

## MOTORIZED ACCESS FOR HUNTING IN YANERT CONTROLLED USE AREA PROPOSED AGAIN BY FAIRBANKS F&G AC

by Nan Eagleson

The Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee has again proposed motorized vehicle access for hunting in the Yanert Controlled Use Area, in Unit 20A. This is Proposal 213 in this year's Board of Game 2011/2012 Booklet of Proposed Changes to Regulations. The suggested change to the now year-round access restriction (for hunting) would allow motorized access after September 30th. This would presumably allow the Department of Fish and Game to raise the quotas for antlerless moose hunting, a polarizing issue since its inception, and help the F&G meet its harvest quotas for Intensive Management (another polarizing issue).

Local users feel there is a low number of moose in this area already and the potential degradation to the habitat cannot be justified for the sake of meeting an artificially high harvest quota set by F&G. Many people also feel it is reckless to have any hunts at all for antlerless (cows and calves) moose in this area. Other users would be negatively impacted by motorized hunting and the conflicts during hunting season found along the Rex Trail, Ferry Trail, Gold King area and the Stampede, would now spread into the Yanert. Those people looking for a quality wilderness hunt who are willing to hike, ski, hunt by horse or dog team have few places left to go where there are not ATVs and other motorized vehicles. The ground is not frozen by September 30th and habitat degradation would certainly take place. There is no place to safely offload vehicles or park along the Parks Highway, at the one and only public access point for the Yanert. The Yanert River typically does



Yanert River Valley in the Yanert Controlled Use Area

*Photo courtesy of Tom Walker*

not freeze up until late December or January and would prohibit safe access to much of the country.

Many excellent letters of concern were written last year regarding this issue and 100% of all the letters objected to the proposed motorized access as did the local Middle Nenana Fish and Game Advisory Committee. In addition, the Denali Borough Assembly promulgated a resolution opposing this change. Recently, eighteen commenters turned up at the scheduled December 5th meeting of the Middle Nenana AC, and gave a number of strong arguments for maintaining the current, non-motorized Controlled Use Area. Although the December 5th meeting was officially cancelled because of icy road conditions, the comments were expected to be influential at the rescheduled meeting of the AC, on Monday, December 12, 2011. AC member and DCC Board member Nan Eagleson has been compiling comments and communicating with members of the AC. If you have comments or concerns you may reach her at [surfbird@mtaonline.net](mailto:surfbird@mtaonline.net).

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*Alaskan Native Knowledge Network*

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## FROM THE BOARD

I want to congratulate the DCC membership and board for a model response to the NPS Vehicle Management Plan. We floated draft ideas, held meetings, broadcast information electronically and in our newsletter, received responses from members, and finally crafted a comment from DCC that was broadly reflective of our membership's interest. Thanks to everyone who participated, both in writing your own letters and in sharing ideas and information with us.

Crafting the comment letter is only one step. DCC also intends to follow up with NPS as the planners work on the final EIS, to emphasize our concerns and make sure they aren't brushed off. We encourage all of you to do the same whenever you have a chance!

The need for maintaining consistent follow-up with NPS about the Vehicle Management Plan – and older issues such as Backcountry Management Plan implementation – was a need clearly identified at the annual DCC board retreat in November. We wish that is all we needed to do. But there is so much more – combating unfortunate Board of Game proposals (such as the one that would end the non-motorized restriction in the Yanert Controlled Use Area) and engaging the Borough Planning Commission on municipal land entitlements could use all our time by themselves.

But looming over the retreat was energy. No longer is there just Usibelli drilling for gas, there is also the impending restart of the Healy Clean Coal Project, GVEA's Eva Creek wind farm, Linc Energy's underground coal gasification development, the Susitna Dam, and various versions of a gas line. Energy development threatens to transform the landscape of the Denali Borough in a far more drastic way than tourism development. And unfortunately, successfully participating in complicated regulatory and legal processes requires an enormous amount of expertise and money that we presently don't have. Yet if we don't rise to the challenge, who will?

Our success on the Vehicle Management Plan response is encouraging. With strong support and participation from our 300+ members, we can do anything. After all, we are the most organized force in the Denali Borough and the most focused public interest group involved in Denali National Park issues. We just need you! We will be calling on our members over the next year to help out by writing letters, attending public meetings, and helping to raise funds. I ask that all of you consider making a commitment to take at least two actions in 2012 to support DCC beyond sending in your membership dues. This would make a huge difference in all that we do.

Thank you.

*CHARLIE LOEB, PRESIDENT*



DCC board members and staff. Pictured from left to right: Erica Watson, Hannah Ragland, J.J. Neville, Jared Zimmerman, Charlie Loeb, Nan Eagleson, Barbara Brease, Julia Potter, Anne Beaulaurier and Nancy Bale.

*DCC photo*

# FROM THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZER

by Julia Potter

Is it just me or do the years seem to pass too quickly? With all that DCC has tackled and accomplished this year maybe I've just been too busy to notice the days sliding along. But here we are ending another year and beginning a new one.

This time of year many of us are reflecting upon the past year, setting new goals for the year to come and hopefully taking the time to relax and enjoy the things we hold dear. As I'm writing today the view outside is stunning - everything is covered in deep glistening snow, the moon is rising (at 3:00 pm !) beginning its ascent to bathe the trees in light. I love the peaceful silence of the snow. The quiet landscape is one of those things I believe we all hold dear - it's a big part of why we are here in Denali. To have the ability to listen to the landscape. The sound of silence. It creates a feeling of peace which brings joy to our souls, appreciation for the gift of nature.

I hope this holiday season brings the beauty of silence and the gift of nature to all of you. May peace and joy be yours. ☘



*Alaskan Native Knowledge Network*

## THANK YOU

NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

### MAJOR

- Kris Fister
- Mary Frische & Tom Collopy
- Charlie Loeb
- Carine McCandless
- Cass Ray
- Ruth Wood & John Strassenburgh

### SUMMIT

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- Ingrid Nixon & Kevin Clement

### TUNDRA

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- Anne Beaulaurier
- Sarah Crowley/Team
- Crowtholow
- Amanda Devine
- Linda & Will Forsberg
- N.J. Gates
- Dan Irelan
- Christine Kriedeman
- Bob Shavelson
- Lowell Thomas
- Jan Tomsen
- Tom Walker

### TAIGA

- Guy Adema
- Karen Deatherage
- Juliette Boselli
- Kris Clone & Annie Sisk
- Bernice Keef
- Beth Lynn
- Jackson Marvin
- Cissy McDonald
- Gretchen & Pete Pederson
- Sondra & David Porter
- Jerri Roberts
- Mike Schnoor
- Paddy Tatum



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# AIRCRAFT OVERFLIGHTS COUNCIL CONSIDERS TOUGH SOUNDSCAPE ISSUES

RECENT MEETING IN ANCHORAGE COMPLETES FOUR YEARS OF DELIBERATIONS

by Nancy Bale

## Soundscape a resource

Denali National Park planners have long recognized the growing significance of natural soundscape as a resource. In the Backcountry Plan (2006), NPS rolled out a formal set of indicators and standards to measure the health of the Denali Park soundscape. Over the core Wilderness, the standards were more stringent; over the areas where mountaineering and overflying were established, the standards were more lenient. The inventory, conducted yearly since 2006, is beginning to show areas of the park that are at risk for exceedance or even frankly out of compliance with standards. An identified cause of exceedances is motorized sound from aircraft overflights.



Overflights Council at work at a past meeting in Anchorage. *DCC photo*

Airspace above the national park is not subject to regulation unless the aircraft has a commercial use authorization or concession to land inside the park. In the absence of strict regulation, NPS recognized the need for a stakeholder process to try to develop consensus on measures that would mitigate the sound of motorized intrusions over Denali.

To that end, the Denali Aircraft Overflights Council, a federally chartered group, was formed. The purpose of our group was envisioned in the Backcountry Plan:

*“The National Park Service would establish an aircraft overflights working group, which would include scenic air tour operators, commercial airlines, general aviation organizations, and other concerned parties. This group would develop voluntary measures for assuring the safety of passengers, pilots, and mountaineers and for achieving desired future resource conditions at Denali.”*

2006 Final Denali Backcountry Management Plan, page 48.

All 12 members were present for the recent meeting of the Denali Aircraft Overflights Advisory Council in Anchorage. This, our eleventh meeting, completes four years of deliberations, roughly two meetings per year.

## The Council's activities – controversy and accomplishment

During four years of deliberations, Council members have become familiar with one another's diverse views and have developed a degree of trust. Initially, representatives of air services were commonly seen at meetings, and many pilots stated that they were already doing all they could to ensure quiet operations. In addition, doubt was expressed by air service operators and their representatives as to the existence of a problem with aircraft, as to whether it was being caused by aircraft tourism operators alone and as to whether this problem had been scientifically proved. Moreover, some members of the Council questioned the soundscape standards themselves.

*continued on next page*

**OVERFLIGHTS CONSIDERS TOUGH SOUNDSCAPE ISSUES** *continued from previous page*

As time went forward, however, certain members of the air service community stepped up with offers of ways to mitigate aircraft sound impacts to climbers on Denali, Kahiltna pass and the Ruth Glacier. In addition, steps to reduce the impacts of take-offs from areas along the Parks Highway outside Denali in the Triple Lakes area were developed. These Aircraft “Best Practices” can be viewed on the website of the Council. In addition, Council members developed a “Brainstorming list” of voluntary measures air services can deploy toward the goals of the Backcountry Plan.

Currently, the Council is confronting the especially sensitive and difficult task of developing best practices for the Wilderness core park. Council member Joan Frankevich has developed a list of possible adjustments for aircraft over sound sensitive areas there, and she and I have developed a map showing the area where increased mitigation is needed. These voluntary best practices would involve at least three major operators at the park. We understand the importance of healthy communication with operators whose livelihood is connected to their operations in the park. We appreciate those individual stakeholders who’ve stepped up with ideas on how to adjust aircraft operations toward a more natural soundscape.

**The Council conducted a recent listening event at Denali**

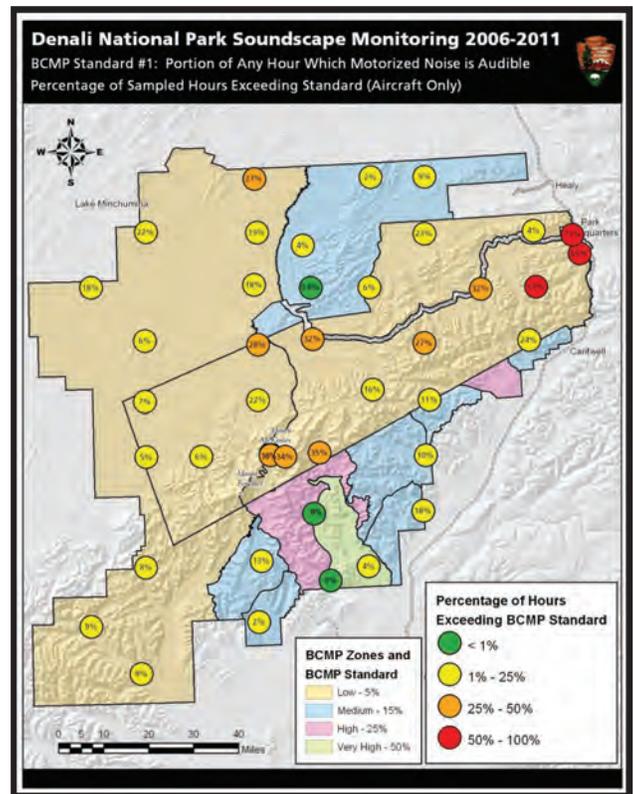
The park has employed a full-time soundscape scientist for several years. Recently Davyd Betchkal replaced Jared Withers in this position. One of the chief duties of this person is to carry forward the park soundscape inventory, to interpret sound monitoring data for the Council, and to assist NPS and the Council with any field activities it conducts. This past summer, Davyd helped to organize and conduct objective sound measurements during a Council listening event near 8 Mile Lake, just north of the park. Members of the Council, during this field exercise, monitored the perceived sound of three different types of aircraft flying at different altitudes and offsets. Interestingly the sound station data and our own perceptions were relatively consistent. The event appeared to show what we intuitively sensed, that increasing the distance between the listener and the aircraft would reduce the sound level.

**The Council’s future**

At our recent full meeting, we learned our Charter is scheduled to sunset in 2013, but could be renewed. Davyd Betchkal stated that the soundscape inventory will be finished in 4 years, in approximately 2015. At that time, Denali Superintendent Paul Anderson suggested that NPS might consider developing a revised implementation plan for aircraft and the park soundscape. Members agreed that the Council should consider retaining its Charter long enough to provide input and suggestions for the plan.

Meanwhile, the Council will convene in Anchorage in late February 2012. We will continue to work on best practices and mitigations for the core park soundscape through an Aircraft Operators Work Group, which plans to meet in late January or early February. We are developing a one-page fact sheet to be available for public education, and we are continuing to analyze information from the park’s sound monitoring program. DCC will update you on opportunities to attend Council meetings.

If you have comments on the state of Denali’s soundscape, you may send them to me at [nancy@denalicitizens.org](mailto:nancy@denalicitizens.org). ☞



NPS map showing location of sound monitoring stations sampled between 2006 and 2011. The stations shown by darker dots are located in areas where the number of motorized intrusions per hour is greater. Note that areas close to the entrance of the park have the greatest percentage of motorized intrusions, probably related to take-offs from landing strips near the park entrance.

*Map courtesy of NPS*

## AIRCRAFT OVERFLIGHTS - A LONGER-RANGE VIEW

DCC member and long-time inholder Rusty Lachelt gives a needed perspective in the letter below. Not long ago, the park was sleepier, aircraft were rarer. More recently, increased uses of all kinds have challenged and re-molded our perceptions. Eventually, as park administrators retire and we lose their institutional memory, our clarity of intent for Denali may blur. The questions for all of us - where do we draw the line?



October 7,<sup>th</sup> 2011

DCC,

*In light of the upcoming Aircraft Overflights Advisory Council meeting I would like to bring attention to the increasing number of aircraft overflights which are, in my view, diminishing the Moose Creek/Wonder Lake area experience.*

*Gone, particularly, is the clear-morning stillness of the Alaska Range as tour flights throttle through 10-12 minute climb-outs. Gone is the uninterrupted daytime quietude of wind and water. Gone is the soft-hued silence of the evening alpenglow.*

*During the three weeks or so that I spend at my cabin near Camp Denali I've noticed over the years a marked increase in aircraft overflights—so much so that three summers ago I started an informal tally of daily aircraft sound events.*

*From 2009 to 2011 the average number of aircraft sound events per day increased by one per year—up to 14.4 this year. An increase of one aircraft sound event per day isn't a particularly startling statistic in itself. But from the perspective of my 37-year history in the area the increasing numbers are striking.*

*In the 1970's (and for many subsequent years) a single aircraft per day was a rarity warranting a heads-up to see who might be arriving or departing Kantishna. Back then the notion of twenty-plus audible aircraft overflights per day would have been inconceivable.*

*As a former commercial helicopter and private fixed-wing pilot I have an appreciation of all things airborne. And as a former seasonal worker I have an appreciation of the need to amass as much in the summer months as possible. But at what point do we step in to protect the soundscape of this area? 15 aircraft sound events per day? 20? 30?*

*Erica Watson's recent piece in the DCC News, Standing Still on a Moving Line, was timely, indeed. What is our status-quo? Our breaking point? My status-quo: the relatively quiet soundscape of the 1970's. My breaking point: this past August when over the course of a single day the sound of 24 aircraft overflights interrupted the quiet.*

*Russell Lachelt  
Inholder, DNP&P*

## WINTER HAIKU

by Louise Gallop

*Tundra sleeps silent  
throughout snowfalls, deep darkness.  
Life stirs beneath it*



*Alaskan Native Knowledge Network*

**Louise Gallop** - I met Louise in the mid-1970s, when I was at Camp Denali and she was making her annual migration to perform assessment work on her gold claim at Friday Creek. An elementary school teacher in Anchorage at the time, she dedicated a part of each summer to the claim. Known to many as Kantishna Lou, she had mastered the fine art of gold panning, and confidently located the tiny (and not so tiny) flecks using a unique method of panning. Scores of Camp Denali guests visited her claim, learned panning, and returned home with bits of golden treasure carefully decanted into small glass bottles. Louise had her claim professionally mined in 1982 and 1983, and a nugget obtained during that period is on display at the Anchorage Museum.

The Anchorage Museum remained one of Louise's diverse interests, and she has spent countless hours of volunteer time there, leading tours of the Alaska Gallery and working in the gift shop.

Louise's interest in natural and cultural history is reflected in another of her many interests, poetry and writing. She authored a popular children's book, *Owl's Secret*, illustrated by Shannon Cartwright. Louise continues to write poetry and short stories from her Anchorage home, and has kindly permitted DCC to publish her poetry in our newsletter.

Thank you, Louise!

-NB

## ON A DAY OF WHITE TREES

by Louise Gallop

*I stand at the edge of great quiet.*

*The air is mute, so still, so cold  
That even light congeals;  
Pale columns beam the fragile sky.  
My breath is all that moves;  
Each puff comes visible  
And vanishes, absorbed;  
Each adds a mote of frost.*

*If I breathed out and out  
until my life  
was given to this frozen day,  
would any tree or branch,  
would any twig,  
become more white?*



*Photo courtesy of Anchorage Museum*

# DCC SUBMITS COMMENTS ON DRAFT VEHICLE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR DENALI

DCC CONCLUSION — A REVISED DRAFT IS NEEDED TO PROVIDE A FULL RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES

by Nancy Bale

At this time, NPS is analyzing and considering about 300 comments on the Draft Vehicle Management Plan for the Denali Park Road. The Draft Plan, a culmination of several years of study and scoping, was released at the height of the busy summer season, on August 1. We used every bit of the allotted comment time to do research, and communicate with members and partners. Our comments challenged NPS to make the VMP more comprehensible and protective of resources. We concluded that the Draft Plan did not have a sufficiently broad range of alternatives, forcing many commenters to choose No Action, Alternative A.

Instead of choosing the No Action Alternative, however, DCC suggested a **distinct alternative** that retained a regulatory limit on park road vehicles while employing adaptive management in a limited manner, and established stronger standards for Transit affordability and priority. In addition, our alternative supported strong actions to prevent the deterioration of the environment and visitor experience in Kantishna. Finally, our alternative touched on the long-running controversy over the relationship between Tour and Transit, suggesting that marketing and even management of the systems be significantly modified:

*“NPS (should) treat Transit as a public service, not a commercial service. The agency presently provides this service through the park concessioner, but that arrangement should not define its understanding of the service, and the agency should always be open to other ways of providing this service in the future. We reject comparisons of the Denali Transit service to commercial bus services; the proper comparisons are with other public transit systems.”* DCC VMP comments, Oct. 30, 2011, p. 14

We hope that NPS will accommodate our request for a Revised Alternative that includes stronger protections for resources and visitor experience at Denali. More information and our full comments can be found at <http://www.denalicitizens.org/denali-vehicle-management-plan/>.

## Member reactions to our comments

*“Thanks to you and everyone at DCC for cutting this very complex DVM issue into manageable bites. Using DCC’s various updates I was able to compose a short, concise comment in favor of Alternative A. DCC’s Final Comments letter to NPS is spot on. I am so glad to know DCC is working so hard on these issues on my behalf.”*

*“The comments submitted by DCC are exhaustive, articulate, sensible, and rightly demanding. I know a lot of time went in to developing this document, most of it unpaid. Please extend or forward my comments to the rest of the board ... I have never been so grateful for DCC’s leadership on a park issue.”*

*“Thanks for sending the final well-written and thought-out response from DCC. And also, thanks for opposing Proposals B & C and offering a DCC alternative. The real question now is, will NPS even listen to not only individual responses but DCC’s?”*



As NPS considers the approximately 300 comments on the draft VMP, we are hopeful that in the future Transit will be considered a public service, not as a commercial service.

*Photo courtesy of Kim Turnbull*

## MOTORIZED ACCESS FOR HUNTING IN YANERT *continued from page 1*

### Public involvement is needed to keep the Yanert non-motorized for hunting

Expressing your concerns at the AC meetings is not the only action needed, however. Even if the Middle Nenana AC recommends that Proposal 213 not be passed, the proposal will still be considered at the Statewide Board of Game meetings for Interior game management units, to be held from March 2-12, 2012 in Fairbanks. The importance of attending and testifying at the meetings cannot be over-stressed. In addition, formal comments may be sent to the Department of Fish and Game, and will be included in the board members' packets if submitted by February 17, 2012. If you wish to testify at the Board of Game Interior meetings, you should show up on the first day and sign in to testify. We will keep you informed.

### Intensive Management near Denali is proposed with little scientific justification

The proposal for motorized hunting in the Yanert Valley is not the only worrisome action to be considered at the next Middle Nenana Fish and Game Advisory Committee meeting. Additional proposals for Alaska's Interior Region (III) would establish an intensive management designation for Unit 20C, which runs north from the boundary of Denali National Park and includes the Stampede townships. Intensive management has gained traction at the highest levels of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Legitimized through the intensive management law promulgated by the Alaska Legislature in 1994, this method of wildlife management seeks, though whatever means possible, to maximize the human harvest of wildlife prey, most notably moose but also caribou.

Identifying an area for intensive management gives the department the authority to set high human harvest levels for moose, and to achieve those levels through changes in hunting practices such as antlerless hunts and predator control (using liberalized trapping and hunting regulations, and, in some cases, outright predator killing activities). Although both predator control and antlerless hunts can be justified for scientific reasons, their use to maintain high human harvest of moose and caribou is potentially damaging to habitat and ecosystem health. In addition, it can create social impacts at trailheads and along trails, impacts often not adequately foreseen by the Department.

Our particular concern with intensive management in Unit 20C is the absence of data to show that it is justified in any way. No designation should occur without convincing data, through population surveys, habitat analysis and carrying capacity determinations. In our view, it is not appropriate to establish Unit 20C as an intensive management area and then do the science. The investigation and scientific analysis come first, and are currently lacking.

#### We oppose the following proposals:

Proposals 227, 229 – Manage Unit 20C as an intensive management area, goal is high harvest of moose.

Proposal 228 – Adopt a wolf control program in Unit 20C.

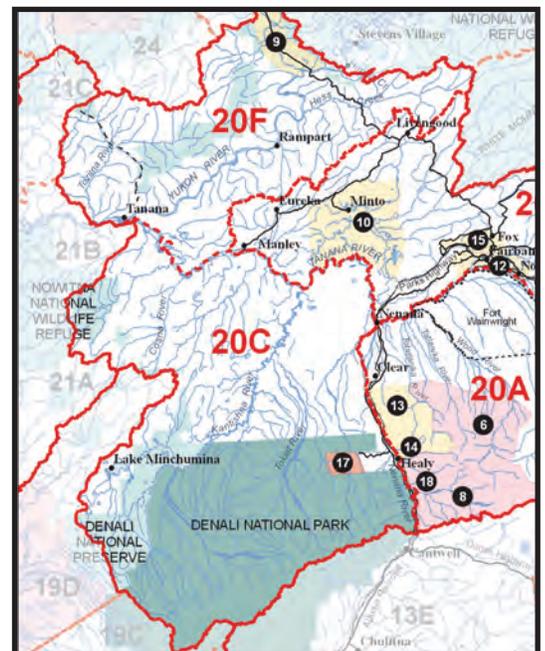
Proposal 230 – Adopt a bear control program in Unit 20C.

Proposal 231 – Liberalize trapping of black bears in Unit 20C.

Proposal 232 – Allow taking of grizzly bears over black bear bait in Unit 20C.

The proposal booklet is available for review online at the Board's website: [www.boards.adfg.state.ak.us](http://www.boards.adfg.state.ak.us). Send written comments to the address below. Deadline for Interior Region comments is February 17, 2012.  
Board of Game Comments, Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Boards Support Section  
PO Box 115526  
Juneau, AK 99811-5526  
FAX: 907-456-6094

Check DCC member alerts for more information on how to testify at the Interior Region meetings in Fairbanks, March 2-12, 2012. ☞



Map depicting Game Management Unit 20C.

## BRIEF NEWS & VIEWS

### IMPACTS FROM CONSTRUCTION OF EVA CREEK WIND FARM FRUSTRATE FERRY RESIDENTS

by Barbara Brease

Construction on Golden Valley Electric Association's (GVEA) Eva Creek Wind Project has suspended for the winter months, giving local Ferry residents (human and wildlife) respite from construction impacts. In March or April, workers will begin realigning and widening the Ferry road, clearing eight material sites, constructing support buildings, transmission substations, microwave communication sites and the massive wind turbines.

One resident interviewed expressed frustration with the construction impacts this fall, which included displacement of wildlife, work camp related litter, bright lights and congestion on the only bridge used to access their neighborhood.

REpower Systems, a German-based wind turbine manufacturer, has finalized a contract with GVEA for the delivery of 12 wind turbines destined for the Eva Creek Wind Project. This will be the first project with REpower turbines in Alaska.

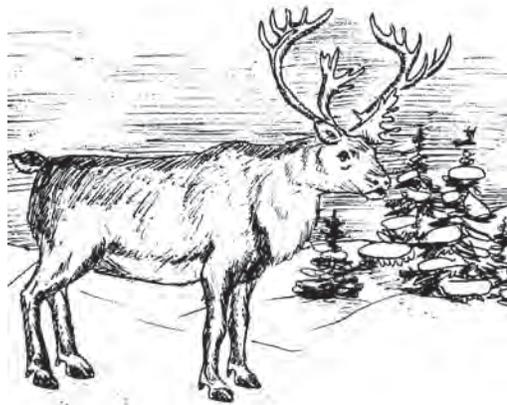
An interesting note is the close proximity of the lands being used for the Wind Farm infrastructure and the Linc Energy Exploratory Drilling Permit area on Walker Dome. When contacted, a GVEA representative expressed that she had never heard of Linc Energy.

Sadly, the solitude and privacy of Ferry residents are being drastically compromised in our thirst for more energy. They should at least get free power. ☚



### UPDATE: HEALY BASIN GAS APPEAL

The DCC's appeal of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources' decision to issue a gas exploration license to Usibelli Coal Mine continues to make its way through the state court system. DCC is still awaiting a response to our opening brief, filed August 26, 2011. The State of Alaska has asked for multiple extensions; the new deadline is December 30, 2011. We expect the court to hear oral arguments early in 2012, with a decision to come in the months following. We will try to make the State's brief available on the DCC website as soon as we are able. Meanwhile, if you need some reading over the Christmas holiday you can still read the DCC brief on the website by going to [www.denalicitizens.org](http://www.denalicitizens.org), selecting the Healy Basin Gas button, and reading down to the link for "opening brief."



*Alaskan Native Knowledge Network*

DCC supporters who would like to donate money to support this appeal to protect residential areas and critical wildlife habitat of the greater Denali ecosystem from the negative impacts of gas development and infrastructure can donate to DCC's Gas Legal Fund on our website. ☚

## BRIEF NEWS & VIEWS

### NEON SITE PROPOSED NEAR 8 MILE LAKE

Because of local citizen concerns, DCC has added its voice to the comment stream on a state of Alaska permit to construct and operate an ecological monitoring site about a mile from 8 Mile Lake, a mile from the boundary of Panguingue Creek subdivision and south of the Stampede Road. The lands proposed for the site are vacant state lands that are also proposed for inclusion in a Stampede Recreation Area. Our first question about this site was why? The website <http://www.neoninc.org> provided an answer:

*“NEON, Inc. is an independent 501(c)(3) corporation created to manage large-scale ecological observing systems and experiments on behalf of the scientific community. National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) is a large facility project managed by NEON, Inc. and funded by the National Science Foundation. NEON, Inc. itself is not a funding agency.*

*NEON’s goal is to contribute to global understanding and decisions in a changing environment using scientific information about continental-scale ecology obtained through integrated observations and experiments. NEON will create a new national observatory network to collect ecological and climatic observations across the continental United States, including Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico. The observatory network will be the first of its kind designed to detect and enable forecasting of ecological change at continental scales over multiple decades. The data NEON collects and provides will focus on how land use, climate change and invasive species affect biodiversity, disease ecology, and ecosystem services. Obtaining integrated data on these relationships over a long-term period is crucial to improving forecast models and resource management for environmental change.”*

The Healy site was identified as one of the monitoring sites for the Taiga domain, one of 20 “eco-climatic domains” across the entire continental US. Alaska contains three domains, Tundra, Taiga and Pacific Northwest.

Our comments to the state of Alaska on the permit for this site reflected four chief concerns:

- Will the site bring unwanted impacts to the surrounding lands and the nearby subdivision?
- Will the site’s benefits to science be clearly communicated and shared with locals?
- Will rehabilitation of the site be adequately monitored and regulated?
- Is the site’s specific location appropriate, especially considering the plan to run power lines a mile beyond their current extent to the site?

We have not heard a response from the state regarding our comments, but we are hoping that the sponsors of this site will make a trip to Healy and meet with locals to share information and concerns. You may view our comments by going to the DCC website, clicking on Denali News, and scrolling down to our post on that subject. ☞

## 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](http://www.denalicitizens.org)

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*Special thanks to Tom Walker  
for the beautiful photo  
of the Yanert River Valley  
on page 1*



**DCC News**

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*HAPPY HOLIDAYS*



**JOIN US**

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.

Your contribution is tax deductible

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_ Tundra (\$75) Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Taiga (\$35) 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, other print material and email updates.

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