

DCC HAS ITS DAY IN ALASKA SUPREME COURT

LEGAL APPEAL OF HEALY BASIN GAS FINDING REACHES HIGHEST COURT - A RULING IS STILL PENDING



DCC photo

At court. Back row, from L - Barbara Brease, Peter Van Tuyn, Steve Carwile, Brian Napier, Karen Schmidt, Hannah Ragland, Susan Braun, Anita Stelcel, John Strasenburgh. Front row, from L - Dave Schirokauer, Heidi Barker, Erica Watson, Claire Pywell.

by Erica Watson

The first sign that the Denali community doesn't spend a lot of time in court-rooms came early in the Supreme Court hearing in Anchorage on September 18th. More than twenty members and supporters of DCC had arrived at the courthouse in twos and threes, and most congregated on the right-side pews of the courtroom. As the lawyers representing each side of our appeal took their seats at the bench, conversations lulled, and a soft beep emanated from somewhere in the room. In response, the eleven people seated opposite us, behind the State of Alaska's and Usibelli's lawyers, stood in unison. Barely a second later, the clerk gave the "All rise" order as the five robed justices entered, and we too stood.

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THANK YOU, DONORS - GAS LEGAL FUND "MEETS THE MATCH"

At the DCC Annual Meeting on May 28th, President Charlie Loeb announced a fundraising challenge to the more than 40 people assembled there. An anonymous donor had offered to match any donation in support of DCC's legal appeal, up to a total of \$7500. The deadline would be the date of Supreme Court oral arguments in the case, September 18, 2013. We're grateful and pleased to announce that between May 19 and September 18, 2013, more than \$ 7,500 had been allocated to the fund, significantly decreasing our debt and putting us within a few months of completely paying it off. As of mid October, even more pledges had arrived.

We're also thrilled about how many of you stepped up to the plate. More than 30 separate donors gave amounts as small as \$50 and as large as \$1000. We received, in addition, several encouraging comments along with the donations. Having more than 20 folks show up for the hearing was simply icing on the cake. We'd like to thank, again, our wonderful attorney Peter Van Tuyn and his fellow attorney Karen Schmidt, who worked long hours honing the arguments to a degree of clarity and accuracy that made us proud. Thank you, Peter and Karen! ☺

To hear the oral arguments in their entirety, you may visit the 360North website, which archives Supreme Court hearings. The exact link is at http://www.360north.org/gavel-archives/?event_id=2147483647_2013101013.

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FROM THE BOARD

by Brian Napier

Attending neighborhood harvest parties, canning salmon and berries, and reveling in the last of the tomatoes from my garden, I cannot help but make connections between our gardens and our community. We all work a collective garden called community. In this collective garden we celebrate our yields and learn from our mistakes. True of any garden, the fruits of our labor

provide sustenance through periods of dormancy and seeds for plantings in the future. We preserve our fruits and then draw from our stores when we need sustenance or when we gather and celebrate. As winter approaches we have much to rejoice in, we have prepared ourselves for the season ahead and with lessons in hand are wiser than we were before. Though we know our work is not done, we celebrate the successful yield of a finely cultivated community.

DCC, too, made itself visible at public meetings, and our voices were heard through meaningful public comments. We came together in celebration at our Annual Meeting, and in pursuit of knowledge in the screening of *Chasing Ice*. We also mounted an impressive legal case against the State of Alaska, recently heard in the Alaska Supreme Court. Here's to a fine yield and a meaningful winter! ☀



Alaska Native Knowledge Network

~ COMING SOON ~ DCC BOARD RETREAT WEEKEND



Advocating for our wilderness, wildlife and way of life

JOIN US ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2013 FOR DESSERT, WINE, AND GAS 7 PM, AT THE HOME OF DAVID AND SUSAN BRAUN

DCC board members are gathering in the Panguingue subdivision to kick off our Retreat Weekend with fun, treats, and video. We will show a recording of oral arguments at the Alaska Supreme Court on our Healy Basin Gas appeal. We'll take time to discuss the appeal and to hear whatever concerns you have about DCC and the issues we are working on (or not working on, but should be). Your thoughts will be rolled into the discussion at the retreat. If you need directions to the Braun home, contact us at charlie@denalicitizens.org. If you can't come to the Friday event but have suggestions for our retreat, email charlie@denalicitizens.org or call Nancy Bale at 244-2510.

BOARD RETREAT WILL BE HELD SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2-3, 2013 AT THE HOME OF NAN EAGLESON

We're planning a potluck dinner to cap our day of deliberations on Saturday evening, 6 PM, at Nan and Bob's home near McKinley Village. If you would like to attend, email charlie@denalicitizens.org for directions and more information. As always, if you have suggestions, you can call or email Charlie or Nancy at any time before or during our retreat weekend.

THANK YOU, MEMBERS & DONORS

Thank you, members, for your generous contributions and your extra efforts to match our fundraising challenge for the Healy Gas appeal. Soon, we'll be sending out a letter for our Fall Membership Drive. If you prefer, you may give on the DCC website, where the *Donate* button is always available. And, as we all disperse to different corners of the world, please stay in touch through our Facebook page, Denali Citizens Council. We'd enjoy hearing from you, wherever you may be.

As we prepare to discuss the 2014 DCC budget at our Annual Retreat, we look toward a time when DCC can again hire paid staff. We fondly remember our Community Organizers, who helped us advocate at local meetings, kept the board informed of important local issues, assisted in running events, and handled mail and web communications. Know that your generosity brings that goal ever closer. ☺

DONATIONS SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

TAIGA

Anne & Guy Adema
Christine Byl
Nan Eagleson & Bob Shelton
Joan Frankevich
Linda Paganelli
Claire Pywell
Nancy Russell
Fritz Wittwer & Marianne Jakob
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SUMMIT

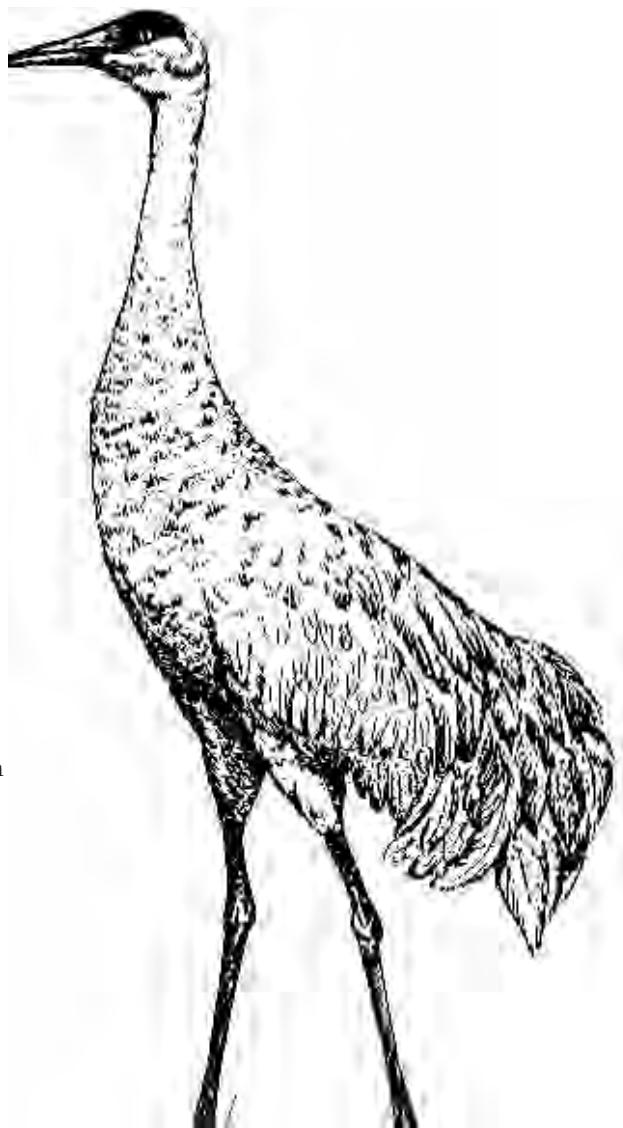
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Jan Tomsen



Alaska Native Knowledge Network

Your donations are tax-deductible.
DCC's Tax ID is 92-0060459

BIOLOGIST STEVE ARTHUR JOINS DENALI RESOURCES STAFF

by Erica Watson

This summer, Steve Arthur joined the Denali National Park resource management staff as a wildlife biologist and Biological Resource Program Manager. This position was previously held by Tom Meier, until he passed away last year.

Steve began work in the park on July 29th. He and his wife, Patty Del Vecchio, moved to McKinley Village from Fairbanks. Patty has worked in Denali before, in various Park Service jobs including law enforcement ranger and wildlife biologist, but this is Steve's first position here. I was able to catch Steve before the government shutdown and ask a few questions about his work here.

Tell us a bit about your career thus far. What is your professional background?

I have a B.S. in wildlife from the Univ. of Massachusetts, an M.S. in wildlife from Colorado State Univ. and a Ph.D. in wildlife from the University of Maine. I have worked in wildlife research for over 30 years, including wolf research in Minnesota and furbearer research in Maine. After finishing my Ph.D., I worked as a furbearer biologist for the Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, before coming to Alaska to work on polar bear research for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I then moved on to brown bear research on the Kenai Peninsula for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and spent the last 15 years with ADF&G based in Fairbanks, working on Dall sheep, caribou, and muskox research. Most of my work has centered on predator/prey relationships, and I am especially interested in the multiple relationships at work in complex systems (involving several species of predator and prey).

What aspects of this job are you most excited about?

I am particularly interested in exploring the multiple biological and physical factors that influence wildlife populations, and I am excited to work with the talented group of scientists here in Denali. I look forward to the opportunity to collaborate with experts from a variety of scientific disciplines to investigate ecological relationships in the park.

What challenges do you anticipate?

My work during the past 20 years or so has largely been in areas that see relatively little human use (Arctic sea ice, remote areas of the Brooks Range and North Slope, etc.), so it will be a challenge for me to adjust to an area that is so much in the public view as Denali Park. The upside to that is that the work we do here is of great interest to large numbers of park visitors, and the park receives a lot of positive feedback.



Biologist Steve Arthur during a radio-collaring event. ADF&G photo

How do you view the role of the National Park Service in the face of global climate change?

National Parks in general, and particularly the large parks in Alaska, are great places to study natural processes with a minimum of direct influences from human disturbance. Thus, changes that result from changing climate conditions are easier to detect and quantify.

Aside from work, what else are you and Patty looking forward to about life in the Denali community?

We are both excited to be back in a smaller community. We love the mountains, and hope to pursue our interests in hiking, skiing, and other outdoor pursuits. ☃

STEVE AND PATTY, WELCOME TO THE DENALI COMMUNITY!

DCC IN ALASKA SUPREME COURT - NOTES FROM THE GALLERY

continued from front page

We learned later that the small crowd gathered on behalf of Usibelli and the State was composed of government lawyers and clerks, not citizens whose attendance was motivated by any personal interest or investment in our case. They all dressed professionally and carried matching yellow notepads, though few seemed to take notes, and as I observed them from across the room, I could detect little interest in the testimonies provided by either legal team. There was some yawning, some phone-checking. Conversely, many on our side scribbled away throughout the hearing, and one supporter (not me) brought her knitting to keep her hands busy while she focused on the arguments. Board member extraordinaire Hannah Ragland sat at the bench with our legal team to assist with references and citations.

Though the “us and them” framework usually strikes me as a frustrating and unproductive way to view a conflict, there’s really no other way to view a legal case, and the layout of the room provided reminders of this fact. And I felt proud to be sitting on what was clearly the ethically motivated side of the room. I noted that, aside from the justice’s bench, the only attendees with gray hair in the room sat on our side, which I saw as further evidence that our community is comprised of people whose commitment is well-established and informed by years of observation. Attending the hearing seemed to be, for those across the aisle, a professional requirement.

DCC’s lawyer, Peter Van Tuyn, presented his opening remarks first, and, we all agreed, spoke convincingly and eloquently about DCC’s reasons for pursuing this case in the Supreme Court. “If [the Department of Natural Resources] refuses to limit the size of the licensing area,” Peter explained, “they must base this finding on evidence in the record.” The justices’ follow-up questions, however, focused less on the size of the license area than on the state’s mitigation standards and on the definitions and use of the words “practicable,” “feasible,” and “prudent.” “Land disposal decisions are important,” Peter stated as he concluded his opening remarks. He explained that DNR only has one chance to do it right in cases like this, and if they fail to uphold the high standard they promise, the window to protect the public’s interests is past.

Following Peter’s testimony was that of Rebecca Kruse, representing DNR. She argued on the State’s behalf that DCC is “focused on minutiae,” and “loses sight of whether the State’s best interest finding is a

balance of what is best for the people of the state.” Kruse appeared a bit flustered at times in response to the justices’ follow-up questions, at one point replying, “I don’t know why (DNR) used the language they used. I didn’t write it.”

Usibelli’s lawyer, David Mayberry, shared the bench with Kruse, and presented his client as a good neighbor, “willing to work with and cooperate with landowners” as they move forward. This statement elicited a slight chuckle from the right side of the room, as it contradicted the experience of many of the local landowners present. Mayberry, gesturing toward us, allowed that the “licensing area is in their backyard, and of course they’re interested in that,” but argued that gas resources belong to the public at large, not those directly affected by their acquisition, and that DCC’s legal argument was “premature at best.”

The five justices questioned each side equally, and all seemed genuinely engaged in the case and the arguments before them. In his closing statements, Peter stressed that, if DNR does not reevaluate its best interest finding, it must admit that “Healy just isn’t that important to us—or that the population isn’t large enough to take into account.”

The hearing was over quickly, in only an hour, and after Peter’s testimony, I felt like applause would have been appropriate. Instead, there were quiet exhalations and exchanged raised eyebrows and nods among those seated on the right side of the room. We stood as the justices exited, and then, as further proof that we don’t do this often, we rushed to the front of the courtroom and posed for a group picture in front of the Alaska state seal. I’d say we looked pretty good. ☀



Outside court. Standing - Steve Carwile, Anita Stelcel, Karen Schmidt, Erica Watson, Hannah Ragland, Brian Napier, Barbara Brease, Peter Van Tuyn, Nancy Bale, John Strasenburgh. Kneeling - Heidi Barker, Susan Braun, Dave Schirokauer. DCC photo

PARKS HIGHWAY ROUTE FOR IN-STATE GASLINE GETS CLOSER

BOTH STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATION PROMOTE A PARKS HIGHWAY ROUTE

by Brian Napier, Charlie Loeb and Nancy Bale

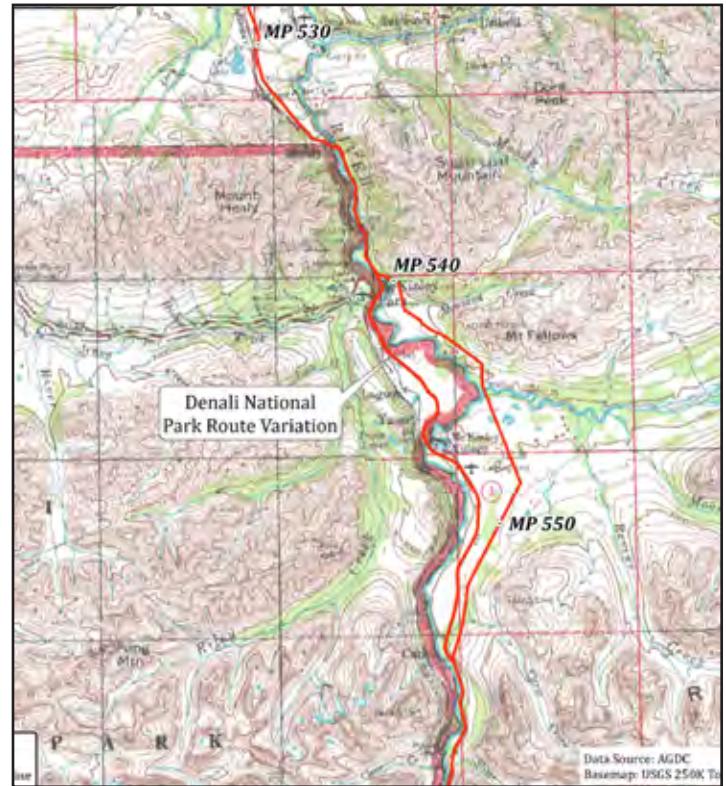
It has been a summer filled with benchmarks for the Alaska In-State Gas Pipeline (ASAP). Starting in May 2013, Governor Sean Parnell signed HB 4, creating and funding the Alaska Gasline Development Corporation (AGDC), a public corporation whose purpose is to develop, finance and potentially operate ASAP. HB 4 funded a full summer field season, including the drilling of boreholes, mapping of soils, cultural resource surveys, alignment surveys and public meetings.

Two routes in the Denali Borough

In July, AGDC held public meetings in numerous communities along the proposed pipeline corridor. At the community meeting, held in the Tri-Valley Community Center, the Project Information Officer outlined the timeline, heating cost comparison and survey work being completed. At the time of the meeting, two routes were being considered for the ASAP as it passes through the Denali Borough. The preferred route, at the time, would follow the Parks Highway through the Nenana Canyon, then divert across the base of Sugarloaf Mountain, through the Montana Creek lands, across the Yanert River and then generally follow the route of the Alaska Intertie through the Yanert Valley, returning to the Parks Highway near Carlo Creek. The other possible route would follow the Parks Highway through the Nenana Canyon, the entrance area of Denali Park, past McKinley Village, and on to Carlo Creek.

Notable facts and statements from the July meeting with AGDC:

- ❑ A processing facility is slated for inclusion, on the North Slope, with the establishment of ASAP. The gas produced along the North Slope will be refined and sent through the pipeline ready for market.
- ❑ The diameter of the proposed ASAP pipeline has been enlarged to 36", instead of the previous smaller 24".
- ❑ ASAP will be buried most of the entire 737 miles, including through the Alaska Range if possible. AGDC hopes to use horizontal drilling techniques to bury the pipeline under water bodies. It has contracted with an engineering firm in Canada to test new pipeline material for suitability of use buried in a high seismic area.
- ❑ The proposed Right-of-Way (ROW) for the pipeline is 6-8 feet wide in normal ditching conditions. However, AGDC plans on a 90-100 foot swath for installation of the pipeline itself. AGDC states that it could replant with native seeds and would maintain only a 6-8 foot ROW after installation.
- ❑ AGDC planned on drilling equal numbers of boreholes to test soil structure on both proposed routes through the Alaska Range, approximately 100 in total, indicating an impartiality of routes through the survey phase.
- ❑ Communities along the Parks Highway could have access to natural gas from ASAP. Communities along the Parks Highway will be able to band together during the "Open Season" in 2015 to set gas pricing and ensure access to gas.



The map above, from the ASAP Environmental Impact Statement, shows the two proposed routes through the Denali Borough. Until recently, the preferred route traveled east through Montana Creek and Yanert lands before rejoining the Parks Highway near Carlo Creek. Both routes remain under study.

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Denali Park Improvement Act advances Parks Highway-only route for ASAP

Senator Lisa Murkowski's bill, the "Denali National Park Improvement Act" passed both houses of Congress and was signed into law by President Obama on September 18th. This bill removed obstacles to the all-Parks Highway route for ASAP, making it more likely that this would end up being the preferred route for ASAP. The bill grants the National Park Service the authority to issue right-of-way permits for "a high pressure natural gas transmission pipeline" to cross Denali National Park through its easternmost edge.

A Parks Highway gasline could become both an in-state supplier and an export pipeline

The relationship between a Parks Highway gasline and the much-discussed larger "export" pipeline recently changed. There had been discussion of running the larger in-state gasline (up to 48 inches in diameter) along the Trans Alaska Pipeline corridor, and liquifying the gas in Valdez, making it possible to sell the gas both in-state and out of state. However, major North Slope producers and the transport company TransCanada announced on October 7 that they had selected Nikiski on the Kenai Peninsula as their preferred location for a pipeline terminal and liquefied natural gas facility, with take-offs along the way in Fairbanks, Anchorage, and the Mat-Su valley. The Nikiski location for a terminal could push the large pipeline proposal over to the Parks Highway route, making it not only an in-state supply line but an export line as well.

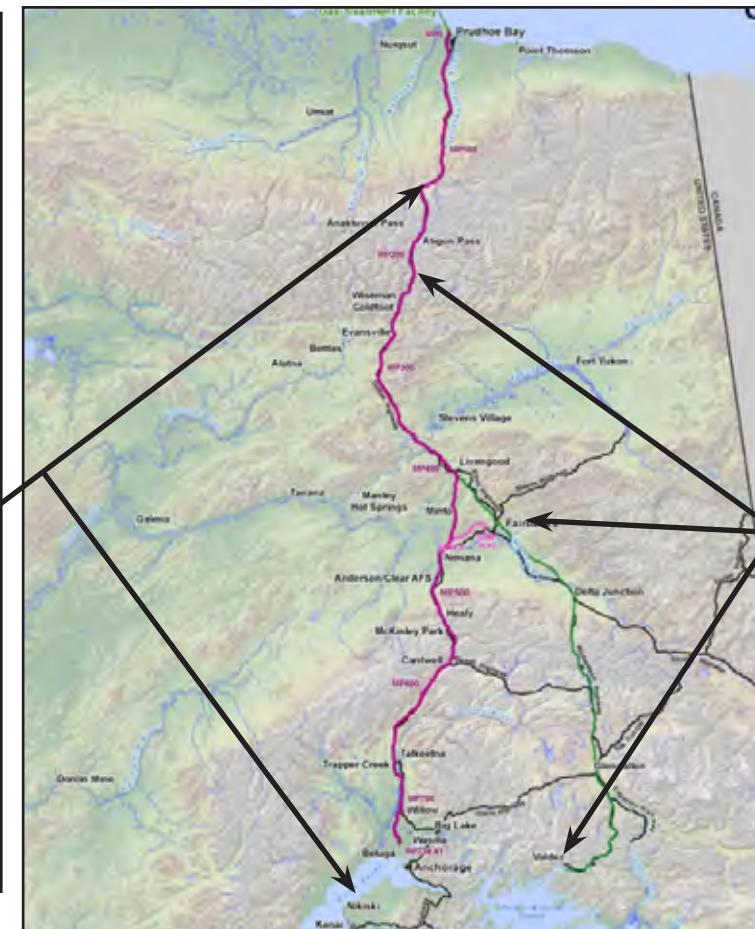
However, whether the gasline will be built down the Parks Highway, with liquefaction for export in Nikiski, or down the existing pipeline corridor, with liquefaction for export in Valdez, remains an open question. DCC had taken the position that a single pipeline along the oil pipeline corridor with a spur line to Southcentral (likely along the Glenn Highway corridor) made the most sense, thereby avoiding the Denali Borough altogether. If the route did stay on the Parks Highway corridor, we supported the routing of the in-state pipeline through Denali Park rather than using the Intertie diversion because of the landscape damage that would be done in the highly visible Montana Creek area and the intrusion into Yanert Valley lands used primarily for recreation. However, the Parks Highway-only route is not without its own serious impacts. It will add both temporary and permanent disruptions to residents with highway frontage in the McKinley Village area. Recent increased interest in a possible gas pipeline near local homes and businesses makes it critically important for DCC to educate and organize local residents about its implications. We'll keep you posted on meetings and comment opportunities. ☺

PARKS HIGHWAY LINE

When originally proposed, this route would supply gas to Southcentral Alaska, to relieve a projected shortfall there. Envisioned as a small-diameter bullet line, it now has a proposed diameter of 36 inches.

The line would travel down the Parks Highway through the Denali Borough. The proponents of the ASAP proposal define this line as an in-state- only gasline.

Recent selection of Nikiski for a gas liquefaction plant could end the ASAP concept and result in a larger line, more like what was originally planned to the east.



LARGE DIAMETER GASLINE

This line could transport a larger volume of gas than ASAP, with a diameter of up to 48 inches. It was originally proposed as a way to replace a gasline across Canada to markets in the northern US, when the economics of that line did not pan out. It keeps to the Trans Alaska Pipeline corridor, with potential spurs to Southcentral Alaska.

An export option has always been part of this line, with gas liquefaction for export occurring in Valdez.

Map from AGDC website,
<http://asapgas.agdc.us/maps.html>

AMONG WOLVES CELEBRATES WORK OF GORDON HABER

AUTHOR MARYBETH HOLLEMAN RECOUNTS THE WORK OF REKNOWNED DENALI WOLF RESEARCHER

On October 14, 2009, Gordon Haber died tragically in an airplane accident while pursuing his research on Denali wolves. Now, four years later, a book detailing his more than forty years of unique and important research has been published.

Marybeth Holleman has authored the book, which brings into sharp focus the gist of Gordon's philosophy - the importance of intact, multi-generational family groups, along with adequate habitat, for the survival of these animals, along with the importance of citizen advocacy for these predators, now targeted just outside Denali National Park by an unrelenting state policy of predator control and lax hunting and trapping regulations.

Her inspiration for writing this book is best stated in Marybeth's own words, from an interview published on the Wolf Conservation Center website (<http://nywolf.org/>):

"Thirty years ago, I moved from North Carolina, where red wolves were being reintroduced into the wild, to Alaska, where people were gunning wolves from the air. The contrast wasn't lost on me, and has threaded through countless essays and poems since.

Times I've seen wild wolves stand out in memory like the most crisp photographs: my first fall in Alaska, watching wolves thread up a new-snow-covered mountainside; in Denali when my eight-year-old son saw wild wolves for the first time, padding beside the Toklat River.

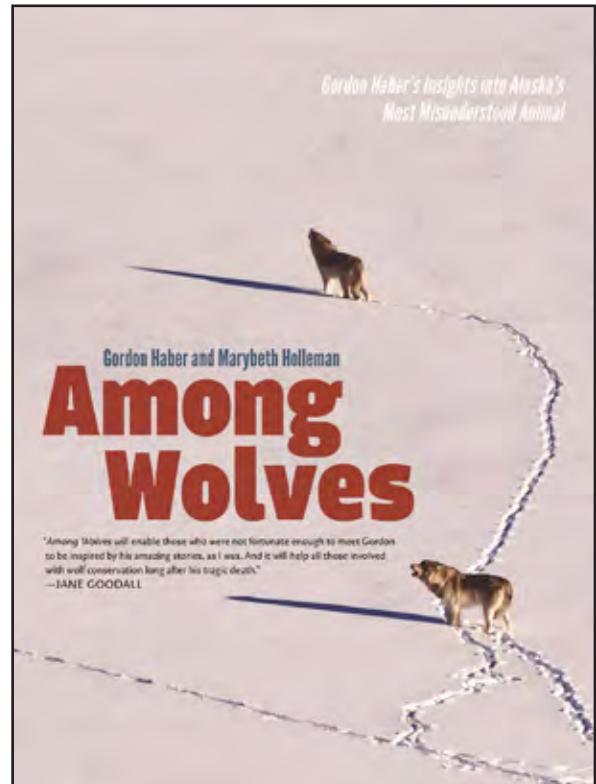
Then there was the first time I heard Gordon Haber speak, when I'd been in Alaska less than two years. I was thunderstruck not just by his incredibly intimate knowledge but by his extraordinary passion for this animal that he wrote 'enlivens the landscape.'

I followed his work, got to know him, and remained in awe of his sense of wonder and his dedication to continue his research in some pretty harsh environmental conditions, but even more so to continue his advocacy in the far harsher conditions of Alaska wildlife politics.



Gordon Haber on the East Fork River, 1969.

photo courtesy of Johnny Johnson



Book cover image courtesy of Marybeth Holleman

Very few wildlife biologists today do the kind of whole-systems observational research that Gordon practiced; few spend as much time with their subjects, and thus few have Gordon's unassailable experiential authority.

What's more, very few scientists have the courage and conviction to take what they learn about their area of expertise and speak out in defense of it, to really educate the public and help us make more informed, intelligent decisions. Gordon did this time and again; he never gave up.

The world needs his voice, now more than ever. The world needs his example. We need more Gordons, and my hope is that this book might inspire them.

When his plane went down in 2009, I became determined that his work wouldn't go down with his life. His findings are too important, and too essential to what wolves—and we humans who live alongside them—are facing today." ☀

FUTURE OF STAMPEDE LANDS - A CORE DCC ISSUE

WOLF TOWNSHIPS' UNIQUE CHARACTER CAN ONLY REMAIN WITH SOUND PLANNING AND CITIZEN ACTIVISM
by Charlie Loeb

The two headline issues related to the Wolf Townships/Stampede Trail corridor have been DCC's appeal of the Healy Basin Gas Exploration License and the fate of Denali's wolf packs, explored most recently in Marybeth Holleman's new book about Gordon Haber. Both of these topics are covered elsewhere in the newsletter, but there are many other issues worthy of note that will affect the future of the Stampede. DCC remains involved in all of them. Here are some updates on these other crucial issues.

Stampede State Recreation Area: Representative David Guttenberg introduced a bill to establish the Stampede SRA into the state House this past session, and it will remain active for the 28th Legislature's second session beginning in January. However, the politics for the bill are more problematic than in the past. After redistricting, Senator Joe Thomas - who sponsored the SRA bill in the Senate in past legislatures - lost his seat, and the Borough's new Senator has shown little interest in the issue. As a result, there is no companion bill in the Senate. Legislative politics have become even more unfriendly to conservation initiatives with the new Republican Senate majority. We hope that Guttenberg will be able to move the bill forward in the House this session, but without a similar initiative in the Senate the prospects for passage during this legislature look gloomy. A new court-compelled redistricting plan was approved this past July, placing the Denali Borough in new House and Senate districts for the 2014 election. There may be fresh opportunities for advancing the bill in the new legislature starting 2015.



Yukon Tanana Area Plan: The revision of the Tanana Basin Area Plan was almost complete when concerns in the northern part of the planning area halted adoption of the final plan in October 2012, and it remains stalled. DCC had advocated that most of the state lands in the Wolf Townships be classified for Wildlife Habitat and Public Recreation – Dispersed. The final plan was consistent with DCC's recommendations excepting two parcels adjacent to the Panguingue Creek subdivision, which were classified as "Settlement" because of land selections by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and the Denali Borough. As DCC believes that both of these selections are no longer in effect, we hope that the adopted final plan will also show these as Wildlife Habitat and Public Recreation. We also hope that the final plan includes a recommendation for legislative designation of the Stampede State Recreation Area. The completion of this plan will hint at a final resolution for the Wolf Townships, with easternmost lands having been conveyed to the Denali Borough and the state retaining the western lands for habitat protection and recreation.

Municipal Land Entitlements: The Denali Borough has acquired a considerable amount of land along the easternmost portion of the Stampede Corridor, identified as Panguingue B. The Borough is still working on its overall land management strategy, however Panguingue B is likely to be the first large parcel for which the Borough makes plans. DCC is tracking Borough land management closely to ensure that Borough lands are managed in ways that truly benefit the community and that respect lands sensitive for habitat and recreation.

Jeeps, Argos, and 4-Wheelers: Commercial off-road guided activities continue to increase along the Stampede Road and from the Otto Lake area. As part of the Yukon Tanana Area Plan process, DCC advocated for a step-down management plan that would include a trails plan. Serious damage to the Stampede Trail is occurring and even creating conflicts among the commercial users. DCC is continuing to advocate for tighter state management and trail planning.

Wolf Buffers: The Alaska State Board of Game remains unwavering in its opposition to creating new closures where the hunting and trapping of wolves would be prohibited on state lands bordering Denali, despite a precipitous decline in wolf numbers within Denali National Park and Preserve.

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DCC BOARD WELCOMES MICHAEL RAFFAEI

We're very excited to welcome Michael Raffaeli as our newest board member. Michael brings many skills to the board, with eighteen years of experience as an educator, biological technician, naturalist, volunteer, and interpretive ranger in and around national parks. He has been working seasonally in the Denali area since 2008, and is married to the Denali National Park Kennels Manager, Jennifer Raffaeli. They have been living year-round at Denali since 2010. Michael fills an empty seat on the board that was held by J.J. Neville until the end of his term in May. Below, Michael speaks for himself.



"I hope that my background as a biologist and educator, my love of wild places, and my commitment to being a steward of the land complement the strengths of the other DCC board members."

"Growing up and surfing in California I found myself in the ocean staring off into the open seascape. This was my introduction to wild places, which over time transformed into a passion for being in the mountains. After receiving a B.S. in Ecology from UC San Diego, I combined my desire to be outdoors with my growing love of education. I found that sharing my excitement for wild places with the upcoming generations needed to include inspiring them to be stewards of these special places. I have been working as an educator, biological technician, naturalist, volunteer, and interpretive ranger in and around national parks for the past 18 years, watching as they change and respond to the pressures they face."

After my first trip to Alaska in 2002 to climb in the Alaska Range I knew that I wanted to return. In 2006 I came back to teach for Outward Bound during the summer months. Winters have kept me permanently in Alaska since my wife introduced me to sled dogs. Since coming to work seasonally for the NPS in Denali in 2008, I have begun to develop a sense of place and a desire to be a positive influence on the future of the Denali community. " ☀

FUTURE OF THE STAMPEDE/WOLF TOWNSHIPS - A CORE ISSUE FOR DCC

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Protection of the Wolf Townships into the future is unlikely to occur through a single action, but a suite of management steps that will work together to achieve the desired level of protection, including a legislatively designated area (Stampede SRA) under the management of Alaska State Parks, a management plan for state lands and trails, a Borough land management policy that respects wildlife, green space and human movement corridors, and state wildlife management policies that ensure that the greater Denali ecosystem is not disrupted. DCC intends to keep working on all these fronts with the Legislature, the Yukon Tanana Area planners, the state Board of Game and Middle Nenana Fish and Game Advisory Committee, and the Denali Borough government. A key element in all of these efforts is citizen activism. If you want to be involved in a sound future for the townships, come and let us know on Retreat Weekend. ☀



Attendees at Stampede Summit 3, sponsored by DCC in August 2012, confronted the core issue - how to plan for land use, trails management, wildlife protection and recreation in order to retain the unique qualities of the area. DCC photo

BRIEF NEWS AND VIEWS

SOUTH DENALI VISITOR CENTER ROAD AND PARKING AREA PROJECT BEGUN

The South Denali Visitor Center project, finalized on paper in 2006, has moved forward slowly but steadily since that time. A cooperative project between the state of Alaska, the National Park Service and the Mat-Su Borough, the South Denali Visitor Center is expected to provide interpretive services and recreational opportunities at a site above Mile 135 of the Parks Highway, a few miles north of the Chulitna River bridge. On August 16, project partners conducted a formal ground breaking for a 1.5 mile access road to the site, a 22 space parking lot/trailhead, more than six miles of interpretive trails, a 15-site walk-in tent campground, a 32-site RV campground, a ranger station and extension of electricity to Mile 134. The road, campground and electrical extension are expected to be completed by the end of next summer. The actual visitor center is likely years away, as planning and fundraising continue. Other complexities of the project include planning for both motorized and non-motorized trails, efforts to protect scenic values along the Parks Highway near the site, and ongoing development of the Denali State Park Special Use District.

RILEY CREEK BRIDGE EXPANSION PROPOSED

A proposal to replace the current Riley Creek Bridge with a new, wider bridge is moving through the state Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. According to a letter from the Northern Region Engineer to the Denali Borough Mayor, dated June 17, 2013, the new bridge will be approximately 21 feet wider than the existing bridge, will include a left turn lane for access to the Park Road, and will have two eight foot shoulders for pedestrians and bicyclists. In addition, the project includes curve realignments along the Parks Highway north of the Park Road intersection, grade adjustments south of the intersection, and the addition of a right turn pocket off the Park Road onto the Parks Highway. As of this writing, we do not know if this project is planned for next spring or summer.

CHASING ICE SCREENED AND ENJOYED BY MORE THAN A HUNDRED ATTENDEES

Denali Citizens Council, in partnership with Denali Education Center (DEC) and Polar Educators International, hosted a screening of *Chasing Ice* on September 5th at the Charles Sheldon Center. *Chasing Ice* is a feature length film that explores photographer James Balog's multi-year quest to substantively document the effects of climate change on the world's glaciers. An astounding 110 people were drawn to the screening and added to an overwhelmingly communal experience.

After the screening, National Park Service glaciologist, Rob Burrows, gave a short presentation on the state of Denali National Park's glaciers and answered audience questions. Burrows' main message concerning the glaciers of Denali and climate change was that glacial retreat is being documented in Denali and the smallest glaciers are faring the worst. Burrows went on to state that the effects on Denali's glaciers, while noticeable, are on a lesser scale compared to the coastal glaciers seen in *Chasing Ice*. Burrows noted that climate effects in Denali concern more than just the glaciers themselves.

Chasing Ice is an exceptional film, both visually stunning and provocative. For those who were unable to join the screening in early September, *Chasing Ice* is now available for home viewing and is worth seeking out. Thanks are due to DEC, Polar Educators International and especially Natalie Brandt, Sarah Bartholow, and Rob Burrows. DCC looks forward to screening more conservation-relevant films in the future - stay tuned! ☀

DCC NEWS

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