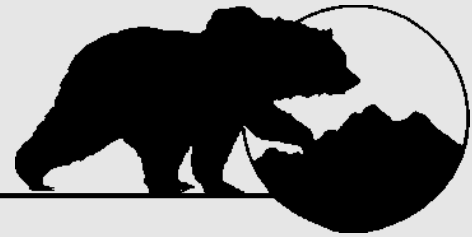


THE NORTHERN LINE



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Pogo: A Time for Principles

by Arthur Hussey, Executive Director

No issue in recent memory has dominated our agenda as did Pogo. From mid April to early May all of my time, all of Mara's, all of three Board members' and up to one-quarter of all other staff members' time was devoted to "Pogo". Pretty significant given that we have five other projects. What exactly went on? Detailed analysis requires a few months' introspection. But I'd like to offer some preliminary notes now.

A Time for Principles

"Pogo," as we now call our appeal to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Environmental Appeals Board, represented fundamental issues of principle in two ways:

- a) Can streams, rivers and lakes be used to dump toxic wastes?
- b) Can threats — political, verbal, and physical — deter NAEC?

First, Pogo calls into question the very essence of that hallmark piece of legislation, the Clean Water Act. Teck Cominco, using an old, tired mine design developed largely in the arid western U.S., proposed to fill in a stream of the U.S. A minor one to be sure, but all are treated equally under the law, in this case the Clean Water Act. A small body of water? Definitely. An irrelevant one? Just as definitely not.

Second, Pogo tested the NAEC's willingness to work under shadow of threats. Verbal abuse. Political vilifi-

cation. "Organized" labor action. We prevailed. We maintained our sense of principles despite the very considerable external pressures.

Under the shadow of these threats, we sought — and obtained — two critical environmental protections that Teck had not originally proposed:

- a citizens' advisory committee to stay abreast of the Pogo mine's operations. This will be composed of seven members and will meet twice yearly. Members will be drawn from specific interest groups including area residents, commercial fishers, and environmental concerns.
- a tiered monitoring approach that requires Teck to take definitive action and act once water quality degrades *but before it drops below Clean Water Act standards*. Seven toxins will be routinely measured in test wells. If any of these substances shows, upon testing, to have reached 40% of the allowable maximum, then Teck will be required to institute remedial action. This is a particularly important step in ensuring that leakage from the waste rock dump in Liese Creek does not reach the important salmon-spawning Goodpaster River.

Both offer potentially significant environmental protections. Either is a significant precedent for the several other large mines now in the design and permitting stage in Alaska. Both embody our commitment to our first principle, support of the Clean Water Act.

A third step undertaken, largely unmentioned, is that NAEC and Teck agreed to reestablish relationships sometime in the next year, facilitated by a neutral mediator. We will do so in the spirit of honestly working together, avoiding tokenism, developing real ties. We

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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 1,127 members.

STAFF

Arthur Hussey, Executive Director
Mara Bacsujlaky, Assistant Director/Mining Coordinator
Nicole M. Braem, Membership and Communications 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, Interim Arctic Coordinator

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This issue of *The Northern Line* was produced by Nicole M. Braem.



Front Page photo: Dorothy Titus of Minto cuts the first kings of the season at a fish camp near old Minto. Undated file photo, Brian K.Allen.

Sidestepping the Clean Water Act:

Unregulated Mine Waste Threatens Alaskan Waters

By Mara Bacsujlaky, Mining Coordinator

Although the Northern Alaska Environmental Center's appeal of Pogo's waste discharge permits has been withdrawn as a condition of settlement – the legal and environmental issues remain unresolved. The heart of the matter is an outdated mine design that threatens Alaska's unpolluted waters and healthy aquatic resources. This practice is the industry's use of stream drainages, lakes and other naturally occurring depressions and valleys to store millions of tons of mine waste (tailings) laced with heavy metals and chemicals like cyanide.

Modern hardrock mining developed largely in arid and semi-arid regions of western mining states like Nevada, Arizona, Montana, and Utah. Typified by the huge open pits like Bingham Canyon, Utah, which at a mile deep and two and one-half miles wide can be seen from space, hardrock mining relies on the removal and chemical treatment of hundreds of tons of rock to recover metals. Even underground mines, which generally produce less waste, now process thousands of tons of ore daily. When operational, the underground Pogo mine will create about one million tons of waste a year. That is slightly less than a quarter of the amount of waste annually generated by New York City, with a population of eight million¹.

With a stroke of the pen, Wilcher circumvents the Clean Water Act and gives the Alaska mining industry an exemption enjoyed by no other industrial or private operator anywhere in the nation.

Desert states, dry stream beds and canyons offer cheap, long-term storage for tailings. All that is required is the construction of a dam to contain the tailings slurry. But what happens when a mine is located in a place where there is no dry, natural containment? That was the issue facing the mining companies that sought to open the A-J and Kensington gold mines near Juneau in the early 1990s.

It wasn't the lack of lakes or stream drainages to act as tailings impoundments that stumped the Alaska mining industry, it was the abundance of water: streams,



The tailings impoundment at the Fort Knox Gold Mine, where 1,177 acres of the Fish Creek drainage were converted to a waste treatment facility. NAEC file photo.

wetlands, lakes, ponds and rivers. The Clean Water Act (CWA) prohibits the discharge of pollutants into Waters of the United States. "Waters" legally defines the range of wet from a damp spot on the ground that hosts wetlands vegetation to a river the size of the Yukon, and all lakes, ponds, bogs, swamps, creeks and fens in between. Tailings are obviously a pollutant, and discharging in amounts so enormous that the receiving water body ceases to exist is prohibited by the CWA.

But what if the water body is made into something other than what it really is – a stream, lake or wetlands? What if it becomes a waste treatment facility? Those are much more easily permitted – needing nothing more than the type of permit a municipal land fill would require; furthermore, the only point of compliance for the CWA is if there is a discharge from the facility.

Thus, in 1992, LaJuana Wilcher, then Assistant Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, produced a memo that laid out "conversion" of Waters of the US. In essence, the Wilcher Memo states that the act of constructing a dam for the purposes of containing mine tailings converts all waters upstream of the dam into a waste treatment facility.

With a stroke of the pen, Wilcher circumvents the Clean Water Act and gives the Alaska mining industry an exemption enjoyed by no other industrial or private operator anywhere else in the nation. With this same stroke, the memo renders Alaska's waters and aquatic

(...Continued on page 4)

The Four Year “Last Minute” Appeal A Pogo Process Time Line:

1999-2001: Teck Cominco continues exploration and conducts environmental studies in support of its proposed mine development.

June 2000: Teck Cominco, in conjunction with state and federal agencies, convenes a working group on access for the Pogo mine project. NAEC participates in the working group.

July 19, 2000: The EPA receives a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit application from Teck Cominco for the proposed Pogo mine. This formally kicks off the detailed environmental impact review required by the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA.)

October 2000: The Environmental Impact Statement, EIS, process gets underway with scoping meetings in Delta and Fairbanks. NAEC provides scoping comments to the EPA, the lead agency in the EIS/NEPA process.

December 2000: Teck Cominco, represented by their attorney Jim Clark, engages in discussions with the EPA and the State over the legality of discharging and storing mine waste in Liese Creek.

April 17, 2001: The NAEC meets with members of the EIS team to give a presentation on ice roads as a viable alternative to year-round road access to the remote mine.

May 2001: Teck Cominco formally rejects a modified winter (ice) road with airstrip option as a viable alternative for access.

June 2002: Teck Cominco, following internal discussions with the EPA and other members of the EIS team, presents a revised water management plan for the mine. Concerns about water balance raised by the EPA cause the EIS process to be delayed by approximately a year.

March 13, 2003: The Draft EIS, draft NPDES permit and other associated state permits, such as the Right-of-Way permit for the Pogo mine road, are released. A 60-day public comment period begins.

May 13, 2003: NAEC submits its comments on the DEIS and associated permits. Among other points, NAEC raises the issue of dumping unregulated mine waste into Liese Creek, a jurisdictional waterbody that should be protected

Sidestepping the Clean Water Act

Continued from page 3

resources vulnerable to serious and long-term contamination by unregulated, toxic mine waste. It was this unregulated discharge into Liese Creek that the NAEC administratively appealed.

Many people – regulators, critics and even some of our supporters – questioned why, out of a long, detailed environmental impacts analysis, NAEC or anyone should even care about Liese Creek – a small, intermittent creek with no fish and no recreational value. It is troubling that its unprepossessing character would be used to justify its sacrifice.

Focusing on the size of Liese Creek is the narrow view that Teck Cominco prefers. It shifts emphasis from the fact that the size of Liese Creek doesn't remove it from legally mandated environmental protections, and it deflects people's attention from the bigger picture: that Liese Creek is part of the Goodpaster watershed – an unpolluted river rich in fish, important to our Interior fisheries.

... nowhere in the Lower 48 is the mining industry allowed to dump unregulated hard rock mine waste into Waters of the U.S. — only in Alaska.

Clean water, healthy aquatic habitats and unpolluted landscapes are quickly becoming the nonrenewable resources of the 21st century.

Alaska is lucky to still have these commodities in abundance, but without rigorous, fair application of existing environmental laws, we may soon be following in the footsteps of the Lower 48. Except in one area: nowhere in the Lower 48 is the mining industry allowed to dump unregulated hard rock mine waste into Waters of the U.S. – only in Alaska.

In states where they had to, mines have found economical engineered solutions to tailings containment in wet regions. It is time that Alaskans ask and receive the same from the Alaskan mining industry; it's time to retire a tired old idea and stop using our streams, ponds, lakes, and fens as private dumping grounds.

¹New York City's Garbage Crisis <<http://www.homestead.com/concernedcitizens/FKfacts.html>>

What they said:

Selected Quotes in the Press

The Petroleum News, Oct. 26, 2003, "Environmentalists criticize Pogo's plan for tailings"

"Although the letter does not threaten a lawsuit if agencies approve permits as outlined in the EIS, 'the tone of the letter makes you real nervous about it,' said Ed Fogels, project manager for the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. 'We're all real disappointed — we thought we worked with the Northern Center on this for years.'"

The Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, April 20, 2004, "Work Halted on Pogo Mine"

"This has no environmental merit whatsoever," Fogels said of the appeal.

"We've worked with the Northern Alaska Environmental Center for four years now and they never once brought up these issues. Never once."

Governor Frank Murkowski, press release:

"There is a right way and a wrong way to do things," Murkowski said, "and clearly, Northern Alaska Environmental Center has chosen the wrong path. What kind of message is the Center trying to send to Alaskans when after four years of working with the mining company through the permit process they choose to bring up new issues and lodge their appeal a mere 72 hours before it was to become final?"

The Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, April 23, 2004, "Pogo Appeal draws fire from delegation."

"Eight Interior legislators appeared at a press conference Thursday morning to rail against the center. They argued that the wastewater issue was a deliberate tactic to delay or kill the mine, a surprise pulled near the end of the permitting process after Teck-Pogo and the center had worked together on the mine plans for four years.

"This last-minute legal appeal, we believe, or I certainly believe, was a tactic to scuttle the project after saying for years that the environmental center wanted to work with the mine developer," said Senate President Gene Therriault, R-North Pole."

The Four Year "Last Minute" Appeal A Pogo Process Time Line:

from such discharge under the Clean Water Act. NAEC supports the State's preferred alternative for access to the Pogo mine site.

July 2003: At Teck Cominco's request, NAEC meets to discuss the organization's comments on the DEIS. At the meeting NAEC proposes mitigation measures that could offer increased protection of water and aquatic resources. These include additional ground water monitoring and tiered trigger responses to contaminant levels. NAEC also proposes that the company consider funding an aquatic resources/fisheries study on the Goodpaster and Salcha Rivers. Teck Cominco is receptive to a potential fish study, but rejects additional monitoring or tiered trigger responses.

August 2003: Teck Cominco meets with NAEC to present revisions to its mine plan wherein wetlands behind the proposed dam in Liese Creek will be scraped away during construction, and a layer of non-mineralized rock laid down. According to the company, placement of mine waste into these converted "uplands" will not require a Clean Water Act permit, since, in their opinion, they cease to be jurisdictional wetlands.

September 19, 2003: Final EIS and accompanying U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permit application are issued. A 30-day public comment period begins.

October 20, 2003: The NAEC submits comments on the Final EIS and the Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permit application. Specifically, NAEC comments that removal of the wetlands through mechanical means does not remove the requirement that mine waste discharge be regulated under the Clean Water Act.

January 14, 2004: All permits required for mine construction and operation are issued, except for the NPDES permit. Teck Cominco mobilizes a construction force, establishes camps and equipment staging areas and begins mine and access construction immediately.

March 15, 2004: The EPA issues its Record of Decision and final NPDES permit, which will become effective April 14, after a 30-day appeal period.

April 13, 2004: NAEC files its administrative appeal of the NPDES permit before the Environmental Appeal Board.

Community Perspective:

The Goodpaster River

Editor's Note: Tim Robb submitted this letter, written to a friend, during the height of the Pogo controversy in April 2004. Tim, who lives at Tenderfoot Hill, has mushed and camped along the Goodpaster for several years. It has been edited for length.

Good day Marty,

Although at first glance this appears to be about rivers and fish, it's not. It's about how words pointing to simple truths sink in over years, how something you said to me in passing, very briefly, rolled around in my head like a secret marble until —BANG— I realized it had become a part of me, or rather something I wanted to live up to.

Quite simply it was about community building.

The river valley where I live is remarkable in the varieties of tannic creeks that feed into the Tanana River main. These creeks link spawning bogs to the glacial fed river, which we must remember, drops drastically in winter and actually runs, clear and silt-free, under the ice.

These interior Tannic-creeks are good for summer fish, but late-fall this changes as fish migrate down to the Tanana River's many channels and sloughs. Winter, Tanana becomes home waters for hoards of grayling, sculpin and other fish.

During winter all throughout the Tanana's channels, in shallow graveled nests, chum salmon eggs percolate in thermally charged upwelling areas, shallow winter-springs that resist freezing in even the deepest of winter cold..

This is the upper Tanana... south facing bluffs, braided channels and richly forested sloughs.

You may recall, a few years ago, five or six years ago, there was much wrangling over the connectedness of these spawning grounds and the huge white spruce that thrive along the sloughs and on islands. The issue wasn't a new one really, but north of the Alaska Range fit into a different kind of management plan than other places. The debates had migrated slowly north.

This was my first involvement in any kind of public issue that I cared about greatly and the first time I became taken in by the polarity that can come with that. Talk about divisive. The different sides began by building little rallying camps, little one-half communities, only existing in order to unite against the opposition. The public meetings were prepared for and if people had built catapults they wouldn't have been better at firing off facts and showcased values.



Tim Robb's dog team, on the Goodpaster River. taken from the back of the sled. Photo: Tim Robb.

One evening — I was returning a book to Mary Shields. I only met Mary a few times, anyway, we had a brief exchange. You were there too. We met briefly. I must have betrayed the kind of tunnel vision I get from focusing very diligently on a subject.

I forget your exact words, but after I was expressing elements of squaring off with “the other side,” you said something about community building. You said it quietly. It made it seem more like a path than a point of view.

That was it. Never saw or heard from you again. Chance meeting.

Amazing the different times, the idea you expressed welled up in my thoughts. It took it almost six years for me to realize the power of that idea. Polarity seems ill-suited for the long haul. Wisdom seems to hide sometimes in unlikely conversations between unlikely people.

I think that there must be a lot of wisdom in seeking the common threads we have with people who see things differently. I think that over the long haul this could point towards clearer vision of our OWN values.

I'm starting to think that REAL understanding might only come from being courageous enough to REALLY

(...Continued on page 17)

Fourteen Facts on Fort Knox Mine

1. Total mine waste produced by the Fort Knox gold mine in 2003 42,374,182 tons
2. Total solid waste (non-mining) waste collected at Fairbanks North Star Borough Landfill for 2003 102, 789 tons
3. In the Borough, average amount of solid waste generated annually 1 ton/person
4. Average amount of Fort Knox mine waste generated in same time period 500 tons/person
5. Rank of Fort Knox mine in toxic waste production in Alaska 4th out of 32
6. Number of years Fort Knox will mine gold 14
7. Estimated ounces of gold recovered during that time 5 million
8. Estimated amount that Fort Knox gold will sell for \$1.5 billion
9. To date, amount of royalties paid by Fort Knox to the State of Alaska \$0
10. Mining revenue, earned by Fort Knox's owner, Kinross Gold Corp., in 2002 \$131.6 million
11. Amount, in US dollars, the State of Alaska made from Fort Knox in 2002 \$214,700
12. Percentage of Kinross' revenue from Fort Knox relative to the State's 1 : 613
13. Fort Knox' taxable income in 2002 -\$17, 470,149
14. Amount of corporate and mining license tax paid by Fort Knox for that period \$0

Sources:

1. True North/Fort Knox *2003 Annual Activity Report*, Fairbanks Gold Mining, Inc.
2. Fairbanks North Star Borough Solid Waste Department, 2004
5. Toxic Releases Inventory, US Environmental Protection Agency, 2001
- 6-7. *Technical Report on the Fort Knox and True North Deposits*, Fairbanks Gold Mining, Inc., 2003

Oil in ANWR Will Not Lower Gas Prices

By Nicole M. Braem, Membership & Communications

With gas prices over \$2.00 — and even higher in remote areas — some oil industry lobbyists claim that opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and other protected areas would lower your cost at the pump.

President George W. Bush said as much in comments to the media in May, according to stories that ran in the Anchorage Daily News and Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. Senator Ted Stevens repeated the assertion later.

“Had ANWR been passed — had it not been vetoed in the past — we anticipate additional barrels of oil would have been coming out of that part of the world, which would obviously have a positive impact for today’s customers,” Bush said.

However, drilling enthusiasts overlook several basic facts governing the price of oil. Perhaps most significant is the reality that the price of oil is not set in the United States — it is set on the world market. Therefore, additional production in the United States will do little to affect the price of oil per barrel, which is subject to manipulation by other producers.

“Even if all of our oil came from Texas and Alaska,

a production cutback in the Middle East would increase the price of Alaskan or Texas crude just as much as it would increase the price of Saudi or Kuwaiti crude, because the world’s just one giant market. The oil sloshes around and goes to wherever the prices are highest. So there’s really no way we can immunize ourselves from the effects of OPEC or from events in the Middle East by reducing imports. And any economist would tell you that,” Jerry Taylor of the Cato Institute said on CNN in 2003.

Even if drilling in the Arctic Refuge were authorized immediately, production would not occur for another ten years — and would still do little to affect the price of oil. In its first year of production, ANWR oil would provide approximately 300,000 barrels per day — only 0.3 percent of world oil production that year. This would be insignificant in terms of reducing oil prices.

At its peak, Arctic Refuge oil production would provide 876,000 barrels per day — translating to just 0.7 percent of world oil production.

New Poll: Americans favor fuel efficiency

By Nicole M. Braem, Membership & Communications

According to a new Zogby America poll, most likely voters think the Bush Administration’s ties to the oil industry are hurting consumers.

The poll found that 57 percent of those surveyed believed its ties to the oil industry harmed consumers, while only 12 percent believed they helped.

The poll found that even among Republicans and self-described conservatives, more voters believe the Administration’s ties to the oil industry harm consumers.

When asked to choose the best response to rising gas prices, only 14 percent of those polled chose drilling more in the United States/Arctic.

The top choice? Increasing the fuel efficiency of cars and SUVs, with 41 percent. Nearly the same percentage, some 40 percent of respondents, thought that the best reaction to skyrocketing gas prices was to increase fines and penalties for oil companies found to be gouging customers.

When asked who is responsible for rising gas prices, 42 percent surveyed said OPEC. Thirty-two percent placed blame on the oil companies — and 14 percent picked President George W. Bush. Only four percent said it was the fault of environmentalists.

Those most likely to blame OPEC include Republicans, Easterners, suburban voters, and those making over \$75,000 per year. Those most likely to blame oil companies include Westerners and those making less than \$25,000 per year.

The Zogby America survey, conducted for The Wilderness Society, interviewed 985 likely voters chosen at random nationwide from May 10-13, 2004 and has a margin of error of +/- 3.2 percentage points. Slight weights were added to region, party, age, race, religion, and gender to more accurately reflect the voting population. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest percent and might not total 100.

NPRA's Future Hangs in the Balance

By Kelly Hill Scanlon, Arctic Coordinator

Summer is a time for us Alaskans to get out and enjoy the wildlands this state has to offer. For some that may mean a trek to the Arctic — out the back door for us, but a once-in-a-lifetime trip for many. While you are trying to cram a year's worth of warm-weather opportunities into a few months of unlimited daylight take a moment to share your concerns about protecting some of the areas in the Western Arctic that we hold precious.

Northeast NPRA

During June 2004 the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is soliciting comments on their Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Northeast National Petroleum Reserve Alaska (NPRA) Planning Area. As you may recall, the original Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and subsequent record of decision for that area was issued in 1998. However, BLM feels that since that time technology improvements have made it possible to open more of the area to oil and gas leasing without causing irrevocable environmental damage. We disagree. Those new technologies are often impractical or uneconomical in the Arctic. As a result, real drilling activities on the North Slope entail more permanent gravel roads, and an increase in drilling platforms all resulting in more disruption to the ecosystem.

At the time of publication, the Supplemental EIS for the Northeast was not yet available for review. It is expected to be released on May 24, 2004, with public meetings to be held throughout the State in June.

Comments on the plan will be due to BLM mid-July. Through our "Arctic Actions" email list and via the website we will summarize the alternatives outlined in the SEIS and notify members of specific meetings and comment deadlines.

Alpine Satellite Development Plan

The Final EIS for the Alpine Satellite Development Plan, an area that includes State land outside of the NPRA and land within the Northeast NPRA, is expected to be released by BLM in July 2004.

Associated with their work in the Alpine Satellite Development Plan area ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc. has applied for a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers to work in waters of the United States. Proposed work includes construction of a 22-mile long gravel road which includes a bridge crossing the Nigliq Channel of the Colville River. The Corps will evaluate the permit in conjunction with the BLM's Draft EIS, but isn't expected to issue a final permit until it has an opportunity to evaluate the final EIS along with comments from other agencies including the Environmental Protection Agency. The Northern Center shared our concerns with the Corps about the implications of the project and its permanent roads and bridges. We will be able to pursue this further as EIS and permit process moves forward.

Northwest NPRA

The Northern Center along with the Alaska Wilderness League, the Center for Biological Diversity, the National Audubon Society, the Natu-

ral Resources Defense Council, the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society filed a lawsuit challenging the Final EIS of the Northwest Planning Area (See "Western Arctic Under Attack," *The Northern Line March 2004* page 8.) Despite the lawsuit, BLM, in their rush to open the Northwest NPRA to oil exploration, scheduled a sale of lands in that area for June 2, 2004. In response, we filed a preliminary injunction on April 29th asking a federal court to declare a temporary "time out" to give the court time to review our challenge to the U.S. Interior Department's leasing plans before holding a lease sale.

"Before the agency gives oil companies the right to drill it needs to look at the full impacts of oil development and consider reasonable alternatives," said Deirdre McDonnell, NAEC's attorney with Earthjustice in Juneau. "Here the Interior Department did neither, but decided to lease 100 percent of the 8.8 million acre planning area. We're asking the Court to tell the agency to try again and consider a more balanced approach."

The injunction has yet to be ruled on by the courts.

As you enjoy your summer take a moment to make sure your concerns are heard by those decided the fate of our Arctic wildlands.

If you are interested in joining the Arctic Action email list please notify Kelly Hill Scanlon at kelly@northern.org, or at 452-5021, ext. 24.

New NAEC Member Arrives in May!



The Northern Center has a new member of the family: Ruby Elizabeth Hill Scanlon, born to NAEC Arctic Coordinator Kelly Hill Scanlon and her husband, Brendan. Ruby came into the world at a healthy 8 lbs, 3 ounces, on May 20, 2004.

"I'm just totally in love with her," Scanlon said. "We're just settling into our routine and getting to know each other. I think she is going to be a great gabber, which she gets from both her mom and dad. She is already learning to disco dance from her dad."

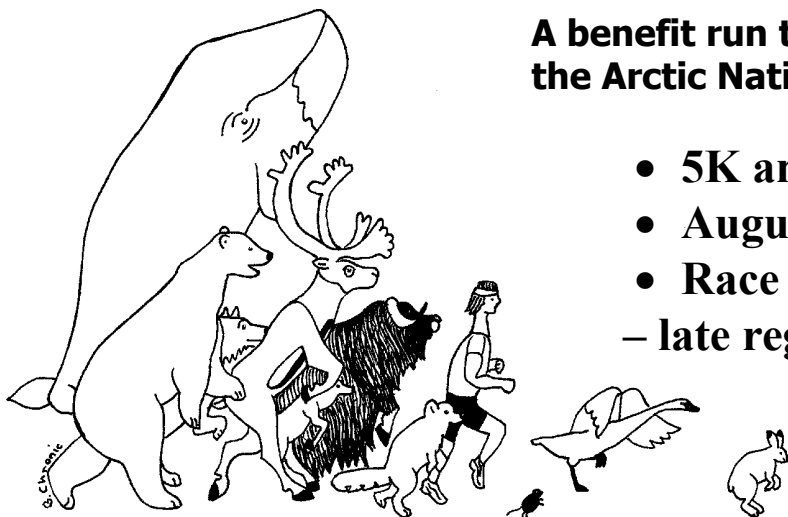


Raiana VandenBroek, JoLee Giuchici, and Dave Boyd of Lathrop High's conservation club, Club Earth, plant a tree at the NAEC office on Arbor Day, May 17. The Canada Red Chokecherry was planted in memory of long-term Fairbanks conservationist Bev Reitz. Photo: NAEC.

Join us for the 2004 8th Annual Run for the Refuge

**A benefit run to raise awareness about
the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge!**

- 5K and 10K walks (and runs!)
 - August 17 @ UAF Patty Center
 - Race starts at 1 p.m.
- late registration begins at noon



Dogs on leash welcome!

T-Shirts, Prizes, and Exhibits

**For more info, contact:
Kelly Hill Scanlon at 452-5021
or email: kelly@northern.org**

New to the NAEC

Membership & Communications hire

By NAEC Staff

Two months into the job, new Membership and Communications Director Nicole “Nikki” Braem has been enjoying the ride.

Two weeks into the position, the Pogo mine controversy blew up, and internet access at the Northern Center went down — it was an interesting welcome to say the least.

“I was so excited to come back up here and be able to work on the environmental issues specific to northern Alaska: subsistence, pollutants, global warming, and how rural Alaska is going to have an economy without trashing its environment,” Braem said.

“I’m looking forward to meeting everyone and getting a better sense

of the Fairbanks community.”

She spent several winters here in the Northern Studies Program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Having finally defended her thesis on the relocation of the King Island Inupiat to Nome, she will be receiving her M.A. this summer.

“I had it all backwards. I spent my winters here in Fairbanks and my summers in Nome,” she said. “I was cold all year.”

Braem first came to Alaska in 1992 from Detroit, MI. She joined the Jesuit Volunteer Corps shortly after completing her B.A. at the University of Detroit, where she double majored in history and English. Her job with JVC took her from Michi-



gan to Nome, Alaska. Prior to that, she had never been west of Chicago.

“I think my parents are still shocked that I moved to Alaska,” she said. “I waited until after I had the volunteer job to tell them that I had applied for the position at KNOM-Radio in Nome. They keep asking me ‘when are you going to move back?’”

Despite some major culture shock in the beginning, Nome turned into her home. It remains her favorite place in Alaska, one where she worked in radio, the newspaper business, the public library and various other occupations in the ten years she lived there.

Braem says she is equally at home outdoors or with her nose in a book. In the summertime, what time isn’t spent fishing or hiking is left to softball. She loves the Fairbanks cross country trail system, and is hoping to try skijoring as well this next winter.

She has taken up residence in the Goldstream Valley with an unruly young dog, Rosario.



Northern Center staffers conducted their twice-yearly cleanup effort on their stretch of College Road on May 17. Photo: NAEC.

**The Northern Alaska
Environmental Center
is online!**

Visit our website at
www.northern.org

Session Ends Without Major Damage

Conservation Movement Can Claim Several Victories

By Brodie Anderson, Legislative Intern

The 23rd Alaskan Legislative session expired without many laws passed that affected the environment of Alaska.

The conservation movement of Alaska should consider it a victory that the session ended with the death of many bills that endangered Alaska and its environment. These victories can be largely attributed to the Defend Alaska Now campaign, in which the Northern Alaskan Environmental Center participated.

The campaign was dedicated to establishing a statewide movement with set goals of influencing specific bills that effected the conservation of Alaska on a statewide level. The campaign achieved the goals through direct contact with legislators, public education of the issues, and most importantly, member and constituent action at each regional and local level.

The Northern Center, along with the four other conservation groups of Alaska, South East Alaska Conservation Center, Alaska Center for the Environment, Alaska Conservation Voters coordinated their efforts and resources to effectively reach all of the Alaska's legislators while maintaining informed and mobilized members at the local level. This local connection allowed the member the ability to directly target legislators considering the bills that were before them in committees or on the floor.

The campaign's local support was managed by interns that took the information about the bills, such as their movement, amendments, and committee substitutes of bills. They

then took the appropriate action needed. These actions always included getting the people to voice their concerns and comments about the bills.

The actions and commitment of all of the concerned members that took action this session was the foundation of the success in the campaign. It was the voice of the people that legislators noticed. It was the multitude of letters to the editors, phone calls, letters to legislators, and committee testimony that shaped and manipulated the bills. This is evident in the seven bills that the campaign took action on — they either died in committee or just failed to pass out of either House because of the campaign and local members.

The campaign targeted and stopped three House bills and four Senate bills. Five of the bills had been sponsored or co-sponsored by Interior Legislators.

Four involved Alaska's public lands. Two would have established new policies for the way Alaska classified and addressed wildlife issues. One defined the responsibilities the Department of Transportation would have had in evaluating projects.

One bill targeted and worked on by the campaign would have modified and eliminated the constitutional issues on a past bill about the obligations of Public Litigants.

A progressive bill that moved because of the efforts of the campaign and local members was the pesticides bill offered up by Senator Ellis. This bill required corporations

to pay a registration fee per pesticide used in Alaska. It also established a state advisory board for pesticides while it established a more encompassing public notification and comment period. Finally, it would have brought Alaska up to the national average for pesticide registration.

All of these bills were affected by the campaign and its members. That victory for the campaign came about through members taking action and the impact they had on bills.

An example would be Senate Bill 298, the opening of the Dalton Highway. At the time of the bill's introduction there was a five mile ban on all uses of ATV and snowmachines in the five-mile corridor of the Dalton. Senator Ralph Seekins introduced legislation that would have lifted the ban. The bill would have had large implications for the State, from hunting policies in that area, to subsistence, and for recreational use.

The campaign email alerts and phone calls went out and members responded to stop the bill. Locally, the Northern Center created a special listserve that kept the members informed and updated on the movement of the bill. The Northern Center also provided members the opportunity to testify at committee hearings, send letters to legislators, and direct phone calls to Juneau.

Since the Dalton is located in the Interior, the Northern Center members and concerned Interior

(Continued on page 13...)

Legislative Session EndsContinued from page 12

residents had the largest impact on the fate of SB 298.

The impact was so large that Senators from outside the Interior took notice and weighed in on the bill. They determined that the majority of concerned people was against the bill and they should take the appropriate action. This resulted in the bill not passing out of committee but being placed in a special subcommittee where it was redrafted to better meet the needs of the area.

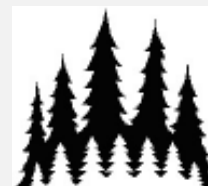
The end result kept the area closed, except for special considerations granted to trappers and subsistence users.

The idea of the campaign was to unify and consolidate the efforts of the conservation movements of Alaska. That goal was accomplished this year, yet a larger goal was also achieved. That goal was for the Northern Alaska Environmental Center's members be better informed of state legislation, and with this knowledge, to take action and help preserve the environment of Alaska. I believe that that goal was also achieved, and I also believe it was the most important aspect of the campaign.

As the legislative year ends, the members of the Northern Alaska Environmental Center can take the energy established this session and apply it to the future of Alaska politics. Members can look forward to a summer of campaigns, a fall of elections, and then a winter that will bring in new legislators that will guide our state. We need to take our momentum and stay active in Alaska's politics by committing to stay informed, staying mobilized, and vote.

BOREAL SHORTS

By Nancy Fresco
Boreal Forest Coordinator



International researchers meet in Fairbanks

From May 3-6 2004, approximately 200 forest scientists from Scandinavia, Canada, Russia, and the U.S. gathered in Fairbanks for the 12th annual meeting of the International Boreal Forest Research Association (IBFRA.) The subject of the conference was "Climate Disturbance Interactions in Boreal Forest Ecosystems," and the event had the following goals:

- To present and discuss the current scientific understanding of climate-disturbance interactions in the circumboreal region
- To discuss the unique ecological, economic, and social conditions that influence management decisions regarding disturbance, climate change impacts, and adaptation to climate change in the boreal region
- To bring a circumpolar perspective to research initiatives
- To foster cooperation and an exchange of ideas among countries in the circumpolar boreal forest

Talks ranged in scale and scope from long-term analysis of global climate over thousands of years to assessment of the impacts of timber harvest, fire, or insects at the level of a single forest stand. The problems and questions being addressed have no simple answers. While it is already abundantly clear that climate change is occurring in the far north, and while it will certainly have significant impacts on forest ecosystems, those impacts will not be uniform. Some regions may become dryer, while others become wetter. Species boundaries will shift, and insect outbreaks may become more common. Regional impacts will affect local communities and forest industry in a myriad of ways.

Conference participants not only shared research results from around the world, but also explored Fairbanks ecosystems during a half-day field trip.



**The Northern Alaska Environmental Center
is looking for a volunteer to help with
grant research and writing.**

***For more information contact:
Arthur Hussey at 452-5021.***



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.

WHAT MATTERS MOST?

Making a difference while learning not to sweat the details

By Nancy Fresco, Boreal Forest Coordinator

To alleviate our enviro-angst while still helping the planet, we need to put everything in perspective. Luckily, researchers — including the Union of Concerned Scientists, the U.S. Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Agency, and many non-profit organizations — have come up with ways to prioritize.

Calculating environmental impacts is complex, because estimates must include everything from air and water pollution to ecosystem destruction to global warming; nonetheless, it is possible to sort out the best and the worst.

Previous *Northern Line* articles have discussed across-the-board conservation in heating, driving, food choice, and electrical use. Below we address some specific high-impact activities; in our next issue, we’ll offer pointers on a few positive choices.

Chemicals with Crossbones

Use less, buy non-hazardous options, and read the labels!

- Fairbanks – and most other cities – offer safe disposal of paints, solvents, cleaners and other hazardous chemicals. But most consumers don’t know this, and the chemicals end up leaching into water supplies.
- Safer substitutes exist for almost all the harsh household cleaners,

polishes, bleaches, paints, adhesives, and aerosols on the market.

The Wrong Set of Wheels

Your choice of car – and how far you drive it — is one of the biggest impacts you’ll ever have as a consumer; you’ll never be able to recycle enough plastic bags or plant enough trees to make up for wasting gas.

- The average American car is driven 17,000 miles per year – burning 1133 gallons of gas (weighing 8,964 pounds) in a 15 mpg SUV, about 500 gallons in an economical small car, or 300 in a hybrid electric car.
- Ninety-eight tons of prehistoric, buried plant material is required to produce each gallon of gasoline.
- For every gallon of gas burned, 22 pounds of carbon dioxide are added to our atmosphere – not to mention additional releases of hydrocarbons, particulates, carbon monoxide, and trace elements.

The “Perfect Lawn”

Uniform grass is not a natural habitat for anything – is it worth the herbicides and the mowing?

- Because there are few pollution controls on yard equipment, a 5 hp lawnmower produces more air pollution than a 200 hp car.
- About 70 million pounds of pesticides are applied to home lawns

and gardens annually; half the users never read the warning labels.

Off-Road Mayhem

ORVs and motorboats have their rightful place, particularly here in Alaska. But before you go joyriding, you might want to consider the following.

- A single all-terrain vehicle can leave an imprint on the Alaska tundra that will not recover for decades.
- An hour of water-skiing causes as much air pollution as driving a car 850 miles.
- Two-stroke engines release approximately 1/3 of their fuel unburned – into the air in the case of ORVs, or into the water for motorboats.

The Cozy Old Fireplace

Sad as it is to admit it, chestnuts roasting on an open fire should only be enjoyed occasionally.

- Old-fashioned fireplaces generally burn with less than 10% efficiency, as compared to 40-50% for old wood stoves and 70-80% for new wood stoves.
- Fireplaces and older wood stoves also release enormous quantities of carcinogenic asthma-inducing particulates into the air.

Sources and further information:

(...Continued on page 15)

What Matters?Continued from page 14

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Carbon emissions worksheet for individuals and households, www.vtearthinstitute.org/carbonwksht.html

Siegel, Lee, Bad Mileage: 98 tons of plants per gallon, www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2003-10/uou-bm9102603.php

US EPA Office of Air and Radiation, Nonroad Engine and Vehicle Emission Study, Washington D.C.: U.S. EPA, 1991.

Calendar of

Earth Friendly Events

July 24 - NAEC float in the Golden Days parade.

August 6 - NAEC booth at the Tanana Valley Fair.

August 22nd - 1p.m. - 2004 Run for the Refuge - Run (or walk) to raise awareness about the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The 5K and 10K courses begin at the UAF Patty Center. Same day registration begins at noon. Dogs on leashes are welcome. For more information contact Kelly Scanlon at 452-5021, ext. 24.

August 22 - Crane Festival at Creamer's Field: Camp Habitat's Tex-Mex Dinner.

Roads to Nowhere?

Proposals sought for EIS for Yukon River Port and Road Network

By Mara Bacsujlaky, Mining Coordinator

The Alaska Department of Transportation is soliciting proposals for a third party contractor to conduct the Environmental Impact Statement for the Yukon River Port and Road Network. A major component of the DOT's Industrial Roads Program, the Yukon River Port and Road Network plan includes a road linking the Kuskokwim and Yukon Rivers, at least one large port, and a network of roads to various mining districts.

During Phase I, a 24-mile road will be built from the Donlin gold deposit to a proposed port on the Kuskokwim River. Fuel and supplies will be barged and trucked in to support advanced exploration at Donlin. Phase II will see an expansion of roads into the Donlin, Flat and McGrath mining districts. The port that will service these mining roads will allow for 30-40 million gallons of annual fuel throughput capacity and delivery by ocean-going barge.

At present, there are no active or proposed hardrock mines in the area covered by the Network Plan. The Donlin Creek deposit, which is the most advanced in exploration, has a difficult metallurgy, and may not be economically recoverable. Its operator, Placer Dome US, still has several years before it must decide whether or not to proceed with mine development. Even though there is significant doubt that there will be a mine at Donlin, federal money is already pouring in. In addition to the \$14 million in federal funds that the Alaska Department of Transportation has already received for the Donlin Creek mine road, another \$15 million is earmarked in the current transportation bill.

Beyond the multinational Placer Dome, there are no other users that stand to benefit from this 20-mile boondoggle. Still at a price tag of approximately 25 million, this road comes cheap. Estimated cost for the full Yukon River Port and Road Network is more than \$625 million dollars.

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.

BOREAL SHORTS

By Nancy Fresco
Boreal Forest Coordinator



Carbon Sequestration Bill Passes State Legislature

House Bill 196, sponsored by Alaska House Democratic Leader Ethan Berkowitz, passed on May 11th 2004, the last day of the state's legislative session. The new law directs the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to study how a carbon-sequestration-credit program might work in Alaska.

Carbon credits — representing tons of carbon that are “sequestered” and thus removed from the atmospheric carbon pool — are already trading on the Chicago Climate Exchange. Such credits are valuable to companies that fear that future international agreements or national laws and regulations may crack down on the release of greenhouse gases.

The new law directs the commissioner of DNR to “recommend policies or programs to enhance the ability of the state to participate in systems of carbon trading.” The recommendations produced by DNR may include identifying private landowners or non-profit groups that might assist or participate in the program. DNR has also been instructed to produce educational materials on the subject, to examine the sequestration programs of other states, and to identify areas in which more research is needed.

It is currently uncertain whether increased carbon storage in Alaska's forests or soils would be biophysically feasible, ecologically desirable, or economically attractive. However, researching the possibilities is an exciting opportunity, and making money by keeping greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere represents a departure from more traditional extractive land-uses in the state.

PROSPEROUS FUTURE DEVELOPMENT COALITION

The PFD Coalition is a diverse group of Alaskans who care about Alaska's economic future.

The PFD Coalition is proposing economic development strategies for Alaska's future.

online at www.pfdcoalition.org

Northern Center seeks comment on Celia M. Hunter Library

By Nicole M. Braem, Membership & Communications

The Northern Center is seeking comments from members on a proposal to create the Celia M. Hunter Conservation Library.

Tentative plans call for the proposed library to be located behind the NAEC office on College Road. An existing garage would be renovated to house the collection.

Such a library would fill the need for a centralized repository for the many scattered collections of documents relating to the development of the conservation movement in this region — and itself would be a continuation of the work Celia began. Ideally, it would serve as a place where individuals could find background and historical information on important issues and have access to environmental regulations and Environmental Impact Statements (EIS.) It is envisioned as a resource for NAEC members preparing testimony, letters to the editor, or articles for the *Northern Line*.

Those interested in getting involved in the planning process for this project should contact NAEC Executive Director Arthur Hussey for more information.

Harriman Expedition Bookset Available

For those interested in first edition Alaskan 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 II: History, Geography, Resources by John Burroughs, John Muir, and George Bird Grinnell. Long-time 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 Center receives multiple requests, we will hold a sealed-bid auction amongst interested bidders. For more information contact NAEC at (907)452-5021 or email info@northern.org.

Community PerspectiveContinued from page 6

listen to someone that has an opposite point of view on an issue you care about. To really look at this person and try and see WHO they are. To try and imagine what shaped their values. Maybe to quietly respond after a pause, with something real that would probably sound more like noticing a path, than a point of view.

I think this must be how rivers work. Flowing steady and branching out, shaping earth and stone and defining itself over the long haul.

There are some water quality issues that are worth looking at up the Goodpaster River — close to this stretch of the Tanana where I live.

There are lots of specifics to be studied and understood with regards to the gold mine perched up the Goodpaster and its long-term effects on water quality. Vested interest for everyone and everything that lives down river from it — over a thousand miles of it — all the way to the Bering Sea. Most important that real wisdom guides this. I'm hoping to contribute your secret marble lesson to this discussion.

Thanks — Tim Robb
Tenderfoot Hill

Don't Just Recycle, Freecycle!

Fairbanks recently joined over 700 communities participating in the Freecycle Network, an online grassroots movement to reduce waste.

The concept is simple - get free stuff and keep your unwanted goods out of the landfill. Everything posted to the network must be free. (Membership is free, too.) Each local group is run by a local volunteer coordinator.

Individuals can either post something they want to give away, or request an item. One NAEC staffer placed a request on the day she signed up for the listserve — and had a response the next day!

To sign up for the freecycle program in Fairbanks, head to www.freecycle.org, choose the region -- in this case the U.S. Pacific region -- and select the Fairbanks group.

The Freecycle Network is a project of RISE, a non-profit organization whose goal is to reduce waste, generate employment training, and foster cooperation between other nonprofit groups and the public. RISE began the Freecycle Network in May 2003 in Tucson to promote waste reduction in that city's downtown.



Camp Habitat

Nature Education Camp
for children ages 4-16

Still has openings for 6-16 year olds!

Nature Sprouts I & II (ages 4-5) are filled.. but spaces are available in other sessions



Day Camp

Refuge Adventures (6-7)

Water Striders (8-9)

Nature Detectives (6-11)

Older Campers (ages 8-11) venture to Alaska State Parks for an overnight camping trip at week's end!

Ages 6-11

July 12-16 (9:00-4:00) \$170

July 19-23 (9:00-4:00) \$185

July 26-30 (9:00-4:00) \$185

Ages 11-16

August 2-6 \$275

July 19-24 \$300

Backpacking Trips

Introduction to Backpacking (11-13)

White Mountain Explorers (13-16)

To Register contact Camp Habitat 452-5021. Scholarships available.

Sponsored by the Northern Alaska Environmental Center, Friends of Creamer's Field and Alaska Department of Fish and Game.



*Pogo: A Time for Principles**Continued from page 2*

believe this exercise will contribute to renewed, constructive working relationships with a key partner.

A Time to Listen

Pogo required that we listen. To members, some very critical of our position. To often hostile legislators. To the general public. To Teck-Cominco. And to the many people who saw our stance as an icon, for better or for worse. Doing so was not easy, under fire as we were. But we had to do so and we did indeed listen at all times.

Listening — and acting on what we heard — resulted in two concrete outputs:

- a) We listened to Teck and responded to their request for concrete, specific technical proposals.
- b) We listened to the general public, as well as our members. We heard their interest that we reach an expeditious, yet principled conclusion. As a result, we worked diligently to reach a negotiated settlement as quickly as possible, while remaining true to our commitment to environmental protection.

A Time to Cooperate

Pogo brought us together with counterparts with whom we don't normally agree. The multinational Teck with its questionable environmental record at Red Dog and other places. The Alaska DNR. The U.S. EPA. We could not have done so — nor reached any agreement — without being honestly committed to working with these groups. The result of that cooperation, aided greatly by the mediation efforts of David Rogers and Brian Rogers, was the agreement announced by the Governor on the 5th of May.

Less obvious in terms of cooperation is that which we had with other groups. The Chamber of Commerce. The Fairbanks North Star Borough and the City Council. The Alaska conservation community. Failing to work well with any one of these groups may well have spelled a much less favorable conclusion than we had.

With the exception of the last group, none are traditional allies of NAEC. Nonetheless, we worked, on the whole, well with all of them, given the circumstances. Doing so reinforced the decision we took in 2000 to reach out more to the community, to cooperate with a wider variety of interests. And make no mistake, we have every intention of continuing to cooperate with a diverse array of groups in Fairbanks. In fact, we proposed to

resume dialogue with Teck, duly facilitated by an outside party, as one of our specific conditions for withdrawal of the Pogo appeal. We anticipate doing so sometime in the next few months.

A Time to be Alaskans

If Pogo meant anything, its most enduring lesson may be that we of the Pogo community (NAEC, DNR, et al) were, for once and for all, Alaskans: principled, outspoken and, above all, desirous of reaching “local” solutions. We solved the problem within Alaska's boundaries. We refined initial proposals into acceptable solutions, such as the Citizens' Advisory Committee. We argued. And we came together. In the end, we were Alaskans who cared about our state, its fantastic ecosystems, its people and its economy.

More than most, Pogo was an issue that defined our concerns about Alaska's environment. About its politics. About its economy. We had to reach these definitions quickly, for Pogo seemed to evolve hour to hour, day to day. In the coming weeks and months, we have time for reflection and will be evaluating the Pogo process in detail. I'll be talking with our conservation group colleagues in Anchorage. We'll be hosting a members' barbecue in June to hear your views.

Finally, no event like this goes without a round of thanks. Therefore, I take this opportunity to recognize several parties for their contributions to the process:

- to Teck, DNR and EPA for sitting down and negotiating under circumstances that were probably as trying for them as for us;
- to Brian Rogers and David Rogers for their exceptional facilitation skills;
- to Rep. David Gutenberg for his support of mediation when so many others called for capitulation;
- to Mayors Thompson, Whitaker and Jacobson and the Chamber of Commerce for their commitment to hearing the views of both sides; and
- to the many members and colleagues in the Alaska conservation community who offered advice, resources and encouragement throughout the challenging process.

In closing, I am interested in hearing from you, as always. By phone. In person. By email. By snailmail. Your views are important. In the meantime, all the best. And thanks for your support and understanding.



Above: The reflections above in the Jago River valley in June mark the transition between winter and summer. Photo: Wilbur Mills, NAEC file photo.

Shape and Protect Alaska's Future...

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



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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.

THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT has two “damaging” bills in Congress: Rep. Pombo (R-CA) the chair of the House committee with primary authority over the act, “has set his sights on dismantling” it. *Focus*, May-June 2004, p. 2

“EASING ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS for a multitude of gasoline blends and streamlining permits for new refineries to increase fuel supplies and fight soaring prices” are being considered by the Bush administration.

Environmentalists say use of clean-burning blends had been consistently one of the most effective measures to protect public health and the environment...” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, May 27, 2004, p. A1, A8.

THE TANANA AREA PLAN is being revised, and state land and

wildlife classifications “are going to be largely influenced by ‘our local elected officials and public comments.” *Denali Citizens Council News*, April 2004, p. 4

THIS YEAR IS THE 40TH anniversary of the Wilderness Act but even National Wildlife Refuges that contain Wilderness — including more than 18 million acres in Alaska — are in danger, as “the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service is rewriting its policies to put commercial and motorized uses ahead of wilderness protection.” *Wilderness Watch*, flyer, May 14, 2004.

THE KENSINGTON GOLD MINE near Juneau will have \$150,000 spent by the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority to study a financing request by Coeur Alaska to develop the mine. A small lake would be dammed and its level

raised by about 90 feet. This would theoretically make the lake no longer “waters of the U. S.”, and turn it into a waste-water treatment facility, so tailings could be dumped there legally. The EPA will decide if the plan is permissible (this might also affect other major gold prospects such as the one Dunlin Creek near the Kuskowim, and another near Iliamna.) *FDNM*, May 9, 2004, p. A3; May 9, p. A1, A9

WHALE WATCHERS “may be making so much noise that killer whales off the coast of WA have to change their calls to communicate...”

Their calls are 15% longer “when boats cluster around them, as shown by recordings from 1977 to 2003; the average number of boats around a pod increased 5-fold, to about 22, in that time. The pod studied has been declining since 1996. *Science News*, May 1, 2004, p. 275

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



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