denali Implementation Plan is to fulfill the goals and objectives of the Development Concept Plan. The Implementation Plan will put forth a number of options for the public to review. Options being considered include:

- No action—no new construction;
- Construct facilities in the Peters Hills, south end of Denali State Park;
- Construct facilities at Tokasitna site (very unpopular option);
- Construct facilities within the study area based on public comments received during this scoping process.

Note that, at this time, development of facilities along the Parks Highway Corridor is not listed as a consideration, but could be recommended by the public as a viable alternative to developing out the Petersville Road.

Benefits of Developing Along the Corridor

Although the DCP promotes the goals of providing access to tundra and arrival at a place set apart, development out the Petersville Road may actually be a disservice to the local communities that will be negatively impacted by such development. Alaskans who wish to travel out the Petersville Road will do so regardless of new facility development. Both Alaskans and tourists could be well served by a visitor facility along the highway. Consider the following:

- Building along the highway corridor, rather than in the backcountry of Denali State Park, would result in considerably less ecological impacts.
- Building a visitor center in the Parks Highway corridor would cost less; be more convenient for the great majority of visitors and result in a similar, if not greater, level of visitation; still provide spectacular views of Denali

and the Alaska Range; have far fewer adverse impacts on both natural resources and existing uses in the area; and be much less controversial.

- Improving the Petersville Road could increase its use as an access point for unregulated forays into the backcountry by off-road recreational vehicles, which would add significantly to the damage that has already occurred from such use.
- Spin-off development would be expected to occur on private, university, borough, and/or state lands along the improved Petersville Road. The fear is that a second "Glitter Gulch" strip development might result to accommodate the tourism industry.

Serious consideration should be given to the Parks Highway Corridor development site, which would fulfill the primary goals of providing, enhanced recreational and access opportunities for the visiting public while at the same time preserving the rural quality of our Alaskan communities.

Resources

To further delve into the issue of South Side development, explore the following websites:

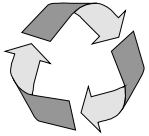
- <http://www.nps.gov/dena/home/planning/plans/southsd/index.html>
 - <http://www.southdenaliplanning.com>
- You may also contact Miriam Valentine (NPS), Susan Dickinson (Mat-Su Borough), or Pete Panarese (AK DNR).

Comments Due April 15

The public scoping comments on the Implementation Plan are due by April 15, 2004. Send your comments to:

Denali National Park and Preserve
South Denali Planning
PO Box 588
Talkeetna, AK 99676

Or e-mail to: dena_south_denali_public_comments@nps.gov



Reduce Reuse Recycle

Please remember to follow the “three R’s”—but keep in mind that in most cases, using fewer resources in the first place is much more effective than recycling what has already been wastefully consumed.

Glass Recycling Comes to Fairbanks

by Nancy Fresco, Local Issues Coordinator

Newcomers to Fairbanks are often taken aback by what appears to be a rather cavalier local attitude about trash. Not only are our roadsides and vacant lots littered, but our recycling options are rudimentary in comparison to those available in most of the rest of the US—not to mention other nations. Granted, recycling is not as dramatic an environmental imperative as the conservation of millions of acres of wild forests and tundra, but for many Americans it symbolizes a personal commitment to conservation. Every bottle, can or jar placed in a recycling bin is a reminder that our resources are not infinite. Recycling makes conservation tangible by bringing it into our kitchens.

While there is still a great deal of room for improvement in Fairbanks’ recycling programs, as well as in local attitudes about conservation, in February we took a small step forward by helping to initiate something new—glass recycling.

Thanks to the generous assistance of Lynden Transport—a local trucking company—and the commitment of the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), the Northern Alaska Environmental Center is proud to announce that residents can now drop off glass in specially marked collection bins in the Taku parking lot at UAF (off Ballaine Road). The glass will be back-hauled to Anchorage on Lynden Transport trucks that would otherwise have returned south empty after making deliveries in Fairbanks. In Anchorage, the glass will be ground up by Polar Supply Company for use as road fill



Glass recycling collection site.

Photo © Mary Zalar

and for sandblasting. Polar Supply Co. also uses Anchorage glass, but needs a larger supply. The program accepts all colors of bottles and will also accept window glass, although all framing must be removed. Unfortunately, auto glass and safety glass cannot be accepted. Rinsing jars and bottles is recommended, and caps and lids must be removed from containers, but labels can remain on.

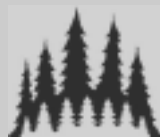
In order to pull this program together, we have been working with the Associated Students of UAF, Lynden Transport, Polar Supply Company, other local businesses, Interior Alaska Green Star, and friends of Karoline Frey, an environmentally-minded UAF PhD student who died in a tragic accident in 2002. This is truly a community-wide collaborative effort.

So far, the program has been popular and has run relatively smoothly, although during the first week of glass collection the bins filled almost more quickly than we could handle. It seems that some Fairbanksans never could bring themselves to throw their glass away. It sat in bags and boxes under their cabins. Sheepish but pleased, glass-hoarders showed up at the official program launch and offered their thanks as well as their bottles. Of course, they had questions, too. For example, when can we get more convenient drop-off points for paper? How about curbside collection, and glass collection from bars and restaurants? What can we do with all our plastics?

Some recycling questions are answered on our web page at www.northern.org. As for the unanswered questions—we’re grateful for everyone’s energy and initiative thus far, and the efforts continue...

Boreal Shorts

by Nancy Fresco



Get Your Reused Trees Here

Some people look at a forest and imagine it cut, pulped, chemically bleached, and stacked in 8-1/2 by 11 sheets in a photocopier. We’d rather see, well, a forest. Since we do use paper in our office, we decided to close the loop on recycling by purchasing 100% post-consumer recycled paper made without chlorine bleach. We purchased a whole pallet-load.

What we aren’t using ourselves we’re selling at cost to our friends and neighbors. One ream (500 sheets) is \$5; one carton (5000 sheets) is \$43. So if you’re in the Fairbanks area and need 500 sheets of paper—or 5000—stop by our office. The trees will thank you.

Western Arctic Under Attack

by Northern Center staff

Disregarding more than 95,000 public comments calling for common sense and balance between oil and gas development and environmental protection, the Bush administration announced in January that it would put up for leasing the entire nearly 9 million-acre northwest planning area of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. This 23.5-million-acre area, also known as America's Western Arctic—the largest remaining block of unprotected land in the nation—is home to myriad wildlife and waterfowl.

The final environmental impact statement (FEIS) also weakens current environmental safeguards, by allowing the Bureau of Land Management to modify or waive all of them on a case-by-case basis for "economic" reasons. In addition, it changes existing prescriptive lease stipulations to vague "guidelines" set by the industry itself. These decisions were made in the absence of a monitoring program and were made without scientific basis.

BLM will initially delay offering leases in some areas near Peard Bay and Kasegaluk Lagoon, but these deferrals offer no real or permanent protection for these important wildlife and subsistence resources. The decision apparently recognizes the sensitivity of these vital resources, yet still makes these areas available immediately for seismic work, as well as future oil and gas development.

In response to this short-sighted approach to managing these important resources, the Northern Alaska Environmental Center, along with the Alaska Wilderness League, the Center for Biological Diversity, the National Audubon Society, Natural Resources Defense Council, the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society, filed a lawsuit challenging the FEIS. The lawsuit alleges that the agency failed to consider all reasonable alternatives to the lease-it-

all course adopted by Interior Department Secretary Gale Norton. Thus the decision is in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act, and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) among other laws. The NPRA contains extremely important breeding, molting and migrating habitat for birds, including Steller's and spectacled eiders, which are listed as threatened under the ESA, and the rare yellow-billed loon.

The Northern Center believes that there is no demonstrated need to lease for oil and gas in the northwest planning area. The National Petroleum Reserve was set aside for use in a time when our petroleum resources are running out. However recently, the owners' of the Trans Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) projected at least 30 more years of oil production off the North Slope, without invading the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and discounting new discoveries in the Reserve and adjacent state lands. This is plenty of oil to use as a transition resource while we develop alternatives that will reduce our dependence on fossil fuels—thereby increasing both our energy and national security and improving the health of the planet.

In addition, since 1999 the Northern Center, along with six other conservation organizations, has been actively involved in a lawsuit challenging the decision to authorize leasing in the

Reserve. We assert that the Secretary (Bruce Babbitt) had no authority to lease pending further authorization from Congress and that he failed to meet the National Environmental Policy Act's requirements for a full assessment of site-specific and cumulative environmental impacts. This challenge is pending in the D.C. District Court.

These litigation efforts are important because the Administration is on the fast track to opening the entire Western Arctic at any cost. BLM is simultaneously evaluating oil leasing activities in NPRA's Northwest Planning Area, revising the Record of Decision for NPRA's Northeast Planning Area, and drafting an EIS for the Alpine Satellite Development Plan Area (which includes state and federal land off the Northeast NPRA). These actions are being handled independently with apparent disregard of the cumulative impacts actions will have on the millions of acres under consideration. The Northern Center believes all natural resources in the NPRA need to be evaluated and valued for their long-term contributions to the health of the Arctic and the communities dependent upon it.

If you are interested in learning more about the NPRA or receiving periodic updates regarding activities in the arctic, please contact the Northern Center's Arctic Coordinator, Kelly Hill Scanlon (kelly@northern.org).

Update Your Contact Information

In an effort to reduce our consumption of paper, the Northern Alaska Environmental Center is asking members to help us update personal contact information. Please send an email to info@northern.org with your current mailing and email address. NAEC also offers five email alert lists—Arctic Action, Boreal Briefs, Camp Habitat, Denali Watch, and Mining Memos. If you would like to join any of these email alert lists, let us know in your email or sign up at our website, www.northern.org, using the "contact us" link. Thank you for your help in making the Northern Center the best organization it can be.

Coal Bed Methane in Rural Alaska

by Mara Bacsujlaky, Mining Coordinator

Although coal bed methane (CBM) leasing in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley has received widespread public attention, there are other places in Alaska that are facing similar challenges. Among these are the upper Kuskokwim villages of Sleetmute, Crooked Creek, Red Devil and Lime Village.

Late in May of 2003, unbeknownst to local residents, Holitna Energy Corp. (HEC) filed applications for four shallow gas leases in the Holitna Basin. Bounded by the Holitna, Hoholitna and Kuskokwim Rivers, the proposed lease area is within some of the most productive and important wildlife habitat in Alaska—with abundant moose, black and brown bears and furbearers. The Mulchatna caribou herd uses the area for winter range, and the Holitna and Hoholitna are important for all five species of Pacific salmon, Arctic grayling, northern pike, sheefish and whitefish. Local people rely on the Holitna region for subsistence hunting and fishing, and it also supports several successful local guiding outfits that cater to sport hunters and fishers, birders, and outdoors enthusiasts.

HEC is a private company formed specifically to explore for CBM in the Holitna and determine if there are sufficient quantities to fuel the massive power plant (80 megawatt capability) required by the proposed Donlin Creek mine. However, whether or not there is recoverable CBM or even any CBM at all is anyone's guess. Reconnaissance geologic surveys indicate there could be thick coal beds in the Holitna, but no core holes have yet been drilled.

Still, residents of the Holitna, including members of the Sleetmute Traditional Council, aren't waiting until the rigs roll out to protest the idea of a gas field in the heart of the country they depend on for moose, caribou, fish, berries and plants. This riverine environment is lush and watery. It's a maze of wetlands, fens, creeks, lakes and ponds that could easily be damaged or polluted by CBM exploration activities. Animals such as martin are intolerant of noise and will likely be scared off by the noise and disturbance from drilling and temporary road construction. People are concerned that access to their traditional hunting, fishing and berry-picking places may be blocked. Even

if adequate precautions were taken to prevent adverse impacts to wildlife and fish, local people are firm that they don't want an industrial complex in the Holitna. In their opinion, CBM exploration and development will destroy their way of life.

Even the promise of cheaper electricity isn't enough to sweeten the pot. HEC has pitched their CBM plans as a viable alternative for cheaper energy to the villages. But residents are skeptical. Peter Mellick, president of the Sleetmute Traditional Council, remarked that the upper Kuskokwim electrical cooperative provides local jobs *now*, and people are willing to pay the slightly higher cost rather than risk ecological damage to the Holitna. Furthermore, if a CBM field was developed for the mine and there was power left over for the villages (a big unknown), these villages would get power only during mine operation. Once the mine closed, such a large power plant would probably not continue operating solely to provide electricity to a handful of villages. Thus, not only would the villages lose their cheaper power, but they would then have to reactivate and refurbish the electrical generation plants left idle in the intervening years.

The bottom line is that the people in Holitna don't see any benefits from CBM accruing to them—only to Holitna Energy Corp. Presently the shallow gas leases applications are frozen under the statewide moratorium, but HEC wants to start exploration sometime this summer. Residents are working with Friends of Mat-Su and other Alaska organizations to learn about CBM and mobilize people up and down the Kuskokwim River to oppose approval of the Holitna gas leases. For more information, or how you can help, contact Mara Bacsujlaky at mara@northern.org.



Holitna River

Alaska Mining Roundup

by Mara Bacsujlaky, Mining Coordinator

Pogo Gold Mine, Delta AK

State permits for the new underground gold mine 85 miles east of Fairbanks were issued late in December 2003, and in early January, the U.S. Corps of Engineers issued the necessary wetlands permits. Pogo developers, Teck Cominco and Sumitomo Metal Mining, are still awaiting the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency permits, which are expected to be issued by early March. Limited work on mine and road construction has begun—primarily with the construction of an ice road to position equipment for the upcoming construction season.

Ryan Lode Gold Mine, Fairbanks AK

Alaska's first gold heap leach operation also became the first to be signed off on by the State as officially closed and reclaimed. Land reclamation included recontouring and revegetating exploration pads, solution ponds, access roads and the heap leach pads. Historic drill holes were plugged and contaminated soil transported offsite for disposal. Kinross Gold Corporation, the operator of the site, will continue to monitor water quality at the mine for the next 35 years.

However, although the State consid-

ers the mine closed and reclaimed, the potential for a new phase of mining remains. Kinross continues to consider the Ryan as a potential source of gold ore feed that would be trucked to the Fort Knox mine, 35 miles to the northeast. The company drilled 68 holes in 2003 and continues to refine its reserve estimates for the property.

Fort Knox/True North Gold Mines, Fairbanks AK

In early March, mining stopped at the True North satellite open pit. Kinross Gold Corporation, operator of both mines, suspended operations at True North to utilize mining equipment for tailing impoundment embankment construction at Fort Knox. The suspension is expected to last three to seven months—although the length of suspension may be adjusted after the company reviews ore grade drilling results and operational needs at Fort Knox. Even before suspension, the True North satellite was nearing the end of its expected mine life—with just another six months of mining remaining.



Upper Tangle Lakes

NAEC file photo

Kinross Gold Corporation continues to add to its stable of early-stage exploration properties in the Fairbanks District. New properties that are being explored by the company as potential sources of gold ore feed for the Fort Knox mine include Treasure Creek and Vault Creek, 18 miles northwest of Fort Knox; Alder Creek, 16 miles north of the mine; and Last Chance Creek and Dark Hollow adjacent to Fort Knox.

The company has declined to give a revised estimate of the Fort Knox mine life, but at the present rate of production (including True North) and the identified Fort Knox reserve, there is a little less than seven years left of production.

Tangle Lakes Platinum/Nickel, Tangle Lakes, AK

Now renamed the Dunite Hill and Fish Lake prospects by Nevada Star Resources, the Tangle Lakes claim block is receiving serious consideration from Anglo American, a subsidiary of Anglo Gold. Anglo American signed a letter of intent with Nevada Star to commit, upon completing due diligence, to a \$12 million exploration expenditure over five years to earn a 51% interest in the property. Anglo is interested in the nickel, copper and platinum potential of the Tangle Lakes area. They are focusing on mining claims staked in the Amphitheatre Mountains near Landmark Gap and around 14-mile and Fish



Ryan Lode Mine, Fairbanks, Alaska

© Douglas Yates

continued on page 11

Denali Backcountry Management Plan In Flux

by Linda A. Paganelli, Denali Watch Coordinator

As reported in the last issue of *The Northern Line* (Winter 2003), the comment period for the Draft Backcountry Management Plan (BCMP) for Denali National Park and Preserve ended last spring. Since that time, the National Park Service (NPS) has been reviewing and analyzing the record number of 9,730 responses from individuals, interest groups, agencies and the State of Alaska to move the planning process forward.

The original intent of the NPS was to progress from a draft into a final plan, but in order to address and be responsive to the many and varied issues and concerns raised in comment letters, the NPS planning team has determined that a significant modification to the alternatives presented in the draft is required. As a result, the NPS has opted to incorporate an interim-planning phase and will produce a revised draft, which will allow for additional public comment, before moving into the final plan.

NPS to Amend the BCMP

According to members on the planning team, the revised draft will address



A view of Denali Park backcountry from Cathedral Mountain.

© Ken Whitten

the same topics as the original, but with an emphasis more on goal setting than on specific implementation actions. A major effort is being made to ascribe specific standards for “desired future conditions” for resources and experiences for each management zone with quantitative indicators and standards to measure success or failure of meeting those conditions. As the team determined that none of the four alternatives in the original draft were particularly responsive to the needs of the public or the State of Alaska, the NPS is formu-

lating four new alternatives. The new alternatives will offer a similar spectrum, from greater protection of resources to providing for a wider range of recreational activities, but will be clearer in articulating how management areas have been defined.

“Traditional Activities”

On the subject of defining the ANILCA term “traditional activities,” which would help to clarify and distinguish between activities that are permitted and those that are illegal, the NPS has left the door open to the possibility of proposing a definition in one or more alternatives in the Revised Draft. If an alternative is selected that requires defining “traditional activities” for the park additions and preserve, the NPS would do so through a subsequent rulemaking separate from the BCMP. Such a rulemaking would involve an interpretation of the Congressional intent of ANILCA and further public scoping.

Timeline

Tentatively, the team is shooting to have the Internal Review (NPS, Department of Interior, etc.) sometime early this summer. If the revised plan is approved, then a second public comment period should occur later in the summer of 2004. NPS does not expect a Record of Decision on the plan until sometime after Jan 2005.

Alaska Mining Roundup

continued from page 10

Lakes. Anglo Gold is the world’s second largest gold producer; it has a 50% interest in a gold exploration property near the Pogo mine in the Goodpaster District.

Pebble Copper/Gold deposit, Lake Iliamna, AK

Teck Cominco’s Pebble deposit has roared back to life as a result of the rise in commodity prices and a favorable political climate. Northern Dynasty Minerals, through an agreement with Teck, is conducting advanced exploration. Current resource estimates by Northern Dynasty stand at 26.5 millions ounces of gold and 16.5 billion pounds of copper. Present plans are to spend \$15 million this season on a substantial infill drilling program to move the resource to measured and indicated. Baseline environmental work will also be started, to build upon that done by Teck Cominco over 10 years ago. Northern Dynasty estimates that this open pit mine, if developed, will employ 1,000 workers and have a mine life of 40 to 50 years. See the Southwest Transportation Plan for the proposed transportation corridor from Bristol Bay to Cook Inlet that would facilitate transport of the copper and gold ore (www.dot.state.ak.us).

Interior Forestry—A Hard Sell?

by Nancy Fresco, Boreal Forest Coordinator

At the direction of Governor Frank Murkowski, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry has put together a brief booklet advertising the availability of timber in the interior of the state. The glossy pamphlet outlines how much timber (in harvestable board-feet per year and standing volume) is available in each region and sub-region of the Interior. The Governor's message welcomes companies to the area by stating that "Alaska is rich in natural resources, rich in human resources, and rich in development potential." What will such a campaign—and such a message—mean for the future of our forests and their ecological integrity?

In the short term, the effects of this advertising campaign may be negligible. The annual volume available is unlikely to attract a pulp mill or other very large-scale business. Timber markets are depressed, and the Division of Forestry finds that many of the timber sales they offer, particularly sales of birch, go unsold. Companies are unlikely to rush in.

In the long term, enticing the logging industry to Alaska may increase environmental threats to our forests; however, even if timber prices increase, our relatively low yields, our distance from markets, and our existing forest regulations and management plans may help protect us from large-scale clear-cutting. Instead, local conditions may favor less destructive and more economically sound small-scale high-value-added enterprises such as wood-carving, furniture-making, and production of dimensional lumber and house logs for local use.

While large, our boreal forest is neither as vast as Canada's nor as vulnerable to enormous lease contracts. The

state of Alaska manages 2.94 million acres of commercial forestlands, including the 1.77 million-acre Tanana Valley State Forest (TVSF). Seventy-eight thousand acres of Interior forest are owned by the University of Alaska, the Fairbanks North Star Borough, and the Mental Health Land Trust. Other private interests hold much smaller shares. All of these lands, public and private, are subject to the Alaska Forest Practices Act and associated regulations that dictate how logging operations may take place. In addition, the TVSF is governed by its own management plan, which was updated in recent years with the input of many local stakeholders. Annual harvests cannot exceed sustained yield, as estimated based on forest inventories.

Thus, some safeguards are in place, but the situation is not ideal. The problem with sustained yield estimates is that they assume that all harvestable trees will be cut every 70-120 years. Theoretically, at least, no older trees would remain in the forest, and all other uses would have to be fit in between harvest cycles. In practice, harvest has never approached these levels. Nonetheless, last year's legislative reworking of the primary purpose of the Tanana Valley State Forest (from multiple-use to timber) was a step in the wrong direction. In addition, our state government still considers logging roads as an asset, not a liability. Roads fragment wildlife habitat, can cause erosion and water contamination, and allow negative human impacts to spread across previously unroaded areas.

The drawbacks of logging notwithstanding, some types of small enterprise could provide a balance that reemphasizes multiple use rather than the new "timber first" imperative. Small-scale businesses are preferable to large-scale not only because they demand lower harvests, but also because they are likely to provide more lucrative local jobs, bring more money into the local economy, and provide enduring products for Alaska consumers. Buying local products also wastes less energy in transportation. A tree sold as pulpwood may fetch only pennies, but trees turned to house-logs can create a home, and a single hand-carved bowl made from Alaska birch may sell for over \$100.

Thus, consumers would do well to support local enterprises rather than buying wood products from chain stores, particularly if the origin of the wood is unknown and unmarked. But regardless of how Interior Alaska timber is touted by the state, economic and ecological realities have not changed. Even if timber prices skyrocket, the value of our forests as functioning ecological systems and traditional hunting and foraging grounds will still far exceed their value as timber.



The Tanana Valley State Forest provides recreational as well as timber opportunities.

© Mary Zalar

NAEC's Legislative Coordinator

by NAEC staff

Brodie Anderson, the new Legislative Relations Coordinator, has lived in Fairbanks for the past eight years. He came to Fairbanks in 1996 as an infantryman in the Army at Fort Wainwright. While in the Army he developed a love for Alaska and its many opportunities and decided to make Fairbanks his home.

After the military, Brodie attended the University of Alaska Fairbanks, pursuing a degree in Political Science. While attending UAF Brodie was involved in the student government holding a variety of positions. As the Ombudsman and Vice President of ASUAF, he represented students' needs and got his first real taste of active political work. While in ASUAF he participated in efforts for university funding, a strong recycling program for the campus community, and a more efficient representation of the students. He was also a part of Sigma Phi Epsilon, holding many of the leadership positions in the fraternity and encouraging community service. He helped Sigma Phi Epsilon become one of the top ten nationally recognized fraternities donating over 2,500 hours to community service projects with only 20 men. Brodie will be a UAF graduate this May with his degree in Political Science and a minor in Law and Society.

Considering himself a "political junkie," Brodie enjoys a variety of topics including international law, environmen-

tal politics, and voter participation. He has an incredible interest in the connection that Alaska has with the federal government in relation to Arctic concerns and the importance Alaska could make on policy setting in the future. Outside of politics, Brodie enjoys softball, frequent hiking and camping trips, and community projects.

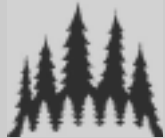


Brodie Anderson is NAEC's Legislative Relations Coordinator

Brodie looks forward to working with all the members of the Northern Alaska Environmental Center to make an impact on this Legislative Session. Contact him at 452-5021 extension 23 or by email at Brodie@northern.org.

Boreal Shorts

by Nancy Fresco



Canada Takes the Lead

An agreement by a coalition of Native tribes, environmentalists, and businesses would make more than half of Canada's northern forest—about one million square miles (650 million acres) in all—exempt from logging and other industrial development. The resolution would also impose strict regulations on development such as logging and oil drilling in the remaining half of the forest. If this agreement is upheld and approved by the Canadian government, it may prove to be one of the most far-reaching conservation initiatives in history.

Some timber giants, including Weyerhaeuser Corp., are not part of the coalition, but others, such as Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc, have been key players. "I'm scared," said Bill Hunter, president of Alberta-Pacific. "But if this works, man oh man, what a model it will be for the world." (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer* Dec. 1 2003).

The Stampede Summit

What does the future hold?

Sponsored by Denali Citizens Council, The Stampede Summit will be held in Healy April 2–3 to discuss Wolf Townships, a land bordered on three sides by Denali National Park. To date, no consensus of a vision has been formulated for what the best use is for this area. The National Park Service, via the legislative history of ANILCA, was directed to pursue land trades to incorporate the ecologically important area into the Park System. This has not occurred. Meanwhile, the location has attracted attention as a likely place to expand the Park's tourism industry with visions of developing a road or a railroad as well as attractions such as hotels, gift shops, visitor centers, and campgrounds. Moreover, an array of user groups including hunters, snowmobilers, dog-mushers, hikers, skiers, and others have become well-established and will not be particularly well-served by either the Park or development plans.

Denali Citizens Council sees a real need to begin a dialogue that attempts to sort out the three-way conflict between the park vision, the development vision, and the existing users. The Stampede Summit seeks to initiate a thoughtful new discussion about the future of the Wolf Townships.

For more information or to pre-register, visit the website, www.denalicitizens.org.

Children, Our Greatest Natural Resource!

by Susan Grace, NAEC member & Camp Habitat Founder

How many of us remember those special places where we played for hours as children—where our imagination ran wild and free and we played with sticks, rocks and mud creating grand adventures? Whether it was a field, a creek or forest, many of those places are now gone and have long since been turned into housing subdivisions, shopping malls, or convenience stores.

The children who have the opportunity to camp and hike with their families, play outside everyday in their own special place, or attend Camp Habitat are creating special memories. They will carry a special relationship with those memories and places for years to come. Hopefully Creamer's Field and the Chena Recreation Area, which Camp Habitat uses for campouts, will remain undeveloped and in their natural state for many years to come.

Camp Habitat is the only hands-on, environmental education program in Fairbanks offered for children of all ages from preschool through high school, open to the entire community

(scholarships are available). Children can participate in programs year after year and learn new things. Beginning with the preschool half-day program (4-5 year olds), children can move up to the full day camp programs—Refuge Adventurers (6-7 year olds), Water Striders (8-9 year olds), and Nature Detectives (6-7, 8-9 and 10-11 year olds). As teens, 11-16 year olds, they continue into the Introduction to Backpacking and Backpacking Programs and then possibly returning to work as Junior Counselors.

In operation for 14 years now, Camp Habitat illustrates how vision and cooperation can create a successful program. The Northern Alaska Environmental Center, Friends of Creamer's Field, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game have continued working together to produce this valuable program at Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge.

Camp Habitat's Preschool and Day Camp Program provide children with a wonderful foundation to connect with

nature. Encouraging curiosity and imagination, children learn how all living things are connected and interwoven. Each day has a theme and all activities are centered on that theme through exploration, games, and fun.

The Backpacking Trips are a great opportunity for young adults to learn about themselves and the world around them. Young people are taught simple living skills for a complex world where so often the message is "bigger and more is better; buy whatever you want not what you need." The Backpackers learn firsthand what their basic needs are and how nature is relevant in their everyday life. Facing the physical challenges of the trip provides a great sense of accomplishment and self worth. Young people learn healthy eating and drinking habits, self reliance, cooperation and leadership, and find meaning in a society which often appears to be devoid of feelings and a sense of connection.

One-third of today's children are suffering from obesity and related ailments such as diabetes and heart disease. Our children need time to be outside all day, being physical through hiking and playing, breathing fresh air, getting dirty, and connecting with their special places and with their own imagination and self.

The children of today carry our hope for the future. The hope that we will have open- and community-minded citizens and leaders who feel a connection to all living things and care about our world. Young people who have time to connect with themselves and their imagination will grow to be adults who can do that, and they will be the creative energy behind change in our society. Feed children's curiosity and imagination in anyway that you can. Children truly are our greatest natural resource!



Campers enjoy a sunny day at Creamer's Field.

NAEC file photo

Meet Juliana Dapice, Camp Habitat Director

by Robbie Dapice

Juliana Popper Dapice, the new director of Camp Habitat came to Fairbanks last October with her husband Robbie Dapice who is a Second Lieutenant attached to the new Stryker brigade at Fort Wainwright. Juliana is a 1998 graduate of Middlebury College in Vermont where she majored in psychology and religion. At Middlebury she served as coordinator of Middlebury Outdoor Orientation (MOO), the outdoor orientation program for incoming freshmen and worked as assistant to the College's Environmental Coordinator. She also studied Appalachian Culture as an exchange student at Berea College in Kentucky.

Most recently Juliana worked for the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) in Boston as their Volunteer Programs Coordinator. As the largest recreation and conservation organization in the northeast, the AMC has over 100,000 members and 10,000 volunteers. At the AMC, Juliana helped to train volunteers and coordinate several yearly volunteer gatherings. She also served as director

of their Mountain Leadership School that takes place in the White Mountains of New Hampshire each summer.

In Boston, Juliana was a committed bicycle commuter (Fairbanks weather has posed a challenge to her usual commuting habits thus far!) and worked part time for Belmont Wheelworks, a local bicycle shop. There she created and organized an annual event called WheelWomen that invited women to the store for an evening of clinics, food, and talks by accomplished female cyclists. She planned and promoted WheelWomen for two years, giving hundreds of Boston area women a friendly introduction to cycling.

In the summer of 2001 Juliana acted as a group facilitator and rider on Bike-Aid, a 3,600 mile bicycle ride from San Francisco to Washington, D.C. Along the way she and her fellow riders met with community groups to exchange ideas about sustainable development and alternative transportation and to assist in community service projects.

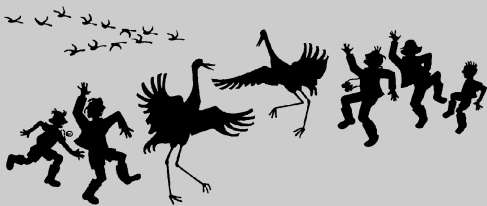
Before working with the Appala-



Juliana Dapice, Director of NAEC's Camp Habitat program

chian Mountain Club, Juliana worked at CASCAP in Cambridge, MA as a Program Supervisor for their Independent Living Program, which aided adults with chronic mental illness to live independently in the community.

Juliana loves what she knows of the Fairbanks community so far and is looking forward to seeing Camp Habitat in action this summer!



Camp Habitat

Nature Education Camp
for Children Ages 4-16

Pre-School Program, Ages 4-5

Nature Sprouts I June 7-11 (9:00 am-Noon), \$105

Nature Sprouts II June 14-18 (9:00 am-Noon), \$105

Day Camp Program, Ages 6-11

Refuge Adventures (6-7) July 12-16 (9:00 am-4:00 pm), \$170

Water Striders (8-9) July 19-23 (9:00 am-4:00 pm), \$185

Nature Detectives July 26-30 (9:00 am-4:00 pm), \$185
(6-7), (8-9), (10-11)

Backpacking Trips, Ages 11-16

Introduction to Backpacking (11-13) August 2-6, \$275

White Mountain Explorers (13-16) July 19-24, \$300

To register or for information, scholarship applications, or payment schedules, contact:

Camp Habitat
830 College Road
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
(907) 452-5021 ext. 26
camphabitat@northern.org
www.northern.org



© Pat DeRuyter

Conservation Awards Announced

The annual conservation awards were announced at the Northern Alaska Environmental Center's annual meeting on January 25. Recognized for their conservation efforts were, left to right, ABR Inc., represented by owner Bob Ritchie, conservationist; NAEC Executive Director Arthur Hussey; Russell DeForest, community service activist; and Mary Zalar, volunteer. Awardees not pictured include the Lathrop High School Club Earth, youth conservationists; Tina Tin, activist; and Patricia and Wayne Fisher, volunteers.

Earth Friendly Events

- April 3 "Cold Climate Homebuilding Techniques Workshop" at UAF; call 474-6300.
- Now–April 22 Alaska Boreal Forest Council Hybrid Car Raffle; call Nancy at 452-5021 for details.
- April 22 Earth Day Carnival at UAF, 11 am–4 pm
- April 24 Earth Day celebrations at Anne Wien Elementary School, Noon–4:00 pm
- April 27 Green Power Advisory Committee's recommendations presented at the GVEA Annual Member Meeting
- May 1 Spring Migration Celebration at Creamer's Field
- May 1 Fairbanks Cycle Club Bike Swap at Beaver Sports—a recycling opportunity!
- May 17 Spring Clean Up at NAEC, noon
- June 17 Camp Habitat begins
- July 24 NAEC float in the Golden Days Parade
- August 6 NAEC booth at the Tanana Valley State Fair
- August 22 Run for the Refuge
- August 22 Crane Festival at Creamer's Field: Camp Habitat's Tex-Mex Dinner

Auction Plans

by Kerynn Fisher, NAEC Board Member & Auction Chair

Raising fun and funds at the annual NAEC Auction could not happen without the support of our members, business supporters, auction attendees, and volunteers. Thanks to this cast of hundreds, the 2003 auction raised more than \$27,000 to support the Northern Center's work to preserve and protect wilderness, natural habitats and quality of life in Interior and Arctic Alaska.

The 2004 event is already on the horizon—mark your calendars for Saturday, November 13 at the Wedgewood Resort. As always, we welcome the donation of new, like-new and antique quality items for the auction. In addition, if you're planning a major purchase for this fall, let us know what you're looking for and we'll see if we can get it for the auction. It's a great way to support the Northern Center while getting the things you need or want. We're also exploring ways to include our out-of-state members in this fun event.

In some respects, the Northern Center's auction is a victim of its own success. The event has outgrown many venues and, unfortunately, those remaining venues large enough to accommodate it require the use of their in-house caterers. Like many members, the auction committee longs for the delicious potluck suppers of auctions past. While we have given great thought to this dilemma, we welcome additional input from our members.

Please contact us with your thoughts, ideas, donations or requests by email at auction@northern.org or by phone at (907) 452-5021.

Another Farewell...

by NAEC Staff

We are saddened to learn of the recent death of Caro GrayHall, the Northern Center's Office Manager and Volunteer Coordinator in the mid-1990s. Caro's warmth, wit, and enthusiasm added spirit and comradery to Northern Center projects. She often organized social activities for volunteers and staff, making all feel welcome.

Caro arrived in Fairbanks in 1976 and was an active member of the community for 23 years. She began her career at Tanana Valley Community College, where she was employed as a grant writer and later was program manager for Fairbanks Resource Agency Adult Center before joining the Northern Center staff. She lent her energy and enthusiasm to many political campaigns and conservation projects.

In Fairbanks, Caro met her husband Conrad Hall and gave birth to their son Buckshot GrayHall in 1979. For the last four years, Caro lived in Redwood City, California.

Our Thanks to the 2003 Auction Donors

Dan Adams	Marjorie Cole	Arthur Hussey &	Adeline Peter Raboff
Alaska Alpine Club	Coleman	Janet Daley	Pikes Landing
Alaska Chromes	Columbia Sportswear	Ice Alaska	Plant Kingdom
Alaska Coffee Roasting Company	Melanie Cook	Gail Jackson &	Prince William Sound Cruises & Tours
Alaska Discovery	Costello Custom Home Improvements	William Simonsma	Pro Wildlife
Alaska House Art Gallery	Country Kitchen	John Jodwalis	Raven Cross Country
Alaska Massage & Healing Arts Center	April Crosby & Merritt Helfferich	Jennifer Jolis	Stan Read & Ann Mallard
Alaska Photo Graphics	Ed Davis	Aldona Jonaitis	Jen Reed & Ian Wright
Alaska Railroad Corporation	Sue Dean	Judie Gumm Designs	Chris Reinhard
Alaska Renewable Energy	Denali Park Resorts	Stan Justice	Riverboat Discovery & Eldorado Gold Mine
Alaska Sea Life Center	Denali Raft Adventures	Frank Keim	Riverside Juice Bar
Alaska Tent & Tarp	Carrie Dershin	Kenai Fjords Tours	Barb Rondine
Alaska Wildland Adventures	Laurent Dick	Don Kiely	Jose Rueter
Alaska Woods Baskets	Clarice Dukeminier & Pat DeRuyter	Alex Kienle	Sara's Mom
Alaskan Freelance Writers/ Photographers	Duszynski & Associates	Carol Kleckner	Angela Schmidt & Chris Miller
Alyeska Resort	Margaret Eagleton	Carol Klopff	Sprucewind Healing Arts
Anonymous	Sara Elzey	Judy Kreith	Steger Mukluks
Apocalypse Design	Ester Hatworks	Carolyn Kremers	Sid Stephens
Arctic Getaway	Ester Republic	Marin Kuizenga	DeAnne Stokes
Arctic Treks	Melinda Evans	Lavelle's Bistro	Sara Tabbert
Arctic Wild	Fairbanks Concert Assoc.	Leatherman Tool Group, Inc.	Tanana Valley Fair
Michael & Jeanne Armstrong	Fairbanks Drama Associa- tion & Fairbanks	Lemongrass	Team Cutters
Artworks	Children's Theatre	Jean Lester	Ron & Mary Teel
Sharon & Tom Baring	Fairbanks Paddlers	Sherry Lewis & Jim Logan	Terra Terpret
Lynn & Charley Basham	Fairbanks Symphony Association	Mace & Trudy's Acoustic Adventures	The Woodway
Basically Basil	John Finch	Maiden Alaska	June Thomasson
Beaver Sports	Kerynn Fisher	Massage Therapy Associates	Bruce Tillitt
John & Linda Benson	Karin Franzen	Peter Mayo	Tivi Haus
Liz Berry	Nancy Fresco	Jon Miller & Lou Brown	Water Wagon
Anne Biberman	Gambardella's Pasta Bella	Moonlight Glass	Candy Waugaman
Biscotti	Great Alaskan Bowl Company	Moose Mountain Ski Resort	We•no•nah Canoes
Blue Loon	Greatland Sports	Jan Morrow	Web Weavers Technology Group
Lou Brown	Jessica Groshek	Rebecca Morse	Well Street Art Company
Bev Byington	Gulliver's Book Store	Mountain Sports	Sigrid Weller
Calypso Farm	John Hagey	New Horizons Gallery	Ralph Wells
Camp Denali	Anne & Will Harrison	North Star Dance Foundation	Jennifer Wenrick
Camp Habitat	Nancy Hausle-Johnson	North Star Golf Club, Inc.	Charlie Whitaker
Sarah Campbell	Dulce Havill & Chuck Klemmer	Northern Alaska Environ- mental Center	Janice Wike
Susan Campbell	Hearthside Bakery	Northern Alaska Tour Company	Phil Wildfang & Jean Payne
Jana Canary	Erik Holland	Daniel & Rita Osborne	Wildlife & Wood
Cascade Designs	Hot Licks	Outdoor Research	Ginny Wood
Cellular One	House of Kustom	Pangaea Adventures	Wood Fired Pottery
Chena Hot Springs Resort	Hugh Rose Photography	Larry Paquin	Wright Air Service, Inc.
Chena Ridge Veterinary Clinic		Patagonia	Yukon Air
Betsy Chronic		Pat Pearlman	Greg & Susie Zimmerman
Cloudberry Lookout B&B		Trusten Peery	



From the Woodpile

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

"Progress destroys what makes a frontier satisfying."

—Wallace Stegner

Now in my 57th year of living in Fairbanks, Alaska and having roamed over much of its backcountry by foot, paddle and small aircraft, I find myself speculating on what Alaska might have looked like and how it might have functioned had it remained a territory as it was for 13 years after I arrived on January 1, 1947. How would it be if a major oil strike hadn't occurred at Prudhoe Bay nine years after statehood? What has been gained? What has been lost?

Well, for one thing, we have a big increase in population. For another, we have a much higher (and more expensive) standard of living and a bigger spread between the haves and the have-nots. The tempo of life has speeded up and is much more high tech.

What are we doing with the time we now save? What about the quality of life and the "well being" factor? What about personal safety and security? Is going faster, getting bigger and richer, and having more creature comforts worth the loss of serenity, civility, open space and the wildlands our wildlife depends on? Is this just my senior citizen's bias that "times just ain't what they used to be"?

Long ago a friend commented to me, "The reason I like living in Alaska is because there are so few of us living in this big country every one of us feels important."

The Fairbanks I came to in January, 1947 was much the same log cabin settlement that Margaret (Mardy) Murie describes in her autobiography *Two In the Far North*. She describes her years growing up from age nine to being the first woman to graduate from the new college on the hill, 1911-1922.

Mardy writes:

"I grew up in Fairbanks when James Wickersham was battling in Congress for a government railroad in Alaska. Wood

was the only fuel. Hillsides were stripped of forests to fuel the boilers of all the little placer mines. Every household burned 10 cords of wood a winter. The waterman brought you two to four buckets of water each day. The nameless heroes removed the "night soil" from the privy in the woodshed.

"Nothing was easy, but everybody counted. Everyone was cared for. There was a beautiful library and a hospital. There were dress-up parties, home-grown concerts, and plays, and always dances. Dance all night. Go to the Model Cafe for breakfast. There were quarrels, but always humor. And we always had the 'March Scandals,' too. At least one was always expected.

"As a small child, I remember whistles and sirens and everybody rushing to First Avenue—an impromptu parade. Mr. Gobrach's German band was marching, and someone was waving a coalscuttle. Wickersham had won! Alaska would have a railroad that would haul the coal from the Healy mines to burn, instead of wood. It was coal then; now it's oil."

Mardy goes on to recount her courtship and marriage to Olaus Murie and their honeymoon field trip by small boat and dog team in the arctic, where Olaus was studying caribou. He taught her how to mush dogs; she taught him how to dance. Later they made their home in Moose, Wyoming where Olaus had been researching elk. Olaus was now president of the newly formed Wilderness Society, operating out of their big log home rather than in Washington DC.

Olaus and Mardy made several trips back to Alaska, the last to explore an area that eventually became the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Their base camps were on the Lobo and Last Lakes in the Sheenjek River basin.

Olaus died in the fall of 1963, but Mardy pulled herself together to carry his torch for wildland preservation in Alaska, becoming "the mother of the American conservation movement."

Mardy writes: "My prayer is that Alaska will not lose the heart-nourishing friendliness of her youth; that her people will always care for one another, her towns not completely ruled by the dollar, and that wild places will remain great, and where the wolf and caribou, wolverine and grizzly and all the arctic blossoms may live in the delicate balance that supported them long before impetuous white man appeared in the north. Do I dare to believe that one of my great grandchildren may someday journey to the Sheenjek and still find a gray wolf trotting on the ice of Lobo Lake?"

No, Mardy, not on Lobo Lake. It has been captured by the Sheenjek River. But there may be one at Last Lake, the second base camp of your 1956 expedition. A few years ago Celia Hunter, Michio Hoshino and I made a rafting trip down the Sheenjek River. We went ashore to hike over to Last Lake for your sake. There stood a big bull moose where you camped. Just that morning where we had camped upstream, a pair of wolves trotted through our camp. Killing wolves as varmints is now back in favor on the present political scene. But perhaps the offspring of these two will be spared in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge you and Olaus worked so hard to establish.

Olaus, Michio, Celia, John Denver, and now you Mardy at age 101, have all left us. But your words remain. May you all be dancing together to John's "Song For All Lovers" in some celestial wilderness—not with angels, but with wildlife.

Then and Now: Talking With George Matz

by Ann Swift, NAEC Member & Volunteer

Talking with George Matz, the second director of the Northern Center, it is easy to see that many of the issues in 1976-78 are still around today. Issues George identifies as important then were energy and the Arctic Refuge (then called the Arctic Wildlife Range). At that time, we were called the Fairbanks Environmental Center, yet were involved in many land use concerns in other parts of northern Alaska. George calls energy "the common denominator for the environment," and said that at the time many in the lower 48 felt that Alaska would be a good place to try out alternative energy sources.

The proposed Susitna River project would have built a dam at Devil's Canyon to generate electricity. After the proposed Rampart Dam project in the 1960s had failed, many viewed the Susitna as another chance, and it was billed as less devastating to the environment. The Corps of Engineers looked at the project but decided it wasn't economically feasible. Flush with the first oil money from Prudhoe Bay, the State of Alaska took it over and formed the Alaska Power Authority. The Susitna project was finally defeated, according to George, because "no one wanted to pay for it."

Much of the discussion on the Arctic Wildlife Range, part of the "d-2 national interest lands" debate, took place in Washington DC, where environmentalists from across the US supported preserving the area. When hearings were scheduled in Alaska in the summer of 1977, development interests figured that sentiment would be on their side, without the outsiders who they claimed were interfering with what real Alaskans wanted. When Rep. John Seiberling scheduled a Congressional hearing at the University, the Center was able to mobilize support for the Udall bill, which favored preser-

vation. Members of the Congressional subcommittee had their eyes opened at the hearing, realizing that not all Alaskans were development-oriented, similar to the frustrations we face today with how Alaska is portrayed in Congress. The Alaska Coalition of environmental organizations made the decision to focus on the Range/Refuge at this time.

The beginning rumblings of a gas line project is another issue then that we still hear about today. Like the oil pipeline, the years of delay in getting this off the ground have only contributed to environmental safeguards, and it's not done yet. The Alaska Conservation Foundation was also started during this period.

After George left the Center, he became a budget analyst for the Hammond administration. Following undergraduate studies in biology and chemistry, he earned an MBA degree, but still hadn't realized how much economic factors impacted environmental decisions until he took this job. With his background, he had expected to work on natural resource issues, but instead found himself analyzing proposed development projects. In this role, he came head-to-head with the Alaska Power Authority, which was still pushing the Susitna Dam. George commented that Governor Hammond liked to balance opposing points of view, so his job assignment may have been deliberate.

After ten years working for the State, George moved to Anchorage where he worked as a consultant and served many years as president of Anchorage Audubon. He still is proud to be a member of NAEC and plans to move to Homer this summer, where he will no doubt encounter another set of environmental issues.

Shape and Protect Alaska's Future...

...become a member of the Northern Center or make a donation.



Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Renewal ☐

New Member ☐

Donation ☐

☐ \$33 Individual ☐ \$38 Family ☐ \$55 Sponsor ☐ \$110 Donor ☐ \$275 Patron ☐ \$28 Student/Senior ☐ Other \$ _____

Does your employer match donations to nonprofit organizations? Check with your personnel office for more information.

☐ Please charge my donation to my Visa/Mastercard (circle one)

Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Your contribution is fully tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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

Conservation Abstracts

by Florence Collins, NAEC Member

The complete Conservation Abstracts are available each month on the NAEC website, www.northern.org, and by standard mail if requested by calling (907) 452-5021. Items from the Abstracts may be reproduced in nonprofit newsletters or similar publications; please credit the original source.

A BILL TO GIVE THE STATE OF Alaska and Alaska Natives land promised by earlier laws would "streamline the system so final titles can be delivered to all within five years." One provision would end the 1971 withdrawal of "millions of acres" of BLM land that blocks new mining claims; it would also give Kaktovik "a final 2000 acres" in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, February 12, 2004, p. A1, A9.

"IRONICALLY, WHILE THE Canadian government rebukes the U. S. for contemplating oil drilling in ANWR, it is pouring money into plans for an equally devastating intrusion into the Bathurst herd's calving and rearing area." *Canadian Arctic Resource Committee flyer*, early February 2004.

THE EIS FOR ESSENTIAL FISH Habitat Designation and Conservation of the National Marine Fisheries Service will discuss effects of commercial fisheries on fish habitats, especially bottom trawling. The Service says bottom trawl-

ing does not have an impact on habitat that is "more than minimal and not temporary," though it does have some impact on it. Environmentalists say the Service's own data show that "it causes significant damage to marine habitats and related species." *Alaska Marine Conservation Council*, February 2004.

TOXIN STUDIES OF WATERS near Cape Romanzof Long Range Radar Site are being done by four Native coastal communities. Contaminants involved are petroleum-related compounds, PCBs, and pesticides. *Bering Sea Ecoregion News*, Fall-Winter 2003, p. 6.

EARTHJUSTICE (an organization that does environmental legal work) has a 2004 docket involving the following items in Alaska: (1) defend the roadless rule for Chugach and Tongass National forests, representing many national groups; (2) oppose Tongass timber sales, representing SEACC, Sitka Conservation Society, and "many others;" (3) challenge NPR-A lease sales, representing NAEC and others; (4) defend

Gov. Knowles' veto of the 250,000-acre gift from the state to the University of Alaska, saying that the bill itself is unconstitutional, representing SEACC, NAEC, and ACE. *Earthjustice 2004 Docket*.

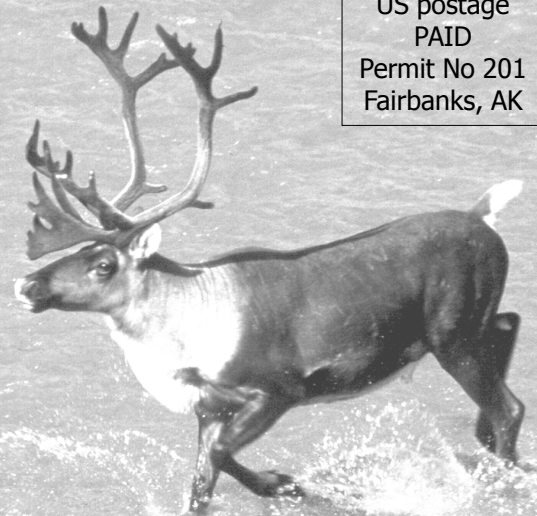
DENALI NATIONAL PARK WILL write a supplement to the Backcountry Management Plan to try to "address widely divergent comments received from agencies, individuals, and groups." Much will center around developing "desired future conditions" for the backcountry. Defining "traditional" in the plan is also controversial. *Denali Citizens Council News*, p. 13.

THE BOREAL FOREST IN ALASKA and Canada furnishes nesting grounds for as many as 1.3 of North America's song birds, and three fourths of its waterfowl are there for some part of their annual life cycle. It holds more fresh water in wetlands, lakes and rivers than anywhere else in the world; globally, it has the world's largest storehouse of carbon. *The Redpoll*, February 2004, p. 2.

Northern Alaska Environmental Center
830 College Road
Fairbanks, AK 99701
(907)452-5021
FAX: (907) 452-3100
www.northern.org



Nonprofit Org
US postage
PAID
Permit No 201
Fairbanks, AK



printed on recycled paper