

DENALI CITIZENS COUNCIL - RENEWED VISION AND NEW BOARD WILL MOVE US AHEAD IN 2009

by Nancy Bale

Since we were founded 35 years ago, Denali Citizens Council has operated largely on volunteer energy. Our Board of Directors prioritizes our efforts on the major issues both inside Denali National Park and in the gateway communities around the park. Since 2002, member and grant support has enabled the board to employ a Community Organizer. As a result DCC has become more effective and more visible within the Denali Borough. Our Community Organizer, Julia Potter, does a tremendous amount of work keeping the board and membership informed of breaking issues, attending local meetings, and keeping the office, the mail and the membership database organized. Without her role we would be much less effective.

Nevertheless, volunteer energy is essential for adequately addressing the many issues that affect the Denali region. We renewed our volunteer energy in 2008 by electing an eight-member board in July. This fall, our board members made a solid commitment to playing a more active role in issues advocacy, and after months of word-smithing, completed our updated **Vision for Denali**. The Vision appears in its entirety on the next page of this newsletter. Below I'll briefly outline how DCC plans to work toward that Vision in 2009.

Inside Denali National Park

Vision: Preservation of wildlife and wilderness resources and direct experience of wild nature are primary goals

If the National Park effectively protects its core resources - wildlife, living ecosystems and wilderness character - then the "park experience" will follow. In this era of interpretation, education and managed tourism, the park will be at risk if this simple fact is ignored.

In 2009 and beyond,

- ☞ DCC will follow NPS plans to enhance infrastructure along the park road, with an eye to keeping the Wilderness core of the park minimally "built" and maximally protected.
- ☞ We will, in cooperation with conservation partners, advocate for completion of Wilderness eligibility review and Wilderness designation for areas in Denali's ANILCA additions.
- ☞ In cooperation with conservation partners, and when appropriate, we will encourage NPS to be more proactive in its management of snowmachines by defining the meaning of the term "traditional activities."



Caribou in Denali

photo courtesy of Julia Potter

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OUR VISION FOR DENALI

In our Jan-Feb 2008 issue of *DCC News* we asked you, our members, to review the Vision for Denali. We received many comments which were reprinted in the Mar-Apr 2008 *DCC News*. The board has discussed the Vision throughout the year and during the DCC Board Retreat this fall, we finalized the Denali Citizens Council Vision for Denali. We look forward to hearing your comments on the updated Vision for Denali. 



DENALI CITIZENS COUNCIL VISION FOR DENALI

Inside Denali National Park and Preserve

- ✧ Preservation of wildlife and wilderness is the primary goal. Direct experience of wild nature by park visitors is valued and protected.
- ✧ Park ecosystems exist in a natural and minimally managed condition.
- ✧ The park is a haven for natural sounds, where motorized vehicles and aircraft do not disrupt the natural soundscape.
- ✧ Travel on the park road is a unique journey through wild, primitive lands with unmatched opportunities to observe wildlife and wild landscapes. This unique road character is protected through careful maintenance, limited vehicle access, and minimal presence of infrastructure.
- ✧ Kantishna is a remote outpost of human activity, where commercial enterprises remain small, few in number, and are characterized by nature-oriented activities for their guests. Experiences there provide a genuine feeling of wildness for park visitors, where the landscape shows minimal impact of humans.

Outside Denali National Park and Preserve

- ✧ Communities in the Denali region practice environmentally sustainable development and retain their small town character and rural lifestyles. Architectural and landscape design complement the magnificent scenery, resource development is subject to public oversight and local residents enjoy ready access to wild lands and wildlife “out the back door.”
- ✧ Local communities embrace their role as part of the gateway to Denali National Park and Preserve, appreciate their location next to a national park, and recognize the importance of the greater Denali ecosystem.
- ✧ Wildlife habitat values on lands that are part of the greater Denali ecosystem are protected.



Alaska Native Knowledge Network

FROM THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZER

by Julia Potter

As this year comes to a close I want to personally extend my heartfelt thanks to each and every member of Denali Citizens Council, and to the wonderful DCC Board of Directors. Throughout the year, as the Community Organizer, I must confess that despite my optimistic outlook and good-natured attitude, I sometimes feel discouraged keeping up with all the issues DCC tackles, putting the newsletter together and wondering what in the world I can write about. Other moments it seems that if I attend one more meeting during the week I'll end up with a permanently numb behind from sitting for hours on end (literally). Just when I think my self-motivation is dwindling, along comes a little note scribbled across the top of a membership renewal, "Thanks for all you do" or "Thanks so much - the newsletter is great - very well done!" This year we received many wonderful kudos sent along with membership renewals or as a reply to our Member Updates. Those little comments make my day and help to remind me why I'm doing what I'm doing. It's not just about protecting and preserving the most beautiful place on earth - Denali. It's about you, our members, who give DCC and me that extra bit of motivation to "fight the good fight." Your interest and desire to protect and preserve the special place we all love and care for are AMAZING! As for the Board of Directors - they are the most awesome group of individuals. I can't say enough good things about them. But I can say this: Jean, Nancy, Anne, Nan, Joan, Jenna, Cass and Jared - I love you guys! Thanks for all you do and for making my job the absolute best job anyone could possibly have. I must also extend a special thank you to Charlie - you add the extra touch, the icing on the cake. It's wonderful to have your brilliant insight on so many DCC issues.

Wishing you all a Happy, Healthy & Peaceful New Year!

THANK YOU NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

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DCC - MOVING AHEAD IN 2009 *continued from page 1*

Vision: Ecosystems exist in a natural and minimally managed condition

DCC supports the NPS policy of managing for natural and healthy populations of wildlife. Even where hunting is allowed, in the preserves and subsistence areas, the park manages for ecosystem health, not for single species abundance. By contrast, on state lands just outside the park, wildlife is subject to intensive management for maximum sustained yield and predator control is practiced to enhance the availability of ungulate species for hunters. The intersection of these two widely divergent management policies at the boundaries of the park and in the preserves creates controversy and places animal populations at risk.

In 2009,

- ☛ DCC will advocate for careful wildlife management on lands outside the park, through our contacts with the local Fish and Game Advisory Committee and through wider advocacy with the State Board of Game if necessary.
- ☛ Inside in the park, we'll ask the Federal Subsistence Board and the National Park Service to reduce bag limits for wolves in hunted areas of Denali Park.

Vision: Natural soundscape is protected

DCC supports the 2006 Denali Backcountry Management Plan's identification of soundscape as a park resource and its resolve to protect that resource.

In 2009,

- ☛ DCC will ensure that NPS is appropriately monitoring and documenting impacts to the park soundscape and is adhering to the standards of the Backcountry Management Plan. DCC will retain a seat on the Denali Aircraft Overflights Advisory Council, advocating for voluntary measures to protect the soundscape of Denali National Park.
- ☛ We will advocate, in our comments on the Vehicle Management EIS, for soundscape protection when considering changes to the transportation system in the park.
- ☛ We will hold NPS accountable for protecting park soundscapes from inappropriate noise intrusions by snowmachines using the park for traditional activities.



Grizzly sow and cub on park road with VTS buses. Will the road character remain?
Photo courtesy of Kim Turnbull

In 2009, we will continue our campaign of education and advocacy on the Denali Vehicle Management EIS, currently in the scoping phase. We intend, in our comments, to support the current 10,512 cap on vehicle access, minimal infrastructure, and maintenance guidelines that protect the Murie vision of road character. DCC continues to oppose the building of permanent commercial facilities at Toklat Rest Stop.

Vision: Kantishna retains its rural character and feeling of wildness

We are very concerned that in the next decade desired future resource and social conditions, established by the 2006 Backcountry Management Plan, will be exceeded in Kantishna.

In 2009, DCC will advocate for proactive NPS planning, in cooperation with Kantishna inholders, to protect Kantishna area backcountry resources. We will continue to support the NPS purchase of mining claims.

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DCC - MOVING AHEAD IN 2009 *continued from previous page*

Outside Denali National Park

Vision: Gateway communities plan sustainably and retain their rural character; resource development is subject to public oversight

The Denali Borough, established in 1989, has come a long way toward providing governance in the local communities of Healy, McKinley Park, Cantwell and Anderson. Comprehensive land use planning is still in the draft stage, however. Planning for borough lands must recognize their intrinsic ecosystem values, their contribution to community development and their nearness to Denali National Park.

In 2009,

- ☛ If a new Preliminary Finding for Healy Gas Exploration is released by the State of Alaska, DCC will advocate for limiting the extent of development to protect recreation and rural lifestyles, local quality of life, and habitat values in the Stampede area.
- ☛ DCC will provide local education and support for more proactive state management of recreation in the Stampede townships under a State Recreation Area.
- ☛ DCC will engage with the borough while it develops plans for management of its Municipal Entitlement lands.
- ☛ DCC will follow the development of tourism infrastructure on Denali's south side and apply our Vision to potential developments there.

Vision: Local communities embrace their role as part of Denali's gateway, appreciate their location next to the park, and recognize the greater Denali ecosystem

In 2009, DCC will consider convening a third Stampede Summit to foster communication and consensus building around land planning, resource and energy development and wildlife management in communities adjacent to Denali National Park.



Tourists in Nenana Canyon area known as Glitter Gulch. Future planning for borough lands must recognize their intrinsic ecosystem values, contribution to community development and nearness to Denali National Park. *DCC Photo*

Vision: Wildlife habitat values of the greater Denali ecosystem are protected

The sub-arctic plant and animal communities that inspire hundreds of thousands of guests at Denali National Park are not completely encompassed by the legal boundaries of the park. Caribou migrate into the state lands north of the park in winter, followed by park wolves. Animals that leave the park on seasonal wanderings are particularly at risk from the pressures of hunting and development.

In 2009, DCC will continue to support habitat protections on lands adjacent to the National Park, to retain important wildlife corridors. We'll also argue for reduction of inappropriate bag limits for game animals who venture outside the protection of Denali's boundaries. We'll demand a strong scientific justification for predator control and categorically oppose the baiting of brown bears or den-killing of wolf pups.

If any of the Vision items above holds a special interest for you, we welcome your efforts. New ideas for letter and comment writing, attendance and testimony at meetings, support for our events - all of these activities are important and necessary. Call our office at 907-683-3396 and let us know what you would like to do. ☛



Alaska Native Knowledge Network

YEAR IN REVIEW - A LOOK AT 2008

DCC'S CHALLENGES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

by Julia Potter

This past year has seen its share of issues and challenges, as well as a few accomplishments. Here's a look at Denali Citizens Council's top issues, challenges and accomplishments from 2008.

Gas Exploration and Development in the Healy Basin topped the list with three issues of *DCC News* featuring articles on the subject. Our biggest challenge is keeping exploration and development out of the Stampede and Wolf Townships, and convincing the Denali Borough government that these lands have a higher value for wildlife habitat and recreation. We are still awaiting a Final Best Interest Finding from the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Oil and Gas. We question why this document is not out after nearly two years since the Preliminary Best Interest Finding was issued. We may see the preliminary BIF reissued in the coming year.

Wildlife Protection and Populations was another hot topic not only within the park but in the areas surrounding the boundaries. DCC reported on new efforts by the Denali rangers to patrol problem areas and their efforts to prosecute poaching cases; the continuing controversy of antlerless moose hunts in Game Management Unit 20A; de facto predator control of bears and most notably wolves based on State of Alaska wildlife management practices; and populations of wildlife within the park, namely Dall's sheep. Few wildlife surveys have been done in the past and this year saw an increase in surveys being implemented. A constant challenge will be maintaining the wolf buffers in the Wolf Townships and along the Parks Highway.

Road Capacity and Vehicle Management Plan EIS is one of DCC's major issues and a continuing challenge. Pressure from the tourism industry has forced the park to look at the current vehicle capacity on the park road. Data from the Road Capacity Study, which began in 2005 and was completed in 2008, will be utilized in developing alternatives for the Vehicle Management Plan EIS. Scoping is complete with a draft plan expected in early 2010.



Antlerless moose hunts in GMU 20A have been a controversial issue for many years.

photo courtesy of Julia Potter

DCC questions the need to change the transportation system so soon after the Entrance Area and Road Corridor EIS of 1997. This EIS set limits on total summer traffic of 10,512 vehicles, and allocations of traffic between Tundra Wilderness Tour and Visitor Transportation buses (shuttle) as well as establishing the Denali Natural History Tour. Apparently, the Vehicle Management Plan EIS is an attempt for NPS to come up with a more scientific approach to the carrying capacity of the park road as the 10,512 number has been called "unscientific" and "un-defendable."

The Wolf Townships and a Stampede State Recreation Area still have an uncertain future and continue to be one of DCC's most challenging issues. The Wolf Townships continue to be plagued with many concerns. Through 2008 *DCC News* articles featured some of these concerns with our primary focus on gas development (see above) and a Stampede State Recreation Area. Although the legislation introduced by our local representatives for a Stampede State Recreation Area was stalled in the House Resources Committee in early 2008, DCC will be continuing to advocate for the recreation area.

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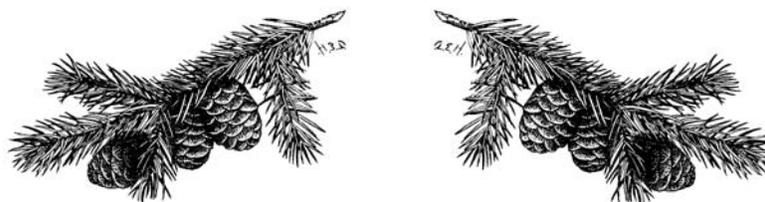
Cantwell Subsistence ORV Management has been a long-standing issue dating back to 1992 when Cantwell residents requested the NPS to make a determination on the use of ORVs as traditionally employed for the purposes of subsistence within the park additions. Throughout the passing years Cantwell subsistence users and NPS have been working toward finding a balance between resource protection and subsistence access. The resulting regulations allow ORV's, with limits on the types of vehicles allowed, on NPS managed trails within the park additions. The regulations allow this use on four established trails (the Bull River trail is not currently open) and the Cantwell Creek floodplain. The new regulations became effective on November 14, 2008. This is a much-improved situation for resource protection considering there were no consistent plans for subsistence ORV use and qualified subsistence users could go off-trail with an ORV for retrieval of game previous to the new regulations. DCC is still concerned regarding resource protection while allowing reasonable access for subsistence users. DCC did not favor actual construction of a Bull River trail when we commented on the ORV plan.

The Proposed Tanana Basin Area Plan Amendments for the purpose of reclassifying certain lands selected by Denali Borough for Municipal Land Entitlements were one of the highlights of 2008. DCC urged our members to submit comments regarding the proposed amendments on two selected entitlements - one area in the Nenana Canyon and the other along the upper Stampede Road, including the lands around 8-Mile Lake. The proposed amendments would have reclassified 22,000 acres from Wildlife Habitat to Public Recreation so that they could be conveyed to Denali Borough. Due to the overwhelming number of comments received by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), primarily from DCC members, DNR has withdrawn the Nenana Canyon area as well as the lands along the upper Stampede Road and 8-Mile Lake. Other lands were also withdrawn from the proposed amendment. This was a major accomplishment for 2008. However, there may still be changes to this preliminary decision. DCC feels confident these lands will remain in state ownership and will submit comments in support of this decision.

Some of our challenges and accomplishments in 2008 were not focused on issues but rather on Denali Citizens Council as an organization. One of the major challenges this past year was revising the Vision for Denali. It's a key accomplishment that will guide DCC in the years to come. Our members elected two additional board members this year at the Annual Meeting. The eight-member Board of Directors took on many responsibilities during the fall board retreat. During the retreat the board accomplished planning for the remainder of the 2008 year and planning for our challenges ahead in 2009.

Beginning in April of 2008 the Community Organizer began working full time. Julia was able to focus some energy on many administrative tasks which always seem to simmer on the back burner. Some of those accomplishments include: revising our member database, creating a catalog of the many NPS reports and other documents DCC keeps on hand, and working towards overhauling the filing system. Aside from the administrative tasks Julia also attended a media training course designed for conservation organizations this spring in Fairbanks, and the 2008 Alaska Transportation Conference in Anchorage this fall. Julia continued to be active in other organizations, bringing DCC's voice to the local Denali Chamber of Commerce and completing an application for the Parks Highway Scenic Byway nomination as an All American Road this year.

While it may seem that our challenges are many, and our accomplishments few, DCC has taken huge strides on all of our issues this last year. The voice of our members made a difference. We look forward to the challenges and anticipate more accomplishments in 2009. 



Alaska Native Knowledge Network

MEET THE BOARD MEMBERS OF DENALI CITIZENS COUNCIL

JEAN BALAY

I came to Alaska by accident. Immediately after graduation from Oberlin College in 1987, with no plans for the future, I took a job working in the snack shop at the Denali Park Hotel: perhaps not the career my family had envisioned when they sent me off to school, but it almost paid the bills. I spent eight years working seasonally for the concessionaire as a cook, maintenance worker and landscaper. More recently, I worked for three summers as a vegetation technician for the National Park Service, and for the past 10 years I have worked year round on the NPS Historic Restoration crew. Also in the last 10 years, like so many of my friends and neighbors before me, I have purchased a lot in the Panguingue Creek Subdivision and built a cabin. The Denali area will always feel like home to me, and I hope that, along with DCC, we can all work to keep it a place where we all love to live, work, and play. ☞



Jean is up there somewhere!

NANCY BALE



Nancy with Kantishna Blueberry pancakes at Camp Denali - Yum!

I grew up in central California, and from early childhood enjoyed the Sierra Nevada mountains with my family. In my early twenties I hiked the John Muir trail, spending six weeks in the roadless back-country. On that trip, I learned to feel at home in wide open spaces. Moving to Alaska was simply the next phase in that education for wilderness. Arriving at the entrance to the park just as the Parks Highway was opening, I witnessed the birth of the shuttle system and the decline of private vehicle access. At that time, about 50 people lived near the entrance of the park in winter. In the years since I arrived at Denali the growth of tourism, spurred by improved road access and hotel development, brought both benefits and challenges to the park and its environs, and made the work of DCC as important now as it ever was. As the Denali region changed over those years, my life did too. I went from local employee, working for over 20 summers at Camp Denali, to community nurse in Anchorage. I went from bush resident for over 20 winters on the Tonzona River, surrounded by those wide open spaces I'd craved since the Muir trail, to a city life. DCC keeps me grounded in both my past joys and hopes for the future. ☞

When I first arrived in Denali to work during the summer of 2003, I was awestruck and speechless. In fact, I don't think I uttered much more than a necessary "yes" or "no" when asked by my coworkers if I was enjoying myself, or if I needed anything. Suddenly, in the vast, wild reaches of Denali, I had much more than I had ever dreamed of. I grew up in the Pacific Northwest under the tutelage of my parents who enjoyed sharing outdoor endeavors with the family. In college, while studying ecology at the University of California-Berkeley, I melded my interest in the natural world with academic studies and developed a fascination for the interconnectedness of every community. Here in Denali, I consider it a privilege to participate in the year round community—to watch the stormy weather move in from the south, hear the hoot of an owl after dark, follow lynx tracks down the ski trail, share a ridge-line with caribou while hiking, and celebrate the spring return of migratory birds with neighbors. In this world, everything needs a voice in order to have its interests considered. I have always been thankful for DCC's participation in important conversations as the voice of the land and of this Greater Denali Ecosystem, including its human inhabitants. It is a pleasure to be able to serve on the board and help to keep this voice heard. When not working on issues, you are likely to find me skiing, helping neighbors train their sled dogs, driving a bus on the park road, or leading hikes at Camp Denali in the summer. ☞

ANNE BEAULAUER



Anne hiking the West Fork

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DCC BOARD MEMBERS *continued from previous page*

I've lived in the Denali area with my family, which includes a team of sled dogs, for over 20 years. I graduated from Colorado State University in Biology and soon afterwards headed to the Canadian far north where I worked in tourism and wildlife for seven years, before coming to Alaska. I live in Denali to experience the wilderness surroundings firsthand and explore my naturalist interests on a daily basis. I became involved with DCC because of concerns with the continuing struggle over proper uses of our natural heritage of wild places which I feel are continually threatened with development and exploited for economic opportunity at the expense of preservation. I am presently the chief naturalist and head instructor at the Denali Education Center and enjoyed many years working at Camp Denali, in the heart of Denali National Park. I also serve on the Middle Nenana Fish and Game Advisory Committee, helped co-author the *Birds of Denali* and if my son Jeff was still on the Healy Hockey team, would be a hockey mama for Obama!! ☺

NAN EAGLESON



Nan - always smiling!

JOAN FRANKEVICH



Joan at Kenai Fjords National Park

Originally from New Jersey and Colorado, I was attracted to Alaska because I LOVE glaciers. In a typical story, I took a one time summer job after college and then never quite left. That first Alaska job was at the McKinley Chalets in 1983. I returned to Denali for the next four summers working as an interpretive ranger for NPS and one winter as a volunteer at the park kennel. One of my favorite experiences from that time was standing in front of the Peters glacier when it was surging (over 50 feet per day!) in 1986. I currently live in Girdwood and work for the National Parks Conservation Association where I've worked on park protection issues since 1997. I hold a degree in Environmental Conservation from the University of Colorado and did graduate work at the University of Idaho in Natural Resource Management. I am pleased to be a part of DCC helping to protect the special park that first brought me to Alaska. ☺

Born and raised in the Denali area, I traveled Outside for school but returned to my homeland to work and live with my family. I love to explore new environments and their flora and fauna, and have sought out mountains, deserts, and remote islands around the world. I pursued this fascination with geography by earning a B.A. in Geography from Middlebury College and an M.A. in Conservation Biology from Antioch University. Returning to my childhood haunts in the Kantishna in 2003, I studied the elevational migration of white spruce with recent climate warming for my master's thesis. My husband, Simon, and I, with our wonderful daughter, Danika, are the managers and next stewards of Camp Denali and North Face Lodge in the Kantishna. I am a keen birder and botanist, an avid skier, hiker, and find continual joy exploring and discovering my limitless backyard. Promoting the protection of Denali's remarkable landscapes and wildlife through my board membership with DCC is a natural extension of being a responsible steward of my home. ☺

JENNA HAMM



Jenna skiing in her Denali backyard

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DCC BOARD MEMBERS *continued from previous page*

CASS RAY



Cass on the Denali Park Road after a hike in the rain. And no, he did not go into the restricted area!

As I type these words, tomorrow marks the third anniversary of my arrival in Denali. The area immediately felt so right for me that as I switched off the car that late afternoon, I turned to the friend who had driven with me from Chicago and commented, “I’m home. I’m going to be here for a very long time.” And that was in a blinding Thanksgiving snowstorm! Maybe one of the reasons that blizzard and Alaska’s winter temperatures felt right was that I had just spent twenty-six years outside Buffalo, New York (which some consider the snowfall capital of the western world). And I know I must live within sight of majestic mountains. But the real reason that Denali and its environs felt so right, and continue to feel so right, has to do with the nearly twenty years that, nearly every summer, I spent weeks solo hiking and camping in Shenandoah National Park in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, and the two seasons that I volunteered there, leading hikes and tours. One couldn’t help but recognize how essential it

is that we work to protect and preserve these very special places set aside by the citizens of this nation. That lesson has been only confirmed by my years in Denali; this is one of the most spectacular landscapes on the planet, and it is under increasing pressure from so many sources. Among so many other factors, the materialism and commercialism increasingly gripping so much of prosperous western society too often threaten the preservation of our natural wonders. One of the things that I like best about living in McKinley Village is that, through several months of the year, it’s hard to practice materialism, hard to spend even a dollar; one can’t help but focus on the things that truly matter—and this park and its environs matter. ☞

I first came to Denali in 1999 to explore the park’s backcountry. I’ve never forgotten the awesome wildlife sightings along the park road and the sensation of feeling like the first person ever to explore the Wyoming Hills. I returned to Minnesota at the end of that summer to continue studying at Augsburg College in Minneapolis. Years of traveling and studying in Latin America inspired me to move to Nicaragua. After graduating, I worked for two years as a volunteer with Witness for Peace, educating people from the United States about how international banking and trade policies from Washington, D.C. create a global economy that makes rich countries richer and keeps poor countries poor. In 2004, I answered the “call of the wild” and moved to Denali National Park to mush sled dogs. Now, Bridget Borg and I live outside of Healy, spending as much time as we can, exploring the park by dog team. I hope that people from all over the world will always have the opportunity to feel like they are discovering the park for the first time. ☞

JARED ZIMMERMAN



Jared and Wickwire hiking along Crow’s Pass (Jared is on the right in case you weren’t sure)



Alaska Native Knowledge Network

MOOSE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

FISH & GAME ADVISORY COMMITTEES JOIN TO DEVELOP AN INTENSIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR MOOSE IN GMU 20A

by Nan Eagleson



Alaska Native Knowledge Network

The process to develop an Intensive Management Plan for moose in Game Management Unit 20A is an on-going saga to meet the high harvest quotas and abundant moose hunting opportunities which Intensive Game Management areas require. Game Management Unit 20A lies to the south of Fairbanks and encompasses the Tanana Flats and northern slopes of the Alaska Range. It is bounded on the north by the Tanana River, by the Parks Highway and Denali National Park and Preserve on the west and the Richardson Highway on the east.

Unit 20 A has been identified by the Alaska Board of Game as being important for providing high levels of moose harvest under the state Intensive Management (IM) law. In recent years the moose population of Unit 20 A has been “very high” (according to ADF&G) and liberal hunting regulations have been adopted to help control the size of the moose population and prevent degradation of the habitat. The abundant moose hunting opportunity has resulted in many hunters from Southcentral Alaska and other areas of the state coming to hunt in Unit 20A. Unit 20A now provides a large portion of the total statewide moose harvest.

In the late 1990’s when low moose twinning rates and other nutritional indices suggested the population was beginning to exceed the capacity of the habitat, the F&G Department began encouraging use of liberal antlerless seasons to prevent further growth of the moose population. Public controversy developed about whether taking cow and calf moose was ethically appropriate and whether there was sufficient biological data to justify antlerless harvest. Because habitat considerations, antlerless harvest and public concerns about hunter numbers and other issues are most pressing in Unit 20A, the Department recently proposed a planning process which would include expanded public information and education programs for moose management in Unit 20A, along with a Moose Management Working Group which would include representatives of the four Advisory Committees in the Unit 20A area and concerned citizens. ADF&G would act as technical advisors to this “Working Group”, and other state, federal and local government agencies with jurisdiction or interest in wildlife and land management issues would be involved in the project as technical advisors.

To make a long story short, a meeting of the representatives of the four AC’s to discuss this proposal took place on November 24, 2008 and basically, the response to the proposal by most of the participants was that it sounded too complicated with too many layers of involvement. Certainly there is a need to identify the biological criteria used to determine when antlerless moose seasons should be authorized and what level of antlerless harvest is appropriate, if any, in varying conditions of the moose population and its habitat.

Public education and outreach would benefit this whole process greatly. From my own perspective, I believe the IM problems are immense and contribute to over use and public conflict for a resource that is over managed to sustain artificially high numbers of moose for artificially high harvest objectives. What is really needed in the whole process is a more diverse view from a broader group of people than just hunters. I have been on the Middle Nenana Advisory Committee for almost four years and rarely has there ever been public attendance by anyone but hunters or trappers. There are issues besides moose which need to be addressed. Like every public process, the commitment by a few individuals for the long haul is what really counts and if that is only coming from one user group, the outcome will likely not please a broader constituency.

The next Middle Nenana Advisory Committee meeting was scheduled for December 22, 2008 in Clear. Fall moose survey numbers from ADF&G were presented and discussion of the antlerless hunt continued. For more information on the Middle Nenana Advisory Committee call or email Julia at the DCC office (907-683-3396 or mail@denalicitizens.org). 

ALACC CONSIDERS ALASKA FEDERAL LAND ISSUES

by Nancy Bale

Recently I joined staff members from several regional and national environmental organizations for our first ALACC meeting with the new Alaska Regional Director of the National Park Service, Sue Masica. In her new position she will oversee the administration of 16 park units, 54.7 million acres and 1,000 employees in Alaska. Before Alaska, Director Masica spent her career in Washington DC, most recently as chief of staff to NPS Director Mary Bomar (since 2006), and before that as NPS Associate Director for Park Planning, Facilities and Lands, where she was responsible among other things for execution of NPS infrastructure programs, land acquisition, and planning. She also served as the Associate Director for Administration, in charge of the Service's budget, training, personnel, contracting, and other support functions.



The ALACC (or Alaska Lands Act Coordinating Committee) began after the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) was passed in 1980, as a way to enhance communication between federal land managers and members of the environmental community. Members of ALACC bring their unique perspectives on conservation issues to the National Park Service. ANILCA established millions of acres of federal conservation system units in Alaska, but contained some unclear provisions allowing forms of access and activities that normally do not occur in national parks. Controversy over some of ANILCA's provisions still dogs the administration of federal lands in Alaska.

As DCC's representative to ALACC, I feel privileged to join the Sierra Club, the Wilderness Society, the National Parks Conservation Association, Trustees for Alaska, Defenders of Wildlife, Alaska Center for the Environment and other conservation groups at the ALACC meetings. The meeting room, at NPS headquarters in Anchorage, provides teleconferencing equipment enabling us to see and hear Superintendents in remote parks across Alaska. NPCA representative Joan Frankevich notifies members of upcoming ALACC meetings and prepares the agenda.

At ALACC I am able to get out of the Denali-centric mode and learn a bit about statewide federal land management issues. Through ALACC I have gained respect for the hard-working Alaskans who administer conservation system units in a state whose citizens do not always value the federal presence. The most recent meeting touched on NPS's draft climate change policy for Alaska, issues of wildlife management in NPS preserves and subsistence areas, problem areas in implementation of the recently approved regulation allowing concealed loaded weapons in Alaska's national parks, and a request to build a subsistence cabin in Noatak National Preserve.

My contact with representatives of the National Park Service at ALACC meetings gives me a better idea of the variety of concerns faced by federal managers in Alaska and the complexity of the decisions they must make. ❧



DCC thanks the
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IN MEMORY OF HAROLD E. "BUD" KRAUSE by Dale Ebben

Harold E. "Bud" Krause passed away peacefully on October 15, 2008, in Fairbanks. Bud was born in Milwaukee, WI to Edwin and Hattie Krause on September 18, 1920. After graduating from Bay View High School in 1939, Bud went to work for an automotive company. He took a leave in 1942 and went to Alaska for the Army Corps of Engineers, returning to Milwaukee in 1944. After retiring, he volunteered at Denali National Park for several summers before deciding to move to Alaska permanently in 1986. Bud drove a bus in Denali National Park for the park concessionaire, including several cross country trips from Georgia to Alaska to transport new Bluebird buses for the park fleet. For several winters, Bud was the caretaker of Mt. McKinley Chalets. After Bud's last season at Denali in 1993, he moved to Nenana and lived at the Meda Lord Center.



Bud Krause at the Nenana Visitor's Center

photo courtesy of Dale Ebben

Bud was an Ambassador Extraordinaire to Denali National Park and Alaska while at the Nenana Visitor Center, with his passion and knowledge of the two second to none. Through Bud's writing to scores of visitors that passed through the Nenana Visitor Center, often sending them requested information, posters, pictures, etc., they were provided a personalized lifetime memory of their Alaska trip. Many of the visitors became friends and Bud continued to correspond with them over the years. As evidence of his VAST knowledge of Denali National Park and Alaska, the publishers of the travel guides would send their drafts to Bud for proofreading and accuracy.

Bud had a great sense of humor and his thoughtful, "90-second" phone calls were well known by all, often at opportune times to provide laughter and not take life or work so seriously. Bud was famous for treating his friends to regular trips to Monderosa in Nenana for the "Best Burgers in Alaska".

Bud was a member of the South Shore Yacht Club in Milwaukee, Lake Lodge No. 189 F&AM, the Scottish Rite Bodies, the Tripoli Shrine Horse Patrol, Fairbanks Masonic Lodge, Audubon Society, and Denali Citizens Council. He loved the outdoors, wildlife, hunting, and hiking. Bud was an avid reader and enjoyed his newspapers, being quite the crossword puzzle solver. He was one of the biggest Green Bay Packer Backers in Alaska. Bud loved to travel, lived life to the fullest, had adventures that most of us only dream of, and was always ready for a new adventure.

Bud was preceded in death by his parents, brother-in-law, Colon Keef, and niece, Darlene Burdick.

Bud lives on through his sister, Bernice Keef of Milwaukee, WI, nieces, Janice Shipler of Waukesha, WI and Cindy Keef of West Allis, WI, his Denali family, friends throughout the country, and the thousands of people that he impacted as they passed through the Nenana Visitor Center. Bud will be greatly missed by the many he touched over the years. A memorial service will be held in Alaska in summer 2009.

The family and friends of Bud Krause request that donations to Denali Citizens Council (PO Box 78, Denali Park, Alaska 99755) be made in his memory.

A heartfelt, special thanks to the staff at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital and Denali Center for their kind and compassionate care, and Margaret Spencer for her daily visits with Bud while he was hospitalized. ☺

<p>THANK YOU Donations Made in Memory of Bud Krause Dale Ebben Sonja & Craig Schmidt Ree & Bill Nancarrow</p>

BRIEF NEWS & VIEWS

REGULATION WILL ALLOW CONCEALED WEAPONS IN NATIONAL PARKS

On December 5, 2008, without any fanfare, the Department of the Interior (hereinafter, the Department) posted a news release on its website (available at: http://www.doi.gov/news/08_News_Releases/120508.html) regarding the new regulation allowing concealed firearms in national parks and national wildlife refuges while leaving unchanged the existing regulatory provisions that ensure visitor safety and resource protection. The rule becomes effective 30 days following publication in the Federal Register.

The Secretary of the Interior received letters from 51 U.S. Senators requesting the department amend its regulations to allow “firearms consistent with the state law where the National Park Service’s sites and the National Wildlife Refuges are located.” The Senators observed that the “regulations infringe on the rights of law-abiding gun owners” and that the “inconsistencies in firearms regulations for public lands are confusing, burdensome, and unnecessary.”

Under the final rule, individuals must have actual authority to possess those loaded and concealed firearms under state law in order to carry those loaded concealed firearms in federal park areas and refuges. This means that the state in which the national park or refuge unit is located must have laws that authorize the individual to possess those concealed and loaded firearms, and the individual must be so authorized.

It should also be noted that the rule understands that states with concealed carry laws impose statutory prohibitions on the lawful possession of concealed handguns in certain locations. It is possible that a state may wish to prohibit a individual from possessing a concealed weapon on federal lands within state boundaries. In the event a state enacts such a law, the Department’s final rule respects the legislative judgment of the people of that state.

The Department reopened the public comment period for 30 days in light of the Supreme Court decision in *District of Columbia vs Heller*. The Department, in its view, did not feel that the Supreme Court’s decision in *Heller* directly impacted the proposal to revise existing federal regulations to more closely conform its regulations to appropriate state laws.

It is not known how national parks in Alaska will deal with this new rule and specifically how Denali National Park will address this issue, particularly in the public transportation system and inside federal buildings, where firearms remain illegal. DCC views this new rule as a travesty and hopes that the new administration will review it critically. 

VEHICLE MANAGEMENT EIS SCOPING COMMENTS NEWSLETTER

This fall, Denali National Park conducted a scoping process for the Denali Park Road Vehicle Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. NPS has recently released a newsletter with a summary of the comments received during this scoping process. The newsletter is available on the Denali Park website at <http://www.nps.gov/dena/parkmgmt/roadvehmgteis.htm>.

The comments received encompassed a variety of subjects. Comments suggested a range of vehicle types from mono-rail to double-decker buses to smaller vans. Not only were vehicle types suggested but the facilities on vehicles as well, such as the quality and comfort of buses, improving windows, increased leg room and adding bathrooms. Comments on services offered included everything from narrated, non-narrated, family-friendly, to birding and photography tours. Basically, more choices. Others feel there are already too many choices. Comments received concerning scheduling and vehicle numbers on the park road mentioned crowding on the park road, more efficient routing without increasing vehicle numbers, and consideration of the soundscape standards and protecting park resources, including the road character. When it came to comments on information and interpretation, NPS was asked to do a better job providing visitors with information about services and activities offered and creating a reservation system separate from the concessionaire. Narration on buses received mixed comments on the quality and consistency and how best to deliver interpretation. People felt that regardless of how interpretation is delivered, visitors need an introduction to and a facilitated connection with the national park.

The newsletter does not detail all comments received, but highlights the diversity of ideas received. Alternatives are being developed for the EIS in part based on public comments received and the Road Capacity Study. A draft of the EIS for public comment is slated for release in March 2010.

When private vehicle access inside Denali National Park was restricted in the 1970’s, the national park became responsible for providing low-cost transportation for park visitors. We urge NPS to recognize this basic obligation amongst all the talk of tours and interpretation. 

continued on next page

BRIEF NEWS & VIEWS *continued from previous page*

CELEBRATE WINTERFEST

A celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Alaska's statehood, and enhanced cooperation among the park, Denali Borough and school district are expected to highlight the ninth annual Winterfest in Denali National Park and the communities of the borough. This year's Winterfest will be the week of February 16-22. For the third consecutive year the borough has hired an event coordinator, to work with the park's coordinator. Among the park's other partners working closely on planning and coordinating Winterfest are the Denali Borough School District, the Denali Education Center, Alaska Geographic, and Doyon/ARAMARK Joint Venture. The dozens of activities and events are expected to include programs on such timely topics as sustainability and climate change, tours of the Usibelli coal mine, presentations on the area's geology and archeology, dog sled rides, student variety show, art and quilt show, ice and snow sculpting, storytelling, and a women's hockey game. ❧

109TH AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Get out your binoculars, put on your winter gear, grab a thermos of something warm to drink, and head outdoors for the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC). While many across the country head outside between December 14, 2008 and January 5, 2009 to participate in the longest-running wildlife census to assist biologists and others in assessing the health of bird populations, you can count birds from the warm comfort of your favorite chair by the window and tally up the birds visiting your feeder. Regardless of where you live or your level of birding experience, this is a chance to make an enormous contribution to conservation. Nan Eagleson has been the compiler for the Christmas Bird Count in the Denali Park area for many years. This year Jill Boelsma joins Nan as the compiler heading up the new Cantwell area count. The Denali Park and Cantwell CBC is slated for December 28, 2008. If you are interested in participating in either of these counts contact Nan Eagleson at 683-2822 or Jill Boelsma at 768-2266. Not in the Denali area? Check out how you can participate by visiting the Audubon website at: <http://www.audubon.org/Bird/cbc/>. Click on *How to get involved* for more information and to locate a count in your local area. ❧



Alaska Native Knowledge Network

DCC NEWS

Join Denali Citizens Council and receive a subscription to *DCC News* published six times a year. A form is provided on the back of this newsletter. Or join on the web: www.denalicitizens.org

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Denali Citizens Council is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Our mission is to protect the natural integrity of Denali National Park and to promote a sustainable future for lands surrounding the Park.
Please join by filling out this form and mailing it to the address below.

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If you have a different address in winter/summer, please include both addresses. Make checks payable to Denali Citizens Council and send to the address below. Members receive our newsletter and other print material and email updates.

