

## DENALI'S CHIEF RANGER SAYS NEW GUN LAW WILL NOT CHANGE MUCH IN THE PARK

BUT OTHERS FEEL LESS SAFE AND FEAR NEW THREATS TO PARK VISITORS AND WILDLIFE

by Cass Ray

The new law allowing visitors to the two-million-acre wilderness portion of Denali National Park to carry loaded guns, concealed or open, “won’t turn the world upside down” and is not likely to “change life in Denali significantly,” Pete Armington, the park’s Chief Ranger, told more than two dozen members and guests at the DCC Annual Meeting at the Denali Education Center’s Sheldon Center in McKinley Park on July 11. Calling the new law “more of a poster child issue,” Armington noted that visitors to two thirds of Denali—the park additions and the preserve—already are allowed to carry firearms.

Further, visitors to Denali State Park also are allowed to carry firearms—yet Armington said he was aware of no resulting carnage to either wildlife or people. Denali is likely to be less effected by the new law than sister parks in the Lower 48, such as Yellowstone or Yosemite, predicted the Chief Ranger.

Responding to a question from his audience, Armington said the “wild card” in the new scenario in Denali is that the majority of park visitors now will visit an area in which firearms mostly are a new addition. At least some firearms already are known or assumed to have been carried into the park, and a bus driver in the audience recalled a park visitor trying to board his bus with a firearm. Given that the age of the average Denali visitor is late-50s, that many park visitors arrive via the cruise industry, and that so many visitors access Denali by riding shuttle or tour buses into the park and back out of the park, noted Armington, it seems unlikely that many of those visitors will avail themselves of their new right to carry firearms into the park.



Pete Armington, Denali’s Chief Ranger (right), speaks with Gordon Haber (center) and Cass Ray (left) during the DCC Annual Meeting on July 11, 2009. Photo courtesy of Joan Frankevich

It is nothing short of “absolutely amazing,” said the Chief Ranger, how many potential problems were precluded when most Denali visitors were prohibited from driving their own cars past Savage River and were required to ride buses. The original proposal putting park visitors on shuttle buses was “brilliant,” he added.

### Rangers already are trained to assume someone is armed

Asked by a member of the audience if the new law would mean that new training would be required for his rangers, Armington said it would not, that his rangers already are trained to “assume that anyone you contact is armed.”

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## FROM THE BOARD

Dear Advocates of Denali National Park,

We're all in for a treat this September when PBS airs Ken Burns' new documentary: 'The National Parks: America's Best Idea.' I'm sure many of you are familiar with Ken Burns and his highly-praised television series on the Civil War, Baseball, Jazz and other topics. For the past 10 years, Mr. Burns has turned his attention to national parks. This six-part series explores the natural beauty, the history, and the inspirational stories of the many citizens who helped create our nation's parks.

In June, Burns was at the Performing Arts Center in Anchorage, where he presented excerpts from his upcoming film and answered questions from a full house. Burns showed mainly the Alaska national park segments, and Denali figured prominently. It was an uplifting and awe-inspiring evening. Not only were the film clips exceptional, Ken Burns is a captivating speaker. He has a deep, thoughtful understanding of our national parks and what they mean to us as individuals and as a nation.

As an American, one of the things I'm most proud of is our national parks. Parks have been important to me my entire life from numerous visits as a child, work as a park ranger, and now as a park advocate. For over 10 years I have advocated for parks both as a board member of DCC, and as staff of the National Parks Conservation Association. These positions quickly taught me I had a naïve belief that national parks were safe and sound because they were "protected". While parks do have many legal protections, unending pressures abound. Whether it's a mega-Wal-Mart in Virginia proposed at the entrance to a Civil War battlefield, a mammoth copper and gold mine fourteen miles from Lake Clark, or unregulated snowmobile use in the Denali park additions. Keeping parks protected for our children and grandchildren to enjoy will likewise take generations of park advocates. It is my hope Ken Burns' documentary will inspire both current and future advocates. The six-part series begins Sunday, September 27 and will be rebroadcast in January. I look forward to tuning in!

*Joan Frankovich*


"National parks are the best idea we ever had. Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best rather than our worst."

Wallace Stegner



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## FROM THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZER by Julia Potter

September is quickly approaching along with cooler temperatures, ripening berries, the twin-  
 Skle of stars in the sky as our daylight hours diminish, and the feeling that summer is indeed  
 over. As summer wanes, I find myself somewhat relieved and anxious for the snow to fly. For  
 me this summer was filled with glorious warm sunny days that prompted many late afternoon  
 hiking trips or evenings on the Jack River in Cantwell with my dog for some heat relief (I've  
 learned that even on an 80-degree day the river is still quite chilly for swimming - brrrr). I was  
 fortunate to visit the Toklat Rest Stop throughout the season with some exceptional sightings of  
 wildlife along the park road including a Golden Eagle flying along the edge of the road right at eye level, a caribou attempt-  
 ing to escape bothersome insects by running up and down the road (quite a sight) and watched two spring grizzly cubs frolic  
 in a pond. But with all the daylight I also find that, like most Alaskans, sleep is not an option. Too many wonderful things  
 to see and do. So now I'm ready for a slower pace, the fresh cool smell of falling leaves, fireweed seeds filling the breeze  
 with fluff and oh yes - the thought of kicking back with a good book and getting some shut-eye. At least that's what I say  
 now. The fall weather always teases me to the outdoors - something about the change of seasons, the preparations for win-  
 ter and the beautiful night sky returning to make me look up in awe at the stars and planets, a glimpse of the aurora. To  
 once again renew my love for this special place called Denali. 



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## NEW GUN LAW MAKES OTHERS FEEL LESS SAFE

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Implementation costs of the new law are expected to be “next to none,” he said. Little would need to be spent on public education and posting, such as outside buildings defined as being “federal buildings.”

The law, which takes effect in February, appeared in May as a short amendment, a so-called “rider,” attached to unrelated federal legislation, the Credit Card Accountability, Responsibility and Disclosure Act. Ten days after the rider was introduced, it was signed into law by President Obama.

Visitors to Denali will be allowed to carry pistols or rifles, “consistent,” noted Armington, “with state law and subject to applicable federal laws.” Alaska boasts a “pretty permissive set of firearm laws,” among the most permissive of any state—albeit with “curious inconsistencies,” noted the Chief Ranger. In Anchorage, anyone can board a city bus “shouldering a twelve-gauge shotgun,” but firearms are not allowed on the Alaska Railroad or on ferries; on trains and ferries, firearms must be unloaded and put away. Yet on whistle-stops, travelers regularly have firearms, such as holstered pistols, in plain sight.

Target-shooting will remain illegal in the park, and “defense of life and property” will be the standard for whether guns may be fired, said Armington. His several years in the park have seen no cases of shootings in the park additions or preserve that were justified by that “defense of life and property,” he said.

Some Denali rangers are concerned that allowing loaded firearms to be introduced into the wilderness could increase the likelihood that they will have to deal with related incidents, perhaps involving the shooting of park visitors or wildlife. Will a camper be tempted to display a firearm to settle a minor campground dispute? Will a hiker declare he was threatened by a grizzly or moose before he dispatched it? Bear spray has discharged inadvertently on buses; so could a concealed firearm. When a woman in the audience reported that allowing firearms in the park will make her feel “less safe,” it was noted that, ironically, proponents of the new law claimed that being prohibited from carrying their weapons into the park made them feel less safe.

### Several “\$64,000 questions” to be answered

Among several “\$64,000 questions,” said Armington, is whether visitors to Denali will be allowed to board shuttle or tour buses with loaded weapons, concealed or open. There is “no answer right now,” he said. While law allows private businesses to prohibit firearms, whether the contract between Doyon/ARAMARK Joint Venture (JV) and the park service, an agency of the federal government, precludes JV’s potential right to post “no weapons” signs is, Armington said, another one of those “\$64,000 questions.”

Responding to a question from the audience, he said the park had not yet contacted JV regarding these questions. Attorneys advise that the park cannot “directly or indirectly” attempt to influence JV’s decision whether to post “no weapons” signs, he said, calling the issue “high-profile, sensitive” and “politically volatile.”

Also to be decided is which of Denali’s buildings—among them, Denali Visitor Center, Murie Science and Learning Center, Eielson Visitor Center, Toklat contact station—qualify as “federal buildings” (think, Independence Hall, in Philadelphia), and thus are covered by regulations that prohibit firearms in those locations.

The federal government presently is working on regulations related to implementing the new law and answering those “\$64,000 questions,” Armington said. Such issues should be resolved by February 2010, when the law takes effect, he said, or by May, the beginning of the new visitor season in Denali.

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## NEW GUN LAW MAKES OTHERS FEEL LESS SAFE

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When a member of the audience asked how the park's in-holders—the four lodges at the end of the park road, in Kantishna—might respond to the new law, Armington said that was “another unknown.” A member of the audience noted that bear spray has been proven to be “far more effective” than firearms in deterring bear attacks. Asked by a member of the audience if allowing loaded firearms in the park is a Second Amendment issue, Armington said yes, but only because advocates of the new law cited that Amendment, adding that he believes that Amendment rightly applies to arming militias, not individuals.

DCC shares the concern of many that allowing loaded firearms, open or concealed, in the park is not advisable and could place park visitors and wildlife in danger. We remain uncomfortable with and unpersuaded by the oft-stated argument that, because loaded firearms already are allowed in two thirds of the park and preserve, the new law actually will have little effect on Denali; the fact of the matter is that the "Old Park" portion in which loaded firearms now will be allowed is the area frequented by the vast majority of park visitors—much in contrast to that other two thirds of Denali. DCC is disappointed that the present federal Administration allowed this measure to slip into law, as a rider to an unrelated bill, and looks forward to monitoring its effect on the park. **SD**

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Many years ago I wrote a book, *Islands of Hope, parks and recreation in environmental crisis*. In the introduction I spelled out some of the dimensions of experience one could have in National Parks: adventure, intellectual stimulus, esthetics, testing the mettle, and, especially, the parks as sanctuaries for civil and social comity—special places where people could associate without fear of untoward or aggressive behavior, but rather instant companionship in the face of shared natural beauty and grandeur, or the emotions of historical triumph or tragedy. Places where even on a remote trail, an approaching group is a welcome sight, for information or exchange of experiences—where people look each other in the eye and share excitement about what's to come next, and before you know it, exchanging addresses for Holiday cards!

Turning the parks into Dodge City where everyone is packing heat—concealed or brandished—will utterly transform the social dynamics of amity and sharing into fear and suspicion, and avoidance.

I hope you stress this pending tragedy in your annual meeting. This could be the most significant result of this concealed rider for concealed and ready-to-fire weapons in the parks.

Good Luck,

Bill Brown



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# PRESIDENT PRESENTS DCC YEAR IN REVIEW AT OUR ANNUAL MEETING, JULY 11TH

By Nancy Bale

A hearty THANK YOU to those DCC members and others who attended our Annual Meeting and engaged with Chief Ranger Pete Armington in discussing new legislation that would allow loaded guns in national parks. Thank you also to those who brought snacks and beverages.

Also, thank you to the Northern Alaska Environmental Center Director Karen Max Kelly and her husband, and Northern Center Organizer Jessie Peterson for attending and contributing to our session. The Northern Center has been our closest conservation partner for many years, and at one time funded the Denali Watch position held by Linda Paganelli. We are grateful for the Center's support through the years, and for their recent efforts to educate and organize the community around the proposed restart of Healy Coal Plant #2. You may visit them on their recently redesigned website at [www.northern.org](http://www.northern.org). And many thanks to the Denali Education Center, which made the Sheldon Center available and helped us advertise this event in the community.

Before Pete Armington spoke, I reviewed DCC's activities since our last Annual Meeting, using slides and a short narrative. Cass Ray has recapped Pete's presentation and our position on the Guns in Parks rider elsewhere in this newsletter. Following is a brief recap of my "Year in Review" presentation.

In 2008-2009, DCC was busy. In addition to putting out six editions of our newsletter under the able editorial skill of Community Organizer Julia Potter, maintaining our membership in the local Chamber of Commerce and the Alaska Conservation Alliance, and supporting the attendance of Noah Schieber at the AYEAC Civics Summit in Juneau, we:

## **Held our fall 2008 retreat and reworked DCC's Vision Statement**

The DCC Board enjoyed a trip to Talkeetna for our Annual Retreat on October 4, 2008. We met in a historic old cabin next to the old town airstrip for a full day and crowded agenda. We finalized our new Vision for Denali and published it in the November-December newsletter. Our issue priorities and activities are meant to help achieve this vision.

## **Participated in the Denali Aircraft Overflight Advisory Council**

DCC President Nancy Bale and 11 others (including DCC Board members Joan Frankevich and Nan Eagleson) represent diverse interests on the federally-chartered Denali Aircraft Overflights Advisory Council. Mandated in Denali National Park and Preserve's Backcountry Management Plan, the Council is tasked with making recommendations to address impacts from aircraft overflights at Denali. The Council has held five formal meetings (one at Denali's entrance last summer). This spring the Council worked on a map of sound-sensitive areas in Denali. An informal listening session was planned for July 17, 2009. The next formal meeting will be held on October 2, 2009.

## **Advocated for a State Recreation Area in the Stampede**

We educated our members on the importance of providing **more proactive management** of the Stampede (or Wolf) Townships north of Denali, an area of mostly undisturbed habitat that is very important to park caribou and wolves, migratory birds and local recreationists. In support of this concept, State Senator Joe Thomas and his staff introduced legislation, SB 108, to establish a Stampede State Recreation Area. We helped to organize local support and testimony before the Senate Resources Committee, and they passed the bill on to Senate Finance, where it will be heard next session, starting in January 2010. We circulated an online petition in support of the State Recreation Area that was eventually signed by over 100 Alaskans. We will continue to educate the community on this effort in the coming year.

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## DCC YEAR IN REVIEW *continued from previous page*

### **Convinced the State of Alaska to reject some Denali Borough entitlement requests because of their important habitat and recreation values**

In January of 2009, the State of Alaska released its Final Finding and Decision on conveyance of the Denali Borough land entitlement. The state retained a number of parcels, including lands in the Nenana Canyon, around 8 Mile Lake, and near Otto Lake. All these lands were best retained in state ownership for their wildlife habitat values and primary importance for recreation and viewshed. DCC comments and alerts were very important in obtaining this decision. It is now up to the Denali Borough to manage carefully the 21,000 acres it did receive.

We at DCC have been approached to provide comments on the major planning document for state lands in the Denali Region, the Yukon Tanana Area Plan. The scoping phase for this plan is over, and we look toward involvement in further plan development over the next year or two.

### **Advocated for strong oversight of energy proposals in the Denali Borough**

DCC had been involved with a number of conservation partners in the original negotiations for construction of the Healy Clean Coal Plant, Healy #2, in the mid 1990s. After operational testing in 1998-99, the parties to the construction could not agree on terms of operation and the plant was shuttered for ten years. Now, Golden Valley Electric Association, the proposed owner-operator, plans to restart this plant with the ten-year-old technology. We argue that they must submit this plant to new review, taking into account changes in technology and permitting since the shutdown of 1999. We pushed for a public meeting with GVEA which drew a large crowd on May 14, 2009. Our partner, the Northern Alaska Environmental Center, has been very active on this issue. It is receiving a great deal of play in the media.


In addition, we informed the community about Enstar's proposed bullet gas line between the North Slope and Anchorage, a line that, if built, would go right down the Parks Highway. We urged Enstar to inform and work with the local community as it attempts to develop this project, a project that remains fiscally and environmentally questionable.



Park road between Eielson and Wonder Lake, where an extensive rehab project is planned along 13 miles. *DCC Photo*

### **Advocated for Denali's unique Road Character in developments along the park road**

We objected to the one-action alternative that the National Park Service proposed in a Road Rehabilitation project for the area between Eielson Visitor Center and Kantishna on the grounds that adequate need for that much change had not been provided. The project involves a tremendous use of gravel and development of widened areas over a 13-mile stretch of the road. This is a developing issue. See a more in-depth article elsewhere in this newsletter.

We welcome any help that members can provide in research, article writing, information gathering and advocacy on these and other key issues. The resolution of the above (and many other) controversies will have long-term effects on the park and its surrounding communities. Please call or write when you can.... 



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# MILE 73-86 PROJECT IS TOO EXTENSIVE

by Nancy Bale

## 1997 EIS spawns some of the park's most controversial projects

DCC members who were involved in commenting on the Final Entrance Area and Road Corridor Plan EIS of 1997 recognized then how important and controversial the plan would be. It established guidelines for access, infrastructure development and *road character*. It spawned a number of projects, whose details were worked out over the years in Environmental Assessments (EAs). The language and intentions expressed in the plan were noble and mindful. However, as the projects envisioned by this plan were implemented through the years, we weren't always comfortable with their effect upon Denali, a park with a long tradition of minimum development; all the more so because many were to occur within a stone's throw of the federally-designated Wilderness core of the park.

The most recent park road project that claims it is a descendent of the 1997 plan is the Road Rehabilitation project for Miles 73-86. This section, between Eielson Visitor Center and Kantishna, is the most lightly used and narrowest portion of the road, with a width that varies between approximately 14 and 24 feet. Passing between two buses can be more difficult on this section, especially between the larger forward control style buses. In fact, NPS has declared that the park concessioner cannot operate one of these larger buses between Eielson and Wonder Lake until the design can be made safer for the larger bus. The weakness of the road's shoulder along this stretch has been cited as an additional problem. Because of



A section of the park road between Eielson and Wonder Lake. Some drivers have said they cannot rely on the existing width of the road to be safe when pulling over to yield or pass.  
DCC photo


the seasonal or weather-related unpredictability of the shoulder, some drivers have asserted that they cannot rely on the existing road width to be safe for pulling over to yield to or pass an oncoming bus.

The National Park Service has considered for years the various ways to address safety concerns along the park road and yet stay within the mandates of the *road character* definition in the 1997 EIS. NPS held meetings with park road stakeholders to discuss how to maintain *road character* while building a safe road. The Road Design Standards (completed and given a Categorical Exclusion in 2007) were a product of this discussion. The Standards described how ditches and spill slopes would be designed, how pullout tapers would look. They also established the specifications of the **design vehicle**, the larger bus not yet approved for travel between Eielson and Wonder Lake. The Standards described how *road character* would be maintained, not through uniform widening of the road, but through the use of "intervisible passing pullouts."

In our comments on the Mile 73-86 project EA we argued that this project does not require the number of passing pullouts mandated to make the road much safer. We argued that the pullouts were going to be too large. In the Finding of No Significant Impact, NPS did make one change, agreeing to reduce the pullout "belly" from 60 to 45 feet long in most areas, shortening the length of the widened sections. However, NPS rejected our suggestion to start pullouts in those areas where sight distance was most problematic, while performing all the other rehab activities in the plan. However, NPS reject our suggestion to limit the number of pullouts..

### Many drivers felt left out of this process

Both before and after this EA was complete, I received messages from ten experienced Denali park drivers and advocates questioning this plan. Most are members of DCC. Their concerns about the size of this project are very important to me.

DCC had asked for an extension of the deadline to comment on this important road project. NPS declined, asserting that there was not sufficient public interest evidenced by a lack of participation in the scoping meetings last fall. I believe that, to the contrary, there is a great deal of interest within the driving community. NPS should have provided additional opportunities for drivers to comment and be involved in this process, through additional public outreach beyond the usual email and PR notifications. We will send our concerns in a letter to NPS administration. 





# ON AND OFF THE ROAD WITH DENALI NATIONAL PARK SPECIAL PROJECTS CREW

By Jean Balay

As with most places, the human history of Denali National Park is a record of change through time. There are structures throughout the park that serve as a record of that change, and structures currently under construction that will serve as historic records in the future. As a member of the Special Projects crew for NPS for the past 10 years, I've seen my fair share of change, and have worked to restore some of Denali's past. Change can mean a lot of different things, and in our work we spend just as much effort restoring past history as we do creating new.

For example, this summer while part of the crew was working on picking up and moving the Polychrome Rest Stop, another part of the crew was building toilets at Teklanika Campground, and the third part of the crew was working on stabilization and restoration of the historic Pearson Cabin and cache. We seem to spend just as much time moving forward in time as we do moving back. It's an interesting dichotomy.



Pearson cache - one of the many historic buildings the Special Projects crew will restore. *Photo courtesy of Jean Balay*



Historic Pearson Cabin and members of the Special Projects crew. *Photo courtesy of Jean Balay*

## A Brief History

The National Parks Service Special Projects crew was established in 1998 to work on historic restoration projects in the park. As time went by our work scope expanded, including new construction and housing remodels. Over the years we have also become the go-to crew for building lifting and moving (sometimes done with the assistance and expertise of the NPS roads crew).

Over the years we have traveled throughout the park working on historic back-country cabins (Riley Creek, Lower East Fork, Lower Toklat, Moose Creek, Busia, Lower Windy, Lower Savage), historic structures on the road corridor (Quigley Cabin, Wonder Lake Ranger Station, Pearson Cabin) and historic structures at Headquarters (the Barn, the Superintendent's House, the plumb shed, the John House, the Ranger Cache, the Interp Building, the Rock House, three Mission 66 housing units, two duplexes, the C-camp Rec Hall). We have also

worked on several new construction projects including the Fire Management addition to the Resources Building, the Butler Building in C-Camp, the Toklat Dorm and one Toklat duplex. In the conversion away from chemical toilets, our crew has been called on to build pit toilets, also known as SSTs, throughout the park (Savage Check station/day use area, Kennels, Kantishna airstrip, Igloo Campground, Sanctuary Campground, Savage Campground, Riley Creek Campground, Teklanika Campground, and Savage Cabin). On occasion we are also called outside Denali to assist at other parks: rescuing a couple of garages from sinking into the mud in Nome, and restoring the Giddings cabin near Ambler.

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## SPECIAL PROJECTS CREW *continued from previous page*



The Busia Cabin before renovations and repairs (above) and the finished project shown below. *Photos courtesy of Jean Balay*



### The Busia Cabin

The Busia Cabin serves as a good example of the scope of the work we do. When we arrived on scene in June of 2008, it was extremely dilapidated, with a section of the roof caved in, the cabin sinking into the ground, and many of the logs rotting. We tore the roof off, lifted the cabin up out of the dirt, removed the bottom rounds of rotting logs, built a new foundation and floor, replaced the bottom rounds of logs, lowered the cabin back down, and replaced the purlins and the roof. We also performed other small repairs: restoration of the existing windows, replacing the doors, installing new flooring, rebuilding the cold hole, and building new furniture and shutters for the windows.

Although I would like to say there is never a dull moment, we do get our fair share. However, the dull moments are usually followed by something more interesting, and there are always opportunities to learn something new and to solve new problems. As far as jobs in Denali go, I think this is one of the most challenging and interesting. *SN*



*Alaska Native Knowledge Network*

## URGE NPS TO CLOSE KANTISHNA SUBSISTENCE HUNT FOR WOLVES *by Nancy Bale*

As it has in the past, the Federal Subsistence Board, which oversees hunting for subsistence in Denali National Park, has established a bag limit of 10 wolves per hunter in the Kantishna area of Denali National Park. This area has been considered a subsistence use area for many years, and those with the proper permits may hunt moose there from September 1-30...along with bears and wolves. We have argued in the past that hunting wolves for subsistence in Kantishna is wrong. For one thing, a wolf den with young pups exists within the subsistence hunting area, exposing vulnerable young pups to human predation during their first season of life. For another, no valid subsistence purpose exists for wolves killed in September, since wolves are taken for their pelts, not their meat, and the pelt is thin and non-prime at this time of year.

We urge NPS to eliminate the subsistence wolf hunt in the Kantishna area this year. Please email your request to Paul Anderson at [Denali\\_Superintendent@nps.gov](mailto:Denali_Superintendent@nps.gov). Copy your email to the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks Thomas Strickland at [Thomas\\_Strickland@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Thomas_Strickland@ios.doi.gov). For more information you may email Nancy Bale at [nancy@denalicitizens.org](mailto:nancy@denalicitizens.org) and check the website of researcher Gordon Haber at <http://www.alaskawolves.org>. *SN*

## BRIEF NEWS & VIEWS

### JON JARVIS TO HEAD NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

On July 10th, President Obama nominated Jonathon Jarvis to be Director of the National Park Service. Jarvis is a 30-year veteran of NPS, including experience in Alaska as the Superintendent of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve in the 1990s. Most recently Jarvis served as the Regional Director for the agency's Pacific West Region. He will be replacing previous park director Mary Bomar. When the Bush administration tried to water down protection measures in the Park Service Management Policies, Jarvis was a vocal critic of the changes, most of which were never adopted. DCC looks forward to having a strong park advocate in charge of our nation's parks.

### REQUEST TO DNR FOR 60'-WIDE EASEMENT ON SUGARLOAF IN NENANA CANYON

Denali Properties submitted an easement application to DNR to create a trail and refreshment area NE of Grande Denali Lodge on state land. The proposed trail easement would be 60' wide and approximately 10,560' in length. According to the application, the graveled trail would be used for foot traffic and minimal motorized traffic for garbage collection. A concession type stand would be constructed at the terminus of the trail. The trail goes to a high shoulder of Sugarloaf Mountain at an elevation of approximately 4,500 feet.

DCC feels the problems include: 1) easement is too wide, 2) trail is too steep, 3) access from private land to a state resource is inappropriate, 4) sale of items at the terminus is inappropriate, and 5) viewshed from Denali National Park will be affected and viewsheds from important Nenana Canyon locations, such as the Parks Highway and Alaska Railroad, would be impaired by a large right-of-way and structural pad. If the proposed easement and refreshment area were to be approved by the state it would set a precedent allowing these types of scars to proliferate throughout the Parks Highway corridor. A trail up Sugarloaf would be appropriate if designed according to existing best practices, kept completely public and not used for commercial purposes.

### GVEA, AIDEA SIGNAL INTENT TO CONTINUE PURSUING SALE, RESTART OF HEALY #2

Golden Valley Electric Association (GVEA) and the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) on August 25 signaled their intent to continue pursuing the sale and restart of Healy Coal Plant #2-- despite the recent abandonment of the project by the Homer Electric Association (HEA), which had negotiated to purchase 50 percent of the power proposed to be generated by the restarted "clean coal" plant. GVEA and AIDEA have signed a new sales agreement, reported the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. "GVEA appreciates AIDEA's efforts to keep this transaction on track," the newspaper quoted a press release issued by Brian Newton, GVEA president and chief executive officer.

## DCC NEWS

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Alaska Native Knowledge Network



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**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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*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.*

