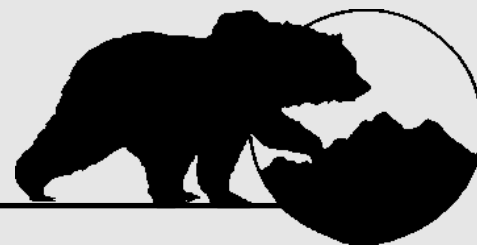


The Journal of the Northern Alaska Environmental Center
Year End 2004
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THE NORTHERN LINE



"Anything else you're interested in is not going to happen if you can't breathe the air and drink the water. Don't sit this one out. Do something. You are by accident of fate alive at an absolutely critical moment in the history of our planet." — Carl Sagan



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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.

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 1,000 members.

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

Front Page photo: Backwoods trail, Fairbanks, AK, by Ginny Wood. Page 20 photo: Canada Lynx, by Charlie Ott.

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

Changing our names but not our stripes

By Arthur Hussey, Executive Director



So said one of our nemeses, Esso, when it changed its name to Exxon back in the early 1970s. What it meant was that Esso was changing its title (to Exxon) but not the very essence of what it did (or in this case, sold, namely gasoline). Funny, we're a bit like Esso these days. Here's why.

Our stripes, our essence.

Your Board of Directors met recently and adopted the organization's first ever five-year strategic plan. This is a far reaching document that sets the stage for NAEC programming until nearly the end of the decade. An impressive piece of work by any standard, it provides a vision and statement of principles by which the organization will be guided. It also gives a roadmap by which NAEC will operate. Some highlights:

Our Vision

We envision a naturally thriving, biologically and culturally diverse, wildlands-rich, sustainable, inspiring and thoughtfully protected northern Alaska, forever.

Our Mission

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

Guiding Principles

NAEC operates upon the basis of ... overarching, guiding principles. We think of these tenets as the basic, inviolable strategies for our work. Included in these twelve principles are the following:

1. We value healthy and intact ecosystems where habitat fragmentation is minimized and wildlands respected;
2. We encourage the advancement of technology and management practices that minimizes air, water and noise pollution and impacts on habitat;
3. We support the establishment, protection and appropriate stewardship of designated Wilderness areas;
4. We base conservation decisions on sound sci-

ence and ethics; and

5. We favor stewardship over intensive management of natural resources.

I don't expect you'll find the above to be anything but a healthy reaffirmation of our commitment to a vibrant and wild Alaska. Same stripes as we've always had.

Our name, our tagline.

No, NAEC isn't changing its name. We're still the Northern Alaska Environmental Center. But a couple of key names, namely staff, are changing. For starters, there's me, your Executive Director. I've decided to step down after going on five years at the helm. I've achieved what I set out to do and feel it's an opportune time for both NAEC and me to explore new options. As I look back on my tenure at NAEC, I'm proud that on my watch we:

- moved the organization from the crowded building on Driveway Street to the more spacious office on College Road;
- stabilized the organization's finances and increased revenues by some 66%;
- stewarded the NAEC's forays into the Chamber of Commerce, the Fairbanks Downtown Rotary Club and several Borough Committees;
- recruited professional staff;
- defined and developed an NAEC political outreach program during the legislative season;
- finalized an agreement with Friends of Creamer's Field and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for the implementation of Camp Habitat;
- served as the contact point for the conservation community in local deliberations on the gas pipeline and railroad expansion efforts; and
- undertook challenging programmatic efforts including most notably the 2004 Pogo mine administrative appeal.

I should further mention that our Assistant Director and Mining Coordinator, Mara Bascujlaky, has also left NAEC to pursue other career options at Tanana Chiefs Conference. Many of you know Mara for her superb

(...Continued on page 19)

NAEC bids farewell to Arthur & Mara

By Franz Mueter
NAEC Board Member

With the recent resignation of Executive Director Arthur Hussey (see Director's Message, page 3) and Mining Coordinator Mara Bacsujlaky in October, the Northern Center is left with some big shoes to fill!

The search for a Mining Coordinator has been in full swing for some time, and the board is working diligently to recruit a new Executive Director to lead the Northern Center through the coming years.

Such changes create obvious challenges for the organization, but also provide an opportunity to reaffirm our visions and goals. We are fortunate to have a very strong foundation to build upon and to help us move forward: a dedicated board, highly qualified staff, sound finances, a large base of volunteers, and a long-term strategic plan that came to fruition under Arthur's and Board president Dan Adams' leadership and is nearing final approval.

Nevertheless, we are a small organization and two vacancies will no doubt leave a void for some time. Arthur and Mara will be sorely missed by staff and board, as well as by our partners in other organizations and in the community. Both have been with the Northern Center for nearly five years and have set new standards for competency and professionalism throughout these years.

Under Arthur's capable leadership, the Northern Center has grown to become a better, more effective organization and a better place to work.

His many achievements include:

- moving the organization from an over-crowded building on Driveway Street to its new, more spacious location on College Road
- stabilizing the organization's finances and increasing revenues
- establishing productive working relationships with the Fairbanks North Star Borough Mayor's office, the Chamber of Commerce, the Fairbanks Downtown Rotary Club, and several Borough Committees
- recruiting professional staff and providing a pleasant working environment; developing a political out-

reach program during the legislative season

- finalizing an agreement with Friends of Creamer's Field and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for the operations of Camp Habitat
- acting as the conservation community's spokesperson in local deliberations on the gas pipeline and railroad expansion efforts
- leading the Northern Center through some challenging programmatic efforts, most notably the 2004 Pogo mine administrative appeal.

Under Mara's expert guidance, the Northern Center built a mining program that has earned statewide and regional recognition as a leading authority on Alaska mining issues. Through her tireless efforts she established effective partnerships with corporate, government, and public stakeholders, greatly enhanced our technical capacity; produced a variety of educational materials on Alaska mining issues, and secured sufficient grants to cover the entire mining program.

Her efforts have led to the addition of important environmental stipulations to several mining permits and to a general increase in the accountability of the mining industry and regulatory agencies. Mara also played a critical role in the efforts to reform the 1872 General Mining Law and in the establishment, governance, and operation of the statewide coalition Alaskans for Responsible Mining.

The Northern Center's board is committed to filling the Executive Director position with the best possible candidate. What we are looking for is an energetic, articulate leader and seasoned professional manager to implement NAEC's strategic goals and objectives (see Recruitment Announcement, page 19.)

In the meantime, we owe a big "Thank you" not only to Arthur and Mara, but also to Kelly (Arctic Coordinator), Linda (Denali Watch Coordinator), Nancy (Boreal Forest Campaign and Local Issues Coordinator), Nikki (Membership and Communications Director), and Sara (Bookkeeper), who are working hard to stay on top of critical developments and to keep our programs running smoothly.

(...Continued on page 5)

*NAEC bids farewell to Arthur & Mara**Continued from page 4*

The transition also offers an opportunity for you, our members, to share your thoughts on the direction the Northern Center is taking, and what, if any, changes you would like to see. We strive to be an open and responsive organization and both board and staff welcome your input as we move forward to face new challenges. Just give us a call, send an e-mail to comments@northern.org, or write us at NAEC, 830 College Rd., Fairbanks, Alaska, 99701.

In addition, the board accepts public comments at the beginning of our regular board meetings scheduled for the second Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. (except July.) Together we can realize our vision to create a naturally thriving, biologically and culturally diverse, wildlands-rich, sustainable, inspiring and thoughtfully protected northern Alaska.

Former Fairbanks Rep. Sally Smith named Interim Executive Director

The Northern Alaska Environmental Center is pleased to announce that it has hired former Fairbanks legislator and recent mayor of Juneau, Sally Smith, as the Center's interim executive director.

"We are delighted to have a person of Sally's caliber join our staff," NAEC Board President Dan Adams said. "Sally is an extremely talented administrator who connects well with people. She understands government and industry and will be a very energetic and competent advocate for the environment."

The decision to hire Smith came two weeks after Executive Director Arthur Hussey made known his intent to resign. Hussey will step down in January 2005.

Smith lived in Fairbanks from 1969 to 1984. She represented the area in the State House of Representatives from 1977 to 1983. Smith was one of the prime sponsors of legislation that set aside Creamer's Field as a refuge.

She served in the Sheffield Administration as Director of Public Services, a division of the Dept. of Revenue. Later, she was appointed Director of Retirement and Benefits. Most recently she was elected mayor of the City and Borough of Juneau. Declining to seek a second term, she retired in 2003.

"I'm looking forward to returning to Fairbanks and working with NAEC as they move forward to strengthen their advocacy for the northern environment," Smith said.

Northern Voices: Authors on the Environment

This monthly series features prominent authors known for their works on the environment and the human relationship with it.

Sponsored by the Northern Alaska Environmental Center and the Fairbanks Library Association, each speaking engagement is held at 7 p.m. at the Noel Wien Library in Fairbanks

Please join us for the following:

- January 13, 2005:
Jill Fredston
- February 10, 2005:
Carolyn Kremers
- March 3, 2005:
Nancy Lord
- April 14, 2005:
Majorie Cole
- May 12, 2005:
Dan O'Neill



DNR Tundra Travel Study not a green light

Outside review points to project design shortcomings

By Kelly Hill Scanlon
Arctic Issues Coordinator

According to an independent researcher, the State of Alaska's plan to extend the exploration season on the North Slope is based on a study that has many inadequacies and has not been submitted to a sufficient level of scientific rigor.

While trying to base tundra travel management techniques on sound scientific models is admirable, results of the current Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) study are too premature to provide a long-term management prescription for when the tundra should be opened for oil exploration.

Saying this study is any kind of conclusive grounds for declaring an earlier opening of the tundra travel season is based purely in politics not science.

While the State's study is a necessary and important effort to determine when conditions are sufficient to minimize tundra degradation — said Dr. Bruce Forbes, an American tundra expert at the University of Lapland in Finland — the analysis had some important shortcomings.

The project design appears to have been a hurried and closed process in which emphasis was placed on the potential statistical power of the computer model and the deployment of the new “drop hammer” for testing frozen ground, rather than on ensuring that the overall range of parameters to be sampled in the field would provide the data necessary to draw robust conclusions.

Saying this study is any kind of conclusive grounds for declaring an earlier opening of the tundra travel season is based purely in politics not science

DNR's claim that the study's findings show us we can open the tundra to travel sooner is a mischaracterization of the study.

It is difficult to truly compare the criteria for opening the tundra in the early days of oil exploration to the new management protocol. DNR only recently attempted to standardize measurement of snow depth and ground hardness, and to separate tundra opening areas based on the varying vegetation of the North Slope. Proceeding with caution should be the first measure taken in this adaptive management technique. Opening the tundra for travel is weather dependent. If our climate continues to warm we'll likely see continued delay in suitable winter conditions for tundra travel.

Although many credible scientists were involved in this project, including several from Yale who provided technical assistance, there was no outside peer review of the study. To date, completed peer review of the

(... Continued on page 7)

What they're saying:

“The results are in and the news is GOOD! DNR will be able to lengthen the oil exploration season on the North Slope with no additional environmental disturbance.”

-- From the Alaska DNR website at:
www.dnr.state.ak.us

“This earlier opening is attributed to the results of the Tundra Travel Modeling Study we recently completed. We now have evidence that we can open the tundra earlier, provided certain conditions are met, without causing any more disturbance than was allowed through more restrictive past management practices,” Bob Loeffler, Director of the Division of Mining, Land and Water.

-- From DNR Press Release, Dec. 16, 2004, announcing opening the Western Coastal area of the North Slope for cross country tundra travel three weeks earlier than last year. See press release at www.dnr.state.ak.us.

DNR Tundra Travel Study not a green lightContinued from page 6

study has only been done by those involved with the project — and Dr. Forbes, who was hired by NAEC. NAEC had to hire an expert living outside of Alaska because scientists here were hesitant to take it on because of conflicts of interest and the political ramifications of taking on the study without the invitation of DNR.

Forbes, working as an independent consultant for NAEC, analyzed DNR's official descriptions of the study's protocol, aim and design as well as data records from the current tundra travel study and its precursor at the Snow Goose site. He also drew upon relevant literature and his own professional experience with off-road vehicle traffic and related anthropogenic impacts in circumpolar arctic ecosystems.

Peer review is an integral process for the validity of any scientific study. It ensures the objectivity of a study because experts from a variety of fields weigh in on the methods and findings of a research project. If, as stated by DNR's proposal to the Department of Energy, this study is a 'matter of national security,' how can we accept the results without recognized experts on all facets of tundra ecology reviewing the study?

In fact, even Forbes' peer review is limited because

he was not given the opportunity to review the full report prior to its release by Governor Murkowski.

Forbes raises other concerns, emphasizing that the one year time frame for the study does not give an accurate picture of the impacts tundra travel may have. Forbes says it is known that components of tundra vegetation can continue to die for two years or more after even modest mechanical damage. Therefore, associated changes in vegetation and soils may take several years to fully develop.

According to officials at DNR, after the Northern Center raised these concerns in the fall of 2004, DNR began assembling a group of scientists from the University of Alaska Fairbanks to review the study. While this is a good step, the Northern Center feels the State should be exhaustive in their effort to solicit input from experts in all pertinent fields even if this means going outside of UAF.

The State should err on the side of caution while trying to develop a thoroughly tested scientific model directing tundra travel management. Letting politics get in the way of real science will only serve to hinder future exploration efforts. Forbes' analysis is available online at: www.northern.org

Renewable energy coalition forms in Alaska

By Chris Rose

Renewable Energy Alaska Project Director

Alaska possesses vast, scarcely utilized renewable energy resources. Until now, there has been no education or advocacy group specifically focused on harnessing those resources. The Renewable Energy Alaska Project (REAP) has recently formed to fill that gap.

Modeled loosely on the Renewable Northwest Project (RNP) in Portland, Oregon, REAP is a coalition of diverse entities in Alaska that share an interest in renewable power.

Included in this coalition are the state's largest utility companies, small village utilities that already have experience with wind energy, environmental groups, consumer groups, tribal interests, businesses, and state and federal energy agencies (including Golden Valley Electrical Association and Chena Hot Springs Resort.) REAP provides a forum for all interested parties to work together advancing the goal of "increasing the produc-

tion of renewable energy in Alaska."

REAP has adopted four strategies to meet its goal:

- getting proposed and viable renewable projects, such as the Fire Island wind farm, off the ground
- working toward statewide policies that will result in more renewable energy
- increasing the market for renewable energy in the state through advocacy and education
- demonstrating to the public and to policy leaders that in Alaska there is stakeholder unity in support of renewable energy

REAP has teamed up with Green Star, an organization working with the Alaska business, government, and environmental communities for over a decade. If you are interested in learning more, or supporting REAP in its efforts, contact REAP Director Chris Rose at crose@alaska.net.

Integrity of Yukon Flats Refuge Threatened:

Land exchange a dangerous precedent for all Alaska wildlife refuges

By NAEC Staff

Oil drills could soon roll into the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska due to a “rider” Senator Ted Stevens successfully inserted into an omnibus federal spending bill recently passed by Congress.

The legislation appropriates \$750,000 to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to implement a land exchange agreement between the for profit Doyon Corporation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Royalties received by the federal government pursuant to the agreement are to be deposited in a special account which would be used to acquire more land from Doyon in the Yukon Flats and other Alaska Refuges.

This stealth maneuver, which has been conducted absent public review, threatens the integrity of the Yukon Flats Refuge and sets a dangerous precedent for other national wildlife refuges in Alaska as well.

During the past two years, the Fish and Wildlife Service and Doyon have been quietly negotiating a land exchange in the Yukon Flats Refuge and have reached an “agreement in principle” which if finalized would:

- Transfer surface and subsurface title of approximately 110,000 acres of federal land in the south central portion of the Refuge east and west of Beaver Creek to Doyon.
- Transfer subsurface title of approximately 96,000 acres of federal land to Doyon. These lands, referred to as “halo lands,” would be subject to “no surface occupancy” — however, NAEC has learned that this restriction would not prohibit pipelines and other transportation facilities.
- USFWS would receive approximately 150,000 acres (surface and subsurface) of Doyon holdings in the Refuge near the villages of Chalkyitsik, Fort Yukon, Birch Creek, Beaver, Stevens Village and Circle.
- Doyon would reallocate its entitlement under Section 12(b) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of approximately 58,000 acres to areas outside of the Refuge.
- If Doyon finds and develops petroleum resources

on its exchange lands, the proposed agreement would allow for a small percentage of royalty to be passed on to a land acquisition account under the jurisdiction of USFWS.

Despite what is being sold by Doyon and USFWS as a winning situation for all parties involved, this scheme will jeopardize the integrity of the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge by allowing an industrial oil development into one of the most remote and pristine areas of the refuge for some Doyon lands that currently are under no development threat.

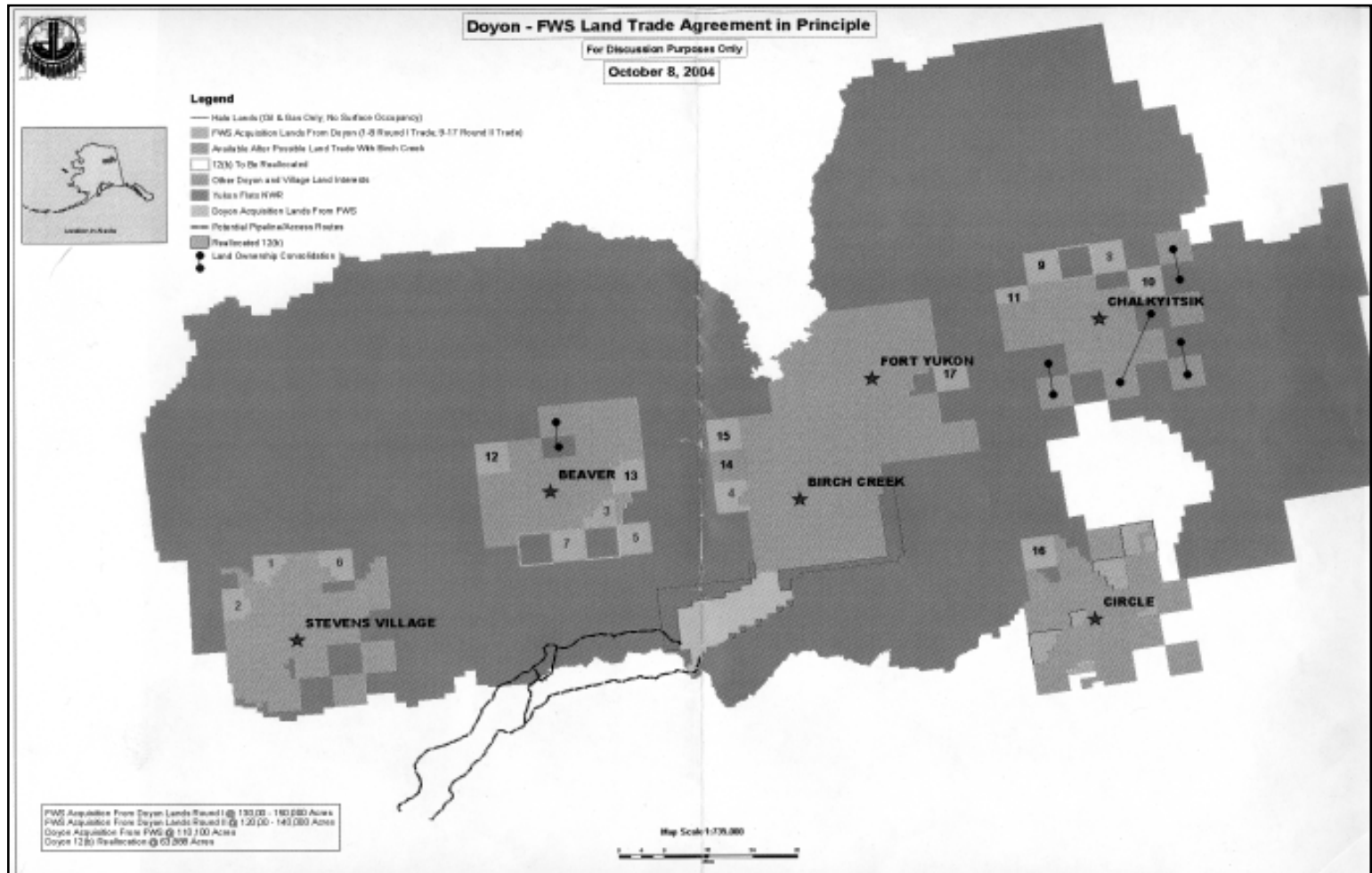
If oil is found and developed on the Doyon exchange lands, the prime transportation route for a pipeline and road would pass through the Victoria Creek area of the White Mountains National Recreation Area where a high level of wild lands recreational use takes place.

The lands to be transferred to Doyon are in and adjacent to an area of the Refuge that was identified for possible designation as Wilderness according to the current Comprehensive Conservation Plan. These lands are also adjacent to the Beaver Creek National Wild River. If oil is found and developed on the Doyon exchange lands, the prime transportation route for a pipeline and road would pass through the Victoria Creek area of the White Mountains National Recreation Area where a high level of wild lands recreational use takes place.

Most importantly, this behind-the-scenes scheme would set a dangerous precedent in that the royalty acquisition fund could enable other ill-conceived deals inside national wildlife refuges wherever there are native corporation inholdings and refuge lands believed to have development potential.

Furthermore, this land exchange is being done with no legally binding public comment. The Fish and Wild-

(... Continued on page 9)



Integrity of Yukon Flats Refuge threatened:

Continued from page 8

life Service plans to hold public hearings on the process beginning in February 2005, but is under no obligation to act upon any of the comments.

The National Wildlife Refuge System was established to conserve fish and wildlife populations and habitats in their natural diversity; to fulfill treaty obligations; to provide for continued subsistence uses; and to ensure necessary water quality and quantity. The public has the right to voice their opinion on any changes to this mission — with those comments being legally binding for the agency. Any other approach to giving away Refuge lands is simply unacceptable.

The Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge is located about 100 miles north of Fairbanks. The Yukon, Black and other rivers run through the area, which supports millions of migrating birds during the spring, salmon spawning, and habitat for bears, moose, caribou and other mammals.

For more information on the land exchange or hearings, contact Kelly Hill Scanlon at kelly@northern.org.

Miles to Make a Difference

The Northern Center's Arctic Program is looking for individuals interested in donating airline miles to get activists to Washington, D.C.

With a fight for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge pending in Congress, we want to send activists to DC to share the importance of protecting this national treasure.

If you are interested in donating airline miles to help with the effort please contact the Arctic Coordinator, Kelly Hill Scanlon, at kelly@northern.org, or 907-452-5021.

Interior wood — alternative energy source?

By Nancy Fresco

Boreal Forest Coordinator

As global climate change melts our icecaps and tweaks our seasons, and as the monetary, social, and environmental price of oil rises, switching to alternative fuels is becoming an ever more pressing need.

Unfortunately, the choices are sometimes limited. Here in Fairbanks, the wind doesn't blow much, hydro-power isn't an option, and solar panels struggle feebly during three-hour-long December days.

Traditionally, Fairbanksans have been dependent on a more old-fashioned form of renewable energy: wood. A wood stove is certainly cozy, but wood-burning is unwieldy, inconvenient, produces vast amounts of particulate air pollution, and compromises our forests... or does it? Creative new solutions and new technologies may be making wood a much more attractive option — if we proceed with caution.

In October, the Alaska Northern Forest Cooperative held a meeting at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Participants included state and private foresters, university scientists, fire experts, energy experts, community spokespeople and conservationists. Speakers presented ideas ranging from traditional timber-industry rhetoric to creative assessments of how to uphold subsistence uses, deal with the realities of living in a fire-driven ecosystem, and glean energy from material that would otherwise be wasted.

One month later, the newly formed Alaska Wood Energy Development Task Group began seeking

interested parties for cost-effective wood energy demonstration projects that will displace fossil fuels by using wood and wood residue. Currently, \$120,000 in state and federal funds have been allocated for this program.

We ask for a lot from our forests. Across the American West, land managers are struggling with what sometimes seems to be an impossible balancing act. Forests must be managed for ecosystem health, species diversity, wilderness values, recreation, hunting, fishing, watershed protection, and timber produc-

Creative new solutions and new technologies may be making wood a much more attractive option — if we proceed with caution.

tion. At the same time, managers must mitigate the danger of forest fires in populated areas.

State and Federal employees are often under considerable pressure to make the forests turn a profit. Unfortunately, the trees that loggers want are generally the long-lived giants that provide some of the greatest environmental and aesthetic benefits. In Interior Alaska, tall sturdy old white spruce are coveted. These trees are rarely the ones that pose the greatest fire danger.

Interior Alaska has an abundance of small flammable trees. The humble black spruce is ubiquitous across the landscape, and in areas where fire suppression is re-

quired to protect homes and property, these hardy little trees are even more prevalent. Because they are so tolerant of shade and permafrost, they slowly out-compete the fast-growing species that generally appear first after fire. This is problematic for two reasons:

- First, the willow, birch, aspen, and other shrubs that the spruce suppress provide important forage and cover for wildlife such as moose and grouse.
- In addition, a buildup of black spruce around urban areas increases the risk of catastrophic fire. When a black spruce burns, it burns like a torch.

Wildfires can't be allowed to burn around homes, but without fire, the forest can't revitalize itself. Thinning trees and cutting firebreaks is by no means a perfect substitute for fire, but it's the best solution on offer. However, it's expensive and time-consuming, especially because we, as residents, want results that are aesthetic as well as practical.

No one wants an ugly clear-cut in their backyard. Unfortunately, it's hard to recoup these costs, because timber buyers don't want small-diameter wood thinned from fire-prone areas.

This is where wood energy and other biofuels reenter the picture. Boilers and heating systems have been developed that can efficiently produce heat or electricity from wood pellets, wood chunks, or even

(...Continued on page 11)

*Interior Wood — Alternative Energy Source?**Continued from page 10*

corn cobs, waste paper, or whole trees. These systems are designed to burn hot, with minimal ash and minimal air pollution, and although they certainly can't be termed "clean energy," they are no worse than conventional systems – and in the case of coal, generally better.

Moreover, trees remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, balancing the greenhouse gases emitted when the wood is burned.

For industrial uses, fist-sized chunks of wood can be mixed with large pellets made from waste paper and cardboard. This fuel can fully or partially replace coal for energy generation, or can heat large building complexes.

On a smaller scale, pellet stoves

designed for home heating have become popular in some parts of the U.S. and Canada. Top-of-the-line models self-feed tiny pellets from a hopper and are thermostat controlled. The pellets are pressed from waste sawdust, using no "new" trees. Two companies even offer pellet furnaces that can replace conventional furnaces.

Are any of these schemes feasible in Fairbanks, and if so, are they a good idea? At the very least, conservationists need some assurance that any wood harvested for use as fuel will be part of a sustainable plan designed to meet all the needs of the ecosystem and the community, including fire prevention, habitat rehabilitation, aesthet-

ics, and carbon balancing.

Fortunately, the criteria the Alaska Wood Energy Development Task Group has put forth in their solicitation for pilot projects include sustainability of the wood fuel supply, community support, and availability of waste wood and/or high-fire-risk forest fuels, as well as economic and logistical feasibility. The ensuing project proposals, community discourse, and scientific research promise to be challenging and thought-provoking.

Whether wood energy proves to be an environmental boon remains to be seen, but we're looking forward to being part of the discussion. After all, we'd all like to use a little less oil.

THANK YOU!



**The Northern Alaska Environmental Center
is only able to do its work because of
the commitment of our members.**

Thank you also to the Fred Meyer Foundation for its generous support of the 2004 Camp Habitat Program.

We also want to thank the more than 50 individual Major Donors who participated in the 2004 Major Donor Campaign — who helped this campaign raise more than \$47,000.

**Thank you all for your support during 2004, and
welcome to our newest members!**



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.

Improving the local recycling effort

By Nancy Fresco
Local Issues Coordinator

Who wants your empty cardboard boxes? What happens to that lemon-lime soda can after you drop it in the recycling bin? Is it cost-effective and environmentally responsible to haul materials long distances for recycling? Does the number “5” on the bottom of your plastic tub of cream cheese actually mean anything?

It’s easy to agree that recycling our waste is more desirable than burning it, burying it in a landfill, or tossing it out of car windows onto the roadside. It’s harder to figure out all the intricacies of a successful program.

How can a municipality inspire individuals and businesses to participate in recycling? What funding, staffing, and equipment are needed for separating, sorting, hauling, baling, and selling recyclables? Who will finally create something useful out of that cream cheese tub?

The questions are complex — but unless all the details are worked out, recycling programs are plagued by problems.

Such has been the case in Fairbanks. Stop-gap measures and short-term programs haven’t lasted, because they have been dependent on temporary arrangements

or unreliable buyers. There’s plenty of room for improvement.

Thus, the Northern Alaska Environmental Center has agreed to work with Interior Alaska Green Star and the Fairbanks North Star Borough to figure out what recycling solutions make sense for our community. As we start to dig into the economics and logistics of creating a more sustainable program, we’ll pass on to you some of what you might want to know — or wish you didn’t know — about waste.

Part I – What are we throwing away?

Ten years ago, the Borough commissioned a report on local solid waste management. Part of the analysis included an assessment of just what it is we’re throwing away. It turns out our waste stream is similar, but not identical, to the average American city. Note that half our waste (by weight) is paper and cardboard. Knowing what we’re dumping in the landfill is the first step toward working out how not to dump it.

	Fairbanks (tons) 1994	%	U.S. Avg.
		%	%
newspaper	3338	5	
corrugated cardboard	21361	32	
other paper	7343	11	
total paper	32041	48	38
ferrous metals (iron)	6008	9	
non-ferrous metals	668	1	
total metals	6675	10	8
plastic	3338	5	9
rubber/leather	668	1	
glass/ceramics	6008	9	5
misc. organics	2003	3	
textiles	1335	2	
wood	2003	3	5
yard waste	2670	4	13
food waste	8678	13	10
misc. inerts	1334	2	

Recycling Facts

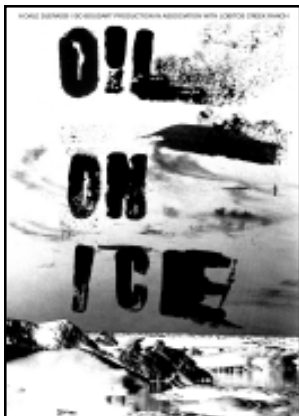
- In a lifetime, the average American will throw away 90,000 lbs. of trash
- Recycling all of your home’s waste newsprint, cardboard, glass, and metal can reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 850 pounds a year.
- Enough energy is saved by recycling one aluminum can to light one 100 watt bulb for 20 hours.
- Americans throw away enough aluminum every three months to rebuild our entire commercial air fleet.
- You can make 20 cans out of recycled material with the same amount of energy it takes to make one new one.
- Incinerating 10,000 tons of waste creates 1 job, land filling the same amount creates 6 jobs, and recycling the same 10,000 tons creates 36 jobs.

Adapted from www.recyclingit.com

Next issue – Part II, the economics and logistics of backhauling.

You can also look for updates via email. Not signed up for our emails? Ask to be added by emailing us at info@northern.org.

Arctic Refuge Documentary Wins Award



Oil on Ice, a documentary about the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the controversy over drilling for oil there, has been awarded the 2004 Pare Lorentz Award in the 20th annual Distinguished Documentary Achievement Awards competition.

Oil on Ice is co-produced and co-directed by Dale Djerassi and Bo Boudart in association with Lobitos Creek Ranch, and is presented by Sierra Club Productions. It was sponsored in part by the Northern Alaska Environmental Center.

“The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which is currently at the center of the national energy debate, has been called ‘snow-covered and lifeless’ by proponents of opening the Refuge to oil drilling,” said Dale Djerassi, *Oil on Ice* co-director and co-producer. “We are proud to be recognized by the IDA and the Pare Lorentz Foundation for our efforts to dismantle that myth by showing a land that is teeming with wildlife, enriched

by centuries of Native American and Eskimo culture, and linked to the migratory wildlife of much of the rest of the world.”

Oil on Ice shows how the fate of the Refuge is inextricably linked to decisions our nation makes about energy policy, transportation choices, and other seemingly unrelated matters, while the culture and livelihood of the native Gwich’in Indians and the survival of migratory wildlife are caught in the balance.

The Pare Lorentz Award, which is presented by the Pare Lorentz Foundation, was earned by *Oil on Ice* for best representing the “democratic sensibility, activist spirit and lyrical vision of the legendary documentarian.”

Oil on Ice can be seen at various film festivals and other screenings across the country. For more information, or to purchase an educational WebDVD, visit www.oilonice.org. Copies of the DVD are on sale at the Northern Center for \$19.95 or can be ordered directly from oilonice.org.

Being Caribou

The Film of a 5-month migration, on foot, with an Arctic Caribou Herd



January 26+27

The Blue Loon

Wed. 5:30pm • Thurs. 8pm

Admission by donation

Fairbanks, AK

Presented by: Northern Alaska Environmental Center + The Blue Loon

On April 8, 2003, two Canadians left the remote community of Old Crow, Yukon Territory, to join the Porcupine Caribou Herd on their epic life journey. For 5 months, Karsten Heuer and Leanne Allison migrated on foot, with the 123,000 member caribou herd from wintering grounds to calving grounds in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and back again.

Spectacular footage and intimate video diaries give a glimpse into a landscape and a way of ‘being human’ that create a journey never before undertaken. The experience transforms the team leaving them to try and convey their story to Senators on Capitol Hill one short week after returning with the caribou to their winter range in the Central Yukon.

Please join us for the Fairbanks’ screening of this extraordinary film!

For more information contact: nikki@northern.org



From the Woodpile. . .

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

“In this country we elect the best politicians money can buy.” – Will Rogers

Well, Will, I don't agree money always gets us the best, but electing them sure costs a lot more by the millions than it did in your day in the 1930's.

November 3, 2004, a dismal apprehensive dawn for Democrats, liberals, environmentalists and for the two John's, Kerry and Edwards. But an ecstatic, victorious one for Republicans, religious fundamentalists, corporate executives – and George W. Bush whom voters have just awarded a second term as President, uncontested, but not by a landslide. In addition, his regime will have an increased majority of Republicans in both the House and Senate. What does this portend? “I've earned political capital and I intend to spend it,” Bush gloated on a television broadcast. So there you have it from the President's mouth.

While dejected Democrats lick their post-election wounds, debating “Where did we go wrong?” and the media dissects the significance of it all, the rest of us, dejected or jubilant, can at least get on with our lives, grateful that our telephones have stopped ringing soliciting our votes, and our mailboxes are no longer stuffed with campaign literature which has to be lugged to dumpsters.

Perhaps John Kerry has escaped being a scapegoat for not being able to fix the messes the Bush regime has mired us in: diplomatically on the killing fields in Iraq, with a trillion dollar national debt that was in the black when they took office, and trying to repair the environmental blunder they have inflicted on the Earth. And with his 90 percent environmental voting record during his years in the Senate, perhaps John Kerry can do more for our country by going back to his old job than he could have as President.

But what depresses me most is, having had four years to judge George Bush's leadership record, my fellow citizens voted to give him four more. I found it remiss that during the so-called Presidential debates, so full of blather and mud slinging, environmental issues were avoided. Yet healthy ecosystems are manda-

tory for a vital economy and for mankind's survival.

For instance, the Earth's water tables are now shrinking faster than they recharge. Bush and Co. still refuse to accept the ramifications of global warming contrary to scientific evidence. Population growth worldwide has already exceeded our farm land's ability to feed everybody adequately, yet the fundamentalists in the present administration have nixed aid to developing countries that advocate family planning. We are talking here about education and women's rights, not abortion!

Then there is the energy crisis and the Administration's spurious claims that drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and other biologically sensitive areas is the solution. What a hoax! We can do it environmentally sound, they claim. That really means we will just weaken the regulations. Other countries have alternate viable energy solutions, but they aren't beholden to oil industries or automobile manufacturers.

I sense that the Bush cabal view environmentalists just a tad below terrorists as threats to our national security and our consumer standard of living.

On the bright side, constitutionally Bush can't serve a third term, and I don't think either of his twin daughters wants the job. But maybe his brother, Governor of Florida Jeb Bush, does.

Now about the “moral values sacrament,” which the press considers the catch phrase that garnered Bush the most votes. How hypocritical can we get! How does Bush's born-again piety jibe with sending young men and women into another country to kill and be killed on an unproven assumption that its ruler, however despotic, was stockpiling “weapons of mass destruction” when the U.S.A. was the country that invented the “A” bomb and so far is the only that has ever used it? And we keep a quantity of even more lethal WMD's in bun-

(...Continued on Page 15)

*From the Woodpile**Continued from page 14*

kers at the ready! We can't dispose of all the tyrants in this world and we certainly can't bully them with our might to get them to give up theirs.

I'm not a Bible thumper, but from my childhood immersion in a Protestant Sunday school, I recall a Biblical commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," and the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." For rules of ethical behavior I rather like author/minister Robert Fulgham's recipe, "All that I needed to learn I was taught in kindergarten: don't hit anyone, and clean up after yourself." This seems to metaphorically encapsulate both my pacifist and environmental leanings.

General cum President Dwight Eisenhower in his farewell address to the nation warned of the threat of a corporate/military alliance. I fear now of an imperial, theocratic plutocracy that is threatening what our founding fathers had in mind. I feel this isn't my government anymore, it's a conspiracy!

So for those of us still in mourning, whither now? Move to Canada? Take aspirin and go to bed? See a psychiatrist? (What if she or he is a Republican?) Vote for Ralph Nader next time? I have no survival prescriptions, but I can share the words of two of my mentors:

Never have I felt such dismay over the leadership and policies of our nation. Never have I felt such determination and faith in our ability to change our country's direction.

— Terry Williams

And from the wisdom of the late Mardy Murie:

Give yourself the adventure of doing what you can do even if it's just the adventure of trying. How much better than standing in a corner with your back to the wall.

And now I need a good cross country ski!



Northern Center member Jamie Smith's Alaskan cartoons have appeared in numerous publications including the *Ester Republic* and *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*; he has published two collections of the cartoon, *freeze•frame:freeze•frame* and *freeze•frame ii - beaver fever*.

North Denali Access Study back in DOT hands

CH2MHill awarded bid; final contract in negotiations

By Linda A. Paganelli
Denali Watch Coordinator

Refresher

In 1997, Congress via then Sen. F. Murkowski allocated money for a study to further investigate the feasibility of developing a second access route to Kantishna, the terminus of the Denali Park Road.

After years of languishing, the Alaska State Legislature finally approved matching State funds to the federal grant in 2001. The Denali Borough and the State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities [DOT] reached an accord in March of 2002 via a Transfer of Responsibilities Agreement, which set the stage for the Borough to facilitate the north access study.

“Should a new north side transportation system be developed between the Parks Highway/Alaska Railroad corridor and some location most advantageous for visitors to, managers and neighbors of, Denali NP&P?”

The Borough accomplished the preliminary public scoping process and was in the midst of collecting proposals from consultant firms to assist on the project when Mayor Talerico was notified, formally on September 8, 2003, that the State was taking the study back under its jurisdiction. On March 23, 2004, the Memorandum of Agreement outlining the conditions of the State taking back the study was signed.

DOT Takes the Lead

Note that with the change in the agent that is facilitating the study, there has been an accompanying change in the name of the study from NARS, which was coined by the Borough, to North Denali Access Route Reconnaissance Study [NDARRS] under DOT. As NARS is a pronounceable acronym that has gained name recognition for these renewed efforts to study north access feasibility, we will continue to refer to the study as NARS, at least for the time being.



Barren ground caribou bulls graze; Denali seen in the background. Photo: Charlie Ott.

In June of 2004, DOT released their Request For Proposals [RFP] Package in order to solicit a contractor to take on the north access study. CH2MHILL was awarded the contract. Negotiations for a final contract between DOT and CH2MHILL, Anchorage, are ongoing since Aug 1. Due to strict guidelines from the Federal Highways Administration and DOT, two areas require extra attention, methodology and direction. According to Janet Brown, DOT Project Manager for the north access study, the length of these negotiations is not unprecedented and a contract should be forthcoming in the next month or two.

Contractor Scope of Responsibilities as Outlined in the RFP

The request for proposal (RFP) states, “The State of Alaska Northern Region DOT, Division of Preconstruction Services, Design Section is seeking professional services for a contractor to conduct a reconnaissance study for a northern access to Denali Park.”

According to the DOT, the most important question that needs to be addressed by the study is:

“Should a new north side transportation system be developed between the Parks Highway/Alaska Railroad corridor and some location most advantageous for visitors to,

(...Continued on page 17)

*North Denali Access Study back in DOT Hands**Continued from page 16*

managers and neighbors of, Denali NP&P?”

The contractor will “describe the problems to be solved, identify and analyze a potential range of alternative solutions and provide benefit/cost comparisons for those solutions.” There will be no formal environmental documentation developed under the National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA] for this study. Environmental analysis to be conducted will identify potential resources and issues that may require further study in a formal NEPA document, should the project move beyond the reconnaissance level of study.

The contractor will investigate different modes of transportation and termini for a new transportation system. Further, funding mechanisms for constructing and maintaining the new facility will also be considered.

Specific Contractor Tasks

Ms. Brown addressed the Denali Borough Assembly on November 10, 2004. In her update to the Assembly and the attending public, Ms. Brown enumerated some of the items that the contractor will tackle. The following partial list was gleaned from her presentation and directly from the RFP. Note that the RFP states that the list of tasks may be expanded.

- **Inventory known information** — Review all previous reports related to a north access project.

- **Define PURPOSE AND NEED (P&N) for the project** — A P&N statement is a technical aspect of a formal environmental document [Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)]. Although this study will not attempt to follow or abide by the edicts defined in the NEPA process, the inclusion of a P&N statement was called for in the original RFP put out by the Denali Borough and could potentially serve as the P&N statement for any future environmental document done on North Access.

It is our hope that the **purpose** is defined broadly, such as Denali National Park and Preserve requires additional access, as it validates NPS sentiment. If on the other hand the purpose is more specific, stating that new access is needed to Kantishna or on the north side of Denali, it becomes problematic and would be inconsistent with long-range park planning documents that

attempt to provide access in a manner supportive of park purposes and resource protection.

The **need** part of the statement will address issues on the ground now, e.g., the road is unsafe, there are people being turned away, the park road has or will in the near future reach capacity, etc. Ms. Brown speculated that this aspect of the study would be performed in late winter or early spring of 2005.

- **Verify demand and forecasts** — Projected over 20 years. Report existing demand and forecast future growth of park visitors. The relationship between the DNP&P Transportation Plan and growth potential for park visitors and development by in-holders must be considered.

- **Identify feasible alternatives and compare significant parameters** — such as transportation alignment, grade, width, length, access, termini, modal options, costs, soil conditions, drainage, material sources, right-of-way and utility considerations, services to existing communities, development and potential development areas within communities, potential hazardous waste sites, wetlands, essential fish habitat, wildlife resources, species and habitat listed under Endangered Species Act, cultural and historical sites, and other environmental issues. Identify and report benefits of preliminary alternatives.

Identify and report additional needs for fieldwork, engineering and preliminary environmental analysis

- **Develop and implement the Public Involvement Plan** — DOT anticipates monthly or bi-monthly reporting to the Borough. It is assumed through discussions with the Borough office that they prefer to be the agent that disperses this information to the public and thus they will be a prime contact for interested persons. The information gathered at the Borough’s Scoping Meetings from 2002 will provide the basis for identifying the issues.

- **Identify costs and benefits**

- **Report findings and conclusions**, recommend a course of action, whether to proceed, defer or cancel subsequent pre-design work.

(...Continued on page 18)

North Denali Access Study back in DOT hands

Continued from page 17

The Study will NOT

“This study will not recommend an alternative route or mode but will compare feasible transportation alternatives. The only recommendation will be whether to proceed, defer or cancel further preliminary design work.”

Conclusion

Ms. Brown speculated that there would be three alternatives presented in the report but if more were identified as feasible that the contract could be modified. Assemblyman Paul Schenk, Northern District, queried

what might occur after the report was completed. Ms. Brown replied by stating that if the recommendation to cancel subsequent work was the report's conclusion that DOT would abide by that decision but other entities, such as the Denali Borough, could continue to pursue this venture. The report would undoubtedly serve as the foundation for an EIS if efforts were made to further explore the potential of NA. Ms. Brown did suggest that NPS might be the lead agent for an EIS. DOT anticipates that work on this report should be done in 2006.

Remembering Richard Collins

Long-time member Richard Hubbard Collins passed away on Dec. 1, 2004 at the Fairbanks Pioneer Home. Collins was 87.

Collins will be remembered for his quiet, easy-going personality and willingness to help others.

“He was not an activist, he was a quiet-spoken person who was always doing something nice for somebody else,” his friend Ginny Wood said.

“He was the last of the Alaskans that really knew how to take care of himself in the wilderness. He really enjoyed being out in it.”

Over the years, Dick had fun with many activities including sailing, sailboarding, scuba diving, flying, snowmachining, fishing, hunting, gardening, photography, lapidary work, welding and home maintenance.

He even windsurfed out on Lake Michumina, where he and his family lived for years.

During World War II, Dick reached Alaska by serving as a levelman during construction of the Alaska Highway. After the war, he found employment with the Federal Aviation Administration, working at Flight Service Stations at Northway, Shungnak, Sheep Mountain and, in 1952, at Lake Michumina, where he made his home.

Spending over 60 years in Alaska, Dick became a skilled pilot and ham radio operator, enabling him to assist in many rescue operations from downed aircraft

to disasters, including the 1964 Anchorage earthquake and the 1967 Fairbanks flood.

In 1957, Dick married Florence Rucker and they raised three children, Ray, Miki, and Julie. They built a two-story log home at Lake Michumina, where they lived until 1997. Dick installed innovative water, heat and electrical systems, including solar power, a solar water heater and a homemade freezer.

Dick and Florence had many adventures in the Bush and flying, boating and driving around Alaska. During the 1980s, they often helped with radio communications for the Yukon 800 and the Yukon Quest races. In later years, they traveled widely, driving the United States and Canada, as well as travelling to other continents.

When Dick was 80, he and Florence moved to Fairbanks to live in the log house they built during the 1970s when the children started high school.

Dick was easy-going and optimistic. He always enjoyed helping other people, whether doing the dishes or airdropping supplies to wilderness travelers. As a husband, father, grandfather or friend, he was always exceptionally cheerful, patient and tolerant.

He is survived by his wife, Florence; three children, Miki, Julie, and Ray; brother, David; and grandchildren, Richard and Karen Collins.

*Changing our names but not our stripes**Continued from page 3*

work at NAEC in grassroots organizing. She goes to TCC to further that skill, working in the field of community organizing. A logical next career move for her but her expertise and resilience will be sorely missed!

But let me return to the Esso analogy. Mara and I are but names in NAEC's midst. What is enduring are NAEC's stripes, the stuff that NAEC is made of: our principles, as agreed to in our strategic plan. Call them foundations: they assure NAEC will continue to prosper and remain the beacon in northern Alaska that it always has been. Exactly who sits in my (or any other) chair or position is pretty immaterial to that mission.

All the best.

Recruitment Announcement

Executive Director

The Northern Alaska Environmental Center seeks an energetic, articulate leader and seasoned professional manager to implement the organization's strategic goals and objectives. The Executive Director is charged with building the organization through enhancing credibility and visibility with the public, increasing membership and volunteer participation, fundraising, and cultivating new and existing relationships with partner organizations, the business community, elected officials and state/federal agencies.

Human resources, board relations, strategic planning, budgeting and grants management experience are required; familiarity with Alaska conservation issues is desired. The ideal candidate will have a strong conservation ethic and excellent communications skills to serve as an effective advocate for the protection of wilderness and wildlands in arctic and interior Alaska. Salary is commensurate with experience. *For a detailed job description, visit www.northern.org or call (907) 452-5021.*

To apply submit cover letter, resume and three references to:
NAEC Executive Director Search Committee
830 College Road
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Position is open until filled. Review of applications will begin February 15, 2005.

Recruitment Announcement

Mining Coordinator

The Northern Alaska Environmental Center, a public-interest conservation organization based in Fairbanks, Alaska, seeks a Mining Coordinator for its hardrock mining program. This program has earned a reputation for technical excellence and responsiveness to citizens' requests for information and assistance in hardrock mining issues, including permitting of new facilities and oversight of existing ones.

If you possess strong writing skills, have education or experience in mining, geology or environmental science, and enjoy getting out into communities and working with people, this job may be for you.

Duties:

- Network with community stakeholders, Alaska Native tribes, trade groups, state and federal agencies involved in the permitting and monitoring of proposed and existing hardrock mines in Alaska.
- Design and implement program components, such as maintaining and updating program's website, developing education materials, and providing technical information to members and public.
- Monitor compliance with environmental regulations and operational permits at Alaska hardrock mines.
- Solicit grants, write proposals and prepare project evaluations

Qualifications:

- BSc in Geology, Mining or related Environmental field
- 2 years' experience in grassroots activism
- Thorough knowledge of federal and state environmental and mining regulations and permitting processes

This job is based in Fairbanks and requires some inter- and intra-state travel, often at short notice. Candidates should send cover letter plus resume to Executive Director, NAEC, 830 College Road, Fairbanks, AK 99701. Closing date: Open until filled.

The Arctic Refuge is under threat again

The Bush administration and its allies have made it clear that their shortsighted energy policy will continue to give inflated prominence to drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Despite the fact that drilling has twice been rejected by bipartisan majorities in the Senate, and that a majority of the American public does not support it, the Bush administration continues to push this unpopular initiative.

No matter how many times they try to advance this plan, the facts haven't changed: drilling in the Arctic Refuge would ruin one of America's last unspoiled wild places for what the U.S. Geological Survey and oil company executives concede is only a few month's worth of oil that would not be available for a decade.

Drilling proponents have a much broader agenda — just last year, Rep. Tom DeLay (R-TX) told a group of high-ranking Republicans that the controversy over drilling in the Refuge is a “symbolic” debate about whether or not oil and gas drilling should be allowed in pristine wild areas across the country.

Ultimately, the battle over the Arctic Refuge says a lot about what sort of nation we are going to be. Will we be a country that squanders its natural resources for short-term profit? Or a nation that stewards those resources, carefully conserving the most valuable natural and economic assets to ensure we will have them in the future?

For some five decades, thousands of citizens from all walks of life and all areas of the nation have worked to protect the Arctic Refuge, beginning with its establishment in 1960 by President Dwight Eisenhower. Leaders of both political parties have recognized the importance of protecting the area. Backed by the majority of Americans, bipartisan majorities in the U.S. Senate have voted time and again to keep the oil drills out of the Refuge's Coastal Plain.

The Refuge faces a “back-door” threat in the 109th Congress. If drilling in the Refuge is included as part of a Budget Resolution it will only require a simple majority for its passage in the Senate. Previously, 60 Senators were need for cloture of the planned filibuster on any amendment calling for drilling. The Northern Center will be working diligently with other members of the Alaska Coalition to make sure this back door approach to drilling does not happen. We remain steadfast in our mission to counter the pro-development viewpoint put forth by Alaska's Congressional Delegation.

If you are interested in assisting us in this effort by volunteering for phone banking; traveling to Washington, D.C. to meet with members of Congress; donating airline miles to help us send people to Washington, D.C.; or general office support, please contact the Northern Center's Arctic Coordinator, Kelly Hill Scanlon, at (907) 452-5021, or kelly@northern.org.

...the facts haven't changed: drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge would ruin one of America's last unspoiled wild places for what the U.S. Geological Survey and oil company executives concede is only a few month's worth of oil...

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