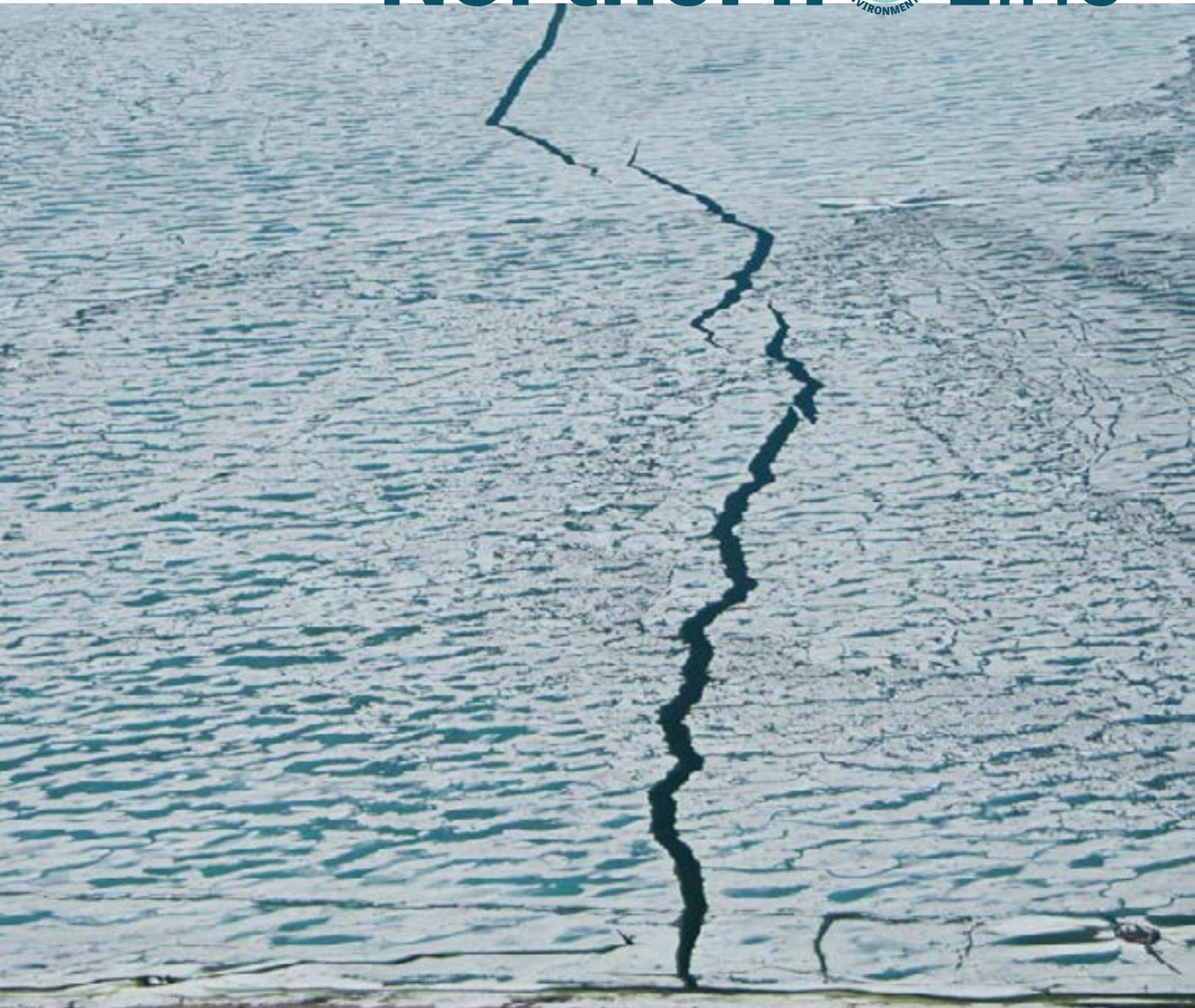


# *the* Northern Line



WINTER 2018



**WINTER IN THE BROOKS**

**INTERNING IN THE ANTHROPOCENE**

**IN MEMORIAM**

**Connected Lines and  
Widened Communities**

# the Northern Line

*Environmental News of Arctic and Interior Alaska*

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# Editor's Note

BY ERICA WATSON

*In thinking about how to best use these pages, I've been pondering Gary Snyder's 1975 poem, "Front Lines," from which this newsletter takes its name. The poem pits industrial development—logging, in this case—against the land, and the tools and heavy equipment is characterized as an angry, destructive man, "growling," "slobbering," "belching." The central metaphor is an old one: the land and forest is a woman's body, violently exploited by the bulldozer and logging trucks grinding over "still-live bushes." Snyder worked and sometimes wrote as a logger, and the integration of this labor, his sometimes contradictory spiritual and political traditions, and natural history is something I've always admired about his work, but it's clear in the final words of the poem which side of the "front line" he stands on here: "Behind is a forest that goes to the Arctic/And a desert that still belongs to the Piute (sic)/And here we must draw/our line." The passage evokes a blockade and a boundary, an uncompromised position. Snyder wrote, though, from the Pacific Northwest, and the Arctic was, to him, held at some distance. His imagination was rooted elsewhere. In the last 47 years, the Northern Center has grown its roots in Interior Alaska, and the perspective on those lines is different here and now. It is more important than ever to work for the continued survival of those communities who were overlooked in earlier colonial narratives about the place, an understanding that our interns, like Greg Stewart and Rachel Ruston this year, often arrive with and seek to deepen during their time with us. At the same time, we look to institutions and ideologies built around legislation like the Wilderness Act, as Roger Kaye writes about in these pages, which was both borne of and attempts to counter our nation's narrowly defined concept of progress. These pages contain reckonings and reflections from and about those who have been part of our communities and conversations, contradictions and all. We hope something of it speaks to you.*

Erica Watson  
COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

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**Cover photograph by David Shaw.** Shore-fast ice breaks up in June just off the coast of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

# Connected Lines and Widened Communities

BY ERICA WATSON

**T**racking extractive industry's advances into undeveloped, protected, and ecologically and culturally valuable lands under the Trump administration is like following a complicated soap opera. Except this show is on every hour of every week, most of the characters look the same, and each episode feels identical to the last, though the minute details differ in critical ways. Most of us can say what it's about: rampant deregulation, disregard for public process, and an antagonistic approach to long-protected sites around the nation, especially lands held sacred by Indigenous peoples. But we may struggle to recount the last episode, or who said what. We know that we're tired, and that we've still got several seasons to go.

However, in some ways, knowing the general plot arc is, in this case, enough to push us towards action. In April 2018, Tarana Burke, the founder of the #MeToo movement, which empowers survivors of sexual abuse and assault to tell their stories and uplift those of others, spoke at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She said that, when listening to others' accounts of the violations against them, "One of the mistakes we make is thinking that the details matter." The meaning of this statement might not be immediately clear to all of us, but what she meant was this: that when a violation occurs, no litany of facts and figures and specified actions will negate the damage done, and the healing that must take place. Recognizing this frees the survivor from having to recount an experience with more specificity than they might choose to, and it asks the person bearing witness to the story to understand that the survivor's credibility does not depend on minutiae, but on the truth of their statement that "this happened." As we connect the #MeToo movement and the abuse and exploitation of women and vulnerable populations to the exploitation of the natural world, Burke's words can offer a reminder

that we are not bound to the industry's telling of the story of Alaska's lands.

And what is happening now in Alaska, and around the continent (and while we're at it, the world) is indeed a violation. Fairbanks activist Princess Daazraii Johnson wrote following the second Women's March in January of this year, "The roots of colonization and patriarchy in the Americas included the strategy of stealing lands from Indigenous peoples, inflicting violence and domination over women, and further exploiting those lands for monetary gain." She asks that the earth be included in our perceptions of #MeToo, and vice versa: the same narratives connect these struggles. As we all work to stay on top of scoping periods and legal appeals, and work through the endless proposals and permit applications, we must also keep our head above the flood of details: no degree of precautions taken during seismic exploration will make drilling in the coastal plain acceptable. No monetary bond will make irreparable damage to the Kuskokwim River by the massive proposed Donlin gold mine ok. Mitigation measures protecting marine mammals would not make up for the unacceptable increase in emissions that offshore drilling in the Arctic would produce. Though the structures in which decisions are made rigidly define, for example, what comprises a substantive comment, as one which leaves out spiritual and cultural bonds and lived experience, most of us speak and act from what Roger Kaye describes elsewhere in this issue as "an evolutionary-ecological-ethical worldview grounded in the recognition of our dependence and interdependence, our need for belonging and connection, and our sense of responsibility and obligation."

The details that matter, as Vivian Underhill and Jessica Girard wrote in the Spring 2017 Northern Line, remind us "that though our struggles are always rooted in place—the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas, for example—our real struggle is against extractive

industry and petro-capitalism in a larger sense."

And Alaskans are showing up for that struggle.

## THE BEST AND WORST OF TIMES

On May 29th, 2018, almost fifty people testified in Fairbanks against opening the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas development. More than thirty more waited for hours and were then denied opportunity to speak publicly. Many of those people have been actively working for continued protection of the coastal plain for decades; others were more recently moved to get involved through their feminism, commitment to labor rights, or patriotic duty to defend our nation's lands and people from harm. Though not every voice speaks in full agreement with the others, the chorus makes it clear that our elected officials' narrative that Alaskans overwhelmingly supported selling off the coastal plain to the oil industry is far from accurate.

Around the state, Alaskans rallied their communities, learned about the inadequacies of our permitting system, and gathered support for updating our laws through Ballot Measure 1. People made the connections Alaska's proposed mega-mines and the devastating legacy of exploitation in salmon habitat elsewhere on the continent, and recognized that any landscape with mineral resources is vulnerable until our laws can hold Outside corporations' interests in check.

During the George W. Bush administration, writer and historian Rebecca Solnit wrote, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. It usually is." As a mantra, this can remind us of many things; among them, that there are always multiple sides to a story. That our current predicament did not spring out of nowhere. And that multiple narratives can play out simultaneously. However, Alaskans are among those around the world who recognize



the common characters in many of those narratives: extractive industry. Girard and Underhill continued, “In the current fossil-fuel context, the protection of individual landscapes will never be complete if they sit on top of fossil fuel resources, unless we find a way to move beyond our reliance on [those fuels].” Under the Trump administration, it is clearer than ever that protections are only as strong as the officials charged with enforcing them, and dependent on the argument that extraction can happen elsewhere. And often, that “elsewhere” is also a culturally, ecologically, and/or aesthetically rich place, but not “special” enough to warrant saving.

In the case of Alaska’s Arctic, though, that narrative is shifting. The Western Arctic, already somewhat fated by its designation as the National Petroleum Reserve, has long been treated as a tradeoff for the continued protection of the coastal plain. But the environmental, health, and climate impacts of extensive development already occurring in the region are not limited to its boundaries. In September, Trustees for Alaska delivered oral arguments in the U.S. District Court, arguing on behalf of the Northern

Center and our coalition partners, that the Bureau of Land Management never looked at the site-specific impacts or cumulative impacts of multiple development proposals before issuing leases in its 2017 sale. The case acknowledges the interconnectedness of Arctic regions, all of which are experiencing climate change more extremely than lower latitudes.

This legal case is just one example of the need to connect rather than isolate regions, ecologies, and movements from each other. In her writing on #MeToo, Princess Johnson goes on to say, “We must do the hard work of taking into consideration our various backgrounds and experiences and we must educate ourselves as much as possible as we come together to organize and remind ourselves it’s okay to feel uncomfortable and misunderstandings are bound to happen but it is how we react to those challenges that give us the possibility of building greater unity.” In order to move forward together, we must dig into some of those uncomfortable spaces. We must have difficult conversations about a conservation legacy that was born out of the colonial mindset we must now

work together to overcome; as theorist Susan Kollin writes in *Nature’s State*, “The myriad ways in which Alaska has been mythologized in the U.S. spatial imagination as a wilderness site par excellence have in turn displaced and marginalized the concerns of indigenous people in the region.”

However, as some have pointed out, these periods in our history that challenge us to work together can be our most productive. In the words of writer and geologist Lauret Savoy, “If the health of the land is its capacity for self-renewal, then the health of the human family could, in part, be an intergenerational capacity for locating ourselves within many inheritances: as citizens of the land, of nations even within a nation, and of Earth. Democracy lies within ever widening communities.” May these inheritances and communities shape the stories we tell. ☺

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*Erica Watson is the communications coordinator at the Northern Center. Most of the time, she lives and works from home near the boundary of Denali National Park, and is passionate about the work required to do justice to the landscapes that have shaped all of us.*



# Interning in the ANTHROPOCENE

*A view of the Ogilvie Mountains from the Dempster Highway, en route to the 2018 Gwich'in Gathering in Tsiigehtchic, Northwest Territories. Photo by Rachel Ruston/ Northern Center*

BY GREG STEWART

I am far from an expert in environmental issues. If I'm being honest, I got a C in a class with that title in undergrad because I slept through my final. However, through a variety of experiences I've become a part of the Environmentalist movement. That first class definitely sparked something in me, and I fought with the professor to be allowed to take the final, but alas, that C is still upon my transcript. Since then, I have come at Environmentalism from a historical, social, and cultural angle. From this position, I've learned a lot about what it means to be involved in fighting the good fight. At the time of my internship, I was a graduate student of journalism and publishing. My intentions since enrolling at The New School for Social Research have been primarily aimed towards working on editorial content, with hopes that I'll break into the book publishing side of the industry. However, since I arrived, I've actually made moves towards the world of magazines. Regardless of these career choices, one way or another, I hope and plan to continue working within Environmentalist circles to disseminate the idea that action is necessary to preserve natural landscapes and the human race. I also aim to utilize critical analysis within the discourse of Environmentalist history and literature to shed light on how the fight has been fought in the past, and where we can go in the future.

I have done a lot of reading in the category of "nature writing" and Alaska is an important area within that field. Alaska has

been symbolized by its massive amount of land, its mountains, rivers, lakes, seas, and glaciers. The wilderness of Alaska has stood as a tenet in the argument against fossil fuel development and the expansion of "civilization," as well as the preservation of people and places which can be considered sacred. As the Wilderness Act of 1964 defines it, these wild areas retain their primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation. Wilderness is an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man. Alaska has more untrammelled land than any other state in our country.

Yet, Alaska also has the largest oil field in North America at Prudhoe Bay. This oil field has been a major contributor in the Alaskan economy. Alaska's mining and fishing economies are large talking points, amongst environmental organizations and politicians alike. With zinc, lead, salmon, and oil all bringing in so much money that is distributed around the state, how does one justifiably argue that industrial development has to cease? How do you tell someone who relies heavily on their permanent fund dividend that it will continually decrease as development is tapered off? How do you explain to a family who has only ever known mining that they can't work anymore?

In coming to work for a conservation organization in Alaska, I have been able to receive a lot of answers to my questions about this place. The crest of Environmentalist thinking has impacted this state in a way that is entirely unique. Due to the tenuous

relationships between resources and economics here, you find that people are often divided on these social and environmental issues. Organizations and individuals who feel strongly about these issues must walk many tightropes to get their agendas across without stepping on the wrong toes. At the heart of much of the discourse is the point of climate change. This is the last frontier of American expansionism, but it is the front line for the effects of our changing climates. With permafrost melting beneath the ground, coasts eroding away long established villages, and the technologies of our modern world spreading into isolated areas the changes are felt incredibly here. The complicated political nature of these advancements causes a loud, wide discourse where all individuals are attempting to highlight what is important to them. The Northern Center stands as a bastion for keeping lands untrammled, maintaining an ethical relationship with land that has already been developed, and upholding justice for those who stand to be affected by development.

**MY EXPERIENCE AT THE NORTHERN CENTER**, while heavily focused on the Run for the Refuge event, has also included opportunities to see first hand how these issues are handled. I was able to tag along with our resident photographer, Rachel Ruston, and our program coordinator, Lisa Baraff to the Gwich'in Gathering in Tsiigehtchic, Canada. We arrived there after a two day drive along many dirt roads. While there, I was able to connect with many Gwich'in individuals who hold leadership roles, as well as many individuals in the media who were there to give voice to this group. I was able to witness many impassioned speeches about how oil and gas development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge will literally cause the death of a nation of indigenous people. While the tone of many meetings was somber, reflective, and often pleading for the right to subsist off of the Porcupine Caribou, I was also able to witness and participate in the cultural practices of the Gwich'in such as drum dancing, canoe racing, and storytelling. One speech that stands out in particular to me was from a young man from Old Crow named Dana; he said something along the lines of, "When the colonizers are no longer able to mine resources from this planet, when there is nothing left for them to buy with their money, they will come to the indigenous people to learn about the ways in which we have lived off the land. The Gwich'in people will not turn a blind eye to these people. We will lend a hand and offer our traditional knowledge in order to help them return to a beneficial relationship with the planet."

This is an important sentiment to consider. The element of forgiveness is crucial to the development of sustainable human relationships. As the councilor of the Vuntut Gwitchin government, Dana has taken many trips down to Washington DC to lobby on behalf of the Porcupine Caribou. He speaks with heavy words about how this fight must not end, about how the Gwich'in people must stand united in their attempts to preserve

their primary food source. The amount of inspiration he was able to impart upon the whole gathering was remarkable. I will never forget how passionately he spoke, and I just hope that lawmakers and organizations like the Northern Center continue to listen to voices like his.

In my studies before and during this experience, I have stumbled upon the idea that we have entered a new geologic epoch known as the Anthropocene. The era in which humans are now contributing to geological phenomena through industrial development and climate change. This concept has been propounded upon by many scientists, cultural critics, and naturalists for the past few decades. With this shift in geologic understanding, there is the inherent responsibility being put upon humans to interact with the planet more thoughtfully. One thing is certain in this discourse: human activity does affect the planet, from its air, ground, and water to its forests, deserts, and tundra. The collective use of cars around the globe has changed our atmospheres. The drilling into oil laden rock has caused spills around the globe, causing damage to wildlife and natural habitats. The harvesting of minerals from rocks has caused pollution all across the earth.

However, there is often one moniker that isn't situated properly in my opinion. We should not be fighting this fight to save the planet; we should be fighting this fight to save humanity. The human race only stands to extinguish itself. Other lifeforms will go on even if we make the planet too hot for us to exist upon it. As biologist Lynn Margulis said in her book *The Third Culture*, "Gaia is a tough bitch— a system that has worked for over three billion years without people. This planet's surface and its atmosphere and environment will continue to evolve long after people and prejudice are gone." The issue of Environmentalism is not one about the environment of the globe, but the environments which humans live in, which our resources inhabit, and which our hearts and minds project onto the globe. Environmentalism is a humanist cause which encompasses all aspects of the human relationship with the biosphere of our planet. These relationships are usually understood and analyzed on scientific terms, but the growing wave of academic interest in environmental issues has spread it further and further into the social sciences. The notion of environmental justice is key to the future of the movement. There must be recognition for the way in which the spaces occupied by marginalized groups have been degraded by pollution and carelessness. ☹️



*Gwich'in Nation flags. Photo by Rachel Ruston.*



*Testimony, Gwich'in Gathering. Photo by Rachel Ruston*

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*Greg Stewart was this year's Arctic program intern and Run for the Refuge race director. He is a master's student at The New School for Social Research in the Creative Publishing and Critical Journalism program, with a focus on sustainable/environmentalist studies from a cultural perspective. He currently contributes creative and editorial work to several literary journals, and expects to work in publishing after graduating this coming winter.*



## Winter in the Brooks

BY STEFAN MILKOWSKI

**I**n the Toolik Field Station cafeteria, nearly 200 miles north of the Arctic Circle, Brie and I fueled up on brownies and coffee. Brie had just finished a shift managing the station's environmental data center, and I had driven from Fairbanks the day before. Caffeinated, we hoisted our packs, clipped into our skis, and started across Toolik Lake, south towards the Brooks Range. Caribou stood on the hillside, heads down in the lichen. A cold breeze blew from the south.

Our goal was to ski from Toolik, to the village of Anaktuvuk Pass, about 65 air miles to the south and west. Our 100-mile route would take us through the mountains while minimizing avalanche danger. We followed a snowmachine trail put in by researchers studying wolverine, and laughed when we saw the tracks of a wolverine that had followed them. We climbed and dropped, and the mountains grew slowly closer. By evening, we reached the wide valley of the Itkillik River, and the end of the snowmachine trail.

In the morning, our thermometer bottomed out at -20. We crammed our feet into stiff leather boots and started upriver, taking turns breaking trail over the tundra. Sometimes, wind-hardened snow would hold us. Other times we skied on frozen

ponds, where river water flooded low areas. We learned to tell by the shape of ice crystals and the color of the ice where the overflow was fresh – to avoid it, or to fill our water bottles.

Forward progress and staying warm became our only needs. We used toe-warmers in camp and slept with bottles of hot water in our sleeping bags. The warm March sun allowed us to ski in thin shirts, but a sudden breeze would remind us to take care. We could stay warm by moving, but to keep moving, we needed food, which meant stopping to cook. Our days became acts of balance, between clothing and exertion, sun and wind, water and ice.

We might have credited ourselves with some ease or comfort, like a camp spot with enough dead willows for a fire, but it was beyond our control. Solid ice with just enough snow for kick was lagniappe. Driving wind and dangerous slopes reminded us to take nothing for granted. We'd chosen to avoid the more direct route over Peregrine Pass for fear of avalanches, and the tradeoff was crossing a steep gully along the North Fork of the Koyukuk. As we crossed the last pass before the Koyukuk, the gully clouded my mind.

We reached it late afternoon, a cold wind whipping our jacket

*We crammed our feet into stiff leather boots and started upriver, taking turns breaking trail over the tundra.*



*Brie and Vilde on windswept snow , photo by Stefan Milkowski*



*photo by Stefan Milkowski*

hoods. We unclipped our skis and followed the rocky edge uphill, looking for a safe crossing. The snow and rock barely held to the slope. In another spot, the rocks crumbled in our hands. The wind blasted us. Our toes went numb. Time was running out. Defeated, we turned around and hustled down the hillside with skis on our packs to camp behind a snowbank.

The next morning, we returned to the gully to make one last attempt. The wind rushed over the edge with such force it was impossible to talk. We found a route that would get us in, and we kicked steps into the snow and scrambled downward, unsure if it would lead to the river or end in a cliff. We climbed, then crawled down a field of scree until finally we reached the Koyukuk. We let out a whoop! We were through.

And then, the wind at our backs, we skied in silence on the sheer river ice. As spruce trees appeared along the banks, the snow piled up. We took turns in front, stopping for wax and chocolate, until the evening chill caught us. The next day we turned north up Ernie Creek. To the south stood Frigid Crags and Boreal Mountain, the peaks that give Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve its name. We basked in the sun and the mountains now surrounding us. We took great pleasure in

simple things. Coffee and buttery oatmeal in the tent. The simple motion of kick and glide. Hours of feeling unstoppable and hours of feeling grateful for a partner to lead. Flocks of ptarmigan found their way in the wind. In a narrow canyon, we again followed the tracks of a wolverine.

Closing in on our last miles, I thought of how knowing a piece of land can help one appreciate and care for it. I thought of the people who live here, and how some must know every rise and drop of the land. A few miles from town, we met three people on snowmachines. One offered a warm place to stay in town. Brie and I looked at each other for a second and politely declined. Neither of us was ready to leave the mountains. ☹

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*Stefan Milkowski serves on the Northern Center's board of directors. He grew up in upstate New York and moved to Fairbanks in 2005 to cover business for the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. He later covered politics for the News-Miner and for the Alaska Budget Report in Juneau, cleverly avoiding Fairbanks winters for five years. He probably wouldn't have stayed in Alaska if not for the great people, the opportunity for amazing outdoor adventures, and the chance to live a simple, deliberate life.*

# Excerpts: The Untrammeled Wild and Wilderness Character in the Anthropocene

BY ROGER KAYE

*Note: Please enjoy these selections from Roger Kaye's piece, originally published in the International Journal of Wilderness. To read the complete essay, subscribe to the journal or visit [bit.ly/2k9ep98](http://bit.ly/2k9ep98).*

UNTRAMMELED:  
It's the essence of Wilderness, the source of its mystique, its otherness, and its transcendent function. It's the state wherein the landscape remains

10 free from the human intent to alter, control, or manipulate its components and ecological and evolutionary processes. It's the key word of the Wilderness Act's "DEFINITION OF WILDERNESS," which states "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area of the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man..."

Untrammeled lends transcendent meaning to wildness. Understanding that meaning is crucial to understanding the Wilderness Act's overarching mandate to preserve wilderness character. It reveals why preservation of wilderness character, and not just the tangible qualities of the Wilderness it includes, is the purpose of the Act and central to the larger function it was to serve. Wilderness, as historian Roderick Nash (1982) documents, was to serve as "an important symbol of a revolutionary new way of thinking about man's relationship to the earth." And today, another symbol of revolutionary thinking—the Anthropocene—reminds us that, as the concept's central proponent Nobel laureate Paul Crutzen (2011) emphasizes, "We must change the way we perceive ourselves and our role in the world."

To better understand why [the Wilderness Act's principal author Howard] Zahniser determined untrammeled to be the most suitable word, consider it in the context of that contrast the Wilderness Act specifies. Physically, wilderness provides a contrast to the altered, developed, or manipulated landscape condition. But also of concern was the contrast wilderness provides between two ways of relating to—and knowing ourselves in relation to—the natural world. One way is as a species ordained to subdue and have dominion over nature. This, Zahniser (1956) said, leads people to become "less and less aware of their dependence on other forms of life and more and more misled into a sense of self-sufficiency and into disregard of their interdependence with the other forms of life..."

So "untrammeled by man" refers to more than the landscape condition of ecological and evolutionary freedom that is wildness. At heart, Untrammeled is the inter-relational dimension of Wilderness. It's also about us, how we relate to the natural world and its other inhabitants, and who we



Photo by David Shaw

become when we find it within ourselves to allow some of it this freedom from our willfulness.

Untrammeled is a relationship of respect for the autonomous creativity of unwilling processes, for the timeless forces that formed and shaped—and connect—our species, all species, all the Earth. It's a relationship of deference to an area's non-anthropocentric

reason for being, a recognition of its intrinsic value. It's a measure of that better part of us that still holds reverence for something outside human utility and desires. Through foregoing control we enter a most genuine relationship of humility and restraint—the relationship necessary for the preservation of Wilderness and central to that message of wilderness character.

Perpetuating some areas that embody this ecocentric-spiritual relationship will be ever-more important as we move farther into the terra incognita of the Anthropocene. Already we are in a post-natural world wherein anthropogenic and natural effects on the Earth system are becoming increasingly intertwined and inseparable, evolving ever more synergistically with humans. But imagine the future of "nature" when not only our unintended ecological degradations, but also when synthetic biology, designer ecosystems, assisted evolution, geoengineering, and who-knows-what become part of the "new natural" of an ever-more managed, manipulated, and controlled planet.

And should the age-old and universal longing to connect to an ultimacy providing meaning outside and beyond themselves remain part of their humanity, perhaps our descendants will also find untrammeled Wilderness to serve as a cathedral of spirituality. It might function as a sort of geographical Sabbath, a reminder of why, across cultures and throughout time, great prophets and visionaries had gone to the wilds to penetrate the transcendent truth that the greater meaning of life is only to be found in relation to the larger community.

Endowed with such meaning, untrammeled Wilderness becomes an encouraging demonstration and reminder of our capacity for restraint. It stands as a symbol of the willingness to think outside our utility and beyond our time that is needed to further the emergence of a new planetary sensibility. It is what Zahniser (1961) hoped might open us to "a sense of ourselves as a responsible part of a continuing community of life," and what he knew is the essential precondition for entering into a sustainable relationship with this finite and conflicted Earth system we share. ☺

# In Memorium

*When it comes time to write The Northern Line, these are the pieces that remind us of the footsteps we follow. It is hard to open emails with subject lines like, "The passing of....," but in the days that follow we are reminded of the enormous contributions of those who are no longer with us. We gather and share the pictures and stories coming in from our Northern Center family around the world.*

*We share the passing of the following Northern Center members with sadness, and with hope that we can carry on the legacy of these land, water, and wildlife protection advocates and activists, creators and documentors, friends and family.*

## DON LEISTIKOW (1948 - 2016)



Donald "Don" C. Leistikow died unexpectedly Dec. 13, 2016, while driving to Anchorage. Born on Nov. 4, 1948, in Cedar Falls, Iowa, Don was the second of six children.

The staff of the Northern Center fondly remember Don attending outreach and fundraising events and making frequent stops by the office to chat about the latest news. He was passionate about

Fairbanks and our arctic environment. He was an avid reader and a first rate news junkie, reading four papers every day. His interests were wide, including English Country Dancers and Osher Lifelong Learning. He enjoyed attending the Monday Energy Lunch Bunch at Raven Landing. Don supported many causes, including the Northern Alaska Environmental Center, Arctic Audubon Society, and Fairbanks Concert Association.

In the early '70s, his college studies in engineering were postponed for a summer adventure in Alaska where he worked as an assistant guide for Rust's Flying Service. An interest in archeology brought Don to University of Alaska Fairbanks. After a brief time away Don came back to Fairbanks, working in commercial construction. When Don's neighbor, Leigh, invited him over to cut some trees for a better view of the Alaska range, he dropped by the next week and stayed for the next 12 years. During their retirement years, Don retrofitted their home, making it an example of energy efficiency, which he so passionately studied and modeled. This was the hallmark of his character, living through actions pursuant to his ideals.

## BOBBY KRECH (1944 - 2017)



Robert Melchior Krech was born to Ada Kally and Frank Krech in Nashville, Tennessee, on April 8, 1944. He was raised with a large extended family which he credited with teaching him the value of hard work rewarded by hamburgers on Saturday night, both habits he continued through his life. He stayed one step ahead of the Draft Board by enlisting in the Army when he turned 18, serving as a helicopter crew chief in Laos and then Germany.

Bobby had previously made forays to Alaska, but now licensed as a Clinical Social Worker, he accepted a position in Bethel, AK, as an itinerant school Social Worker, and then in Barrow, AK, as an on call Mental Health Clinician. For a second time, his heart was captured,

this time by Chloë Wurr, a family physician working briefly in Barrow before moving to Saipan. Never one to pass up an opportunity, Bobby packed up and moved with her, beginning a 19-year romance that circled the globe and knitted their hearts. Along the way, Bobby worked in Saipan, Alaska, Hawaii, Montana and Texas, winning friends with his honesty and good humor. He retired in 2015 to winter in Honolulu HI, summer in Girdwood AK, and toodle around the country visiting friends and family in his camper.

Bobby's unexpected death at the age of 73 brought these dreams to an end. He is survived by his wife, Chloë Wurr, his sister Frankie Rae Reese and brother Edward Krech, his best friend and former wife, Marika Krech, daughters Marika Regnier and Colleen Jones, and granddaughters, Juliet and Matilda Regnier as well as many nieces and nephews.

## MORTON STANLEY "WOODY" WOOD (1924 - 2018)



Morton "Woody" Stanley Wood died peacefully in his Seattle home on August 16, 2018, at age 94. Woody was born January 12, 1924 in Dexter, Maine, raised in Freeport, and moved to Newton, MA, for high school. During 1943-1945 he trained in the US Army's 10th Mountain Division in Colorado and served in Italy. His experience of war fostered a contempt for violence and a commitment

to peace.

Woody's deep love of nature and wild places led him to study Forestry at University of Alaska Fairbanks and University of California Berkeley, where he finished his degree in 1950. While in Fairbanks, he met two adventuring buddies, Ginny Hill and Celia Hunter. He married Ginny in 1950 and they had a daughter, Romany, in 1956. Woody worked as a ranger at McKinley National Park and cared for the dog sled team. In 1952, Woody, Ginny and Celia founded Camp Denali on the boundary of McKinley Park, and thus began the evolution of one of the first wilderness retreats in North America.

Woody was an instrumental member of the Alaska conservation community, and is remembered for his role in the founding of Camp Denali, and his commitment to the creation of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. He was among the early members of the Northern Center, and many in our community are reflecting on the time spent with him. Longtime member and activist Roger Kaye reflected on Woody's innovative and earth-system focused worldview. "Right up to the end, he was visionary," Roger said. His belief in "thinking globally and acting locally" led him to volunteer at local nonprofits throughout his life. In 2000, Project Jukebox interviewed Woody *continued on back cover*

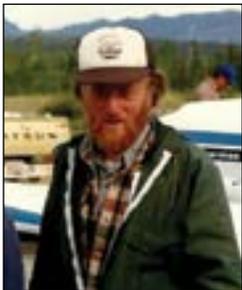


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*In Memorium* continued from page 11.

about his account of the 1954 Thayer Expedition on Denali, as well as other experiences. He concluded with reflections on unrestrained development in National Parks and other public lands: "We're losing our roots, and I fear for our future. Sometimes you have to have some control if you want to protect other values."



#### **WILBUR MILLS ( - 2018)**

On July 20, 2018 wilderness advocate, adventurer, and photographer Wilbur Mills passed away in Washington state.

In the late 1960s Wilbur worked together with Mardy Murie and other conservation leaders to begin planning for the expansion and permanent protection of the Arctic Range. He completed six field seasons (sponsored by Mardy Murie and the Sierra

Club) in the Brooks Range describing and documenting its wilderness and recreational values. The first Arctic Refuge manager, Ave Thayer, flew him around the area. This work was the foundation of what would become ANILCA, the Alaska National Interest Land Claims Act.

He was a conservationist with a camera and his photos were widely published, including in the classic coffee-table book, *Earth and the Great Weather* by Ronald Brower. He was generous with

his knowledge of the Alaska country. Friends from his Sierra Club Alaska outings program said, "Many of us were introduced to Alaska on Wilbur's trips and then became infected by his enthusiasm for the country, becoming Alaska Outings leaders in our own time. One important aspect of the Mills experience was that you got an insight into the frontier spirit that pervades the story of American settlement, along with the tension between the rugged outdoorsman/pioneer and the conservation ethic. The story of the American west is replete with the idea of brutal and heartless displacement of native peoples combined with rapacious exploitation of natural resources. Wilbur was living proof that the frontier ethic and conservation are not natural contradictions. Wilbur knew what it was like to live off the land and struggle with the extreme environment of the arctic yet was never willing to trade his wilderness for the cozy comfort that would go with income extracted from a ravaged environment. That passion for conservation and appreciation of wilderness for its wildness always set comfortably with his pioneering ethic as a reassuring indication that a reasonable and lasting solution to the present clash between preservationists and resource developers can be achieved."

He leaves behind a legacy of showing people the country we so fiercely want to protect, whether that was through the lens of his camera or the trips he guided. ☹️

## Please join us for these upcoming **NORTHERN VOICES** SPEAKER SERIES events:

**Date TBA, January:** Julianne Warren: Hopes Echo: Learning an Extinct Birdsong for Ecosphere Healing

### **Friday, February 22:**

Kathleen Dean Moore and Rachel McCabe: *A Call to Life* spoken word and musical performance, 7pm, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fairbanks

**TBA: Susan Todd:** Namibia's Wildlife Conservation

*Keep in touch for more events and upcoming opportunities to be involved.*



## **The Northern Line Has Gone Green**

Here at the Northern Center, we are dedicated to demonstrating our commitment to conservation through the reduction of our footprint and efficient use of your donation dollars. Equally important is our responsibility to keep our members informed about the successes, struggles, and emerging issues of the environmental movement in Northern Alaska. In light of this, all editions of the Northern Line will be available in digital format on our website ([www.northern.org](http://www.northern.org)), in color! Once per year we will still mail out a paper edition to current members.

Don't have access to internet or a printer? Please let us know - we will happily print and mail you a copy when each electronic edition is published.

Do you get the Northern Center's updates? Send your email address to: [info@northern.org](mailto:info@northern.org)