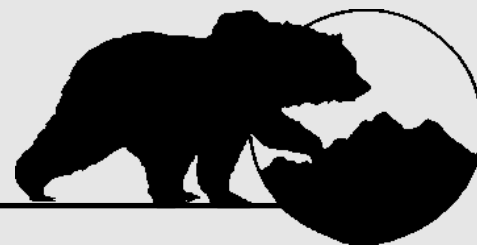


THE NORTHERN LINE



"I would feel more optimistic about a bright future for man if he spent less time proving that he can outwit Nature and more time tasting her sweetness and respecting her seniority." --E.B. White, author



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NAEC Wish List

- ★ 1 or 2 Small Bookcases
- ★ Filing Cabinets (3-4 drawer is preferable)
- ★ Framing for posters
- ★ Large window (approx. 48" X 72")

Thank You for:

- ★ Gutter work
- ★ Fence painting
- ★ Garden work
- ★ Small Desk
- ★ Weed whacker
- ★ New (attractive) display racks
- ★ Relocation of the bulletin boards
- ★ Replacement of the flush mechanism in the toilet tank

Front Page photo by John Lyle. Page 20 photo: Tundra Vole, *Microtus Oeconomus*, by Charlie Ott.

THE NORTHERN LINE



Environmental News of Arctic and Interior Alaska

The Northern Line is published quarterly by the Northern Alaska Environmental Center (NAEC), 830 College Rd., Fairbanks, Alaska 99701, <info@northern.org>, <http://www.northern.org>. Copyright © 2005 by NAEC. All rights reserved. Subscription rate is \$33 annually and includes membership. We encourage letters and articles to be submitted for publication. We reserve the right to edit all submissions. The Northern Alaska Environmental Center is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization.

The Northern Alaska Environmental Center promotes conservation of the environment in Interior and Arctic Alaska through advocacy, education, and sustainable resource stewardship. The Northern Alaska Environmental Center has 1,000 members.

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

Win a framed Jeff Jones' photograph!

Raffle tickets are now on sale for a framed copy of Jeff Jones' *South from Sunset Pass*, a photographic panorama shot in 2004 the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

The color photograph is 14x28"; frame size: 18x32"

**\$5.00 per ticket or
 \$45.00 for a book of ten.**

**Only 1000 tickets will
 be sold.**

Drawing held August 21, 2005 — you need not be present to win! To purchase tickets, just stop into the Northern Center or order over the phone at (907) 452-5021.



Jeff Jones creates large photographic panoramas to capture a sense of place. In *South from Sunset Pass*, he attempts to convey a sense of the vastness and openness, and the undulating terrain, of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Jones shot this image on a trip into the Refuge in August 2004. The view across the arctic tundra includes snow-capped Mt. Chamberlin prominent in the Franklin Range, with the Sadlerochit River flowing from west to east. The image is composed of five of the eleven sequential photographic frames he shot of the sweeping vista. Afterwards, he digitally "stitched" the five frames together to produce this scene. He's pleased to share it with you, a fellow supporter of wilderness. **To view the image in color** and see other work by Jones, visit his website at: www.lumnos.com/pages/anwr/SSsPs.html.

A Letter to our Membership



By David van den Berg
Executive Director

Dear Members:

I am so happy to be the Northern Center's new Executive Director. I cut my teeth at the old Northern Center at 218 Driveway Street in the early- and mid-1990s. I had the time of my life working with staff and members to protect Alaska's wild lands and to build community here in the Golden Heart City.

Having devoted my adult life to exploring the Brooks Range and the North Slope, I believe I know the Alaskan dream. Yet, there is a difference of opinion

Ginny Wood and Celia Hunter would tell me that Alaska was better when they were young. While I am saddened to accept that the Alaska my generation inherits is diminished by time and events, I know they are right. The frontier is past; distances are not as great as they were, the nights not as dark; wolves wear collars; and wilderness – the very essence of Alaska – is threatened throughout this great state.

Alaska has changed in the two generations since Statehood, it is true, and it will continue to change. No matter how much our Chamber friends and the Brahmins of the flagship industries proclaim that "We don't do it like they do it Outside," we are doing to Alaska exactly what our ancestors did Outside - the great exception being the enlightened legislation we know as ANILCA.

Today more than ever, wild lands and wildlife live at the mercy of human appetites. If our appetites consist of more wants than needs (i.e. - I need personal transportation; I want a Hummer), then we should question the costs of our wants. This the

environmental movement does, and many, many Americans are grateful for the role we play in charting a course that finds harmony with other life.

No matter the issue to which we apply our energies, the work we do is a public service. From recycling to advocacy for the Arctic Refuge, the root of our inspiration is to lead an examined national life.

Whether you live in Fayetteville or Fairbanks, your community needs you. We call ourselves the "environmental community" at the risk of being a community apart. Environmentalism makes its greatest strides as a broad social movement. As we carry our work into neighborhoods and communities, we put a face to our philosophies and the universal value of stewardship. We become catalysts for change.

If you have not visited the new Northern Center at 830 College Road, please stop by. The staff are sunny, hard-working professionals whom I'd like you to meet. My Board of Directors comes with brains, brawn and a strong commitment to serving the Fairbanks community. We'd like to re-acquaint with our members and work together to continue protecting wild lands and building community in Alaska.

Sincerely,
David van den Berg

P.S. – As you will read on page 5, the fate of the Arctic Refuge is in the balance. While we have suffered a number of disappointing defeats in Congress, these setbacks should come as little surprise given the nature of the Executive and Legislative branches. We have at least one more shot to protect the Refuge some time this fall. Rest up, friends, and save some energy for the struggle.

Membership Drive 2005

Membership Drive 2005

Membership Drive 2005

Membership Drive 2005

Give a gift membership to the Northern Center to friends or family who want to protect the very character of Alaska – its wilderness and wildlife. ***Gift memberships are available for \$20*** – all you have to do is fill out the membership voucher in *The Northern Line*, check the Gift box, give us their address, send payment, and then it is up to us to retain them. As always, we're counting on you to help us help you!

NAEC Furnace to be Retired (finally)

By Nicole M. Braem
Membership & Communications Director

It may be our oldest staff member, but we're not sorry to see it go.

Yes, we're finally going to pink slip our aged, decrepit, and *embarrassingly* inefficient boiler.

How inefficient?

Let's put it this way... Crane, the company that manufactured it, went out of business over 35 years ago. The "normal" lifespan of one of these things is 20 years. We actually entered it in a recent contest here in Fairbanks for the oldest furnace in town. (We were disqualified for technical reasons. We're still not sure how old it is.)

A recent evaluation concluded it was operating at 60 percent efficiency. It's enough to make a Green blue.

Yes, it's time to come clean (and hopefully pollute a little less, too.) We have been wasting fuel. Not intentionally, of course — the Crane boiler came with the building when we purchased it several years ago.

But like many folks, myself included, you *want* to go as green as possible... get your house or cabin on solar, put up a windmill, tool around town in a hybrid vehicle — but there is the tiny problem of not having the money to do so.

Well, no more!

Recent estimates to replace the boiler and do the other required work have come in with a \$17,000 price tag.

The **good news** is that recently, we received a commitment of matching funds to money we raise to finally rid ourself of the monstrosity lurking under the trapdoor in our garage.

It won't be easy. The Crane is HUGE. At the moment, we have two strategies to get it out of the hole. The first is to dismember it, attach an engine jack to the garage rafters, and winch it out one piece at a time. Another proposal is to cut it apart and get a tow truck to winch pieces out.



Top: Say goodbye to the Crane Model 20!; Inset: Your fearless Membership & Communications Director, none too happy about climbing down to the boiler.

But we'll need your help. We'll be sending our members an appeal in a few weeks, asking for your help to clean up our act. We'll appreciate whatever you can do to help. Look for updates on our progress in future editions of *The Northern Line*.

Yes, we have MORE Being Caribou DVDs

Thank you for your overwhelming interest in *Being Caribou*, the epic of two Canadians migrating with the Porcupine Caribou Herd. NAEC is once again able to offer copies of the movie for sale at a reduced cost. Copies are \$10 each.

This DVD is a great way to bring the message home of what we are protecting in the Arctic Refuge's coastal plain. To order your copy, contact the Arctic program (907)452-5021 or rocky@northern.org.

Being Caribou

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



Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Update:

Despite setbacks, this fight is not over

By Kelly Hill Scanlon & David van den Berg
Arctic Coordinator

On April 28, 2005 Congress passed a concurrent budget resolution (House vote: 214-211; Senate vote: 52-47.) Passage of the budget resolution means the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is still at risk for oil drilling and exploration.

This is disheartening news. But it is important to realize that even though the Senate's version of the budget includes Refuge drilling, the vote was not specifically on the Refuge; and the House version of the budget passed without concrete reference to Refuge drilling.

We have a lot working for us as the budget battles unfold. Public support for a wild coastal plain runs high; support for President Bush's extreme policies is dwindling; many in Congress consider it a misuse of the Budget process to settle issues that cannot be settled on their merits; projected revenue from leasing the coastal plain is grossly inflated – **leasing revenue projections are as much as 60 times higher than leases on the North Slope have realized, on average, during the last twenty years.** And finally, there is the budget process, a Byzantine exercise that advantages the cleverest parliamentarian.

Veteran budget watchers predict the budget process could drag into October. To illustrate the budget process, we offer the following blow-by-blow of the budget process. A diagram is available on the Northern Center's web site at www.northern.org.

Stage 1

The budget resolutions that passed both chambers of Congress instruct thirteen House and Senate committees on their budget goals. To meet their budget targets, committees must either cut existing funding or find additional funds.

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the House Resources Committee each have as a target \$2.4 billion in new revenue – exactly the amount President Bush claims lease sales in the Refuge's coastal plain would earn.

Critics of the budget figure make a strong case that North Slope leasing history and the geology of the Refuge do not justify these radically inflated and poorly justified estimates for lease revenue. (See "Projected Bonus Payments Greatly Exceed North Slope Trends" at www.finebergresearch.com/arbr.pdf.) Instructed to find \$2.4

billion in new revenue, these committees may recommend that this amount be acquired through leasing the coastal plain for oil exploration and drilling.

Stage 2

All House and Senate committees report back to the Budget committees with the ways in which they will meet their targets. These actions – these cuts or sources of additional funding – are assembled into a budget reconciliation bill.

Stage 3

Additional funding sources can be voted on separately, or lumped into a single omnibus appropriations bill. It is likely that the Budget committees will package these changes into one omnibus bill for consideration by both chambers. Any bill must be signed by the president to become law.

Can a budget bill be filibustered?

No. The Budget cannot be fili-

bustered. The budget will pass or not on a simple majority vote.

How will we impact this process?

The last stage of review before the final vote will allow us an opportunity to strike Arctic Refuge drilling from the budget.

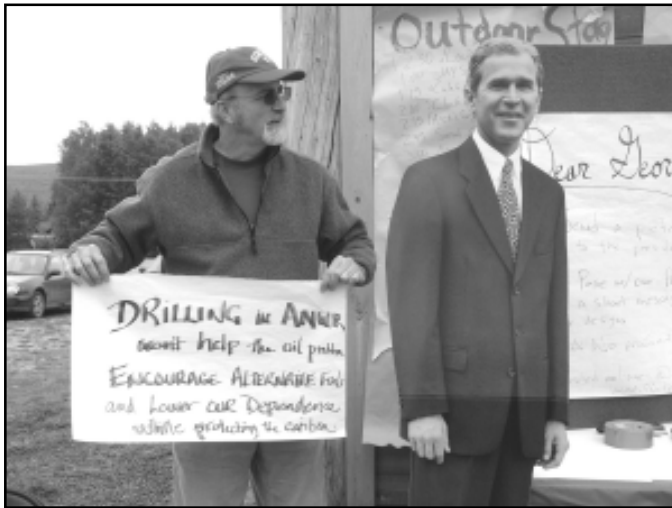
Strike we will. The fight is not over! The "commotion" we create with letters and phone calls alerts our leaders to the fact that the fate of the Refuge matters – it is of importance to their constituents.

So keep writing letters to your Senators and Congressmen. If you already have the *Being Caribou* DVD, or if you want to buy it, we will send a how-to for letter-writing parties.

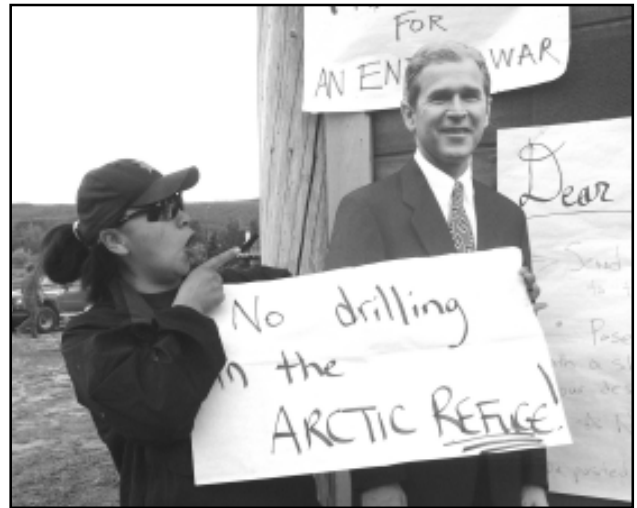
We also need volunteers in Fairbanks to help with events - and a select few to go back to Washington D.C. to work on Capitol Hill.

To find out more, please contact Kelly@northern.org.

Applause for Volunteers - Thank you!



Top left: At the May 2005 Clucking Blossom Festival in Fairbanks, local resident Pete Pinney explains to President Bush the reasons not to drill in the Refuge; Top right: TohCyahDayMah Tahbone, of Anchorage, just says "No!"; Bottom left, right: staff and volunteers spruce up the Northern Center offices on our annual Clean Up Day.



The Northern Center would like to thank all of those who helped out with our Clean Up Day activities.

Dave Boyd and the students from Club Earth: Ephy Wheeler, Marie Sorensen, and Michael Fantana planted a beautiful lilac bush in our front garden. Kaarle Strailey, Sarah Campbell, Stan Justice, and members of the staff turned our weeded yard into a landscaping showcase. In addition, many of the Northern Center staff and Board cleaned up our "adopted highway" along College Road. And an even bigger thanks goes to the nameless individuals who assisted with cleaning up this stretch before we got there!!!

Thanks to Sean McGuire, Suzi Lozo, and Mary Shields for helping with Camp Habitat.

Thanks to Loren Reuben for painting the fence. Thanks for making a difference!



“Defend Alaska Now!” Campaign a success

Thank you to our Alaskan members for their letters and phone calls

By Brendan Buckley
Legislative Intern

As a member of the Defend Alaska Now! (or DAN) program this year, I had three main legislative priorities.

The first was the passage of HB 19, the Pesticide Right-to-Know Bill. The second was the defeat of HB 130, the University Land Grant, and the third was the defeat of SB 85, Senator Ralph Seekins’ attempt to lift the five-mile corridor ban on all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use around the Dalton Highway.

We were successful on the first and third priorities, but not nearly as successful on the second one.

HB 19 was helped in its path to law by two factors: it is an extraordinarily common-sense law, and it was sponsored by Anchorage Republican Kevin Meyer, who is also co-chair of the House Finance Committee.

The bill requires pesticide manufacturers to pay a small fee to the State of Alaska in order to register each product for use, a practice that was in place in 49 states at the start of this year’s legislative session. It also mandates that, when pesticides are sprayed in government buildings, parks, or multi-unit dwellings, notice be posted from 48 hours before application until 48 hours afterwards.

With this notice, people can better limit their exposure to pesticides. Pesticide exposure has been linked to a variety of maladies, including breast cancer, childhood cancers, Parkinson’s

disease, and low birth weight. By requiring this notice to be posted, the legislature took a step towards protecting the health of all Alaskans.

The University Lands Grant passed both the House and Senate during the regular session, but their two versions had not been reconciled before midnight on May 10.th However, the bill was added to the docket of the special session, and passed on the 12.th

With this notice, people can better limit their exposure to pesticides. Pesticide exposure has been linked to a variety of maladies, including breast cancer, childhood cancers, Parkinson’s disease, and low birth weight.

While everyone is in favor of supporting the University, a number of concerns prompted DAN’s opposition to this bill. The first is a concern about the loss of public process around the development and disposal of these parcels of land.

The second is a concern about the loss of public access to these lands once they are conveyed to a private entity — the University.

The third is that this land grant, which would have a negligible net effect on the University budget, would be used in the future by the Legislature as an ex-

cuse to shortchange the University on funding.

The third major area of activity was on SB 85, Senator Seekins’ attempt to open up the Dalton Highway corridor to ATV use. He had introduced the same bill in the past, only to see it dragged down by Senator Georgianna Lincoln. Unfortunately, Senator Lincoln has retired, so we didn’t have her clout on the bill.

Though we were unable to change the minds of any of the members of the Interior delegation, once word got out about SB 85, other legislators raised concerns. Eventually, a deal was reached to hold the bill over until next year.

In the meantime, the Senate Resources Committee will hold a series of hearings on the bill in Fairbanks, Coldfoot, and Barrow over the summer. Those hearings have not been scheduled and probably will not be scheduled until after the special session adjourns.

The case of SB 85 illustrates the great strength of the DAN program: coordination. By working together, the Northern Center, ACE, and SEACC are able to combine our resources, and attack problems from a variety of different angles, increasing our likelihood of success.

Thank you to the Alaska Conservation Foundation for sponsoring the Defend Alaska Now! campaign.

2005 Camp Habitat off to Great Start

By Amber Borner
Camp Habitat Director

The 2005 Camp Habitat season is off to a great start!

Our preschool camp, Nature Sprouts, began June 6-17, and is followed by our day camp June 20-July 15. Our backpacking trips are June 20-24 and July 11-16, with exciting trips to Granite Tors and the White Mountains respectively.

We have five excellent new instructors this year. Dawn Joswiak, Courtney Havrilek, Kari Martin, and Trista Saunders are our day camp instructors, and Jim Trombley is a new backpacking instructor. In addition, Karen Toland and Nancy Wood are returning as backpacking instructors.

We also have a great team of Junior Counselors that will team up with our instructors: Frankie Breaid, Laurel Carothers, Sanna Turnbaugh, and Mary Wiese. We have a volunteer from Australia, Angela Kidson, who will assist camp in June. Kyle Campbell, an Alaska Department of Fish and Game Intern, will lead special boreal forest hikes and will assist camp in July.

To date, Camp Habitat **has awarded 20 scholarships** to children from low-income families. We could not provide these scholarships without the generous support from our donors. Please see our special Thank You ad and support the organizations that support us!

Camp Habitat will be undergoing an exciting transition in the next year. Our *VISTA volunteer, Katherine Helmuth, is expanding and applying the Camp Habitat curriculum to an after school program that she will implement in two local elementary schools (Anne Wien and Hunter) and two middle schools (Randy Smith and Tanana.)

The expansion will allow more children to access this excellent environmental education program on a year-round basis. We hope to expand this program to more schools in the coming years.

In addition to the after school program, Katherine is developing a preschool reading program called *Preschool Nature Discovery Time* this summer at Creamer's Field. Children three to five years old accompanied by an adult, are invited to listen to a story, participate in a craft, and go on a short nature walk. The expansion of the Camp Habitat Program will result in the creation of a year-round position for a Camp Habitat Executive Director. This is an important step for camp, creating continuity and greater self-sustainability. Keep your eyes open for the exciting changes!

Ways to Support Camp Habitat!

- Donate your Fred Meyer rewards rebates to camp! We will use this money to purchase nutritious snacks for our preschool program, food for our overnight campouts, and backpacking food.

- When you purchase anything from Beaver Sports make sure to write Camp Habitat down in on the "Be True to Your School or Organization" form.

Beaver Sports will then donate 2% of these sales to Camp Habitat. We will use this money for equipment replacement and repairs.

- Replacing your tent or camp stove this year? Donate used equipment in good shape to Camp.

Camp Habitat *Backpacking Wish List*

- ★ Water filter
- ★ Head nets
- ★ Backpacking tent
- ★ Small backpack
- ★ Gallon ziplocs
- ★ Backpacking stove



Camp Habitat

WISHES to THANK our 2005 SPONSORS:

Sandhill Crane Sponsors:

Mary Shields – Tails from the Trails

Boreal Owl Sponsors:

Gene DuVal – Re/Max

Golden Plover Sponsors:

Alaska Biological Research

Arctic Audubon Society

Doyon Limited

Dr. Phyllis Pendergrast

Fairbanks Elks Lodge

Fairbanks Emblem Club

Kiwanis Club of Chena

Kohler, Schmitt & Hutchison

Shelley Goddard

Chickadee Sponsors:

American Tire and Auto

Denali State Bank

Chickadee Sponsors Continued:

Fairbanks Distributors/Great Alaskan Food Company

Fountainhead Development

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Mrs. Miriam Moody

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Additional Sponsors:

Mountain Sports, Capture Photography – Katy Lynch,

Faye Barfield Inc, Fairbanks Sunrisers Rotary Club,

Interior Medical Supply, K&K Recycling, Sharon

Baring, Shannon & Hank Billings, Martha & Bill

Bristow, Margaret Eagleton, Edward Murphy, Alexis

Runstadler, Anna Zierfuss

CAMP HABITAT

Summer 2005



We are still accepting registration for the following programs:

Day Camp Program

Nature Detectives	June 20-24
6-7 year olds	\$170
Water Striders	June 27- July 1
6-7 year olds	
(*New Section Just Opened!*)	\$185
8-9 year olds	
(includes overnight campout)	\$185

Backpacking Program

Space is limited! Sign up today!

An unique opportunity for 11-16 year olds to develop backcountry skills while exploring Alaska's wilderness with experienced and knowledgeable instructors. We emphasize safety, group cooperation, outdoor and leadership skills, and low-impact camping techniques.

Backpacking I: Granite Tors Trekkers	June 20-24
11-13 year olds	\$275
Backpacking II: White Mountain Explorer	July 11-16
13-17 year olds	\$300

Call Now to Enroll! 452-5021 ext. 26



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.

Economics and logistics of recycling

By Nancy Fresco

Local Issues Coordinator

Is it more important to recycle cardboard boxes or plastic bags? Is glass recycling cost-effective? Why is there a #5 on my yogurt container? 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 recycling program. However, unless all the details are worked out, recycling programs are plagued by problems.

In *Part I* of this article last winter, we took a look at what Fairbanks – and America in general – is throwing away.

Fairbanks vs. the national average

By weight, it turned out that:

- 25% of our waste is paper and another 25% is cardboard, for a 50% total — above the national average
- 23% is organic, including wood, yard waste, food waste — below the national average
- 10% is metal, mostly iron — above the national average
- 9% is glass and ceramics — above the national average
- 5% is plastic — below the national average

Part II: The economics and logistics of recycling

What recycling program is workable for a municipality is highly dependent on several key variables:

1) Existing waste disposal system. In places where land is expensive, zoning restrictive, and population density high, waste disposal is often very expensive and recycling therefore comparatively cheap. The opposite is true in Fairbanks.

2) Recycling budget expectations. Several possibilities exist. (Fairbanks falls in category b.)

a. A municipality can decide to subsidize its recycling program as much as necessary to maximize participation. This often includes providing amenities such as blue bins and curbside pickup, as well as charging for trash disposal while keeping recycling free.

b. Alternately, local authorities can choose to subsidize recycling start-up costs only. This might include building a recycling collection facility at the landfill and assisting the formation of local businesses that use recycled materials.

c. Or, the municipality may expect recycling to actually save money as compared to waste management. Such cost-savings might occur more often if raw materials weren't subject to government subsi-

dies that keep their prices artificially low (such as allowing mining and drilling companies almost free access to public lands).

3) Markets for Recyclables. Markets fall into two basic categories: small-scale and industrial.

a. Small-scale recycling tends to be local, and creates products that are often more valuable than the original material. Examples include crafting glass tiles from crushed glass or making braided rugs from old clothes. The advantage of small-scale recycling is that it provides jobs and income within the community. The disadvantage is that it generally uses part rather than all of a particular waste stream.

b. Industrial recycling such as the production of recycled paper or aluminum cans from old ones generally involves an economy of scale, and can't be pursued except in massive facilities such as paper mills or foundries. The advantage is that it can absorb almost any quantity of material. The disadvantage is that recyclables must be transported to such facilities and prices for the materials are sometimes lower than the transport costs.

4) Volume of Recyclables. This is almost entirely dependent on the size of the community and

...Continued on page 11

*The economics and logistics of recycling**Continued from page 10*

the size and proximity of nearby communities. Not only is Fairbanks a small city, located hundreds of miles from the nearest port, but the overall population density of Alaska is low.

Because the above variables differ from place to place, there is no one “perfect solution” to the recycling dilemma. In general, however, large port cities (e.g. New York, Boston, San Francisco, Seattle) should concentrate on efficient collection and handling of all possible recyclables, and should channel those materials to industrial recycling facilities locally or abroad. Smaller communities that exist primarily as suburbs of large cities may be able to piggy-back onto these larger programs.

For much of Alaska outside Anchorage, a combined solution is probably the most practical. A plan for Fairbanks might break down as follows:

- Reducing and reusing should be encouraged through education and also by raising the cost of disposal in the landfill (tipping fees) as well as the fines (and enforcement) for littering.
- For all recyclables, local recycling businesses should be encouraged, and small start-up projects should be offered incentives.
- For our largest waste stream, paper and cardboard, it makes sense to take the industrial approach. We hope to eventually be able to collect and bale it at the Borough landfill, and backhaul it to Anchorage on trucks that would otherwise have returned empty. The relatively high world market price of cardboard should, with luck, cover the cost of this approach.
- Metals are high in value and hard to reforge locally, so the emphasis should be on backhauling.
- Organics could be composted locally, perhaps in conjunction with our sewage composting program or local farming and gardening operations.
- Although Lynden Transport is currently backhauling glass free of charge, in the long run it would be less labor-intensive to crush and use glass locally, since a market for fill and finer gravels already exists.
- Finally, plastics – along with the small percentage of “other” waste – will probably be the last thing to be dealt with. At five percent of our waste, and over a dozen different categories, the first tactic should be avoidance, and the second reuse.

Where the Wood Bison Roam?

BOREAL SHORTS



By Nancy Fresco

Boreal Forest Coordinator

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has initiated a scoping process to determine whether wood bison should be reintroduced to the state. NAEC recently participated in a stakeholder group that examined this question in depth, looking at geologic records, habitat, environmental health, subsistence, land management, and much more.

There is little doubt that wood bison once roamed across Alaska and much of northern Canada. They exist in the geological record, and some Native elders recall traditional stories about them. It is suspected that they were over-hunted when snowshoes and bows and arrows improved hunting efficiency in deep snow, although diminished habitat also probably played a role.

But should they be brought back? The animals are listed as an endangered species in Canada, and we could play a part in saving them. Moreover, they might fill a biological niche that has been empty in their absence; studies have shown that there is little overlap between the grazing of bison and the browsing of moose. Reintroductions within Canada have been largely successful. If their populations became healthy again, they could be managed as a game species, an idea that is popular with many Alaskans.

On the other hand, putting a species onto the landscape when it has been absent for generations may have unknown consequences, and is certainly not a decision to make lightly.

Thus far, NAEC is supportive of further exploration of the idea. The stakeholder panel unanimously agreed that ADF&G should pursue the possibility of reintroducing wood bison. However, NAEC and other panel members outlined some detailed caveats that should be considered before the wood bison roam once more, including stipulations on the animals' health, the ecosystem's integrity, and the manner in which both the species and the system are managed.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife to Conduct an EIS on Yukon Flats Land Exchange

By Kelly Hill Scanlon
Arctic Coordinator

After hearing the request repeatedly during public meetings throughout the Interior, the regional Native corporation, Doyon Limited, has asked the federal government to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Yukon Flats Land Exchange.

Doyon President and Chief Executive Officer Orié Williams announced in May that the corporation asked and the federal government agreed to go forward with an EIS for the proposed land exchange.

In the proposed exchange, Doyon would acquire a single tract of about 200,000 acres of mostly uplands with potential for commercial oil and gas development in the southcentral part of the Refuge. This tract is adjacent to existing Doyon land interests.

In many cases, those expressing dismay at the exchange are the same shareholders Doyon claims to be working for in their push for the exchange.

In return, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) would acquire up to 220,000 acres located in more than a dozen areas throughout the Yukon Flats. For more information on the land exchange, go to www.northern.org or the Spring 2005 *Northern Line*.

Although Doyon and the USFWS have been discussing the exchange for years, it was not until public meetings in early 2005 that details of the plan became widely known.

At these meetings, individuals and tribal leaders from villages within the boundaries of the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge voiced concerns about the impact of oil and gas development projects on subsistence activities. In addition, residents from the village of Beaver outlined their opposition to the exchange in an ad in the March 19 edition of the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*.

The Gwichyaa Zhee Gwich'in declared a State of Emergency over the land exchange and held an

emergency Gwich'in Gathering regarding the exchange and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge June 15-17 in Fort Yukon, Alaska.

In many cases, those expressing dismay at the exchange are the same shareholders Doyon claims to be working for in their push for the exchange. Although the Gwich'in will discuss the exchange during the gathering, they remain adamantly opposed to the exchange regardless of the outcome of the EIS process.

The Northern Center submitted comments both in writing and at the public hearing in Fairbanks in February 2005 suggesting that an EIS would assist the public in determining the true costs and benefits of a land exchange. An EIS examines the positive and negative effects on the environment that might occur if a particular federal action is taken. It also looks at alternatives that might avoid or mitigate possible adverse impacts.

An EIS for the proposed land exchange could take 18 months or more to complete. It will be followed by public review and comment and a final federal decision. Since an EIS is not a legal requirement for land exchanges between the Department of the Interior and Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act corporations, it is unclear at this time what the legal requirements will be for a final decision on the exchange.

Comments on the land exchange are being accepted by USFWS until July 30, 2005, but the EIS process assures there will be time to submit more informed comments at a later date.

From the Woodpile. .

by Ginny Hill Wood

founding member of NAEC,
and regular columnist
will return in the next
issue!



BOREAL SHORTS

By Nancy Fresco
Boreal Forest Coordinator

How Green are the Whites?



Fairbanksans love the White Mountains.

Located just north of town between the Elliot and Steese Highways, this million-acre National Recreation Area offers trails, forests, ridgelines, mountain vistas, rustic rental cabins, creeks, rivers, and plenty of space to enjoy the natural world. Multiple uses – including cross-country skiing, hiking, mushing, ski-joring, hunting, fishing, snowmachining, and 4-wheeling — currently coexist relatively peacefully in the White Mountains.

However, local populations are increasing, and the aggressive new designs of off-road vehicles can push them further into the wilds. Thus, the Bureau of Land Management is now immersed in a planning process to determine whether anything in the existing management plan needs tweaking in order to prevent future conflicts and environmental problems.

In the initial scoping, we weighed in on four major topics: education, enforcement, trail management, and separation of incompatible uses. In short, although some human footprint is inevitable in a recreation area, stewardship of a wild and scenic landscape such as the White Mountains should focus on avoiding a downward spiral of degradation.

One solution would be to ban summer off-road vehicle use en-



The White Mountains National Recreation Area is one of the most popular destinations for outdoor enthusiasts in the Fairbanks area. Above, a Fairbanksan enjoys a snack with his sled dogs on a winter outing. Photo: Nancy Fresco.

tirely, on the grounds that the per-person impacts of four-wheelers are simply too high for even a semi-primitive designation. If available funding cannot cover the costs associated with properly managing trails and enforcing limits, then such a ban is the only acceptable solution. A compromise would be to allow four-wheelers on designated hardened trails.

Meanwhile, a greater educational presence in the White Mountains — through more signs and more personnel — would help keep adverse human impacts to a minimum while increasing users' knowledge about the area they are enjoying.

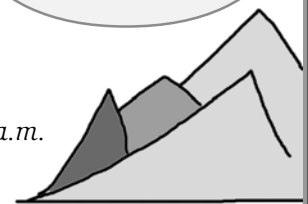
Further opportunity for public comment on this issue is upcoming.

Join us for a walk in the White Mountains

See the beautiful Nome Creek Valley, Mt. Prindle, and the impacts of summer ATV use on tundra

- meet at the Northern Center at 11:00 a.m.
- convoy to Mile 42 of the Elliot Hwy.
- expect to be back no later than 9 p.m.

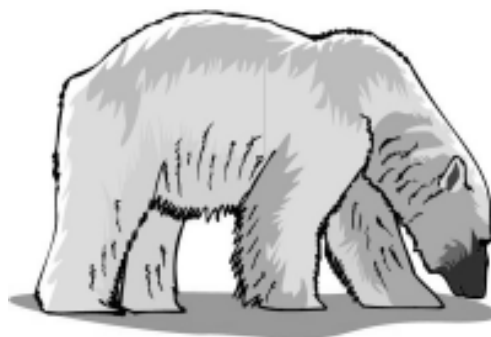
**July 24th
11 a.m.**



Come out for the 9th Annual *Run for the Refuge*

Sunday, August 21st, 2005
5K & 10K Run or Walk

Race begins at the UAF
Ski Hut on West Ridge



Bib Pickup/Registration
Starts at Noon
Race begins at 1pm

Call 452-5021
for more info

AT THE RUN FOR THE REFUGE YOU CAN:

- ❖ Join a post-race celebration featuring local music, and tasty refreshments
- ❖ Win prizes from local businesses regardless of where you finish in the race!
- ❖ Visit our informational booths about the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and Energy Efficiency.

Shape and Protect Alaska's Future...

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



Name: _____

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Your contribution is fully tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Thank you for your support.

Please return to: NAEC, 830 College Road, Fairbanks AK 99701

Then and Now: Gordon Wright

NAEC Board President Dan Adams interviewed Gordon Wright at his cabin overlooking Turnagain Arm.

Gordon Wright is known widely as a musician. During his twenty-five years as conductor of the Fairbanks Symphony and the Arctic Chamber Orchestra, Gordon made lasting contributions to the cultural landscape of Alaska. Perhaps less well known is his contribution to the natural landscapes of the North.

In 1971, Gordon and a small group of friends founded the Fairbanks Environmental Center, now the NAEC. The controversy over the Trans-Alaska Pipeline was raging, and the campaign for the Alaska National Interest Lands was just beginning. With characteristic foresight, Gordon understood that northern Alaska needed a strong, clear voice speaking out for the land, the animals and the special qualities that make this a place like no other.

Today this need seems more urgent and Gordon's vision more timely than ever before.

Adams: Q. Tell us about the start of the Northern Alaska Environmental Center and your involvement with environmental activism.

Wright: A. What got me interested in working as an environmental activist was the country's penchant for damming America's rivers to try to satisfy the nation's insatiable need for electric power.

I was living in Wisconsin at the time and Jim Kowalsky got me involved and we worked on dams in Kentucky, Wisconsin and the Glen Canyon dam.

During that time I became aware of the proposed environmental disaster of damming the Yukon River so I had as a result joined the Alaska Conservation Society of College, Alaska just to help the cause. I could only imagine this place called College, Alaska and never imagined I would ever be living there.

Then in 1969, there I was in Fairbanks, teaching at the University and conducting the symphony. That fall, hearings for the pipeline construction began. Ed (Edgar) Wayburn of the Sierra Club came to Alaska for the pipeline hearings and tracked me down, since he knew I had been active with the Sierra Club in Wisconsin.

He and the other environmentalists ended up having a strategy session at my house and there the Fairbanks group of the Sierra Club was founded as part of the Anchorage Chapter, and I became the chair-



Gordon Wright, Jim Hunter, and Jim Kowalsky at the 30th Anniversary of the Fairbanks Environmental Center (NAEC.) Photo courtesy: Gordon Wright.

man. Dan Osborne and Vivian Mendenhall were also on the board.

Q. How did you decide what issues to take on?

A. We wanted to provide a forum, a "Center," for people to tackle the issues needing to be tackled which were more in number than we had ever imagined. We had a real good leader in Jim Kowalsky because he was such a pro and had great vision. Jim pretty much set the agenda and I didn't really care what issues they took up.

I've felt all along through a number of directors, as far as issues were concerned, that we should follow the passions of the people that you have working for you. You can't deal with everything. The Board at that time was involved with finding a home for the Center, getting members and raising money, establishing the legal and tax status, that sort of thing. I think we worked together very well.

Q. What was your involvement with the Center and how long were you an environmental activist?

A. I was very active for the first ten years, attending meetings, writing articles, editing and traveling. Along with serving on the Center Board as president and secretary, I served on the national board of the Friends of the Earth. After ten years of environmental activism it was time to shift gears, to give more time to my music.

Q. The work of an environmentalist can be frustrating with the seemingly endless effort and what seems to be insignificant results. Was that an issue for you?

...Continued on page 16

Then and Now: Gordon Wright

Continued from page 15

A. The only frustration I ever had was that my fellow man would continue to make such a mess of things. We had to continually fight all these battles.

We were always overwhelmed by corporate and government money, especially in those early days. I'm a pretty good organizer but I look at myself as more of a spokesperson for the environment. Of course in the early days it didn't matter what I said, I was always labeled as a lock-it-up Sierra Clubber.

According to the Chamber of Commerce, I had stated publicly that I would like to see all of Alaska turned into a national park. So how do you deal with that? You don't. Maintaining humor through it all is essential.

I can remember the Larry Carpenter radio talk shows when callers would say "we should run all the environmentalists out of town on a rail," and Kowalsky responded that 'we are big supporters of mass transit.' There were even death threats. We never knew if the Center was going to be blown up or burnt down.

Q: Do you think there was more hostility then than there is now?

A: There was hostility, but nothing compared to the Bush and Murkowski administrations' hostility towards the environment.

Government and industry are strong bedfellows and a lot of Alaskans don't seem to care. Most live in the cities and just want snow machine access to the open country of the National Parks and Wildlife Refuges. Many want Alaska to be managed as a big moose farm.

It's the struggle between special interests. But it was important that these issues were brought out in the open for public discussion. A big part of the reason for the Center was education.

The Center's job was to make sure development stayed within the law and to keep the public informed. I don't know who's going to do that if the Environmental Center doesn't. But that's almost more than any community environmental organization can cope with. Preventing "terracing" is our most important public service. I just thought of that word by the way.

Q. Do you think environmentalism can become more accepted, more a part of the mainstream? How do we do that? There's a movement to try to increase the effectiveness of the environmental movement by forming alliances with community

organizations that understand the benefits of protecting the environment. Does this seem like a sound approach to the political milieu that makes up Alaska?

A. The answer is yes - when appropriate. There are many community and government alliances that will help the environment.

But if your issue is the Arctic Refuge, for example, you have drawn the line and said no oil development in the calving grounds. Cozying up to the oil companies and politicians serves no purpose. You have to mobilize an opposition force of public opinion.

As for as advocating for sound environmental development, that's fine but in my mind the Center should be aggressive in assessing the environmental costs. We can give strokes, but the environmentalists have a humongous job to do to save the earth. If it takes putting on a suit or getting a haircut to assist your persona to do business to get the job done - do whatever works.

So I think you need to meet the enemies of the environment on all fronts. For me it starts at home, the neighborhood, the community, all the way to the Juneau and Washington lobbying. Whatever gets the job done - I say go for it.

Q. How has the Center changed since it first got going in '71?

A. In the 35 years since the idea of the Center was first conceived the membership has grown tremendously. We've had good staff and interns with strong educational backgrounds come along regularly to work on various projects.

There will always be personnel changes, huge challenges, never enough money, people are often overworked, machinery breaks down. I see one of the Center's roles is to make sure development stays within the law and to help keep the public informed.

More than ever we need a vigilant Environmental Center to monitor what the industries are doing, and to make sure they do what they say they're going to do.

I'm impressed with how many issues the Center handles so well, and that it has survived and flourished. It makes me feel good that an organization I had some hand in starting is still going strong. I've been a member now for 35 years and wish the Center great success.

Arctic Refuge: Keep it Wild!!

One Fairbanksan delivers the message on his bike

By Kelly Hill Scanlon
Arctic Coordinator



Kaarle Strailey before hitting the road, bug bite and dust free. Photo: NAEC.

On July 8, 2005, Kaarle Strailey will do his part to make sure travelers up the Haul Road and beyond get the message that Alaskans want to keep the Arctic Refuge wild.

Departing from the Northern Center at 10 a.m. that day, Strailey will ride his bike from Fairbanks to Deadhorse. All along the way he'll talk with travelers and hand out information about the benefits of conserving energy and its relationship to protecting the Refuge.

"A lot of people just don't understand how their actions can help us keep the Refuge wild," said Strailey. "I thought this might be a fun way to get people's attention."

In addition to speaking with people he meets along the way, Strailey is planning to deliver a talk on the Refuge at the visitor's center in Coldfoot on Tuesday, July 12th.

Updates on his trip will be posted on the Northern Center's web site at www.northern.org.

If you would like to assist Strailey with his trip,

he has the following wish list of new or used items:

- bike trailer
- panniers (to borrow)
- 4 spare tubes
(size 26'X1.95" — schrader)
- 2 water bottle cages
- chain lube
- tire levers
- spare chain ring
- duct tape
- clipless pedals
- semi-slick tires
- food donations

Donations will be collected at the Center. For more information on Strailey's trip contact Kelly Hill Scanlon or Rocky Weber at (907) 452-5021, or Kelly@northern.org.

Calendar of Earth Friendly Events

- **July 23rd**, *NAEC float* in the Golden Days Parade. This year's parade theme is "Garters and Gold." Volunteers are needed to be in the parade and to work on preparation of the float. Contact Nancy Fresco at 452-5021, ext. 27 or at nancy@northern.org
- **July 24**, *White Mountain Walk*, a group hike: see the beautiful Nome Creek Valley, Mt. Prindle, and the impacts of summer ATV use on tundra. More details on page page 13.
- **July 29**, *Membership Picnic* at the NAEC office, 830 College Road, from 5 p.m. until ? Grill the new executive director and share some barbeque!
- **August 5-13**, *NAEC fair booth*: Volunteers are needed to staff our fair booth — handing out brochures, selling t-shirts and books, and provide fairgoers and opportunity to learn about the Northern Center. Contact Nancy at 452-5021, ext. 27 or at nancy@northern.org
- **October 2**, *Northern Center Annual Meeting*, 4 p.m. at the Birch Hill Convention Center.
- **November 5**, *NAEC Annual Auction*. Social begins at 6 p.m., Auction begins at 7 p.m. Come bid on fabulous desserts and a variety of outdoor gear, art, and useful items.

Mining Across Alaska - Summaries

By Meg Schlesinger
Mining Coordinator

Proposed Mines

The Nevada Star and Anglo American mining companies filed exploration permits in April 2005 and both companies have pursued options this month. Anglo has been on the ground through a helicopter-supported drilling program since May 15th, while Nevada has been so since the 20th. The Copper Country Alliance has taken the lead in Tangle Lakes.

Existing Issues

Pogo

On May 19th, Teck Pogo Vice President Karl Hanneman met with NAEC staff at the Northern Center office. Hanneman provided copies of the Goodpaster River fish study carried out by the Tanana Chiefs Conference in 2004. Further requirements as set forth in last year's agreement between NAEC and Teck Pogo are still to be fulfilled, although Alaska Department of Natural Resource Commissioner Tom Irwin has fulfilled the Stakeholders Committee provision, appointing NAEC board member Bill Holman as the environmental chair.

Red Dog

The Working Group that was constructed two months ago has successfully designed a comprehensive action plan to address the environmental and legal ramifications of Teck Cominco's Red Dog Mine.

As a part of that strategy and as a result of meetings held in Anchorage last month, Teck Cominco and their consultants have distributed copies of the Multiple Accounts Analysis (MAA) to consider the potential options for managing mine tailings. The MAA is designed to allow stakeholders to adjust data weights and values to correspond with the stakeholders' concerns. Teck Cominco will take the results of the MAA and determine the best solution to extend the mine's management procedures.

Other immediate issues surrounding Red Dog are the call for public comments on both the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

(NPDES) permit for the proposed port expansion and the fugitive dust study. NPDES comments are being reviewed and constructed by Amy Crook and Dave Chambers of Center for Social Policy, and have been distributed to members of the working group for review. Due to the size and length of the fugitive dust study submitted by Teck Cominco for Red Dog (weighing in at 37 pounds), NAEC and other members of the Working Group requested an extension of the review period. While the request for a ninety day extension was made to Rich Sundet at ADEC, only a 45-day extension was granted, requiring comments be submitted by July 11.th

Under the rules of the proposed 2005 general permit (GP), the EPA would again relax standards, this time increasing the size of dredge hose in categories. This would allow for greater disturbance, turbidity, and ecological ramifications.

Regulatory

In the 1980's, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) divided placer mining permitting into three categories: small, medium and mechanical.

In 2000, the EPA modified those regulations and subsequently relaxed restrictions.

In the 2005 regulations, restrictions stand to be relaxed once again — however, this time, the environmental community is paying attention.

Under current state regulations, records are kept only of small suction dredge permits. Under the rules of the proposed 2005 general permit (GP), the EPA would again relax standards, this time increasing the size of dredge hose in categories. This would allow for greater disturbance, turbidity, and ecological ramifications.

Small suction dredge size would increase from the current 4" to 6". Medium suction dredge size would be increased from 8" to 10". The other change to the 2005 GP is that an individual permit would no longer be required if a placer claim is to be lo-

...Continued on page 19

Mining UpdatesContinued from page 18

cated on a Wild and Scenic River. Instead those locations that include Wild and Scenic River designations would fall under the GP and have no individual permitting restrictions.

In an attempt to make public comments and bring the current 466 placer permits issued in the state of Alaska under better comprehension by the conservation groups in the state, a review of the current permit, permitting process, and location of these sites has been launched.

NAEC has begun to compile information about each of these sites from the regional offices that hold the individual permits.

Upon review of the 56 permits held at Fish and Game's Fairbanks' Habitat and Permitting Office,

NAEC found that over 50% of those permits are issued for three general areas of Alaska. The Steese Highway, Dalton Highway and 40 Mile approved areas are a compilation of generally accepted sites, but do not require miners to specify where in these areas they intend to mine.

Placer permits filed for other areas require additional information: section, township, range, meridian, and name of the area, and for ADF&G to distinguish what type of claim is on file. This inconsistency between approved sites and miner selected sites is a gap in the placer mining permitting done by the state of Alaska and needs to be corrected so that better management of the state's resources can occur.

Northern Center welcomes new staff

By NAEC Staff

Rocky Weber has arrived at the Northern Center as the new Arctic Intern.

He will assist Kelly Hill Scanlon during the busy summer months and organize the "Run for the Refuge" coming up in August.

During the winter, he is a master's student in UAF's Northern Studies Program, in which he is dealing with the social, economic, and environmental issues facing the Arctic nations.

"The Northern Center provides me with a good opportunity to view those issues from the inside of an environmental organization, Weber said.

Weber has studied abroad in Australia, where he learned to scuba-dive; Scotland, where he studied the area's medieval history; and Finland, where he supplemented his current studies of the Arctic.

"My greatest outdoor passion is rafting down Alaska's awe inspiring and incredibly powerful rivers, particularly when I get to do so over several consecutive days," said Weber. "Little beats floating along the river while sipping from my mug of tea and taking in Alaska's natural wonders."

Katherine Helmuth, *VISTA Volunteer, has joined the staff at NAEC for one year.

She will be working to expand the Camp Habitat summer camp by adapting the curriculum to an after school program. The plan is to offer this new program in four area schools during the 2005-2006



Welcome Rocky and Katherine! Photo: NAEC.

school year. Because the *VISTA mission is to eliminate poverty, these first schools will be Title 1 schools.

Katherine is also starting a preschool reading program at Creamer's Field this summer called the *Preschool Nature Discovery Time*.

This hour-long program is for three to five year-olds and their parents. Kids will listen to nature-oriented stories, do a craft and explore the wildlife refuge on short, theme-focused walks. The program is being offered every other Tuesday at 10:00 am in front of the farmhouse at Creamer's Field. The first program is on June 21st and will be about the summer solstice. Kids will get to make single strand beaded sun-catchers and explore sunny and shady habitats. There will be refreshments provided. Depending on this summer's success, the preschool program may be expanded into a year round program.

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.

ANIMALS AND FISH

Wolf-control aerial hunting in Alaska has resulted in 276 wolves killed in the state — less than half of the 500 the state wanted. More than 100 aerial permits were issued to hunters, covering 5 different parts of the state. *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, (FDNM), May 29, 2005, p. A1, A8.

Chinook and chum salmon bycatch by Bering Sea pollock fisheries using “massive” pelagic trawl sets has risen steeply in the past few years, with an all-time high of 62,493 chinook and 465,650 chums caught in 2004 (up from a combined total of 100,000 in 2002.) Ibid, p. 7.

PETROLEUM

Two new double-hulled tankers made to carry Alaskan crude oil “have developed mysterious cracks” in their rudders. One, the *Alaska Frontier*, has been in service since August 2004 and has carried 25 loads

(1.2 million barrels) of crude oil; the largest crack in it is nine feet long, and was found during a scheduled inspection in mid-May. The other, the *Alaska Explorer*, has hauled one load. FDNM, May 22, '05, p. D1, D2.

FEDERAL ACTIONS

HR 2361, to fund the Dept. of Interior, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and EPA, passed the House floor May 19, 2005; it forbade blending sewage after heavy rains or snows with water in rivers and streams, as proposed by the EPA. <lcv@lcv.org> May 26, 2005.

ROADS

The Bradfield Canal Road: The AK Dept. of Transportation (ADOT) is “pushing to start an EIS on the Bradfield Canal Road...from near Wrangell over steep coastal mountains into Canada.” In 1997, ADOT said “we have no compelling reasons to spend more public money on... [it]. The project won't work.” *Ravencall*,

MISCELLANEOUS

Thirty percent of Fish and Wildlife scientists answered a Union of Concerned Scientists survey, *in spite of being told not to*, saying 56% of scientific findings were interfered with, and that the Dept. of Interior interfered with 70% of them. Insufficient resources and inadequate funding affected morale of 92% of them; 85% said scientific candor was affected 42% of the time from fear of retaliation, and 19% of the time by orders to mislead the public. *Audubon*, May-June 2005, p. 12.

TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST

The Tongass has had more than 1 million acres cleared and 500 miles of logging roads built so far. In 2002, the Forest Service spent \$36 million in logging subsidies, and got \$1.2 million in timber profits; this supported 197 jobs, at a cost of \$178,000 per job. <lcv@lcv.org> April 29, 2005.

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