

THE NORTHERN LINE



*"Behind is a great forest that goes to the Arctic...
and here we must draw our line."*

~ Gary Snyder, Front Lines



Gifts from the Earth

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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, www.northern.org. Copyright © 2007 by NAEC. All rights reserved. Subscription rate is \$33 annually and includes membership. We encourage submission of letters and articles for publication. We reserve the right to edit all submissions. The Northern Alaska Environmental Center is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization.

MISSION: 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 1,452 members.

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Cover photos: *Example of small-scale wind turbine at Chena Hot Springs 2007 Renewable Energy Fair* © Lori Hanemann Fickus, *New 15 kilowatt solar array installed by Sonny Linder off Chena Hot Springs Road* © Pamela A. Miller

Back cover photo: *Sunset at Chukchi Sea in Barrow* © Pamela A. Miller

Calendar of Events



December 1 Holiday Bazaar

10am – 5:30pm @ Alaska Bird Observatory. Join local conservation and wildlife groups for a holiday shopping experience! Sponsored by the Northern Alaska Environmental Center, Alaska Bird Observatory, Arctic Audubon, Friends of Creamer's Field, and Calypso Farms. Free hot drinks and goodies. The annual tree lighting ceremony at Creamer's Field will take place at 6pm as a finale to the day.

December 6 47th Anniversary of the establishment of the

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

Celebrate this momentous occasion when the Refuge received its original designation by President Eisenhower's Interior Secretary. Further details to be announced on our website www.northern.org.

December 11 Global Warming Working Group*

12 - 1:30pm @ the Northern Center. Join this action oriented group, the second Tuesday of each month, to discuss Global Warming issues relevant to Interior Alaska. Bring a lunch!

December 11 NAEC Board of Directors Meeting**

6 pm @ the Northern Center. Meetings are open to NAEC members. Comments are welcome during the scheduled comment period at the beginning of the meeting.

December 13 Northern Voices Series: Eva Saulitis

7pm @ Noel Wien Library Auditorium. Eva Saulitis is an essayist, poet and biologist who teaches creative writing and English at UAA's Kachemak Bay Campus of Kenai Peninsula College. For the past 20 years she has studied killer whales in Prince William Sound. Her poems and essays have appeared in *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Northwest Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Quarterly West*, *Cimarron Review*, *Seattle Review*, and several anthologies. Her nonfiction book, *Leaving Resurrection*, will be published by Red Hen Press this fall. She is the recipient of writing fellowships from the Island Institute, the Rasmuson Foundation and the Alaska State Council on the Arts.

January 8 Global Warming Working Group (*see above)

January 8 NAEC Board of Directors Meeting (**see above)

January 10 Northern Voices Series: Sandy Jamieson

7pm @ Noel Wien Library Auditorium. Sandy Jamieson is a log house builder and big game guide. He is better known for his humorous art work depicting animals in roles usually held by people.

February 12 Global Warming Working Group (*see above)

February 12 NAEC Board of Directors Meeting (**see above)

February 14 Northern Voices Series: Heather Lende

7pm @ Noel Wien Library Auditorium. Heather Lende writes for NPR, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and the *Anchorage Daily News*, and is the author of *If You Lived Here, I'd Know Your Name: News From Small-town Alaska* which won the Alaska Library Association's Alaskan Award.

March 1-5 Wilderness Week in Washington DC.

Become more involved in protecting the Arctic by joining with citizens from around the country in this bi-annual session sponsored by NAEC and other Alaska Coalition groups. Some travel scholarships are available. By attending grassroots, media, and lobby trainings, you will have skills and inspiration to be a more effective Alaska advocate. For more information contact pam@northern.org.

March 11 Global Warming Working Group (*see above)

March 11 NAEC Board of Directors Meeting (**see above)

March 13 Northern Voices Series: Kes Woodward

7pm @ Noel Wien Library Auditorium. Kes Woodward is the author of *Painting in the North* and other works. He is also History of Art Professor Emeritus at UAF in Fairbanks and famous for his richly impressionistic paintings of birches. He has been an artist-in-residence at Denali National Park and was invited to accompany the centennial voyage of the Harriman Expedition several years ago.

Need some
**QUALITY
RECYCLED PAPER**
for printing or a cool earth-
friendly gift for a friend?

Stop by the Northern Center
and pick up a ream...or a case!
White paper is \$6.50/ream and \$60/case.
Colored paper available at a special,
1-time price of \$5/ream.

Gifts from the Earth

By David van den Berg
Executive Director



AS WE APPROACH YEAR-END, WE ARE SATISFIED. We have managed change within the Northern Center, prioritized well, benefited from much help, and delivered conservation results. We're not content, but we are thankful.

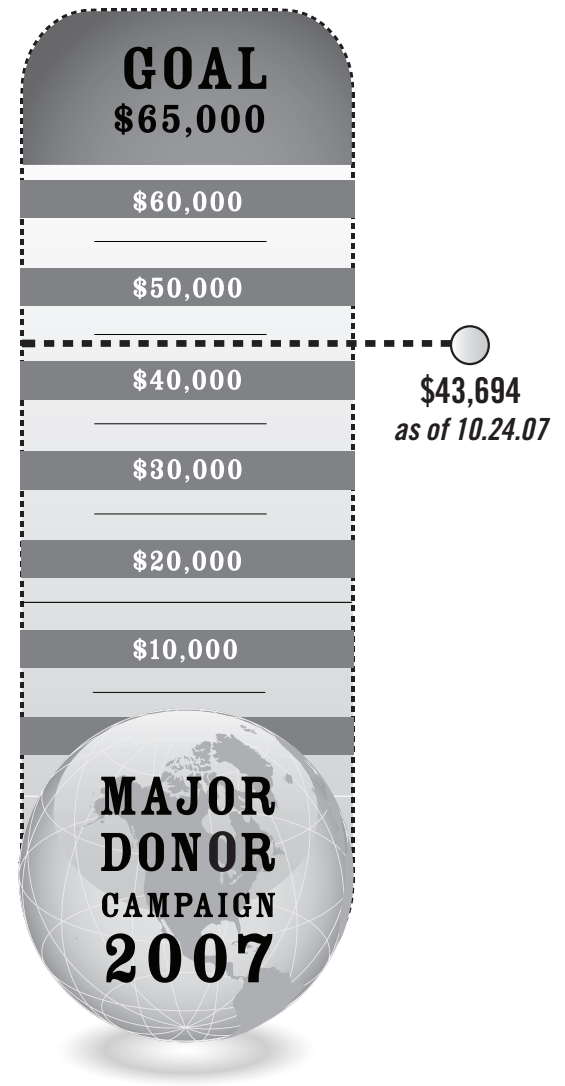
There's more to do! So this holiday season, please give gifts for the Earth. Please give a friend and loved one a gift of membership to the Northern Center, a gift that protects the Arctic.

We envision a future for northern Alaska that remains naturally thriving, biologically and culturally diverse, wildlands-rich, thoughtfully protected - forever. To see this vision true in 2007, we:

- Successfully challenged Shell Oil's oil drilling plans in the Beaufort Sea, on the shores of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.
- Brought local and national attention to the coastal erosion – and the impacts to wildlife – caused by global warming.
- Helped pass through the Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly a resolution committing the Borough to develop a plan to adapt to and mitigate for global warming impacts.
- Commissioned a benefit/cost analysis to scrutinize the need for western arctic infrastructure that would expand mining in the western arctic.
- Worked with allies to prevent the Red Dog Mine from weakening their permit under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System.
- Challenged the Bush Administration's ongoing efforts to lease for oil drilling some of the highest value goose molting and caribou insect-relief habitat on Alaska's North Slope.

Past performance does suggest future results. You have given us the wherewithal to succeed. We hope you are satisfied, too, and that you will share our successes with others. As you approach the holiday season, please give your friends and loved ones a stake in protecting the Arctic. Please see the back page for details on how to do it.

Thank you and Happy Holidays-



Record Ice-free Season draws new Bull's-eye on Arctic

By Pamela A. Miller

This summer, the symbolic planting of a Russian flag on the Arctic Ocean floor and a traverse of the completely open Northwest Passage via sailboat captured the world's attention to the melting pack ice. It also revved up the engines of nations seeking to divvy up portended oil and gas spoils.

For the first time, the U.S. Coast Guard plans installing a Barrow base due to increased oil and gas activity, ecotourism, and territorial imperatives. Just imagine oil tankers on the move from Europe to Asia or shuttling oil from the Beaufort or Chukchi Sea.



Polar bear in Arctic Refuge © K.R. Whitten

"I have seen the changes in the migrations of animals on the land and in the water as a result of climate change in Alaska." *Elijah Lane, Director of Parks and Wildlife Department, Native Village of Point Hope.*

This bull's-eye centers on the Arctic's rich living resources in the ocean, Arctic and Alaska Maritime refuges, and Teshekpuk Lake coasts. I noted, "we should be taking a hard look as a nation at what do we need to do to adequately protect the environment, faced with that kind of massive change in risk" (New York Times, October 19, 2007).

Summer sea ice shattered records in 2007. It is disappearing faster in the Arctic than IPCC models predict and the ocean could be ice free during summer by 2030 (NOAA's Arctic Report Card). Icebergs where Pacific walrus rest receded far north of prime clam feeding grounds in the Chukchi Sea this summer, according to U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Thousands of walrus, many with empty stomachs, beached at Barrow and the Chukchi Sea.

"As a member of the next generation of subsistence whalers and hunters, I'm seeing the effects of climate change in all I do," said Elijah Lane, Native Village of Point Hope

Arctic Refuge Senate Wilderness Bill Introduced



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Write your Senators

Senator Lieberman (I-CT) introduced a bill in the U.S. Senate on DATE that would permanently protect the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as Wilderness. This important legislation parallels similar legislation in the House of Representatives, H.R. 39, introduced by Representatives Ed Markey (D-MA) and Jim Ramstad (R-MN). While similar bills have been introduced in the past, Sen. Lieberman's introduction of the Arctic Refuge Wilderness bill marks the best opportunity in recent years to build momentum for permanent protection.

Please urge them to cosponsor S_____, the Arctic Refuge Wilderness bill, and help permanently protect our country's last great wilderness. In addition to providing vital habitat to thousands of caribou, migratory birds, and the most important land-denning area for polar bears in the U.S., the Arctic Refuge coastal plain is considered sacred to the Gwich'in who depend on the area's caribou for their subsistence needs. Renewable energy sources are cleaner than burning fossil fuels.

Write: The Honorable _____

U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20515

E-Mail: Go to our coalition partner's handy site:

<http://www.alaskawild.org/take-action/>



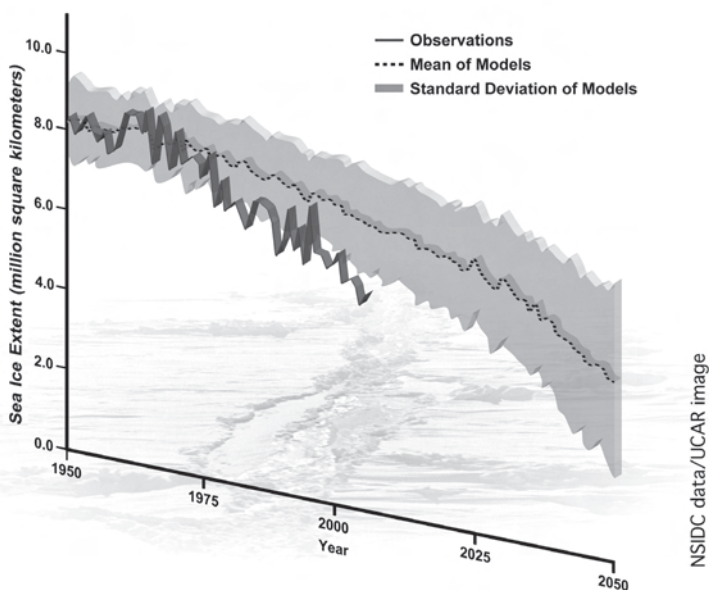
Protect Beaufort & Chukchi Seas from New Oil & Gas Leasing

Director of Parks and Wildlife Department. "I have seen the erosion and the disappearing ice in the Chukchi Sea. I have seen the changes in the migrations of animals on the land and in the water as a result of climate change in Alaska."

Polar bears using sea ice to hunt seals, their primary food, face disappearing habitat throughout their Arctic range. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service proposed listing polar bears in as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act in January, primarily due to projected climate changes. This fall, a new U.S. Geological Survey study said that future reduction of Arctic sea ice could result in a loss of 2/3 of the world's polar bear population within 50 years. USGS predicted polar bears in Alaska could be extirpated 75 years from now under projected changes in sea ice conditions (using "business as usual" IPCC sea ice models – i.e. if we don't significantly cut greenhouse gases).

Yet the Bush Administration ignores climate change realities while pushing oil and gas industry at the ground zero for global warming. At a recent hearing, former Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt said that climate change could make the Arctic Refuge coastal plain a lifeline for polar bears. USGS scientist Dr. Sue Haseltine testified to Congress, "we still have time to act to save polar bears."

**Arctic September Sea Ice Extent:
Observations and Model Runs**



Accelerated sea ice disappearance in the Arctic Ocean

WHAT YOU CAN DO



Our voices have made a difference protecting the Arctic this year. Shell Oil's Beaufort Sea drilling on existing leases off the Arctic Refuge was stalled due to our appeal of EPA's Clean Air Act permit and a court injunction in a case filed by Alaska Native and other conservation organizations challenging Interior's environmental review will be heard in December.

Despite the alarming climate changes to wildlife habitats and inadequate scientific baselines, the Interior Department aggressively pushes more leasing in the Chukchi Sea (2 lease sales) and Beaufort Sea (2 lease sales). They are doing one environmental impact statement (EIS) for all four sales – covering an area over 60 million acres – and will likely rely on it when a company wants to proceed with exploration after a lease sale, such as Shell exploration plan's EA instead of a full-blown EIS review.

There is no proven technology to clean up crude oil spills and the risks are too high for such aggressive leasing. At risk are polar bears, Pacific walrus, bowhead, Pacific right, and beluga whales, migratory birds, coastal Alaska Native communities, Arctic Refuge wilderness coastline, sensitive caribou and goose molting at Teshekpuk Lake, and millions of seabirds nesting at the Alaska Maritime refuge. Please oppose these massive off-shore leasing plans and ask the federal government to conduct a separate EIS for each planned lease sale.

Write: MMS Alaska OCS Region
3801 Centerpoint Drive, Suite 500
Anchorage, AK 99503
E-Mail: arcticmultisale@mms.gov



Congratulations to Al Gore

and a thousand scientists of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) won the **Nobel Peace**

Prize, shifting the debate from the reality of global climate change to the most effective policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Global Warming *Alaska Responds*

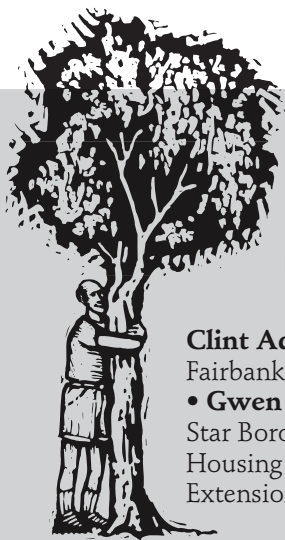
By Lori Hanemann

2007 was the year the world reached the tipping point of Global Warming awareness. Headlines and conversations have become more peppered, with the terms “greenhouse gases” and “carbon footprint.” For Alaskans, the impacts encroach on our daily lives with the threats of coastal erosion, dying forests, and shrinking ice caps.

So how are Alaskans responding? In September 2007, Alaska’s Governor Sarah Palin established a Climate Change Sub-Cabinet to prepare a climate strategy for Alaska, and the Alaska Climate Impact Assessment Commission will make their final report to the Legislature in February 2008. Locally, the Fairbanks North Star Borough passed a Climate Action Resolution to guide this community as it mitigates for and adapts to global warming.

The Northern Center continues to highlight Global Warming as a social priority to be addressed through individual action, legislation and policy. We host the Global Warming Working Group to sustain political will to address fossil fuel dependency. We organized several events to increase awareness: the International Live Earth concert, Golden Days parade, Tanana Valley Fair, Run for the Refuge, Renewable Energy Fair, and National Conversation on Climate Action, and hosted Union of Concerned Scientists analyst Jeff Deyette’s presentations on renewable energy.

In 2008, we will continue this momentum to pass renewable energy legislation at the state and national levels. Alaskans have responded with action; now let’s lead the way on renewable energy and a clean future! ♻



**Thanks to our
partners who made
the Climate Change
Presentations happen:**

Clint Adler, Dept. of Transportation • **Jeff Deyette**, Union of Concerned Scientists • **Haley Evans**, Fairbanks Alaska Youth for Environmental Action • **Todd Hoener**, Golden Valley Electric Association • **Gwen Holdman & Lena Perkins**, Chena Hot Springs Resort • **Luke Hopkins**, Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly • **Paul Klitzke**, Alaska Interfaith Power & Light • **Mike Musick**, Cold Climate Housing Research Center • **Jim Norman**, Alaska Battery Systems, Inc. • **Rich Seifert**, UAF Cooperative Extension Services • **Jim Whitaker**, Fairbanks North Star Borough Mayor

Environmental Legislative Priorities

Short list of good bills likely to gain
in 25th Legislature

The conservation community selected renewable energy, clean water, and children’s health as their legislative priorities at the Alaska Conservation Alliance’s Annual General Meeting in October. All of ACA’s 40 member groups will work to pass these good bills in the second year of the Alaska Legislature’s 25th session.

Establish a Renewable Energy Fund for Alaska’s Future – HB 152
Possessing some of the best renewable energy resources in the world while experiencing some of the most dramatic evidence of global warming, Alaska has the opportunity to lead the nation and the world in the development of clean, renewable energy. The promising stance of the new Palin administration combined with the urgent need for affordable energy in Alaska’s communities makes renewable energy a top priority for Alaska’s conservation community.

Protect Alaska’s Clean Water and Healthy Fisheries – HB74
Alaska has a long-standing reputation for clean water and vibrant, healthy fish stocks. We need to reinstate the high standards of water quality and fish protection that were the hallmark of Alaska policy for years. “Mixing zone” loopholes created by former Governor Murkowski should be closed to safeguard the spawning habitats of salmon and other fish populations that are vital to commercial, subsistence and recreational activities.

Protect Children’s Health – to be introduced in January, 2008
To protect children from the harmful effects of pesticides will require public and private schools and licensed childcare facilities to use the healthiest, least dangerous alternatives to pesticides first, with pesticides used only as a last resort. Such policies exist in Anchorage schools; it’s time to carry these protections statewide. ♻

Red Dog Mine to Expand

Major Permit Tied to Expansion Plan

By David van den Berg

Over the last year, the owners of the Red Dog Mine applied for a weakened clean water permit while simultaneously studying a mine expansion to keep lead/zinc/silver production going to 2031, and probably beyond.

Along with the Native Village of Kivalina and two Alaska conservation groups, the Northern Center successfully appealed Red Dog's pursuit of a weakened National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit. Our appeal asserted that issuance of a weakened permit required the full study of an environmental impact statement review. The EPA rescinded the permit renewal, allowed Red Dog to operate on its existing permit (which Red Dog has trouble meeting anyway), and couched the permit renewal in the context of the project expansion at the so-called Aqqaluk deposit adjacent to the Main Pit at the mine.

The environmental impact statement review for the Aqqaluk project is underway; scoping comments closed October 15. The Northern Center submitted comments along with partners Alaskans for Responsible Mining, Trustees for Alaska, and Center for Science in Public Participation. 🌱

The Aqqaluk expansion will disturb an additional 94 acres by 2012, and extend the mine life to 2031. The expansion relies on the existing water diversion, collection and treatment system. To see a map of the proposed expansion, please visit www.northern.org.

A hearty THANK YOU to all volunteers who help us be successful in every way and to:

Cara Brunk for help at summer events • **Margaret Eagleton, Julie Elliot, and Mary Ann Nickles** for help updating our brochures • **Lois Epstein** for supporting our Arctic work • **Pat and Wayne Fischer** for their hospitality during Wilderness Week • **Stan Justice** for keeping our building in good working order • **Karl Monetti** for work on various building chores & projects and for his committed work on renewable energy • **Gary Newman** for keeping our phone system updated • **Anne Ruggles, the Alaska Bird Observatory & Mary Shields** for hosting our annual retreat • **Kaarle Strailey** for donating his time and expertise • **Dan Swift** for instigating and supporting Jeff Deyette's tour



What is Wilderness really?

By Roger Kaye

What does the Wilderness Act say? Do we recognize the full range of purposes it was intended to serve?

We know that wilderness designation protects a landscape's scenic condition, maintains it as a repository of wild-life habitat, clean water, biodiversity, natural processes, and provides opportunities for adventurous recreation, inspiration, and restorative experiences.

But the conservationists who wrote and fought for passage of the Wilderness Act were also concerned with something that transcends those attributes and benefits of an area that can be counted, measured, or programmed into a computer model. Something about a place we dedicate to nature's freedom that reminds us of our capacity to rise above the materialism that rules the major part of our lives.

Implicit in the wilderness concept is a message about our place in the larger scheme of things, about our relationship with the biosphere we jointly inhabit.

For a society caught up in the rush toward more and more consumption and an ever higher standard of living, what advice did the authors of the Wilderness Act offer? At a time when our profligacy is fundamentally altering this shared planet, how can an understanding of the deeper meaning of wilderness contribute to attaining a sustainable future?

For a thoughtful exploration of these questions, read A Christmas Letter: Yes Virginia, there is Wilderness on our website at www.northern.org. 🌱

Fairbanks Alaska Youth for Environmental Action e-recycle!

By Katie McCaffrey

On October 12th and 13th, Interior Area Green Star, AYE, UAF Recycling, Northern Alaska Environmental Center, Fairbanks North Star Borough Solid Waste Division, and

Total Reclaim sponsored an e-waste recycling event on the south end of Shoppers' Forum.

"E-waste" is a term for unwanted electronic products with a circuit board inside, like computers, monitors, cell phones, TVs, printers, keyboards, scanners, fax machines, and microwaves. Appliances such as toasters, vacuum cleaners, and irons are not included.

Every year Fairbanks volunteers organize one or two recycling events in

Fairbanks, one in the Spring and Fall. Some people believe that Fairbanks is too far away from any type of recycling facility but we hope to prove those thoughts wrong. Our partners in Anchorage hold four recycling events every year and the most recent one collected 336 tons in four days.

E-waste is now the fastest growing part of the world's waste stream. New products are being introduced constantly

and because technology improves so fast, it means we are always upgrading our old electronics. The toxic materials that get thrown away include lead, mercury, and cadmium. When computer parts are recycled, manufacturers can use those materials again to make new products.

A lot of people handing over electronics brought mainly cell phones, DVDs, printers, computer and monitors. One man brought about 15 cell phones that he had found along the highway. It's amazing what people throw out their windows. Overall, 13,290 pounds of e-waste were collected at this event. Interior Area Green Star is already looking to the next event in Spring 2008! So start your pile—especially during the holidays when you may get new electronic devices and are ready to discard old ones. ♻️



Aana Prentzel moves a pallet of computers during electronics recycling event. © Eva Rothman



Roben Congdon surrounded by cell phones for e-recycling! © Eva Rothman

Camp Habitat Advisory Board

**CAMP
HABITAT**



Camp Habitat Advisory Board is seeking new, energetic members! Parents of campers—past and present—and community members are encouraged to get involved to help make camp successful year in and year out. *Please call Laenne Thompson at (907) 452-5021 ext. 31 for more information.*

Stampede Recreation Area proposal makes News at Denali

Denali Citizens Council urges a second look at boundaries, enabling language

By Nancy Bale, Denali Citizens Council Staff

The Stampede townships, surrounded on three sides by Denali National Park (see map), are ecologically vital to the park. Roadless beyond 8 Mile Lake, these lands are used for wilderness recreation by local and regional citizens. This year, a bill introduced in the Alaska House of Representatives by David Guttenberg, proposed designation of a State Recreation Area in the Stampede Townships. This concept had a rapid rise to prominence over just a few months. Why did this happen? See below for a brief history.

A HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES

Over the past few years, the Stampede townships have been involved in a number of North Denali Access development schemes. In 2002, HB 244 passed the state legislature, granting a railroad right of way to the Denali Borough through which Joe Fields' group Kantishna Holdings would build a railroad to Wonder Lake. This project languished, but Governor Frank Murkowski continued to push for some sort of access to Wonder Lake through the Stampede area, promoting a North Access Reconnaissance Study in 2002, a North Access Visitor Facilities Study in 2003 and a Stampede Road extension appropriation in 2005. As the Murkowski administration left office at the end of 2006, the Final North Access Study failed to recommend a single route. Funds for the Stampede extension were withdrawn soon thereafter. In addition to the above access proposals, the eastern portion of the Stampede area was included in an application to explore for natural gas by Usibelli Coal Mine in 2003.

THE STAMPEDE SUMMITS

Because we understood the overriding importance of the Stampede area, DCC made it a program priority over many years. Our Stampede Summits in 2004 and 2005 convened local and regional citizens to discuss the importance of this area. Attendees at the summits indicated that they wanted locals to have a voice in the future of these townships. Many residents were opposed to large projects and big changes to the rural lifestyle for which they had moved to the area.

STAMPEDE STATE RECREATION AREA PROPOSED

It became clear that some sort of action to promote local interests and preserve ecosystem values within the townships was needed. In January 2007 Denali Borough Assembly member David Evans introduced a resolution supporting formation of a State Recreation Area (SRA) there. Designation would leave the lands in state hands, but would move administration of these lands from the Division of Mining, Land and Water to the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. Under Parks and Outdoor Recreation, a management plan could be developed, with details regarding use, trails and amenities. Stakeholders would be involved in crafting this management plan. It sounded very good.

We at DCC are, in general, supportive of SRA designation for the townships. However, two productive changes could be made to existing legislation.

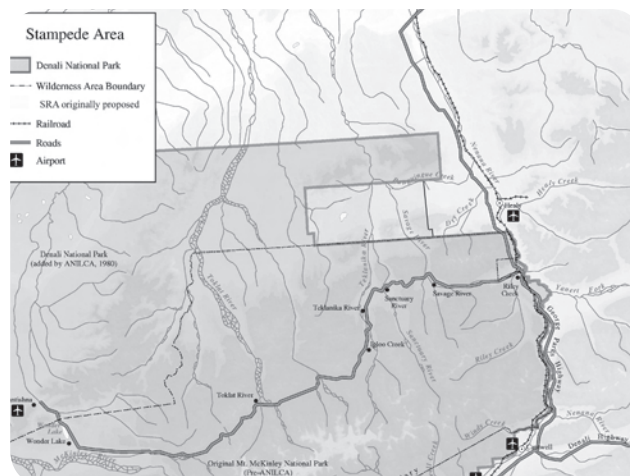
Legislation should strongly state the importance of the Stampede area as habitat for animals that range throughout the regional ecosystem including Denali National Park and Preserve. The primary value of this area as habitat was not strongly enough stated in the original bill.

Legislation should consider including a larger area of state land within the SRA, including 8 Mile Lake and general state lands within the townships east

to borough selected lands. It is these easternmost lands that currently experience the most pressure from recreation and the most need for management.

Recently at a town hall meeting in Healy, staffers from Rep. Guttenberg's and Senator Thomas' office, along with Commissioner of Parks and Outdoor Recreation James King and Northern Region Director Anna Plager spent two hours with members of the local community and heard a reasonable level of support for an SRA. Look for some action on this proposal in the upcoming State Legislature. We at DCC are hopeful that the legislation and the boundaries will be something that we can support.

For more information on this and other Denali Citizens Council matters, please visit www.denalicitizens.org or call (907) 683-3396. ☘



Founding Member Ginny Hill Wood Turns 90

Ginny Hill Wood celebrated her 90th birthday in Fairbanks on October 24, 2007, joined by friends and family. She was a founding member of the Northern Center, and indeed one of the founding “mothers” of the conservation movement in Alaska.

In the living room of her log cabin, Ginny cranked out the newsletters for the Alaska Conservation Society, our predecessor, which campaigned for establishment of the Arctic Refuge, and successfully fought megaschemes like Project Chariot (Edward Teller’s nuclear blasting a harbor near Point Hope) and Rampart dam (flooding Gwich’in villages and the entirety of today’s Yukon Flats refuge). Big visions to protect big wilderness through the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act were hatched looking at maps spread across her floor. She guided many into the heart of Denali and the Arctic Refuge. She answered many a knock at her cabin door from those seeking facts and inspiration about conservation of Alaska’s wilderness. In “from the woodpile,” her long-time column in *The Northern Line*, she espoused sustainability in daily life as well as for national policy.

On her 90th birthday, Ginny said, “I decided the best thing I could do at this point is to have the smallest carbon footprint. I’ve laid up my car, that’s my contribution to the environmental movement. It’s been almost a year without driving my car.”



Ginny Hill Wood at her birthday celebration
© Pamela A. Miller 2007

Meet our new Research Associate

By Kaarle Straley

Growing up outside a small logging town at the northern end of the Sierras in California, surrounded by national forests, mountains, streams, and trees, I developed a strong appreciation for nature from a young age. But human impacts, direct and indirect, on that region have been severe. Its history of gold



© Laenne Thompson

mining, which included hydraulic mining, then logging that had eliminated what were once massive forests, the wear on the land, air, and water due to human population pressure, the hospitability of California to invasive species, and a host of other issues have all left an altered environment. I often wondered what has been permanently taken from the landscape by the previous generations.

All the wild world is beautiful, and it matters but little where we go, to highlands or lowlands, woods or plains...so universally true is this, the spot where we chance to be always seems the best and it requires a distinct effort of the will to get oneself in motion for a change of place. *John Muir*

I studied Environmental Sciences and Earth Science at the University of California, Berkeley. In 2003 I came to Fairbanks as a Research Assistant for a graduate student at UAF studying climate change feedbacks in Interior Alaska’s boreal forest; a chance to come to Alaska, the “Last Frontier!” I was fortunate enough to travel around to many of the road-accessible parts of the state. I knew I wanted to return the following year, did so, and have more or less called Fairbanks home since.

I continued to work as a Research Technician for another year but finally reached a tipping point in my frustration with short-sighted, destructive policies being pushed on what seemed to be all levels of government. Finally as Congress hotly debated the fate of the Arctic Refuge in 2005, I decided it was time to switch tracks and get directly involved in protecting what remains of the once vast wilderness. I began volunteering here at NAEC that spring and have been active in the community ever since.

ALASKA CONSERVATION ABSTRACTS

Compiled by Florence Collins, NAEC Member

CLIMATE CHANGE

Kivalina residents left their homes on September 13 because of a storm that threatened the village; houses were not damaged but the storm surge "sheared off large segments of a multimillion dollar sea wall." The village was "virtually the only inhabited area under the flood water along a 100-mile stretch of the Chukchi Sea Coast. The village is on a 600-foot-wide sand reef and has lost about 100 feet of coastline in the past 3 years to waves. Evacuees were housed at the Red Dog Mine, over 50 miles toward the Interior. Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, Sept. 14, 2007, p. A8, p. A1, A9.

NUCLEAR POWER

A nuclear power plant is being considered by Galena, which was offered the "super safe, small and simple" plant by the Toshiba Corp. Its core would be cooled by liquid sodium. It would generate 10 megawatts and would be about 100 feet underground, and could "theoretically run for 30 years without refueling". In 2005 indigenous groups with the Yukon River Intertribal Watershed Council passed 2 resolutions against any radioactive material in the Yukon River watershed. Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, September 8, 2007, p. B1, B2

FEDERAL BILLS

The Hardrock Mining and Reclamation Act of 2007 was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives; the bipartisan bill would require royalty on minerals extracted from federal lands. It would also: have environmental standards for operations and cleanup; limit permits to 10

years; and prohibit mining in conservation areas without a permit. (Most Alaskan mining activity currently occurs on state land, and Alaska miners pay a 3% royalty to the state).

The 1872 Mining Law should be revised, according to a bipartisan group of senators of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing on Sept 27, 2007. They were "open" to charging royalties, adding environmental restrictions, and possibly "other" items to the bill. The House Natural Resources Committee Chair Rahall (D-VA) has introduced a bill that proposes new energy requirements on hard rock mining and would assess an 8% royalty. Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, September 28, 2007, p. A7

POLLUTION

In the U.S. 100 billion plastic bags are thrown out each year they are the equivalent of 12 million barrels of oil. www.sierraclub.org, September 18, 2007

There are 239 million cars or light trucks on U.S. roads; they traveled 2.7 trillion miles in 2006. www.environmentaldefense.org, September 19, 2007

The full Conservation Abstracts are available on our website www.northern.org.

NAEC 2007 AUCTION



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\$25,000
raised and a good
time for all!*



Top: Fran Mauer and Mary Ann Nickles happily file auction bids.

Left: Karl Monetti demonstrates the quality of an auction item—one of his handmade guitars.

Right: Ana Fochesatto, Aana Prentzel and Katie McAffrey from Fairbanks Alaska Youth for Environmental Action show off items to the auction crowd.

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