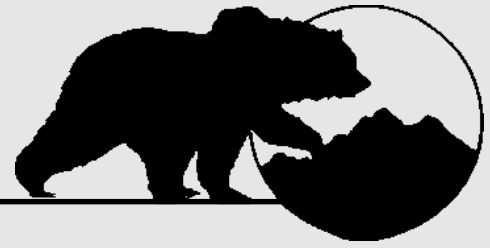


THE NORTHERN LINE



"I think what I'd like to leave with people your age is the idea that change is possible, but you're going to have to put your energy into it...I'm past 80 and I'm not going to be the mover and shaker of this, but people like you are. And you're going to have to bite the bullet and really decide what kind of world you want to live in." - Celia Hunter, radio interview in 2001



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What's in a Word: Wilderness?

by Arthur Hussey, Executive Director

Wilderness. No word so defines NAEC's history as does this word. Surprisingly, no word appears less in our policies than does *wilderness*. Indeed, in this year of 2004, the fortieth anniversary of the landmark Wilderness Act, NAEC has as yet no policy with the word "Wilderness" in the title. We're going to change that soon.

The first thing we'll deal with is *legally-designated* wilderness, a.k.a. "Wilderness," the result of the 1964 Wilderness Act. This is the land that we have preserved for future generations, to continue to exist as it was before the advent of industrial society, "... *where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.*" It's one of the main reasons that we continue to be so passionate about our work.

Wilderness means different things to different people. To me, it is not:

- A place that's locked up, forever off limits to people;
- A place that we can do anything we want; or
- A place that's forever vacant, free of people. I bear in mind that indigenous Americans actively practice subsistence activities in Wilderness and have done so since well before "Wilderness" came into our legal lexicon.

Rather, Wilderness is an area where we use restraint,

where we don't unleash humanity's technological prowess. It's where natural processes predominate.

There's another aspect of Wilderness that attracts me: in these days of questionable U.S. reputations throughout the world, Wilderness is something that we as Americans should be proud of. In other words, our economy has developed enough so that we don't need to extract and transform every last bit of our natural resources. Rather we have the liberty — and responsibility — to allocate some of our great land to remain as it was "before impetuous man appeared on the [scene]." If all countries could be so privileged, the world would be a different place.

There's another type of wilderness, what we loosely call "wildlands." These are lands that have no legal protection as Wilderness, per se, but that are otherwise substantially unaffected by industrial development. Picture the 1002 Area of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the Minto Flats, the Tanana Flats south of the Intertie, the White Mountains. These lands have other types of protections, as does the Arctic Refuge with its designation as a Wildlife Refuge, but that protection is invariably less than exists for Wilderness.

Wildlands are important because they encompass a very sizeable chunk of Alaska. I know, for, as a pilot I spend a lot of time peering down at the landscape. Take, for example, the 267 mile run from Fairbanks to Galena. Once I'm past the railroad tracks just west of Fairbanks, the next real area of development I encoun-

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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 1,233 members.

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



Burning Questions: Record Fires Scorch Alaska in 2004

By Nancy Fresco, Boreal Forest Coordinator

During the summer of 2004, about 6.3 million acres of Alaska's forest burned¹ — an area larger than the entire state of Vermont. For much of July and August, dense smoke blanketed Fairbanks, making breathing difficult and outdoor recreation impossible. Several small communities to the north and east of town were evacuated. Some public and private property was destroyed. Many local residents, particularly those with respiratory conditions, headed south to find cleaner air.

While it is easy to focus on the negative consequences of these fires and to assume that the impacts might have been lessened by suppressing blazes, the real solutions are much more complex. As in most years, the vast majority of the acreage burned resulted from lightning strikes, not human-caused fires. Although firefighters work hard to suppress fires in zones designated as "critical" or "full protection" in order to protect human lives and valuable property, most fires burn relatively unchecked. This is sound policy, since fire is crucial to the revitalization of the ecosystem.

Fires of varying size and intensity create a mosaic of different vegetation types. New growth of willows, berries, and flowering plants proliferate. Black spruce in particular are highly fire-adapted and release copious seeds after their resinous cones are heated by a blaze. Each species plays an important role in providing food and cover for Alaska's diverse wildlife, and the patchiness of fire creates a landscape that fulfills complex habitat requirements.

Attempting to suppress more fires would be counterproductive as well as expensive; fire suppression often increases eventual fire severity by allowing burnable materials to accumulate.

Fires in Alaska tend to be cyclic rather than regular, meaning that years with very few fires are interspersed with high fire years. However, 2004 broke every existing record. Some people termed it a disaster. Others merely shrugged, accustomed to adverse weather. Was the summer of 2004 merely an unusual year within the normal pattern, or was it a harbinger global climate change?

Forest scientists are finding evidence that supports the latter hypothesis. Many researchers are currently trying to assess the interaction between climate and fire in Alaska. The increase in fire severity and frequency in the past quarter century parallels a trend towards hotter, dryer weather. While the connection with global patterns has not been proven irrefutably, the potential ramifications are worth pondering: more fire in the boreal may mean melting permafrost, dramatically changing ecosystems, even more CO₂ in the atmosphere, and even more warming^{2,3,4}.

What can be done? In the most immediate sense, we can protect both ourselves and Alaska's ecosystems by thinning dry brush and spruce trees from around homes and businesses, by planting less fire-prone shrubs and trees in urban areas, and by continuing to allow fires to burn in forests far from human habitation. Urban and suburban sprawl should be prevented, as much as possible, to minimize the overlap of urban areas and forests. Where buildup of fire-prone material is already a problem, small prescribed burns can help prevent large uncontrolled burns in the future.

We can deal with smoke by using air filters, and by providing "safe" public places such as libraries and schools to harbor at-risk individuals. Long-term, however, fire in Alaska may not return to balanced cycles until we limit, on a global scale, all the human activities that are directly or indirectly causing accumulation of excess carbon dioxide and methane in the atmosphere.

This is a task that a few air filters — or even a fully equipped firefighting crew — can't solve. It must be addressed at all levels, from the individual to the international — and it must be tackled now.

¹ Alaska Fire Service <http://fire.ak.blm.gov/>

² Kasischke, E.S. and Stocks, B.J., Editors (2000) *Fire, Climate Change and Carbon Cycling in the Boreal Forest Ecological Studies Series*, Volume 138, New York: Springer-Verlag, 2000.

³ <http://www.uaf.edu/water/projects/frostfire/frostfire.html>

⁴ Chapin, F.S. J. Beringer, H. Epstein, W. Eugster, A. Lloyd, A. Lynch, J. McFadden, D. McGuire, and M. Sturm. 2002. Vegetation feedbacks to climate warming in Alaskan arctic and boreal ecosystems. *Bull. Ecol. Soc. Amer.*

Fairbanks paper recycling put on hold:

Assessment holds promise for better waste management and recycling

By Nancy Fresco, Local Issues Coordinator

In response to a 2002 survey, Fairbanks North Star Borough residents cited lack of recycling as the number one local environmental issue.

Every week, people call us wanting to know what they can do with aluminum, paper, glass, plastic, and every other possible type of waste. When we helped create a collection site for glass bottles — in collaboration with the University of Alaska and Green Star — we were almost overwhelmed by the response. More than one hundred tons of glass have been voluntarily brought to that site in six months.

Then, just when it appeared things were headed in the right direction, paper recycling abruptly halted. The glass program is continuing, but it is at capacity, and at times people are frustrated to find the bins completely full. Why, when Fairbanksans clearly want recycling and most other American communities have effective programs, is our community so far behind? What is going wrong — and how are we working to fix it?

The short answer is that our paper collection program was dependent on a deal between the Borough and Eielson Air Force Base. When AFB contracted out its paper pelletization program, the old agreement was voided. Under the former contract, paper collected in Fairbanks was turned into fuel pellets that were used to replace a portion of the coal used in Eielson's power plant. In

exchange, Eielson was allowed to dump some of its trash in the Fairbanks landfill.

The long answer, however, is a little more complicated. The exchange with Eielson was originally intended to be merely a pilot program, and thus was never planned on more than a small scale and a short time-frame. However, the years went by, and the pilot program was never expanded into a "real" program. Participants had to take their paper to the landfill themselves; there was no roadside pickup and no paper collection at the transfer stations used by people living outside of town. Thus, only an estimated 3.5% of the Borough's paper waste was being reused as fuel. Meanwhile, no additional local markets for waste paper were created, and more distant markets were never explored.

Recycling in Fairbanks is limited by several important factors. Some are intrinsic to our location and size: we are a long way from existing markets for recycled material, and we aren't large enough to support full-scale traditional recycling businesses such as an aluminum can plant or a paper mill. In addition, our community sprawls, and many homes and businesses rely on transfer stations or direct hauling to the landfill rather than roadside trash pickup services.

These challenges, however, are not insurmountable. The real limitation to recycling is the fact that we

have never systematically assessed all the information necessary to set up a program that would be economically viable, sustainable over the long-term, and user-friendly.

Upon the shutdown of paper collection at the beginning of the summer, NAEC immediately set to work to get it started again, one way or another. For now, this means renegotiating an agreement with the new waste managers at Eielson. Borough Mayor Jim Whitaker has been very supportive of our ideas and is actively working towards this goal, although results are by no means guaranteed.

In the long term, however, we need to find a much larger-scale solution — not just for paper, but for all our recyclable waste.

Currently, NAEC is working closely with Interior Alaska Green Star, the Associated Students of UAF recycling program, and Mayor Whitaker to find out what we can — and cannot — do about "greening" our trash program.

Eventually we hope to answer the following questions:

- How much waste are we creating in each major category (paper, glass, metals, plastics, and organic material)?
- How much is it costing us as a community to collect and dispose of these wastes?
- What would be the additional cost of collecting recyclables separately, and what would be the savings from

(...Continued on Page 18)

Mining the Stock Market:

Junior Mining Companies hunt for investors, not gold

By Mara Bacsujlaky, Mining Coordinator

In modern metal mining, mining companies are typically classified as majors or juniors.

Majors – like Barrick, Placer Dome and Teck Cominco – are those that have an established track record of operating mines, substantial ore reserves, and a number of mines in operation.

Junior mining companies, which more properly are exploration companies, are those with no operating mines or ore reserves, whose principle activity is speculation: conducting exploration programs in new areas, funded by massive stock placements. Although infrequently a junior will find something worth mining, most times a “hot” prospect turns out to be a bust, with neither a mineable deposit nor a mining company standing in line to take over the property.

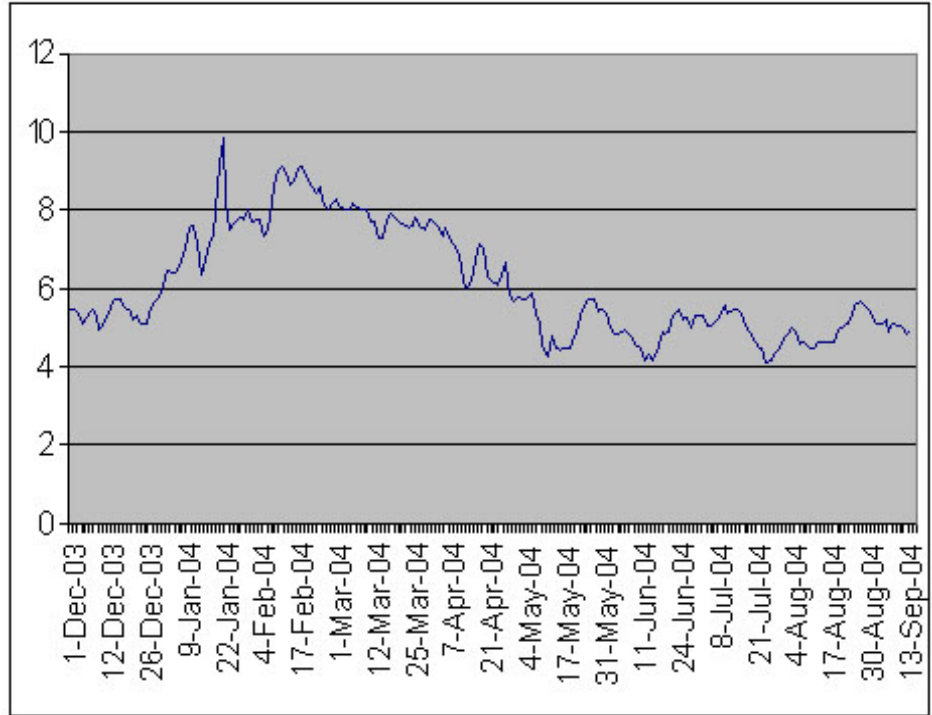
That’s as good as gold — if not better — because being a loser in the grand game of finding precious metals pays big. It’s a tax shelter shell game that makes even the savviest of market aficionados reel, and it works because of Canadian tax laws and the Vancouver Stock Exchange.

Mining money not ore

While the public persona of a junior mining company is about undertaking the risky business of exploration and selling off a discovery to a major waiting in the wings, the real business of juniors is mining the stock market.

That market is the Vancouver Stock Exchange (VSE) – which has been called the “Sodom and Gomorrah of modern day financial markets.”¹ The massive amounts of capital needed for exploration and development activities combined with the high risk and lure of finding the “Big One” attract gamblers, speculators and thrill seekers to mining like no other business.

Over the past 30 years, the VSE has gained notori-



Above: Northern Dynasty's daily stock closing price on the Vancouver Stock Exchange since December 2003.

ety not only for the amount of money raised (in one five-year period over \$4 billion²) but for its scams and scandals – most notably the Bre-X gold-salting affair.³ While Bre-X Minerals Ltd. represents the worst end of the junior spectrum (it fraudulently claimed it had found the world’s largest gold deposit), juniors overall possess characteristics that auger ill for communities that end up with their exploration or development projects.

You know it’s a junior when...

First, junior mining companies have no working mines to provide revenue, no ore reserves, machinery, equipment, or mill plants to count as assets.

What they do have is a long history of losses and no earnings. For example, Northern Dynasty Minerals, Ltd., which is proposing to develop the Pebble copper-gold project near Lake Iliamna, Alaska, disclosed in its June 2004 filing with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission that it “has a history of 20 years of losses [and that it] may never be profitable.”⁴

To get money to do exploration (there never seems to be enough money to do adequate reclamation),

(...Continued on Page 6)

*Mining the Stock Market**Continued from page 5*

juniors sell stock – most typically in private placements: large blocks of negotiated shares sold between company principals.

In one such placement, Northern Dynasty raised over \$20 million for its Pebble Project. Galahad Gold, a British junior headed by Ian Watson, who also sits on the Northern Dynasty board, purchased over half the placement. Not only does this stock shuffling among insiders enable juniors to finance their exploration, it provides, through a complicated accounting of losses and gains, excellent tax deductions and handsome returns for company directors.

Second, juniors issue with great frequency – usually about once a month – flashy press releases that not only tease with a few juicy drill results, but also draw geologic parallels between their prospect and an established mining belt somewhere in the world. In Alaska, where junior Nevada Star Resources is wildcatting for platinum and nickel near Tangle Lakes and Rainbow Mountain, it's the Noril'sk nickel/platinum belt in Russia.

At Pebble, Northern Dynasty is trumpeting its similarities to Bingham Canyon in Utah – which has been

...juniors often produce exploration plans that could fit on a cocktail napkin.

mined for copper for the last 100 years. These hyped-up press releases, combined with slick websites, strategically placed infomercials and suave company spokesmen work towards a single purpose – to keep the project/company afloat until a better-capitalized mining company can buy it out.

If these efforts aren't successful, no matter, because lastly, juniors possess an ability to repeatedly rise from the dead that puts Count Dracula to shame. Should that gold turn out to be fool's gold after all, the company — frequently a subsidiary of a private holding company⁵ — writes off its losses, reorganizes under a new name and the cycle starts all over again.

A messy legacy

So if a company with no revenue wants to take on

the risk of trying to fund a \$20 million exploration program who should care aside from the investors who front the money?

If juniors just kept to mining paper and stayed put in Vancouver, it would indeed be an issue confined to the financial world, but these companies leave a legacy of adverse impacts in communities throughout the world, including Alaska. These can include open and unreclaimed drill holes and trenches, drilling mud and fuel spills, abandoned fuel drums and other camp items or trash, poaching of game, degraded habitat, and unreclaimed or poorly constructed and sited exploration roads, resulting in long-term damage to habitat from erosion or increased access.

While majors have phalanxes of geologists and engineers designing and implementing mineral development activities and the capital to fund both exploration that minimizes long-term environmental damage and solid reclamation, juniors often produce exploration plans that could fit on a cocktail napkin.

There is no incentive for them to design technically competent and environmentally protective exploration programs because those don't sell stock any better than the slapdash ones and they cost more. Also, juniors have no ties to the communities they work in; unlike other businesses, including the major mining companies, they have no regular staff living in the affected community and they don't participate in local civic and charitable activities.

They also don't worry about long-term liability from their operations — because they are here one day and gone the next.

Corporate Accountability for Juniors

Alaska is a magnet for VSE speculators because of our vast unexplored country that could be hiding a dozen more deposits like Red Dog, the world's largest zinc producer, a history of boom and bust and an administration that focuses on short-term gains, no matter the long-term costs.

The antidote is both statutory and educational. A bad actor provision in Alaska state law that prohibited a company, or its directors, from further conducting mineral activity on state land if they had previously defaulted on reclamation obligations would be one way

(...Continued on page 7)



Above: Reclamation as done by Silverado Gold Mines Ltd. — a plastic bucket covers an open drill hole on Ester Dome in Fairbanks, AK. © NAEC 2003.

Mining the Stock Market

Continued from page 6

to encourage corporate responsibility from juniors. Another is to enact stricter bonding regulations on exploration activities, so there is money available for reclamation should the company disappear.

Finally, Alaskans should demand that our public land managers consider a mining company's financial history and balance sheet when processing exploration and mining permits. After all, a bank wouldn't mortgage a house without proof of financial responsibility and credit checks — why should it be any different for mining companies?

¹ David Baines, "The Sins of the Commission," *Equity Magazines*, v. 12(5), May 1994, p 28-37.

² Alan Young, "Whose Risks, Whose Rewards?" Environmental Mining Council of British Columbia at www.miningwatch.org/emcbc/publications/VSE_hazardous_waste.htm.

³ Bre-X Minerals Ltd., a Canadian junior, made international headlines and started a financial feeding frenzy when it claimed it had found a 200-million ounce gold deposit at the headwaters of the Busang River in Borneo. Barrick, the Indonesian government and Freeport McMoran all fought to gain controlling interest in what appeared to be the world's largest gold deposit. Freeport won out, but its due diligence work revealed no more than an insignificant amount of gold. After the scandal broke, Bre-X's geologist on the project mysteriously fell out of a helicopter — an apparent suicide.

⁴ Form 20-F, Northern Dynasty Minerals, Ltd., filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, June 10, 2004.

⁵ For example, Northern Dynasty is one of nine publicly traded companies owned by Hunter Dickinson Group, Inc., a private company. All but one of the Northern Dynasty Directors sit on the board of HDGI.

Sorting through the hype:

When they say: "A recent independent resource estimate by Norwest Corporation established the Pebble deposit as the largest gold deposit and at the same time the second largest copper deposit in North America."

Source: Northern Dynasty Minerals, Ltd. press release, 3/17/04

They really mean: "Norwest has relied extensively on information supplied by Northern Dynasty Minerals Ltd. regarding geological interpretations on plan... Norwest has not verified this information."

Source: Disclaimer, Norwest Corporation, Resource Estimate Pebble Gold Project, Iliamna Lake Area, Alaska 2/20/04

When they say: "We have sufficient drill data to confirm there is a mine. The question is how big it will be."

Source: Bruce Jenkins, Director of Environment and Permitting, Northern Dynasty Minerals, Ltd. quoted in "Massive Mine Gains Momentum," Alaska Journal of Commerce, 5/4/04

They really mean: "Northern Dynasty's recently optioned Pebble property contains no known reserves of ore."

Source: Ronald W. Thiessen, President and Director, on behalf of Northern Dynasty Minerals Ltd. Form 20-F filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, 6/10/04

When they say: "Northern Dynasty is committed to engineer, permit, construct and operate a long life, large-scale, open pit, gold-copper-molybdenum mine at [Pebble]."

Source: Northern Dynasty Minerals Ltd. press release, 03/17/04

They really mean: "There can be no assurance that Northern Dynasty will obtain additional financing on acceptable terms (or at all), and failure to obtain such financing could result in the loss of Northern Dynasty's interest in the Pebble Project."

Source: Ronald W. Thiessen, President and Director, on behalf of Northern Dynasty Minerals Ltd. Form 20-F filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, 6/10/04

Alaska Mining Roundup

By Mara Bacsujlaky, Mining Coordinator

Pogo Mine Construction Moves Along

Despite wildfires burning up to the Pogo air strip and across the road at several locations, construction at the mine is progressing at a rapid pace. The road is in use, the bridge over the Goodpaster is in place, and the entire mine footprint is grubbed out.

In preparation for constructing the dam and impoundment, removal of the overburden in Liese Creek is underway. During a recent over-flight in early August, Liese Creek, an intermittent creek according to Teck Cominco, had water flowing in it even though this is one of the driest summers on record.



Pogo mine site with Goodpaster Bridge in August 2004. © NAEC.

Kensington Nears Final Permitting

On August 5, 2004, the public comment period for proposed federal permits for the Kensington Gold Project closed. The Southeast Alaska Conservation Council conducted extensive review and analyses of the proposed Section 404 and NPDES permits. The Northern Center, along with the Auk Kwaan and the Mineral Policy Center/Earthworks, joined SEACC in their submittal of written comments.

The Kensington Gold Project, operated by Coeur Alaska, Inc., a subsidiary of the Idaho-based Coeur d'Alene Mines Corporation, is located on the northwest shore of Berners Bay, near Juneau, Alaska. The bay is one of Juneau's prime recreation, hunting and fishing areas. As at the Pogo gold mine in the Interior, Coeur proposes to dump tailings into waters of the U.S. – a direct violation of the Clean Water Act. At Kensington, it is Slate Lake that will become a tailings dump. Despite Alaska state law that defines mine tailings treated with chemicals as "waste," the Environmental Protection Agency takes the position that at the point of disposal into the lake, the tailings are fill material, and are thereby regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Pebble reality... "no known reserves or body of commercially viable ore."

Recent press on the Pebble Project, near Lake Iliamna on the Alaskan Peninsula, makes it sound like the development of one of the world's largest open pit copper-gold mines is just around the corner. The p.r. flowing from Northern Dynasty Minerals, (NDM), the junior exploration company currently controlling the Pebble claims, states that the mine will employ up to 1,000 people, operate for 30 to 60 years and require as much energy to power it as does the entire Kenai Peninsula. The State of Alaska has already entered into agreements with the company that will expedite preparation and approval of their operating permits, and many contractors have been hired to collect baseline data. The question is — is all of this a bit premature?

According to NDM's own financial disclosures submitted in June 2004, Pebble is merely an exploration project. The company acknowledges that "there are currently no known reserves or body of commercially viable ore."

This contrasts strongly with public statements that NDM has made on whistle stop tours in villages in the Iliamna region, Kenai and Homer – where company officials touted the potentially five-mile wide open pit mine as just about a done deal. In reality, much technical work remains to be done to determine if any of the identified copper and gold resource can be recovered, and if the grades are sufficient to support a mine.

Flawed Final Alpine Plan Released by BLM

By Kelly Hill Scanlon, Arctic Coordinator

Will the Alpine Satellite Development Plan really benefit North Slope villages? An unlikely source outlines problems with ConocoPhillips Alaska Inc.'s plan — the Bureau of Land Management.

On September 3, 2004, the Bureau of Land Management released the final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for ConocoPhillips Alaska Inc.'s plan for moving forward with five satellite oil exploration and drilling operations in an area known as the Alpine Satellite Development. The area encompasses state and federal lands within the northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska and the Colville River Delta.

ConocoPhillips Alaska Inc.'s (CPAI) proposed development includes placing 20-30 wells on each of the five drilling pads and to transport the unprocessed product (a three-phase output of oil, gas and water) to the Alpine Central Processing Facility for processing and then shipment to market through the existing pipeline.

The Alpine Plan will directly impact the village of Nuiqsut in several ways including increased access into the traditional hunting grounds used by the villagers. While the village may see an increase in revenue in the short term, the long-term negative impacts of development are many. They are best outlined by the Bureau of Land Management itself in its newsletter *National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska: Alpine Satellite Development Plan, Volume 4, September 2004*. The following paragraphs describing the impacts are directly excerpted from that newsletter:

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

Physical Environment

The Preferred Alternative would create a long-term impact to over 300 acres of soils and land surface area by mining gravel from up to 65 acres to cover approximately 250 acres with fill for drilling pads, roads and an airstrip. Placement of roads, pads, and bridges could affect the surface hydrology and stream channels by increasing scour, sedimentation, shoaling and bank erosion.

Biological Environment

In addition to the approximately 315 acres of veg-

etation that would be covered or disturbed to extract gravel, vegetation would also be impacted by dust, gravel spray, snow accumulations, water impoundments, thermokarsting and temporary ice roads and ice pads.

These impacts could include altering of plant communities or changes in productivity. Although individual animals will be disturbed, displaced or killed, there would be negligible effects on fish, bird and mammal populations. (An exception to this might be if a very large spill reached an important habitat for a bird species at a critical time.) Terrestrial mammals will be disturbed and, at least in the early years of the project, displaced from areas near the development.

Social Systems

Taxes and royalties on CPAI's project will increase North Slope Borough, state and federal government revenues. The total work force to build the project is projected to peak during construction in 2006 at over 500; many fewer individuals will be employed to conduct drilling and operations. The great majority of these jobs are anticipated to be held by people from outside the North Slope.

Nevertheless, social system impacts will be greatest for residents of Nuiqsut. The proposed facilities add to the existing oil production infrastructure in areas of important subsistence fish, bird and mammal harvesting. Local residents are reluctant to hunt near oil facilities, so construction of the proposed development may effectively reduce traditional hunting areas.

The Preferred Alternative places the pipeline 7 feet or higher above the tundra, in contrast to CPAI's original proposal of 5 feet. This reduces, but does not eliminate the potential that the pipeline will impede caribou and hunter movement. Consequently, subsistence hunting could require more lengthy travel and the associated increase in effort, cost and risk. Reduced or disrupted subsistence harvests, should they occur, could impact the social structure of Nuiqsut that depends heavily on the sharing of subsistence foods. Nuiqsut's

(...Continued on page 18)

Camp Habitat Thanks You!

By Juliana Dapice
Camp Habitat Director

It has been another wonderful summer for our fourteenth year of Camp Habitat. Many individuals and organizations helped make it all possible. Thanks to the following businesses, individuals and organizations for their generous donations to Camp Habitat this year, including our scholarship fund:

- Alaska Department of Fish & Game
- Alaska Railroad Corporation
- Arctic Audubon Society
- Bob Ritchie & ABR Inc.
- Doyon Limited
- Eileen Duval of ReMax
- Fairbanks Emblem Club
- Fairbanks North Star Borough
- Fort Wainwright Officers' Spouses' Club
- Frank Keim & Jennifer Allison
- Friends of Creamer's Field
- Holland America
- Interior Graphics and Copy
- MAC Federal Credit Union
- Mary Shields & Tails of the Trail
- Northern Alaska Environmental



Center

- Larry & Merriam Paquin
- Dr. Phyllis Pendergrast
- Sam's Club
- Dr. Gary Sawdy
- The Sierra Club
- Dr. Stephen Sutley
- Ron and Mary Teel
- WalMart
- June Weinstock

I would also like to thank Lora Seery, Assistant Director, and counselors Megan Robert, Allison Athens, Lauren Louwagie, Lissa Robertson, Karen Toland and Nancy Wood. Thanks also to Junior Counselors Joe Hagey, Jasper Rogers, Colette Pauly, Jody March and Audriana Smith.

Many guest speakers came to

camp over the course of the summer thanks to Mark Ross, Lorrie Hawkins (and Yoda and Lilith), Tricia at ABO, AK Parks and Recreation, Susan Grace, Erik Anderson, Mike Taras, Cathie Randall, Brenda Saddler, Laurel Devaney, Cathie Harms and all the rest of you who I may not have named but who have helped in many ways.

Last of all I would like to thank Susan Grace and the Camp Habitat Advisory Board as well as the Camp Habitat campers and their parents who keep Camp Habitat alive and full of wonder, learning and excitement year after year at Creamer's Field.

Thanks for another fun and educational summer at Camp Habitat. See you in 2005!



Conservation and Public Health: A Northern Perspective

By Aaron Wernham, MD, MS

The environmental movement is often cast as being at odds with the public interest. In the press, we seem to be constantly labeled as “taking jobs away” from loggers and miners; we “make it more difficult and costly for industry to operate;” we even “threaten national security” by fighting oil development.

But this perspective overlooks the legitimate public health concerns associated with development. In truth, since Rachel Carson’s “Silent Spring,” which led to the regulation of the pesticide industry and the banning of DDT, environmentalists have won innumerable protections of our air, water, and food supply.

In Alaska, challenges to the environment posed by the oil and mining industry have also created serious public health concerns, and the debate between development and conservation has profound public health implications.

Since subsistence is a deeply rooted part of life for many Alaskan Natives, changes in the natural environment have profound effects on their communities. And while the economic benefits of oil development for Arctic villages are well publicized, the public health impacts have received far less attention.

In March 2003, Nuiqsut mayor Rosemary Ahtuanguaruk testified that her village has seen increases in a wide array of illnesses such as asthma, thyroid problems, and diabetes since the nearby Alpine oil

field operation (the industry’s flagship of the low impact ‘small footprint’ design) began. She also reported marked deterioration in the health of caribou and fish, with hunters noticing tumors, higher parasite burdens, and liver damage in these animals. These concerns, though, are under-studied and rarely publicized.

Oil exploration on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge’s coastal plain would pose a serious threat to the Porcupine caribou herd, and biologists predict that their numbers may decline significantly. But is this a public health issue? Problems such as toxic emissions from oil and mining development pose a tangible, clear-cut public health risk,

...in global warming we will finally find an arena in which human concerns and environmental conservation unquestionably share much ground in common.

but what is the significance to human health if game animals simply decrease in number?

Contrasted with Lower 48 tribes, the prevalence of diabetes and heart disease in Alaskan natives remains remarkably low. This owes largely to the protective effects of a traditional diet and a very physically active subsistence lifestyle.

However, along with develop-

ment comes the replacement of game meat with the high-calorie convenience food available in village stores that will predictably lead to rapid increases in diabetes, obesity, and heart disease.

Perhaps even more significant, the loss of traditional culture and diet correlates strongly with not only medical but social problems as well. As has been the case with many tribes in the Lower 48 under the pressures of rapid cultural and economic change – as subsistence is replaced by work and welfare – disenfranchisement, depression, substance abuse, and suicide rates tend to soar.

Even without continued oil exploration, though, Arctic communities in 2004 stand at the brink of an unprecedented challenge to their environment, their traditions, and their health. In the coming decades, global climate change threatens to become the major threat not only to the natural environment but to public health as well.

International Health organizations foresee a wide range of problems: changing patterns of infectious diseases, deaths from extreme weather events (such as the unprecedented 2003 European heat wave in which an estimated 20,000 people died), contamination of the water supply, and famine. It seems, then, that in global warming we will finally find an arena in which human

(...Continued on Page 18)



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.

On a Positive Note — Environmental Choices to Feel Good About

By Nancy Fresco, Local Issues Coordinator

It is easy to become overwhelmed and depressed by the number of ways we can go wrong environmentally. Our daily activities, we are constantly reminded, can cause everything from water pollution to ecosystem destruction to global warming. What’s a conscientious consumer to do?

In the previous issue of *The Northern Line*, we outlined the worst of the worst: a handful of behaviors and purchases that every conservationist should avoid. These harmful environmental choices — gleaned from expert research by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCN), the U.S. Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Agency, and many non-profit organizations — included chemical-laden lawns, gas-guzzling vehicles, off-road mayhem, and cavalier use of toxic household chemicals.

In this issue, we will put a more positive spin on the question we asked last time: how can we make a difference without sweating every detail?

Things worth buying

In most cases, buying less is part of being environmentally astute. But there are a few exceptions:

- **Chilling:** Refrigerators and freezers have increased so much in efficiency over the past 15 years that if yours is old enough to attend high school, it’s worth replacing it.
- **Not a dim bulb:** Compact fluorescent bulbs now come in a wide range of colors and sizes. They use 1/3 the energy of incandescent bulbs and last ten times longer. Why wouldn’t you buy them?
- **Zap it:** Don’t feel bad about buying a microwave — microwaving uses only 1/5 the energy of heating food in a regular oven (it still doesn’t work for crispy foods, though).
- **Hot stuff:** Buying a new furnace or hot water heater

— or at the very least some extra insulation — may save you money, make you cozier, *and* be good for the environment. Check your efficiency, and invest in warmth.

- **Nutritious and delicious:** You now have another reason to buy non-rubbery tomatoes, even if the local organic produce *is* more expensive. Most of the foods that are good for you (more beans and broccoli, less beef and bacon) are equally good for the environment, so you can feel noble and healthy at the same time.
- **Don’t be a drip:** Water-saving showerheads cost less than \$20, take minutes to install, and save 50% on hot water. Buy one. Or buy several, and give them to friends.

Getting from Point A to point B — and beyond

Your choice of transportation is one of the biggest impacts you’ll ever have as a consumer; driving the right car, sharing rides, and driving less can outweigh a multitude of lesser environmental sins. Here’s the good news:

- **Bikes belong:** You don’t have to be Lance Armstrong. Replacing just one three-mile round-trip car trip per week with a bike trip not only saves gas but also burns about 5,000 calories. If you bike-commute four miles to work every weekday instead of driving, you’ll save about \$200 on gas, keep almost 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere, and burn 65,000 calories.
- **Hybrid vigor:** Hybrid cars have been performing well for several years now — even in the extreme weather of Fairbanks. The average American car (including SUVs and pickups) is driven 17,000 miles per year, using 714 gallons of fuel (\$1378). At 50 miles per gallon, a hybrid saves an average of 374 gallons and \$722.

(...Continued on Page 13)

*On a Positive Note**Continued from page 12***Worry less**

Products that create only a few ounces of waste are much less of a problem than many people think.

- **Weighty issue:** Burning a gallon of gas wastes 8 pounds of hydrocarbons; it would take a heck of a lot of Styrofoam cups or plastic grocery bags to equal even one pound. This doesn't mean you should toss cups and bags about with impunity; it just means that the occasional convenience is – well, convenient.
- **Fashion statement:** Wear what you want, so long as you don't pack three closets with it or buy a whole new wardrobe every year. Yes, organic cotton t-shirts and recycled plastic polypropylene long underwear are among the best options, but your impacts are small so long as you aren't Imelda Marcos.

Speak up

Finally, one of the most important things you can do for the environment is, whenever you get the chance, tell the government to do all of the following.

- Tax polluters, provide incentives to cleanup efforts, or at least stop subsidizing waste
- Set high standards for the performance of everything from stereos to power plants
- Fund environmental research and education
- Discourage sprawl and protect wildlands

Sources and further information:

Brower, Michael, and Warren Leon, The Consumer's Guide to Effective Environmental Choices, The Union of Concerned Scientists, Three Rivers Press, New York, 1999.

United States EPA <http://www.epa.gov/FuelEconomyStandards>, U.S. Department of Energy <http://www.fueleconomy.gov/>

Artists, Authors and Craftspeople Wanted

This December the Northern Center will host its annual holiday sale featuring books, calendars, art and other items celebrating Alaska. If you are interested in having your creations in the sale please contact Sara Elzey or Kelly Hill Scanlon by November 15, 2004. A portion of all sales go to benefit the Northern Center.

Calendar of Earth Friendly Events

September 30 - "Oil on Ice," an hour-long documentary highlighting the controversies surrounding the pursuit of oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, illustrates the inextricably linked issues at stake in the conflict between conservation and energy extraction interest. 7 p.m. at the UAF Salisbury Theatre. For more information, go to: www.oilonice.org.

October 15-17 - Anchorage, Alaska. The Bioneers Conference, the largest environmental sustainability conference in the country is coming to Alaska! A group of Alaskans have been awarded the honor of hosting a local version of the 15th annual Bioneers Conference. The Bioneers in Alaska: Creating Sustainable Communities Conference will be held at the University of Alaska Anchorage. The Bioneers (biological pioneers) Conference promotes practical solutions and innovative strategies for our most pressing environmental and social challenges. For more information, or to become a sponsor or partner organization, visit or contact Mark Masteller at 907-373-0909 or info@sustainak.org.

November 13 - NAEC's Annual Auction - at the Wedgewood Resort; doors open at 5, hors d'oeuvres at 6, event begins at 7 p.m. Come bid on some great items. Last year, we had more than 300 donated auction items, ranging from outdoor equipment and excursion packages, to massages, artwork, and pottery. For more information contact Kerynn Fisher at 479-0559.

Join us for the
**2004 Annual FUNdraising
AUCTION!**

for the
**Northern Alaska
Environmental Center**

**Saturday, November 13
Wedgewood Resort
Tickets \$20**

**5pm • Doors Open
6pm • Hors d'oeuvres Social
7pm • Auction Action Begins**

Featuring a Kenai Fjords tour package,
season tickets to the Fairbanks Symphony, a dis-
counted dinner for four at Lavelle's Bistro,
cool outdoor gear, decadent desserts and more!



We are still taking donations of items, for more info please
contact us at 479-0559.

Searching for Environmental Justice

By David Radcliff

We are rightly concerned for the state of the earth in our times — the vanishing forests, declining plant and animal populations, shrinking ice sheets. Our ire is especially raised as we see the last wild places — such as the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge — threatened for the sake of a few months worth of oil. Many of us have seen or heard about the plants, mammals, birds and other living things that depend on this pristine area for critical habitat. We know about the Porcupine Caribou Herd that travels hundreds of miles to the Coastal Plain for an intense few weeks of calving and preparation for return to their wintering grounds, but few of us have actually seen this area.

For the past three summers, I have visited among another group for whom this habitat is critical — the Gwich'in people of Arctic Village, Alaska. Each year our delegations go to this small native community, some 150 souls living 150 miles above the Arctic Circle, to live with them and learn from them about their culture, history and dependence on the land, and in particular the Porcupine Caribou Herd, for survival. And each year they have challenged us to see the well-being of the caribou not just as an environmental concern, but as integrally bound up with the well-being of their people.

For the Gwich'in, living in a dozen communities in the region, preserving the sanctity of the Coastal Plain is a human rights and even religious issue: the former, in that their interrelationship with the Porcupine Herd is a key source of their identity as a people, not to mention over half of their food supply. From the religious perspective, they call the birthing grounds, "the sacred place where life began." Their creation stories weave together their own and the caribou's origins.

If we think about it for long, caring for the earth has very clear implications for human justice. The warming climate is already responsible for over 150,000 deaths annually worldwide, according to the World Health Organization. In the Lower 48, air pollution is the prime culprit in 70,000 respiratory-related fatalities each year. Water quality — or lack thereof — leads to millions of premature deaths in the global neighborhood.

Even in the religious sphere, I believe we all suffer



Church of the New Brethren group, left to right, front: Chad Kister, Brent Carlson, Sarah Reed, David Radcliff; back: David Steele, Emily Laudeman, Bill Puffenberger, Kelly Hill Scanlon, and Ed Goff.

spiritually for not being able to see the Milky Way due to light pollution. And the lack of areas left in their wild estate, where we can actually hear the sounds of silence, further separates us from the wonder and solace of undisturbed contemplation.

In this way, perhaps the Gwich'in are the "canary in the mine" for the human family. They remind us that it is at our own peril that we disregard the health of the ecosystem, and that a dependable and even inspirational environment is a right for all of us.

In regard to protecting the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Fanny Gemmil of Arctic Village sees the Gwich'in role as one benefiting the wider human family. "People are trying to open up those lands just for the oil," she told us around the campfire one morning. "We want to keep them the way they are for the future, so maybe 200 years from now people will say it was the Gwich'in who kept it this way." Let us join them in the struggle, for the well-being of the earth and for all who dwell therein.

Editor's Note: David Radcliff is the Director of the Church of the Brethren's New Community Project's learning tours. Their purpose is "to build community with our neighbors, to explore pressing issues of justice and environmental stewardship from a Christian perspective, and to grow in faith." To learn more about the project log on to www.newcommunityproject.org.

BOREAL SHORTS

By Nancy Fresco
Boreal Forest Coordinator



Local Timber Attracts Interest

Early this year, we reported that at the direction of Governor Frank Murkowski, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry was advertising the availability of timber in the interior of the state to potential timber processors. According to a report provided to the Board of Forestry at their meeting in Fairbanks in July, the state has thus far heard from two companies with tentative interest in the offering. However, neither business prospect has progressed further.

Any business using local timber would impact both the forest and the community, but the nature of those impacts would depend upon the scale of the business and the degree to which the wood is processed. In general, small-scale value-added businesses are preferable to large-scale export of raw logs or rough cut timber. Not only do such businesses demand lower harvests, but they are also 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.

All forest 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 1.77 million acre Tanana Valley State Forest is governed by its own management plan.

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



Fire Sale! The Run for the Refuge was smoked out, leaving us buried in a pile of red, hot t-shirts, now on sale for \$10 at the Northern Center offices.

Run for the Refuge thanks due

The Northern Alaska Environmental Center would like to extend a big "thank you" to all of the individuals and businesses who worked so hard to put on the 8th Annual Run for the Refuge. Unfortunately, the smoke worked a little harder and, after rescheduling it, we were forced to cancel the race. However, this does not minimize our appreciation of the efforts of the following:

Special thanks to Stan Justice for setting the 5K course. Thanks also to Robert and Claudia Weeden, John Hagey, Sara Elzey, Mary Shields, Dan Adams, Ritchie Music, and Claudia Rector for volunteering their time to help out on race day.

Thanks to our sponsors—Raven Cross Country, Hearthside Bakery, Gulliver's Books, Beaver Sports, College Coffee House, College Town Pizzeria, Hot Licks Ice Cream, The Magic Carpet, Cold Spot Feeds, Sam's Club, the Alaska Club Fairbanks, Food Factory, Alaska Tent and Tarp, Trademark ScreenPrinting & Embroidery, the UAF Patty Center, Louisiaska, and Running Club North.

And finally, thanks to all of those racers who registered for the race! We'll always remember the race that never was. Look for the Run for the Refuge in 2005!

Then and Now: Profile of David Klein

By Ann Swift

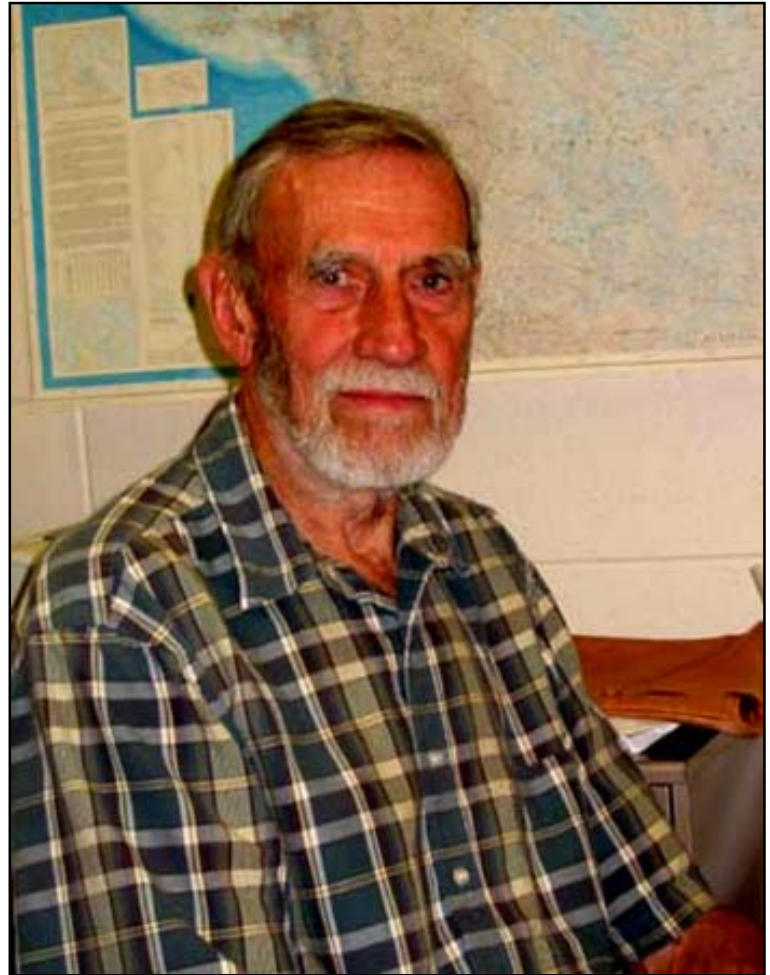
David Klein is a long-time Alaskan whose influence on the environmental community is still evolving. He is a wildlife biologist who spent many years doing research on deer, caribou and muskoxen. Now as a professor emeritus at UAF he is actively involved in arctic ecology — of Canada, Scandinavia and other northern areas as well as Alaska.

Klein first came to Alaska in 1947 following a short stint in the Navy, after graduating from high school toward the end of World War II. After going back to Connecticut to complete a degree in wildlife management, a masters degree from UAF in 1953, and another year in the military during the Korean War, he worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Southeast Alaska until statehood in 1959. When Alaska became a state he moved to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, but took a leave of absence to get his PhD at the University of British Columbia.

In 1962 he returned to Fairbanks, where he started his 30+ years as Leader of the Alaska Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, a federal, state and university agency. His environmental activism began with the Alaska Conservation Society, moving over to the Northern Center (then Fairbanks Environmental Center) where he served his first term on the Board starting in 1974.

He believes that environmental groups, such as the Northern Center, should be in touch with what is happening so they can work on a variety of problems and not be focused on a single one.

Klein was an ecologist before the term was even coined, and environmental activism came naturally through his work in resource management. He considers himself first and foremost a scientist and admits that it can be difficult to work for government agencies while sometimes criticizing government actions. However, he says he “tends to be idealistic,” which leads him to activism. During pipeline construction he was a member of the Citizens Advisory Council, a group pushed for by environmentalists. Because of his scientific connec-



Long-time activist David Klein.

tions, he was able to get the Council to look at certain aspects that the oil companies wanted to ignore.

He believes that environmental groups, such as the Northern Center, should be in touch with what is happening so they can work on a variety of problems and not be focused on a single one. He thinks that education, especially K-12, should be a top priority, and that some confrontations could be avoided if people really understood what agencies were doing.

Currently Klein is on the Board of ARCUS, the Arctic Research Consortium of the U.S., which despite its name is an international organization headquartered in Fairbanks, and the Nature Conservancy of Alaska. He is especially interested in the impacts of development on the people, as well as the wildlife, of arctic regions.

*Fairbanks Paper Recycling Put on Hold**Continued from page 4*

keeping these materials out of the landfill?

- What incentives could be used to persuade individuals and businesses to separate their waste?
- What products could be manufactured and sold locally using recyclable materials?
- What resources would be needed to encourage such businesses?
- How might recyclables that are not useable locally be affordably and efficiently back-hauled to markets using trucks that currently make the southbound trip empty?

In the mean time, concerned and resourceful Fairbanksans can continue to do what they've always done: reduce over-consumption and waste; creatively reuse everything from scrap wood to empty plastic bags; and recycle everything that is currently being accepted.

*Flawed Final Alpine Plan Released by BLM**Continued from page 9*

social system could also be impacted by increasing contact with non-residents and increasing job opportunities and income.

It is for these very reasons that the Northern Alaska Environmental Center has called the Alpine Satellite Development Plan into question. We will comment on the FEIS, and encourage you to do so as well. Comments are due to BLM by October 4, 2004.

What You Can Do:

Comments can be submitted to:

Jim Ducker

Alpine Satellite Development Plan EIS

Bureau of Land Management

222 W. 7th Avenue

Anchorage, Alaska 99513

(907) 271-3130

The FEIS is available online at (www.ak.blm.gov). If you would like to browse the document directly, the Northern Alaska Environmental Center has a copy of the FEIS on disk as does the BLM Public Room at 1150 University Avenue, Fairbanks, Alaska, 99709.

*Conservation and Public Health: a Northern Perspective**Continued from page 11*

concerns and environmental conservation unquestionably share much ground in common.

In the Arctic, we already have.

The Arctic climate has warmed far more rapidly than anywhere else on the planet. Alaskan winters are 7 degrees F warmer than 30 years ago, compared with a worldwide average of 1 degree F. Climate scientists have called the Arctic the "canary in the coal mine" of global warming.

As the climate has warmed, northern communities have already had to adjust. Whalers can't find solid pack ice to land their catch. Migration patterns are changing, leading to unreliable hunting. And now even the villages themselves are threatened, as melting permafrost has led to accelerated erosion. Kivalina, and Shishmaref have already decided that they will have to relocate. At least 20 more villages, including Barrow, face immanent threats from the same problem. Residents have expressed profound concern that leaving their traditional villages will have a "devastating impact on how we exist and who we are."

Here is the final irony of oil exploration in the Arctic, and a test of our foresight as a society. Conservation of Arctic ecosystems represents not only the opportunity to save a unique wilderness area from the local impact of oil exploration, but also the first step toward mitigating the climate change that now appears to present it's greatest threat.

The decision to protect the Arctic requires a philosophical shift away from our stubborn adherence to a doctrine of excess. It is a difficult decision, sacrificing such short-term benefits as jobs and income for the State for the seemingly nebulous and idealistic goal of mitigating climate change.

We won't see the health benefits in our lifetimes, but our children and grandchildren may. And the Arctic villages depending on this land now certainly will. Taking all of this into account, it seems clear to me that the goals of the environmental movement in Alaska are strongly aligned with the long-term public health interest of its people.

Dr. Wernham formerly worked as a physician in Bethel, Alaska and is currently at the Interior Community Health Center in Fairbanks, Alaska.

*What's in a Word: Wilderness?**Continued from page 2*

ter is Galena itself. Of course, Manley, Tanana and Ruby all pass off my wing, each 20 or so miles away. But that's it. That's not to say that the entire route is pristine, untouched. Far from it. But it is, by and large, relatively undisturbed, the province of wildlife and wild systems. No wildlands areas are Wilderness but they certainly protection and stewardship. Free from habitat fragmentation, from transportation corridors that don't consider state resource access needs, from excessive wildlife harvest levels. You get the picture.

Hopefully, we'll come up with two policies: one for Wilderness, another for wildlands. I leave the rest of the work up to the NAEC Board, tasked as they are with coming up with uniquely NAEC positions on these vital topics.

However, the Board can't undertake its work in a vacuum. We're membership-based so key to what we arrive at are your comments and inputs. Please send them to me at arthur@northern.org. I'll make sure they are passed on.

This brings up an ancillary point: how will NAEC define the policies? Since the issue has arisen re: Pogo and other NAEC policies, I'll take a stab at the question. First, we'll listen to your valued comments as I indicated above. Second, we'll draft up a document, circulate it to Board and Staff and have the Issues Committee issue a final draft. Thereafter, it will go to the full Board for approval. We'll then use it as the basis

for recommending actions.

Once the policy is in place, we'll be working closely with our many colleagues including Wilderness Watch, the Wilderness Society, the Sierra Club and, of course, the Alaska Wilderness League. By working with these counterparts, we will translate NAEC's expertise and multiply it.

Very rarely will this work be confined to Fairbanks, our home. This work will focus on federal (Wilderness and wildlands) and state (wildlands) issues, as you know, which are largely managed out of Washington, D.C. and in Juneau.

To make sure our influence is felt as much as possible in distant metropolises, we'll have a threefold role:

- We will represent and demonstrate the existence of the significant Alaskan minority who are committed to Wilderness, despite what federal and/or state delegations contend;
- We will facilitate and provide access to technical experts on Wilderness, its cultures and its ecosystems; and
- We will articulate—and publicise—the aesthetic values of Alaska's Wilderness.

The above is a brief roadmap of the NAEC's current work on Wilderness and wildlands, two of the most important issues ever for NAEC. I welcome your views. All the best for the early winter.

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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.

NATIONAL FORESTS:

National Forests would be open to road-building unless governors of individual states ask the Forest Service for protection under the 3-year-old "roadless rule"; more than 14 million acres in the Tongass and Chugach National Forests are affected. A 665-acre "swath" of the Tongass roadless area has already had logging plans approved, and "federal officials plan to approve another 1800-acre harvest there" next month. Environmentalists plan a letter-writing campaign urging Governor Murkowski to reinstate anti-logging policies on the Tongass and to keep roadless areas in the Chugach protected. FDNM, July 13, 2004, p. A1. A7

THE LAND SWAP at Berners Bay, to give land and mineral rights to the Cape Fox and Sealaska Corporations, has been "tabled" by the U.S. Senate committee. The corps would lease the land

and mineral rights to Coeur Alaska to develop the Kensington gold mine. Environmentalists oppose the swap, which would need an EPA water discharge permit and U.S. Corps of Engineers permit to discharge dredged and fill material into federal waters. The area is popular with Juneau residents and others for recreation and scenic value. FDNM, July 22, 2004, A3.

DENALI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE'S South Denali Implementation Plan, "launched" in February 2004, has had public scoping meetings by the Park Service, the state, and the Mat-Su borough, for opinions on where to develop campsites, a nature center, and trail systems. Most people wanted minimal impact on vegetation, wildlife, and "the wilder and rural character of the area" but "supported enhancements along the Petersville Rd west from the Parks Highway. The study area has been expanded to in-

clude the Parks Highway corridor and "additional lands to reflect new site locations." A draft South Denali Implementation Plan will be released in early 2005, to be followed by a 60-day public comment period. After revision, a Final Plan will be published with a Record of Decision by fall 2005. South Denali Implementation Plan Newsletter, June 2, 2004.

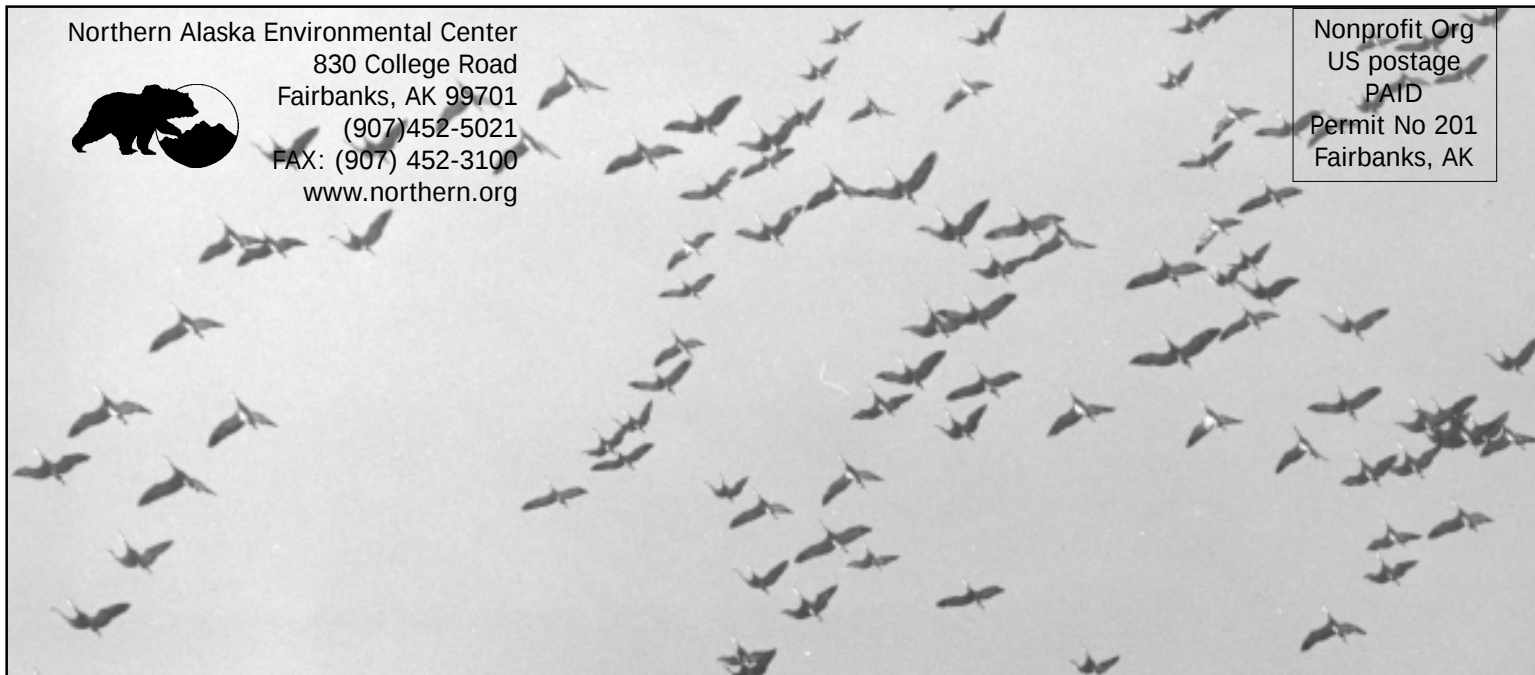
A RAILROAD connecting Alaska with the rest of the American railgrid would permit a large number of marginally profitable mines on either side of the Alaska-Yukon border to open. Walk Softly, Summer 2004.

A LAWSUIT by eight states, to force five of the U.S.'s largest power plant companies to reduce emissions by 3% per year for 10 years, has been filed, and Gov. Murkowski has been asked to sign it for Alaska. FDNM, July 23, 2004, p. A3.

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ERRATA:

Due to a software error, the following paragraph was dropped from the Director's column. It should be inserted between the first and second paragraphs, first column, page 2:

Of course, NAEC has always been active on Wilderness and has been prominent in many efforts, including the landmark Alaska Wilderness-related legislation, ANILCA. Moreover, NAEC counts among its previous and current activists and membership many significant Wilderness champions — Celia Hunter, Ginny Wood and Fran Mauer to name but three. Without their pioneering efforts, we would have less Wilderness than we do today.

However, and this is critical, Wilderness faces unprecedented threats these days, with no improvement in sight. NAEC is increasingly called upon to engage in Wilderness issues and will be more so over the coming years; speaking with a common voice — as defined through a policy — will help us better weather the challenges and threats to Wilderness that lie ahead.