

A Time to Be

by Elisabeth Dabney, Executive Director



Sun coming out over the Brooks Range after the rain. Photo by Bjorn Olson

It is that time of year when winter is knocking on the door, gardens are pulled and yards made tidy, and the excitement of a new season begins to take hold. At the Northern Alaska Environmental Center it is budget season, annual auction time, and a time to reflect on the successes and shortfalls of the first three quarters. For us, it is a time to be aware that no matter how many victories we’ve had there are still obstacles to overcome, positions to take, and an ever-present need to keep an eye on the wilderness we know and love.

This year we’ve focused on a theme of time in our Northern Line newsletters. We live in a world of fast conveniences—speedy Internet, fast cars, fast food, and express lanes. As the world moves around us, we sometimes get swept up in a pace that we are not setting. We are chasing, pursuing, and closing in on a target that we haven’t necessarily set for ourselves. We are missing the opportunities to be present—it’s time to be present.

In the following pages you’ll read about Northern Center interns—adventurous, proactive, inquisitive interns—who took a chance on exploring the arctic and sub-arctic and came away with an understanding of the need to protect our wilderness. You’ll hear about opportunities to join the Northern Center in keeping our sacred places free of over-development and needless transportation routes through untouched land.

Alaska—and especially northern Alaska—is being threatened by a systemic and heavily supported program of resource development. Proposed new coal mines, offshore oil and gas drilling in the Arctic Ocean, and minerals extraction in the heart of the Brooks Range are battles that need our attention (and dollars) and voice. It is a time to be proactive—to write opinion pieces in our local newspapers, to call-in to our radio stations, and to ask our representatives (state-wide and national) to stop their support of these mega-projects.

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The Northern Line

Environmental News of Arctic
and Interior Alaska

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

The Northern Alaska Environmental Center has 1600 members.

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Elisabeth and her daughter Audrey enjoy winter hiking and snow angel making along Chena Small Creek.

A Time to Be

continued from cover page

Autumn goes by quick in Alaska. There isn't much time to enjoy the smell of overly-ripened berries or feel the bite of newly crisp air. But there is time to be present—present in the decision-making process, for the conversations that will determine the future of Alaska, and for the place that we call home. 🌱

Elisabeth Dabney, hired in June 2014, is the Executive Director of the Northern Center. To view her full bio visit our website: <http://northern.org/about-us/staff>

A Greener Northern Line

by Anna Sorensen

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, most issues of the Northern Line will be available in digital format on our website (www.northern.org), in color! Once per year we will still mail out a paper edition. We will be sending out an e-mail reminder when each new edition is released.

To receive your Northern Line:

Call: 907-452-5021

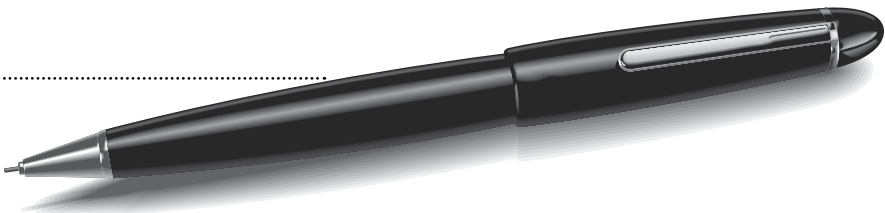
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Send us your e-mail address to help us be greener!

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The N.L. will be available on our website, we will keep you informed of the publication dates and a paper copy will be made available at our office (830 College Road — come visit and relax in our comfy foyer!). 🌱



LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK!

Do you have: Comments about articles?

Corrections to point out? Accolades to share?

We would love to hear from you! Letters to the Editor can be sent to officemanager@northern.org or mailed to The Northern Line Editor, 830 College Road, Fairbanks, AK 99701. A selection of letters to the editor will be published in future issues of *The Northern Line*.

Donor Update

by Lori Hanemann

We've said it through the mail and to some of you with a phone call or in person, but we really want to say it again, thank you for your membership and friendship. I've enjoyed so many connections with our members around the country and sincerely look forward to hearing from each of you, especially learning how you came to be members of the Northern Center. Many of you attended the University here and joined our group as a concerned community member. I know there are a large number of members who have travelled to the Arctic Refuge or the Brooks Range, and the wildness of the far north became a permanent part of your life and memories, and supporting our work to protect these distinctive places is important to you. Each of you has a different story and values as to why the Northern Center is part of your charitable giving, and no matter what brought you to us, thank you.

For many folks, the end of the year is a time of giving, including gifts to charity. One way to give to both your loved ones and the Northern Center is with a Gift Membership. Please consider purchasing a Gift Membership as a way to say Happy Holidays — it's the perfect gift. Donate in a friend, family member, client or colleague's name to the Northern Center for wilderness protection in Northern Alaska. It's a thoughtful gift they're sure to appreciate and so will we. Visit our website to make your purchase or call the Center 907-452-5021. 🌱

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Sign up your Fred Meyer Rewards card to earn donations for the Northern Center

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The Summer of our Youth

by Lori Hanemann

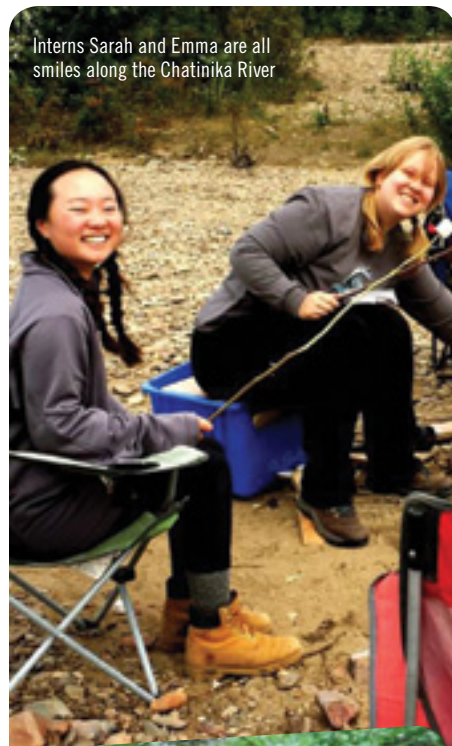
Were you at our Annual Meeting in May? Did you notice the increase in the number of young people in attendance? We did! It was inspiring to see the 35 and under crowd show up and show an interest in activism. With help from the membership, we've been actively engaging with these young interested environmentalists. With the record-breaking amount of donations brought in from last year's Fund-A-Youth section of the Auction, we provided scholarships to every child in need for Camp Habitat, and we were able to hire a Youth Education Intern, Bennett Wong, for the summer. We also had Interns for the Arctic and Clean Water and Mining programs, Sarah Hong and Emma Hedman.

Bennett organized and hosted meetings for our Education Committee, who hope to continue our popular Northern Voices Series of presentations and invite in more teachers from local schools to help us reach their students. The education

committee hosted local author, Debbie Miller, for a presentation on her newest book for children, *Grizzly Bears of Alaska*, and also led a birding walk for REI employees at Creamer's Field. Through Alaska Youth for Environmental Action, we sponsored two youths to go to a Civics Summit in Juneau — Nagaoka Kengo and Tristan Glowa.

We're thrilled to be growing young environmentalists by offering them fun outdoor opportunities as well as education and activism training. We know they want to have fun as well as make difference, and they are — they really are. The youthful vibe around the Center is contagious and inspires all of us to keep working hard. Thank you for continuing to support our future generation of wilderness lovers. 🌱

Young campers enjoy the woods during Camp Habitat.



Interns Sarah and Emma are all smiles along the Chatinika River



Ana Thayer receives her award for Youth of the Year from Paul Reichardt



Bennett Wong leads a birding walk with the staff of REI

Fostering our Future: Summer 2014 Interns

Bennett Wong

My time as an Education Intern with the Northern Alaska Environmental Center has been nothing but good experiences. From a very young age I knew that my passion and goals would drive me to one day work with a non-profit organization devoted to conservation of our wild lands. Everything and everyone at the Center has motivated and inspired me to further my career as an environmental conservationist as well as an educator. Here, I learned different strategies required to lead and organize dynamic events. I saw the intrinsic values of working with the community and our members.

Above all, I witnessed a small group of inspiring individuals who put a lot of effort into the environmental platform, and the outcome is nothing but amazing. In a time of endless corporate greed, environmental neglect, and exploitation, I am so glad that I was able to work and be part of a group who has worked so passionately to protect the Arctic. I will continue to support the Northern Center any way possible and with new inspiration to work with future generations to promote environmental stewardship. With the experiences that I have gained working with the Northern Center, I will finish my Master's Degree in environmental education, work to become an exceptional environmental educator, and hopefully continue my work with other environmental and wildlife organizations.

Bennett's internship was made possible by Northern Center Members through their generous donations to the Fund-a-Youth Program.



Clockwise from top: Bennett Wong and past Intern Nikki Navio; Bennett Wong and founder Jim Hunter; Education Intern Bennett Wong looks for birds in Barrow; Sarah, Emma, and Bennett take a 'selfie' at Cleary Summit.



Sarah Hong

This summer I was the Arctic-Media Intern, made possible through the Tishman Environmental Merit Scholarship.

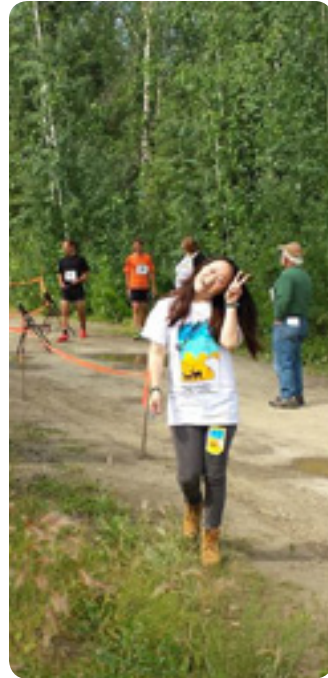
As an intern I worked closely with the Northern Center staff to lead various projects. Among many things, I created a social media website, integrating media and news feeds, managing a photo campaign to President Obama requesting he designate the Arctic Refuge as a wilderness protected land, tabling information booths at various events and learning all about the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge!

The most significant project during the internship was coordinating the 18th annual Run for the Refuge. I learned how to solicit donors, created new graphics, ordered race equipment, processed entry forms, wrestled with the darn registration website and helped to mark out the 10K and 5K race trails. We had a great turn out and I got to know an amazing group of people in Fairbanks.

I will definitely be missing the friendly people, coffee and Thai food! I will not be missing bicycling up Chena Ridge Road—I biked over 500 miles this summer!

I want to take this quick opportunity to express my gratitude and appreciation for all the people at the Northern Alaska Environmental Center and its members for all the things that they do and for helping me in my time as an intern. Thank you so much to Ali Blechman and Hugh Rose for hosting me! Their inspiration and guidance has been reinvigorating and life changing.

Sarah's internship was made possible by the Tishman Environmental Merit Scholarship and The New School. Special thanks to Professor Alan McGowan of the New School for his support.



Run for the Refuge Race Organizer Sarah Hong poses for a photo at the finish line



Sarah Hong braves the rain to experience fishing in Alaska

Emma Hedman

A day in the life of a researcher may not be very exciting to read about, but the end products are incredibly satisfying. I am no stranger to academia, where after years of painstaking research everything ends up hidden behind a pay wall, findings are reported in the densest, jargon-heavy way possible that makes it impossible to decipher except by those with the adequate training, and most people are none the wiser. There is something comforting about the process of research after so many years of doing it, but my favorite part of the job is getting the information out to the right people and hoping it makes a difference.

At the Northern Center I got to spend days on end doing research about the Road to Ambler, caribou, acid mine drainage, and financial discrepancies and it helped me learn about Alaska in a very short time. I was out in the community at the Midnight Sun Festival, the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics, and the Tanana Valley State Fair and shared my findings with people who care and had conversations with people who want to protect the place they grew up. I may be repetitive during the weekly staff meeting, constantly saying “I did research” while my peppy young co-intern reports her exploits running around town like a mad person doing event organizing. But now that the summer is over and my work is done, suddenly all my reports and fact sheets are getting used. The Northern Center has pages and pages of new literature to share and I know that my months of picking through journal articles was worth it!

My time in Alaska wasn't all in the office though! I spent my weekends exploring all Fairbanks had to offer. I hit the farmers market almost every weekend, canoed down the Chena River, picked blueberries and went fishing with my amazing co-workers, saw the local art at First Friday, spent a weekend in a dry cabin with a pack of sled dogs, met Santa Claus, saw a cheesy vaudeville revue at Alaska Land (as the locals lovingly called it), and walked everywhere I could (doused in a thick layer of chemicals to combat the mosquitoes, of course). Finally near the end, I even got to live my dream and spend a weekend exploring Denali National Park which is so huge and gorgeous it is unreal. Soon I'll be driving back to Delaware, but I can safely say I've caught the Alaska bug, and not just because I've been bitten about 200 times by actual Alaska bugs. I hope that my journey will bring me back here someday and I will forever hold a special place in my heart for the Northern Alaska Environmental Center!

Emma's internship was supported by the Alaska Conservation Foundation's Conservation Internship Program.



Above, Emma gets silly during her tour of Pioneer Park. Left, the highlight of Emma's summer in Interior Alaska was her visit to Denali National Park.



Emma enjoys the sunshine while talking with Fairbanksans about the proposed Road to Ambler during the Midnight Sun Festival.

NAEC 2014 TIMELINE

THE NORTHERN LINE FALL/WINTER 2014

NORTHERN CENTER OUTREACH



March 2
First House Party Fundraiser at Tako Raynold's home



April 5-6
Junior Advisory Board Ski Trip through the White Mountains. Junior Board members and several members took a ski journey out into one of the landscapes we work to protect – the White Mountains Rec. Area.



April 25
Annual Major Donor Wine and Cheese Party is held at the home of long-time member, Mary Shields. This is an opportunity for our Board to ask for input and thank some of our local donors who offer significant financial support throughout the year.



May
Membership Drive gathers 25 new members from Alaska and the lower 48.

May 19
Walter the Office Dog visits for the first time

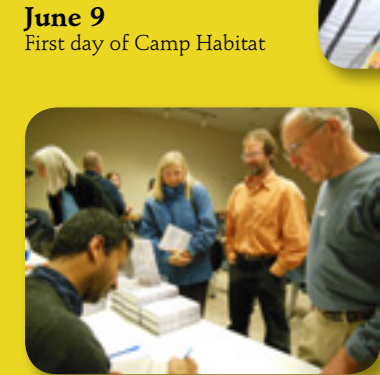
May 30

Annual Membership Meeting and Picnic at the Northern Center, with about 125 members attending to learn the latest happenings and the Center and meet our new Executive Director.



June 9

Executive Director Elisabeth Dabney's first day at the Northern Center



June 9
First day of Camp Habitat



July 14-25

White house in our backyard is salvaged by volunteer group from Indiana.



June 23

Education Intern Bennett Wong's first Education Committee Meeting. The Committee will be focusing on the long-standing popular Northern Voices speaker series and adding a focus of youth outreach.

JAN

FEB

MAR

APR

MAY

JUNE

JULY

AUG

SEPT

OCT

NOV

DEC

ARCTIC PROGRAM

June 22

A national campaign of photo petitions urging President Obama to support a designation of wilderness for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge has garnered support from almost all 50 U.S. states. Locally, over 100 people posed in support!



July 16

We asked our United States Government to please keep new leasing and drilling out of the Arctic Ocean. The Northern Center gathered 93 signatures of Alaskans who oppose opening up their precious Arctic Ocean to offshore development.

July 27

The 18th Annual Run for the Refuge was the most successful to date. Over 144 runners, walkers, and joggers with dogs, kids, and costumes showed their support for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.



September 3

The Wilderness Act was signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson on September 3, 1964. This year we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act and the Northern Center was honored to have the FNSB Noel Wien Library public display for the whole month of September to celebrate the anniversary.



CLEAN WATER & MINING PROGRAM

January 29

Roads to Resources seminar with BRC Chairman John Gaedeke at the Northern Center.

April 30

Jill Yordy presents for Acid Rock Drainage webinar with Alaska Community Action on Toxics.

May 9-11

Jill Yordy presents at the Western Mining Action Network conference in Anchorage.



June 2

CWMP invited by upper Kobuk River tribes to audio record AIDEA-led meeting in Kobuk, AK.

June 25-26

CWMP rallied reporters and allies to attend AIDEA-led meeting in Kotzebue with community leaders to discuss Road to Ambler.

July 11-13

CWMP headed into the Brooks Range with National Parks Conservation Association to interview residents in Allakaket, Bettles, and Iniakuk Lake about their feelings on the Road to Ambler

July 16

Received notice from the State Pipeline Coordinator's Office that our requests for multiple public hearings around the state will be granted before they make a decision on the proposed Donlin Mine natural gas pipeline.

July 21-24

CWMP organized a river trip along the Kobuk with 3 villages and 4 other organizations to engage youth in water quality testing and public participation for land use planning.



October/November

Anticipated start of the Road to Ambler NEPA Environmental Impact Statement scoping period.

Kobuk to Kiana: Advocacy in Action

by Jill Yordy

This summer the Clean Water and Mining Program got an incredible opportunity to reach out to upper Kobuk River villages about water quality, land use planning, and mining development. In collaboration with the villages of Kobuk, Ambler, and Shungnak we organized a three-day trip down the Kobuk River to get youth engaged in conservation issues facing the region. On July 21st seven people took off from Fairbanks bound for the Kobuk River with a few specific goals in mind: building relationships, talking about public participation in land use and development planning, and working with youth to get them engaged in gathering baseline water quality data.

Suzanne Little, Pew Charitable Trusts, joined the trip to talk about how

villages along the upper Kobuk could get involved in the BLM's Central Yukon Resource Management Planning process. Marci Okada, National Park Service, participated to talk about subsistence planning in Gates of the Arctic. John Gaedeke and Angela Britt, Brooks Range Council, came along to talk about the proposed Road to Ambler and impacts to the region. I went to help teach youth about water quality impacts from mining and how to gather baseline water quality data. Bjorn Olson, Ground Truth Trekking, and Hunter Wurster, UAF film student, joined the expedition to collect video footage of the experience.

As we all know, Alaska wilderness adventures never quite go as planned—we were rained on nearly the whole

time and we had a boat operator that needed to drop out two days before we left. Despite these things, the trip was a great experience.

The Ambler Traditional Council and Kiana Tribal Council allowed our group to stay at traditional camps used by their communities both nights on the river. On the first morning at Ilisagvik, a traditional culture camp maintained by Ambler, we had a great group discussion about how youth and their communities can get involved with the Central Yukon RMP and development plans for the Road to Ambler. We also gave youth a rundown on how to develop a good sampling plan for baseline water quality data and brainstormed sampling locations that we wanted to target along the trip.



Kobuk River trip participants enjoy a clear evening at the Kiana Elder's Camp. Photo by Bjorn Olson



Boat captain Frank Downey surveys the river to find the best spot for taking a water quality reading. Photo by Bjorn Olson.

Once we were on the river we used a Hanna probe recently acquired by the Kobuk River Intertribal Watershed Council to take 16 readings along the river. We focused on gathering data upstream and downstream of important tributary confluences. At each sample point we talked about various elements of sampling such as the importance of recording weather conditions, water conditions, sampler, and location of each sample.

At the Kiana Elder's Camp on the second night we were met by elders from the community of Kiana who talked with us about changes that they have seen to the landscape and subsistence resources in their lifetimes.

The next morning when we bought gas in Kiana a fisherman gave us some fresh-caught salmon and sheefish!

All of the upper Kobuk River communities plan to make additional trips to expand their baseline water quality data in preparation to ensure that the subsistence and water resources that they rely on will be protected. This kind of effort is more important than ever with the proposed Road to Ambler being pushed by the state of Alaska and here at the Northern Center we are excited to be involved! 🌱



John Gaedeke and Angela Britt, Brooks Range Council, look on as youth from Ambler point out important cultural sites along the Kobuk River. Photo by Jill Yordy.

What Future for the Wildness of Wilderness in the Anthropocene?

By Roger Kaye

Of all the sweeping conservation laws of the 1960s that came about in response to concern over the worsening environmental degradations accompanying the prosperous post-World War II march of progress, the Wilderness Act of 1964 most expanded the boundaries of conservation thinking. The rapid loss of natural landscapes, the destructive logging, mining, and agricultural practices, the spread of pollution and pesticides, and the awesome power and fallout of the atomic bomb had signaled a new order of environmental threat. Biologist and Wilderness Society president Olaus Murie (1960) summarized it as “the real problem of what the human species is to do with this earth.” He and other leaders of the growing wilderness movement sought legislation reaching beyond the traditional conservation of resources to the protection of entire ecosystems. But their Wilderness Act went beyond protecting all components of a designated area’s natural condition. Going further than any previous conservation initiative, it also specified perpetuation of the evolutionary process of their origin, their wildness.

Compromises have been made in meeting the act’s mandate for preserving both an area’s natural conditions and its wildness. Nevertheless, wilderness status has been quite successful in protecting both from development, resource exploitation, harmful public uses, and the like—the focal threats of the 1950s and early 1960s.

Visionary as it was, however, the Wilderness Act did not anticipate today’s human-driven, global-scale changes. Nor did the act anticipate how such changes undermine basic assumptions about “natural” conditions. It could not anticipate the emerging post-natural era of the Anthropocene.

THE ANTHROPOCENE

Nobel laureate Paul Crutzen and other Earthsystem scientists who advanced the Anthropocene concept describe the state it encapsulates:

Human activities have become so pervasive and profound that they rival the great forces of Nature and are pushing the Earth into planetary terra incognita. The Earth is rapidly moving into a less biologically diverse, less forested, much warmer, and probably wetter and stormier state. (Steffen et al. 2007)

Since Bill McKibben’s 1989 pronouncement of “The End of Nature,” findings from the ecological and physical sciences have documented the pervasive globalization of human influence on protected areas, including wilderness. Everywhere, the degree to which broad scale environmental changes are anthropogenic or “natural” in origin are becoming less distinguishable, and more synergistic. The recent text *Beyond Naturalness (Cole and Yung 2010)* raised awareness of the now problematic goal of maintaining natural conditions—that is, apart from human influence—that had always guided stewardship of protected areas. And now National Park Service (NPS) director Jonathan Jarvis has declared that “the paradigm of allowing nature to rule

the parks is no longer viable.” “Now the challenge before us,” he said, “is to see the world with nature and humans intertwined.” (Jarvis 2010).

This increasingly intertwined world of the Anthropocene will exacerbate tensions between the goals of perpetuating a wilderness area’s wildness and its other natural conditions. One underlying problem is that the act specifies that a wilderness be managed to perpetuate its wild “untrammelled” condition and also “so as to preserve its natural conditions” (Sec. 2[c]). Although the act did not define “natural conditions,” the Congressional Record shows that proponents intended that wilderness would perpetuate resource conditions such as wildlife species, their habitats, ecosystems, and historic viewsheds, “unimpaired” (Sec. 2[a]); or essentially as they were at the time of designation.

A larger problem is that the act also specifies that its purposes are to be “within and supplemental” to the purposes of national parks, wildlife refuges, forests, and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) areas that are designated as wilderness (Sec. 4[a]). National park wilderness areas, for example, remain subject to the 1916 NPS purpose of conserving scenery, natural objects, and wildlife “unimpaired”. National wildlife refuges, for example, retain their statutory purposes and other mandates to perpetuate specific high value species.

THE DILEMMA OF WILDERNESS STEWARDSHIP

The dilemma of wilderness stewardship (Cole and Yung 2010), as this has come to be called, is that in many and perhaps most wilderness areas, focal species and other favored natural conditions will not be perpetuated without management interventions. These will be needed if areas are to resist or adapt to global-scale impacts. Where the hope is to regain lost conditions, restoration efforts may be needed. Such actions would compromise or be antithetical to preserving the area’s wild, untrammelled condition.

What then should we as wilderness stewards do? We should start with the admonitions of Howard Zahniser, chief author of the Wilderness Act, who warned against management programs that would erode wild character. “We must always remember,” he stated, “that the essential quality of wilderness is its wildness” (Zahniser 1992). Interventions in wilderness should never be considered unless absolutely essential to meeting other mandates.

But in light of the emerging conflict among purposes that Zahniser and the other framers of the Wilderness Act could not have foreseen, and considering the inevitable calls to prevent loss of favored resources, can we realistically expect that all 109 million acres of the nation’s 757 wilderness areas will be managed for real wildness?

Unfortunately, no. As a solution, ecologist Daniel Botkin (1990) proposed a divided wilderness system. Some areas would be designated as “pre-agricultural wilderness” wherein conditions would be maintained as they were when first

viewed by Europeans. “No-action wilderness” would remain “untouched by direct human actions, no matter what happens.” Fearing a homogenized wilderness system wherein both wildness and natural conditions are “compromised everywhere, and optimized nowhere,” ecologist David Cole (2000) proposed an approach for “allocating separate lands to each opposing value and embracing diversity.” Some wilderness units could be designated as true hands-off, nonintervention areas where wildness is preeminent. Within them, ecological systems would be allowed to adapt and evolve as they will.

We would need to accept that “natural conditions” will change and some preferred species, for example, will decline or be replaced by others more suited to changing conditions. In such areas we would accept that their purpose is not to perpetuate their current components and biotic assemblages. Instead, their purpose would be to protect the unfettered processes of their creation.

True, anthropogenic effects will have changed the conditions that evolution responds to, but the processes by which evolution responds would remain autonomous. They would remain untrammelled, free of conscious intent, and not otherwise subject to the projection of human desire. This approach would require forgoing all interventions and restoration efforts—even, for example, removal of invasive species. Hold them off at the border if you can, but once established, they are part of the “natural order” of what may become a novel ecosystem.

Neither remoteness nor a wild-by-default strategy will assure permanent perpetuation of wildness anywhere. Deliberate, proactive choices need to be made. To facilitate them, agency wilderness policies would need to be revised

to prescribe a procedure for deciding where or to what degree each wilderness area’s wildness purpose or its other purposes will have primacy, where maintaining one would compromise the other. Some laws underlying these policies may need to be amended. Decisions would need to be informed by science, but they must be made in the social and political arenas, considering many factors, including probable effects on high-value resources and effects on adjacent lands. Difficult choices and painful tradeoffs would be inevitable.

Yes, the prospect of a divided wilderness system is awfully disconcerting. The alternative, however, is incremental and cumulative erosion of wildness everywhere.

But in an era of ubiquitous anthropogenic effects that influence, if only ever so slightly, the evolutionary trajectory of every landscape, can we perpetuate real wildness anywhere? Yes, wildness, that evocative and elusive quality of wilderness, can be a permanent legacy, if correctly understood.

WHAT IS WILDNESS?

Delving into the etymology of *wild*, historian Roderick Nash (1982) traces its early Teutonic and Norse language origins to the root word will, meaning self-willed, or uncontrollable. This

follows Henry David Thoreau’s succinct definition: “Wild—past particle of to will, self willed” (Turner 1996). But Thoreau knew nature has no will per se; he began the tradition of describing wildness in terms of its antithesis: not subject to human will.

Early wilderness movement leader Robert Marshall summarized this central condition of wilderness as “its entire freedom from the manifestations of human will . . .” (1956). Marshall’s friend Zahniser went on to describe this freedom as “untrammelled” which he defined as “not being subject to human controls and manipulations that hamper the free play of natural forces” (Zahniser 1959). *Untrammelled* became the key word in the Wilderness Act’s definition of wilderness as “where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man.” Murie (1960) called it simply “nature’s freedom.” Based on the intent of those who most influenced and wrote the Wilderness Act, wildness can thus be defined as...*a condition of a landscape characterized by its freedom from the human intent to alter, control, or manipulate its components and ecological and evolutionary processes.*

Wild, then, is not synonymous with pristine or virgin. Rather, it is the state wherein those evolutionary processes of an area’s genesis—free from human purpose, utility, or design—are allowed to shape its future. Thus, not requiring the absence of all human effect, wildness can persist in environments that have been altered or continue to be influenced by external human factors such as climate change—as long as we refrain from interfering with nature’s autonomous response.

THE HUMAN RELATIONSHIP DIMENSION

Challenging our understanding of wildness is the fact that it depends upon our willingness to leave an area’s functioning outside the realm of our volition. And because it is therefore a landscape condition dependent upon human intent, wildness is at once both a landscape condition and a human-nature relationship. Both are legacies we should leave to the future.

Most readily recognized by the managing agencies are the ecological and scientific reasons for perpetuating the wild landscape condition. As Aldo Leopold (1949) espoused, wild areas can serve as baselines for understanding how unmanaged ecological systems respond to anthropogenic change. They can serve as a “control” for assessing the effectiveness of interventions and restoration efforts implemented elsewhere.

“The Need for Wilderness Areas” (1956), is Zahniser’s canonical essay explaining the intent of his pending wilderness bill (and part of the act’s legislative history).

In it Zahniser included these and recreational and aesthetic values as among the reasons for the legislation. But he emphasized that most importantly, wild areas could serve as reference points “essential to a true understanding of ourselves, our culture, our own natures, and our place in all nature.” He went on to explain:

This need is for areas of the earth within which we stand without our mechanisms that make us immediate masters over our

environment—areas of wild nature in which we sense ourselves to be, what in fact I believe we are, dependent members of an interdependent community of living creatures that together derive their existence from the Sun.

Therein Zahniser summarized a need underpinning the wilderness idea (and now, also the Anthropocene concept). That is the need for an expanded world-view, to see ourselves in relation to all life, in the larger scheme of things.

WHY WILDNESS?

When we left our origins as creatures of the wild and embarked on the Neolithic project of altering, then controlling our immediate environment, we began changing theEarth,and changingwhowereinrelationtoit.Today we are not “part and parcel with nature” as Thoreau (1862) understood nature. We are no longer the same members of the life community Zahniser (1956) described. We are already well past being “only fellow voyagers with other creatures in the odyssey of evolution” as Leopold (1949) wrote.

We should acknowledge and look beyond this reality of our time. We should look well beyond, to the next century or two of the Anthropocene. Imagine when synthetic environments, novel and designer ecosystems, domesticated DNA, planetary geoengineering, and who-knows-what come to be integral to the world formerly known as natural. We can only speculate as to which “natural” conditions of wilderness our distant descendants might wish we had attempted to perpetuate through efforts to resist or control change. Who knows what conditions would evolve in areas left free to evolve, or the consequences of interfering with their adaptation? Areas left wild can serve as a baseline for understanding how ecosystems function and transform when left alone.

So too, areas set apart for wildness may serve future generations as a baseline for understanding their own nature and their place in nature, whatever forms nature then takes. Left as living museums of unhampered evolution, wild areas can be touchstones to ways of knowing and relating to the world that shaped us as a species. They can serve as reference points as humankind reshapes its world. On a planet increasingly permeated with human intentionality, areas we allow to be there for themselves, that we allow to become what they will, can stand in contrast to human hubris. They can counter the dominating presumption that everything exists in relation to us. As Nash (1982) emphasizes, their perpetuation would be a gesture of environmental humility, and an encouraging demonstration and reminder of our capacity for restraint.

As the naturalness of natural areas continues to recede, remnant enclaves of wildness can better serve the age-old quest to understand who we are in relation to the world. The notion of naturalness has always been subjective and culture-bound. But wildness, the eternal process of evolution—of our species and all life, of this planet, its sun and universe and all others—is the objective, ultimate, and unifying reality. Wildness is our true, ongoing creation story. It can be a grounding point, if we will, for creating an ethic to confront, as Murie (1960) said, “the real problem of what the human species is to do with this

earth.” Intangible, immeasurable, nonutilitarian: The otherness of wildness is a resource in itself.

The question of what future for wildness within our conservation estate confronts us with paradox, the notion of areas, as Zahniser said, “that are so managed as to be unmanaged.” Wildness challenges us with the irony that self-willed places will only continue through our will. To have areas free of human purpose must be a resolute human purpose.

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Volunteers are at the Heart of our Successes!

BOARD MEMBER
Carol Norton, Treasurer

WHAT IS YOUR CAREER OR SCHOOLING BACKGROUND?
I graduated from college on the east coast and then came to Alaska. I've done a number of jobs including nine years as a teacher aide in Barrow. I've also been a bookkeeper for a local nonprofit and a local small business, as well as Northern Center's Board Treasurer.

WHY ARE YOU A NORTHERN CENTER MEMBER?
How could I help it? When I first came to Alaska, I worked at Camp Denali for Celia Hunter and Ginny Wood. I had grown up in suburbia and, although we spent lots of time outdoors and visited natural areas, was not imbued with an articulated conservation ethic. Ginny and Celia soon fixed that. I am a member because we need wild lands and clean environments.

WHERE IS YOUR FAVORITE PLACE IN INTERIOR OR ARCTIC ALASKA?
Anywhere I am outdoors in a beautiful unspoiled environment.

WHAT ARE THE TWO MUST-HAVE EATS IN YOUR BACKPACK?
Chocolate and home-smoked salmon. I've never tried chocolate coated smoked salmon. Maybe I should.

**BOARD MEMBER
Sven Grage**

WHAT IS YOUR CAREER OR SCHOOLING BACKGROUND?
High School teacher

WHY ARE YOU A NORTHERN CENTER MEMBER?
To protect Wildlands of Interior and Northern Alaska from unnecessary development and destruction.

WHERE IS YOUR FAVORITE PLACE IN INTERIOR OR ARCTIC ALASKA?
The Brooks Range.

WHAT ARE THE TWO MUST-HAVE EATS IN YOUR BACKPACK?
M&Ms and moose jerky.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEMBER
Mary Shields

WHAT IS YOUR CAREER OR SCHOOLING BACKGROUND?
I earned a Bachelor of Science degree, majoring in English from the University of Wisconsin in Madison Wisconsin. Several years of post-graduate work at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, completing all requirements for an elementary education degree, except fundamentals of math (there are three kinds of people when it comes to math, those who understand it and those who don't). My more significant education came from fifty years being aware of the natural world around me and observing our role in this great adventure.

WHY ARE YOU A NORTHERN CENTER MEMBER?
I'm a member because I know Alaska's wild country is very important to me and I believe it should be available to future generations. I'm grateful I've had this opportunity to learn my place in the natural world.

WHERE IS YOUR FAVORITE PLACE IN INTERIOR OR ARCTIC ALASKA?
My favorite places, I couldn't limit it to one, are the boreal forest west of Fairbanks where I have a cabin, up in the high country of Denali Park, and out on the spring dog trail anywhere away from town. Now, at nearly 70 years old, I find comfort and connection in my garden here in the Goldstream valley.

VOLUNTEER
Karen Jorgenson

WHAT IS YOUR CAREER OR SCHOOLING BACKGROUND?
I am currently studying biology at Western Washington University. I intend to go on to earn a masters degree in botany or a related field and use these skills to help facilitate a sustainable interaction between humans and our natural world.

WHY ARE YOU A NORTHERN CENTER MEMBER?
The Northern Center is important to me because it is a small group of hardworking people whom we all are in debt to for fighting the battles that benefit every one of us. In a state where we have great swaths of wilderness and resources left to protect, and with a political climate that obstructs many efforts to do so, the Northern Center is doing the work that really should be shouldered by all of us. Volunteering for the Northern Center is the least I can do to help repay this debt.

WHERE IS YOUR FAVORITE PLACE IN INTERIOR OR ARCTIC ALASKA?
My favorite trip in Alaska would have to be rafting down the Hulahula River on the northern slope of the Brooks Range. The length of the river from the mountains to the ocean offers a stunning array of experiences from being whisked through rocky canyons to watching caribou nimbly navigate the tundra. It was cold, wet, and windy, but I certainly can't demand that nature be accommodating when I am already privileged to see such beautiful sights!

WHAT ARE THE TWO MUST-HAVE EATS IN YOUR BACKPACK?
Two of my favorite backpack snacks are dark chocolate chips (“go drops” as my parents would say), and apples!



Left to right; Carol Norton, Sven Grage, Mary Shields, and Karen Jorgenson.



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