

ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS DCC'S CURRENT ISSUES

DCC MEMBERSHIP MEETING DEMONSTRATES OUR NEWLY ELECTED BOARD'S ENERGY AND INVOLVEMENT

by Julia Potter

The more than 45 attendees, including board members Nancy Bale, Anne Beaulaurier, Charlie Loeb, Hannah Ragland, Erica Watson, and Jared Zimmerman, as well as newly elected board members Barbara Brease and J.J. Neville, enjoyed a dessert social featuring many scrumptious treats. Root beer (thank you Jared), wine donated by Charlie Loeb, as well as coffee and tea accompanied the lovely desserts. The highlight of refreshment was water, fresh from the Panguingue community well to show how important it is (and how lucky we are) to have clean well water.

Program departs from the usual format, promotes dialogue

Following the dessert social, board co-president Charlie Loeb called the meeting to order and related how this year's meeting was not the usual affair. Typically the DCC annual membership meeting had been a forum-style presentation featuring guest speakers. This year board members took turns presenting the current issues and their status to the members. Before things got underway, Charlie took a moment to reflect upon the outstanding dedication of one long-time board member, Nancy Bale. As many of our members know, Nancy has been on the DCC board for over ten years and has served as board president for most of those years. She was re-elected this year to a three-year term. As Charlie mentioned, Nancy spends many hours driving back and forth from Anchorage to Denali to attend meetings, serves on the Overflights Council, meets with our other various conservation partners, and always keeps NPS on its toes. In honor of her dedication to Denali Citizens Council, the board members presented her with a beautiful print by local Denali artist Ree Nancarrow.

The presentation of issues started off on a hip beat with the showing of "My Water's On Fire Tonight" (The Fracking



Denali Citizens Board members - from left to right - front row Hannah Ragland and Nancy Bale; second row Erica Watson, Barbara Brease, Jared Zimmerman and Charlie Loeb; back row Anne Beaulaurier and J.J. Neville. Not pictured: Nan Eagleson. *DCC photo*

Song) video as Molly McKinley, DCC's Gas Organizer, reviewed her role and spoke about the organizing she has accomplished in her short time with DCC. For those who missed the lively video you can find a link on our Facebook page.

Following the upbeat Fracking Song and Molly's presentation, Jared Zimmerman spoke about the Healy Exploration License Best Interest Finding, granted in November 2010 and signed in January 2011. DCC's appeal of the Finding in Superior Court of the state of Alaska, questions the fairness and scope of the process. A brief will be filed by our attorney, Peter Van Tuyn, on July 6th. The decision as to whether the Finding must be done again will be made by a judge. We feel we have a strong

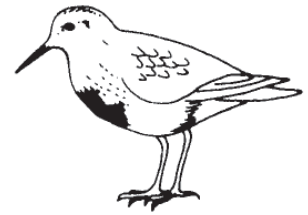
continued on page 4

INSIDE

<i>From the Board</i>	2	<i>Census of Denali Wolves</i>	10
<i>From the Community Organizer</i>	3	<i>Redistricting of Denali Election Boundaries</i>	11
<i>Vehicle Management Plan</i>	5	<i>Board Member Cass Ray Steps Down</i>	12
<i>Yanert Motorized Access Proposal</i>	7	<i>Scenic Byway Interpretive Plan</i>	13
<i>Gas Bullet Line to Skirt Denali</i>	8	<i>Brief News & Views</i>	14-15

FROM THE BOARD

by Nancy Bale



Alaskan Native Knowledge Network

These past few months have seen a resurgence of energy at DCC, and my Co-President Charlie Loeb is largely responsible. Charlie established subcommittees for major elements of our work, including media outreach, financial viability and board development. The board development subcommittee, composed of Anne Beaulaurier, Cass Ray, Jared Zimmerman and Charlie Loeb, put together an early and very successful Annual Meeting. It was heartening to have such a large, supportive turnout there. Thanks, Charlie! And, thank you, board, for the lovely Ree Nancarrow print. More on the Annual Meeting in another part of the newsletter.

Our ongoing appeal and fundraising/organizing effort around the Healy Gas Exploration license has spawned a subcommittee as well, and our temporary Gas Organizer Molly McKinley did a stellar job during her brief term of employment this spring, building a database of supporters, getting the message into the community and developing educational materials. Thanks to the Alaska Conservation Foundation for funding this position. Our appeal brief is scheduled to be filed on July 6th in Superior Court, and we remain open to dialogue with the state of Alaska and Usibelli Coal Mine regarding reasonable and do-able changes to the state's Final Finding on Healy Gas Exploration.

Meanwhile, thank you members for your support and for renewing in our semi-annual spring membership drive. We are especially grateful to those who chose to give more toward our gas appeal. If you have not renewed yet, you may call Julia for materials at 907-683-3396 or renew online at <http://www.denalicitizens.org>.

Vehicle Management Plan will be released this summer

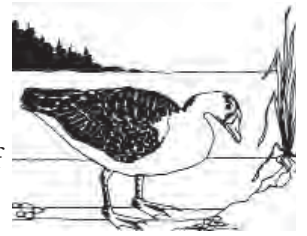
As we move into summer, folks' lives are becoming very busy, but I hope our members will have the time and energy to participate in the public process around the soon-to-be-issued Draft Denali Vehicle Management EIS. Our concerns about this new approach to managing transportation are expressed in another part of the newsletter. The EIS will be large and will contain a LOT of information. We hope to hold a forum sometime this summer/fall on the plan, and the National Park Service will be holding mandatory public meetings as well. Fortunately the plan is being released during the summer, when most of the stakeholders are nearby. Please participate.

Fed up with the feds?

This past spring, I was chagrined to hear about a rally on April 27th in Fairbanks, whose title was "Fed up with the Feds." Ostensibly the rally was held to protest the interventionist policies of the federal government statewide. Sponsored by Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife, a statewide organization that supports "abundance management", the rally brought out anti-government sentiment from a variety of users and businesses. A key catalyst for the sentiment was the NPS arrest of Jim Wilde last summer for failing to stop his boat for a safety check on the Yukon River as it moves through Yukon-Charley National Preserve. Wilde garnered donations to his legal appeal against the NPS at the rally. His was not the only cause represented, however. Our own Corey Rossi, Director of the Division of Wildlife Conservation at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, stood up and accused the federal government (National Park Service) of getting in the way of the state's ability to manage state resources for abundance (read predator control). A T-shirt at the rally that portrayed the NPS logo with the words "Nazi Police State" was signed by Alaska Congressional Representative Don Young and Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski.

Although DCC doesn't always agree with the National Park Service, we are wholehearted supporters of its management of resources for natural and healthy wildlife populations and to protect wilderness. Both of these concepts are not new. Neither is the strong contribution made by federal lands to Alaska's worldwide appeal, and the contribution made by our Parks to the long-term financial sustainability of this state. The current anti-federal rhetoric makes it harder for us to advocate and achieve results in wilderness and wildlife protection, but we pledge to move ahead nevertheless. And - shame on our federal and state officials for pandering to the rhetoric. ☘

FROM THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZER by Julia Potter



As our summer tourist season gets underway and visitors begin to flock to Denali I find myself anxious for the soon-to- be-released draft Vehicle Management Plan. I'm also concerned due to the time lapse from the initial scoping meetings to the draft plan. So often these time lapses cause many of us to be unaware of the upcoming comment period or we let the issue drop from our radar entirely. Denali Citizens Council has been at the forefront of many important issues within the park and surrounding communities; however, I feel this issue to be one of major significance. It may have an astounding impact on the park, and the park road character may be irrevocably changed, not for the better. I am also becoming more and more concerned with the increased cost of access for the public as bus fares continue to rise year after year. What began as free public access has become a serious monetary consideration for many wishing to visit Denali.

This summer I will have the delight of showing my mom the beauty of the Alaskan wilderness and why I have chosen to live here. The visit won't be complete without a trip into Denali via the Visitor Transportation System. Knowing that visitors such as my mom save up to make this once-in-a-lifetime visit to Alaska (and more importantly to visit her eldest child), I wonder if she'll have heart palpitations when she discovers the cost of access. While the cost for two can be justified as part of that once-in-a-lifetime trip, "I'm visiting my eldest child living so far from me", and so on, how does the average family of four or six justify the cost, or those with less-than average incomes?

Our national parks were created to preserve important irreplaceable natural treasures and to provide for the enjoyment of all. I fear that not all will have the opportunity of access to our dearest treasure - Denali National Park & Preserve. ☘

THANK YOU

NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

MAJOR DONORS

Jean Balay
 Dale Ebben
 Jenna & Simon Hamm
 David McCargo
 Carol McIntyre &
 Ray Hander

SUMMIT

Paula & Stuart Barb
 Elizabeth Beavers
 Jeff Forsythe
 Frank & Jennifer Keim
 Alex Lindeman
 Molly McKinley
 Brian Napier

TUNDRA

Mona & Chuck Bale
 Louise Gallop
 Mary Bee & Steve
 Kaufman
 Jeff Lebegue
 Kathleen Mertens &
 Kurt Sahl
 Joyce Oswald
 Jan St. Peters & Rick
 Weibel
 Jim Stratton
 George Wagner

TAIGA

John E. Adams
 Earl & Martha Barb
 Sandy Bauer
 Susan Braun
 William Butler
 Mike Crofoot
 Sharyn Gerhardt
 Joanne Groves
 Becky Irish
 Dulce Havill & Chuck Klemmer
 Nancy Jones
 Roger Kaye
 Cindy Keef
 Kirsty Knittel
 Chuck Lennox
 Fran Mauer
 Rosemary & Dennis McGlynn
 Mary Pearson
 Gina Soltis &
 Ray Gary
 Erica Watson



Alaskan Native Knowledge Network

ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS DCC'S CURRENT ISSUES *continued from page 1*

case and the best attorney in Alaska to do this. DCC has never opposed gas development entirely in the Denali Borough and would be willing to work with the state and the operator toward a positive solution to some of the problems with the Finding.



Julia Potter, DCC Community Organizer, sets up informational materials during the annual membership meeting while attendees enjoy the dessert social. *DCC photo*

Hannah Ragland was next to update members on the status of the proposed legislation for the Stampede State Recreation Area. She encouraged members to contact Friends of Stampede, a group formed by Panguingue and Healy area residents to promote the proposed legislation as well as management for the Stampede area. For more information or to become involved, visit their website at <http://stampedefriends.wordpress.com>.

Nancy Bale brought the members up-to-date regarding a proposal recently submitted to the Alaska Department of Fish & Game for a motorized hunt in the Yanert area, and described the efforts by Friends of the Yanert to oppose this change (see article on page 7). She also spoke about the Backcountry Management Plan and the Overflights Council, which recently conducted a listening session in the Stampede Area. Of special interest for DCC and our members, Nancy discussed the soon-to-be-released draft of the NPS Vehicle Management Plan (see article on page 5). Of concern is the adaptive management process which requires ongoing monitoring and data gathering. As one attendee questioned, can the park fund the research required for adaptive management plans? DCC will be looking for a plan that guarantees inexpensive public access into Denali National Park. Rising bus fares have made access for the general public an expensive endeavor.

Social media is rapidly growing for Denali Citizens Council. Erica Watson has been active keeping DCC issues and topics of interest posted on our Facebook page. Erica related how our social media presence on the world-wide-web is growing. She also talked about our newly designed website with features such as RSS news feeds, the ability to donate online and links to other features such as our calendar of events and meetings. While our newsletter continues to inform members with in-depth feature stories, social media venues will provide our members with timely access to issues and related stories as well as the ability to interact with comments and concerns.

The meeting concluded with a brief question and answer session and another chance to nibble on dessert and socialize. A big thank you to members in attendance, for the wonderful desserts and for a successful event! Thanks especially to the Annual Meeting planning committee, composed of Charlie Loeb, Anne Beaulaurier, Cass Ray, Jared Zimmerman and Erica Watson, for their efforts. Their decision to have our Annual Meeting at the beginning of the season, when we all have more energy, was insightful and will guide our planning from now on! ☘



Alaskan Native Knowledge Network

A NEW VEHICLE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR DENALI - WILL IT BE BETTER?

by Nancy Bale

A unique transportation system is born - 1972

In 1972, the National Park Service closed the park road to private vehicles in response to the opening of the George Parks Highway. Before then, major access was by rail, which limited impacts on the existing road. Although this decision was unpopular at the time, it was undoubtedly correct from the standpoint of both safety and resource impacts. In its place a two-part transportation system evolved, Shuttle (Visitor Transportation System, to replace private vehicle access) and Tour (Tundra Wildlife, later Wilderness, Tour). In later years, two additional Tour-type products came into being - the Denali Natural History Tour and the Kantishna Experience. In addition to these public systems, private vehicles were permitted for Kantishna inholders and service vehicles, certain campground guests, NPS vehicles and professional photographers with permits.



Shuttle and Tour share Denali's unique gravel road.

photo by Kim Turnbull

Limits on vehicle numbers are established - 1986

Over the years, it became obvious that, even with the private vehicle closure, a cap on vehicles along the road would be necessary to protect park resources. After ANILCA enlarged and renamed Denali in 1980 and the park developed a General Management Plan in 1986, a number was developed. This number, 10,512 vehicles during the regular season, finally went into federal regulation after the 1997 Final Entrance Area and Road Corridor Development Concept Plan/EIS. That plan also established an allocation standard between the two types of buses and for other permitted users such as inholders and photographers.

This vehicle management scheme has persisted, with some greater and lesser manipulation, since the 1980s. However, increased build-out of accommodations near the entrance to the park in the 1990s and early 2000s brought large numbers of visitors to the front door of the park and they wanted in. The pressures were mounting.

Managed tourism pushes the limits - 2004

In the final months of 2004, as access pressure was mounting, park managers were involved in a number of actions to try and keep up. Increased services at the entrance area included a new Visitor Center with accompanying bookstore and food court, along with plans for several built trails. The Murie Science and Learning Center was dedicated in July 2004 to provide an enhanced interpretive service. In addition, park administrators began to consider enlargements to both the Toklat and Eielson Rest Stops. As if that were not enough, NPS was a co-participant (with the state of Alaska) in the North Access Visitor Facilities Study, Governor Murkowski's effort to front-load a new access route into the park through state lands north of the park all the way to Kantishna. And, finally, an EIS to determine the siting and uses of a South Denali Visitor Center was in its final stages. This project was billed as one way to relieve pressure on the gateway area of Denali.

Then, in fall 2004, when the Tundra Wildlife Tour (TWT) appeared to be nearing its legal allocation limits, the Alaska Tourism Industry Association (ATIA) formed a Denali Access Committee (DAC). The DAC provided recommendations on how this problem of access might be remedied. ATIA forwarded these recommendations to Park Superintendent Paul Anderson, hoping that a simple EA could resolve the regulatory issues and get Tour the access needed. Among the recommendations - reduce the number of professional photographer permits in order to provide more opportunities for TWT, and conduct an EA or other environmental review to determine an allocation system that could increase Tour bus numbers.

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VEHICLE MANAGEMENT PLAN *continued from previous page*

Superintendent Anderson replied to these recommendations in a letter dated January 26, 2005, stating:

"We concur that a full evaluation of the Park Road transportation system would be timely, as we too, believe there may be opportunities to increase efficiency. We are currently seeking funding to conduct the road use and impacts studies and a review of the Park Road transportation system and road permit allocation. Given the time and cost involved in amending the GMP, we believe that it is most efficient to address the Professional Photographer permit allocations in conjunction with the Park Road transportation system analysis. This would require only one GMP amendment and one compliance process, which will be supported by the social, physical, and biological science studies we are initiating this year."

The Road Capacity study is born - 2005

The current Vehicle Transportation Plan Draft EIS grew out of this reply by Superintendent Anderson. In his reply was the strong statement that although there might be a need to change the system, it was not going to be done haphazardly. Soon after this interchange the Road Capacity Study began, overseen by Assistant Superintendent Philip Hooge. The study gathered data on the movements of wildlife in response to the road and conducted social analysis of what visitors expect of their experience along the road. These data formed the basis of an impacts analysis that would help develop a new vehicle management plan. The basic question...what is the carrying capacity of the road and what indicators and standards can be used to measure that capacity? Park administrators asserted that the current 10,512 limit was not a scientifically developed number and that science was now going to determine carrying capacity. We began to hear that hard limits might be a thing of the past.

Incorporation of the Road Capacity study into Vehicle Management alternatives – coming this summer in a Draft EIS

We've been told that the Vehicle Management Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement is to be released this July, with at least a 60-day comment period. In the Draft, NPS will incorporate data from the Road Capacity Study in the development of indicators for resource health along the park road. We've had previews of some of these indicators – number of vehicles at a rest stop, number of vehicles in the viewshed, number of vehicles at a wildlife sighting, signs that animals are avoiding the road during key vehicle use hours. We are told that if the indicators exceed certain standards, then action will be taken to adjust vehicle numbers. However, management of numbers could be more fluid using this ongoing monitoring and adjusting method, called adaptive management.

DCC's concerns - We've already had several opportunities to express our concerns, and we're looking forward to seeing how the Draft Plan addresses them. We are happy that the plan will be released in the summer, when stakeholders are present and engaged. We urge you to get involved in the public process associated with this EIS. Our concerns below:

- **The Denali Park Road is a thin strip of developed land within a vast, Congressionally-declared Wilderness.** This fact must remain central in all planning. Are current vehicle numbers already damaging the resource?
- **NPS must guarantee the continued existence of inexpensive public access.**
 - Although NPS has expressed a desire to deliver interpretive themes to every visitor, its bottom-line responsibility will be to provide simple access to the park consistent with protection of resources.



Drivers see the road daily, and need to participate in the development of the upcoming Vehicle Management Plan.

photo by Kim Turnbull

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VEHICLE MANAGEMENT PLAN *continued from previous page*

- **Denali Park Road character is a resource to be protected.** As such, NPS may need to limit traffic for simple safety, given the relatively primitive character of this road.
- **Adaptive management, in the absence of hard limits, has vulnerabilities and weaknesses.**
 - Adaptive management requires ongoing monitoring and data gathering. Can NPS afford this over a long term of years?
 - Adaptive management cannot adequately measure every variable that indicates health in a Wilderness park.
 - Visitor notions of a park experience must not be the sole criterion for protecting that experience.
- **NPS should develop clear limits for vehicular traffic.** We have no problem with using adaptive management to assist in developing these limits. However, limits are necessary. ☞

BOARD OF GAME CONSIDERS ALLOWING MOTORIZED HUNTING IN THE YANERT

“FRIENDS OF THE YANERT” SEEK TO RETAIN NON-MOTORIZED HUNTING IN THE VALLEY

by Anne Beaulaurier

Since 1970, the Yanert Fork valley in Game Management Unit 20A, just to the east of Denali National Park, has been maintained as a Controlled Use Area (CUA), providing the rare opportunity for year-round non-motorized hunting. It's an area popular among moose hunters traveling with the aid of horses, dog teams or simply on foot, as well as local residents for a variety of recreational activities.

This March, the Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee (AC) filed a proposal before the Alaska Board of Game (BOG) that threatened to end the forty-year non-motorized hunting precedent by opening the area to motorized hunting after October 1 each year. Due to wide local opposition and a procedural inconsistency, the BOG delayed consideration of the Fairbanks AC proposal until its March 2012 meeting, at which interior proposals will be entertained.



Yanert Valley in winter, as seen from the west, showing the prominent landmark Pyramid Mountain.

Photo courtesy of Anne Beaulaurier

On April 29, a group of local McKinley Village area residents, “Friends of the Yanert,” filed a “no-action” proposal regarding the Yanert CUA for consideration at the March 2012 BOG meeting. Among the concerns shared by Friends of the Yanert and DCC are the lack of a moose density high enough to justify an increase in access and hunting pressure within the CUA, the potential for habitat damage due to the use of off-road motorized vehicles and snowmachines, the limitation of an option for those seeking the quality experience of a non-motorized hunt, and the crowding and social impacts consistently found at motorized trailheads within Unit 20A. The primary access to the Yanert is via a sole 17B easement through Ahtna Native Corporation land at the gravel pit at mile 228 where there is neither parking nor waste facilities.

The next seven months will be a crucial time for gathering information and broad-based support, and for developing a strategy to defend the Yanert CUA. If you are interested in participating in this effort, please contact DCC board members Anne Beaulaurier (anne.beaulaurier@gmail.com) or Nan Eagleson (surfbird@mtaonline.net). To see a copy of the Friends of the Yanert Proposal, visit our website at <http://www.denalicitizens.org>. ☞

GAS BULLET LINE SKIRTING DENALI NP WOULD BE LARGEST PROJECT ON CONTINENT

BUT, GIVEN THE HISTORY, HEALTHY SKEPTICISM MAY BE IN ORDER

by Cass Ray

The proposed 737-mile natural gas pipeline skirting Denali National Park and Preserve would be the largest ongoing construction project in North America, it was noted at a forum in Healy on May 10. But some healthy skepticism regarding the feasibility of the proposal might be forgiven, as the project is pretty much the same one proposed in 1958, more than a half century ago, the borough mayor reminded the Denali Borough Assembly at its meeting the very next evening.

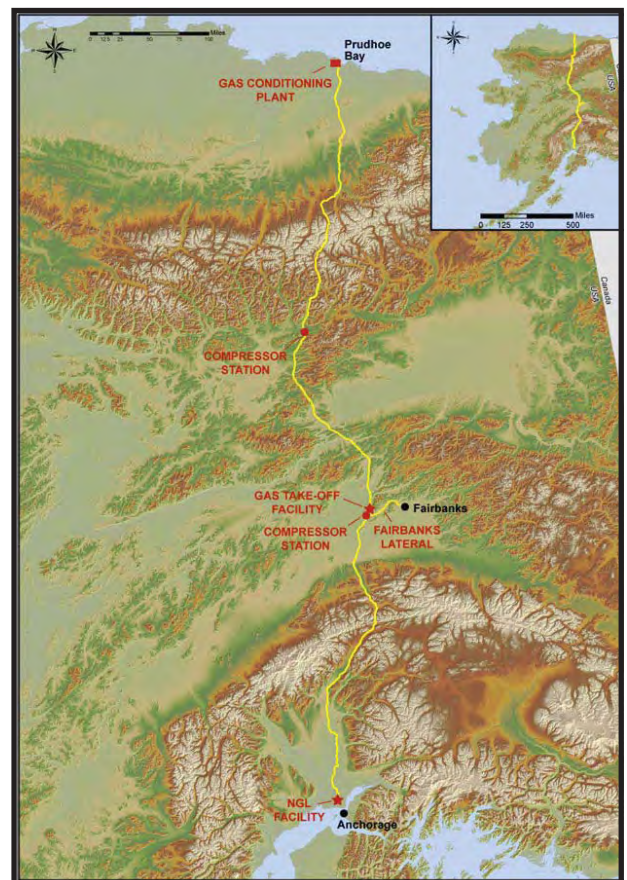
And while a similar forum at the McKinley Village Community Center a year and a half ago was told that pipeline construction could begin in June 2012, construction now would be expected to begin no sooner than 2014. Further, the number of permits required by the pipeline project is more than 2,200, a representative of the Alaska Gasline Development Corporation (AGDC) told the eleven people who attended the May 10 forum at Tri-Valley School.

Included among those nearly a dozen members of the audience were two members of the DCC board and the DCC's Gas Organizer. The forum, attended by six representatives of AGDC and the state's Department of Natural Resources (DNR), was the fourth of seven public hearings hosted by the agencies, in the wake of DNR receiving from AGDC, in March, an application for a lease of right-of-way on state land for the proposed construction of the pipeline.

Pipeline Route Might Provide Bike Path?

While plans for the 24-inch-diameter, high-pressure Alaska Stand Alone Gas Pipeline (ASAP), also known as "the bullet line," pursue a route well away from the national park, and AGDC representatives have vowed that any terrain disturbed by the construction would be re-vegetated to as near its original, natural state as possible, one member of the audience, an employee of the national park, suggested that if a portion of the bullet line were to pass through the park, parallel to the George Parks Highway, a bicycle path possibly could be constructed on top of it. ASAP would "completely avoid traversing" the park, heading east of the Parks Highway and the Nenana River at a point just south of the Nenana Canyon, and rejoining the highway at a point south of McKinley Park, at about Carlo, at about Mile 224 or 225, noted the 220-page project summary issued in July 2009.

"Routing the pipeline through any portion of the park may require congressional approval," added the project summary. The 15-mile "bypass" of the park, "in an area without an existing road system," would "have a substantial effect on the existing viewshed" from the south, it was noted. Much of the bypass would be near the electric



Map of route for the Alaska Stand Alone Gas Pipeline, from the Alaska Gasline Development Corporation website. We are particularly concerned regarding the impacts of routing this gasline to the east of the Parks Highway as it passes adjacent to Denali National Park.

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GAS BULLET LINE *continued from previous page*

intertie linking Fairbanks and Anchorage. The bullet line would return to the highway “in a forested area with scattered developments along the highway and linear features such as power lines, other buried utilities, and driveways.” ASAP would be “buried, except at fault crossings and select major river crossings,” noted a project brochure.

Route: Yanert Valley versus Highway or Intertie

Another member of the audience raised questions regarding disturbing the relatively pristine condition of the Yanert Valley area and suggested instead aligning the pipeline with the Parks Highway or the electric intertie.

“No long-term effect on tourism or recreation is expected once construction is complete,” noted the project summary. “Traditional mitigation measures” would include “avoiding areas with tourist-related facilities,” as well as areas with public recreation resources, “avoiding creating new public vehicular access to remote areas,” “retaining the existing natural landscape to the extent practicable,” and “providing new recreation-related opportunities when compatible with pipeline operation.”

Governor’s Recommendation: ‘Take a Deep Breath’

The pipeline, with an expected life of 100 years beginning as soon as early 2016, would transport natural gas from the North Slope to Cook Inlet, serving more than half of the state’s population. While construction, beginning as soon as 2014, would include a 35-mile-long, 12-inch-diameter lateral line to serve Fairbanks, the main pipeline itself would not pass through the state’s second largest city, and concerns have been raised there and in other interior Alaska communities that they would not reap sufficient benefits from the multi-billion-dollar project. In fact, the Fairbanks Borough Assembly is on record as vowing to oppose any such intrastate gas pipeline that does not pass through that city. But less than two weeks after AGDC’s forum in Healy, Gov. Sean Parnell was quoted as recommending interior communities “take a deep breath,” assuring them their needs would not be neglected by the project.

The most recent study of the feasibility of construction of the bullet line was authorized by the state legislature two years ago, and this latest plan for the project is to be completed by July 1, although AGDC representatives said they remained uncertain whether they initially would forward the plan to the state legislature or the governor’s office. AGDC’s mission includes specifying and documenting how ASAP “can be designed, financed, constructed, and made operational by Dec. 31, 2015.” At this early point in the process AGDC has eleven employees.

Bullet Line is One of Three, Make that Two, Pipelines Proposed

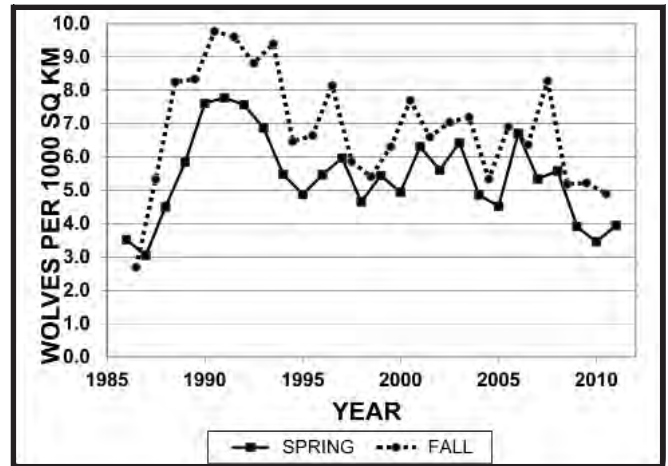
An AGDC handout distributed at the forum in Healy noted that two larger-diameter pipeline projects in development, one the Alaska Pipeline Project and the other Denali/The Alaska Gas Pipeline, have longer development timelines than does ASAP and focus on transporting gas outside, rather than inside, the state. But a week after the forum in Healy, the two key partners in the Denali/The Alaska Gas Pipeline project, British Petroleum and ConocoPhillips, announced they were scrapping that \$35 billion project; blaming “market forces,” they lamented that despite a year and a half of effort, they had proved “unable to secure the financial commitments necessary to advance the project.” In contrast to those two projects, noted the AGDC handout, ASAP would provide state residents with an “abundant, long-term, and affordable energy source to replace oil.” The bullet line’s initial supply of gas would “exceed the demand for power generation and residential heating... [and] industrial users will be required for efficiently filling the pipeline capacity.” Alternative energy sources, such as geothermal or hydroelectric, said AGDC, “have long lead times or may not meet needs.”

DCC remains committed to the pursuit and development of alternative energy and retains a healthy skepticism about the feasibility and future of the ASAP bullet line proposal. Many issues and questions remain to be pursued and answered, and DCC looks forward to closely following this proposal through the months and years after it is offered to the state government on July 1. ☞

SPRING CENSUS OF DENALI WOLVES SHOWS SMALL INCREASES

Thanks to NPS Biologist Tom Meier for providing the wolf density chart and census data pictured to the right and below. More complete maps and charts are available upon request. We note that the park wolf census remains low relative to the past, with a small uptick in Spring 2011 numbers.

NPS and DCC remain concerned about the impact of wolf hunting and trapping on state lands at the northeastern boundary of the park. Ease of access to this area and a **known preference** by park wolves in the winter predict that losses will continue. The effect of these losses on viewability of park wolves is being studied by NPS. An informative flier entitled **“Are Wolf Viewing Opportunities at Risk?”** describes the current situation and the studies. You may pick up a copy at the Murie Science and Learning Center.



Pack sizes and wolf density estimates, Denali National Park and Preserve 2004-2010 (pack sizes in parentheses were not included in total or density estimate)

PACK	2004		2005		2006		2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
	spring	fall	spring	fall	spring	fall	spring	fall	spring	fall	spring	fall	spring	fall	spring	fall
100 MILE	8	0														
ALDER CREEK																1
BEARPAW	2	5	3	6	6	10	8	10	9	5	5	2	2	6	5	
BOOT LAKE								1	(2)	2	4	3	(3)	(8)	(9)	
CASTLE ROCKS	1	1	1	2	2	6	5	7	7	2	0					
CHITSIA	4	4	4	8	6	11	9	11	5	7	1	0				
EAST FORK	7	12	6	14	14	15	15	15	11	16	11	12	5	11	6	
GRANT CREEK	2	5	4	6	6	13	5	5	3	6	6	14	11	16	16	
HAUKE						4	4	4	3	0						
HERRON	8	8	8	3	3	0										
HOT SLOUGH							2	7	7	8	6	7	5	3	4	
HULT			1													
IRON CREEK											2	6	5	9	7	
KANTISHNA RIVER	5	2	2	7	7	1	1	1	2	5	2	6	6	8	0	
MCKINLEY RIVER	2	6	4	2	2	6	5	10	2	0						
MCKINLEY SLOUGH	7	8	8	10	10	8	8	15	15	14	11	15	14	19	18	
MCLEOD 2							4	6	2	0						
MOOSE CREEK											2	2	2	0		
MT MARGARET	9	7	6	10	9	11	6	7	3	2	2	5	0	0		
MUDDY	1															
NENANA RIVER											2	6	2	5	4	
OTTER LAKE											2	2	2	3	0	
PINTO			6	6	5	3	10	4	0							
SAVAGE							2	2	6	0						
SOMBER					7	6	11	8	8	4	2	2	6	7		
STARR LAKE	7	7	7	9	9	3	3	6	4	3	3	6	3	3	3	
STRAIGHTAWAY	10	4	4	8	8	0										
TOKLAT SPRINGS	5	7	6	12	12	8	6	9	6	(5)	(1)	(3)	(3)	(3)	0	
TONZONA							(1)	(2)	2	2	1	0	0			
TOTEK HILLS							6	6	(4)	(3)	0	0	0	0		
TURTLE HILL		2	2	3	3	3	3	4	0							
TOTAL WOLVES	78	78	66	106	103	111	93	147	99	86	65	89	59	89	71	
AREA IN KM ²	16,061	14,630	14,630	15,367	15,367	17,439	17,439	17,757	17,757	16,607	16,607	17,061	17,061	17,994	17,994	
WOLVES/1000 KM ²	4.86	5.33	4.51	6.90	6.70	6.37	5.33	8.28	5.58	5.18	3.91	5.22	3.46	4.95	3.95	
ESTIMATED WOLVES IN PARK*	84	92	78	119	116	110	92	143	96	89	68	90	60	85	68	

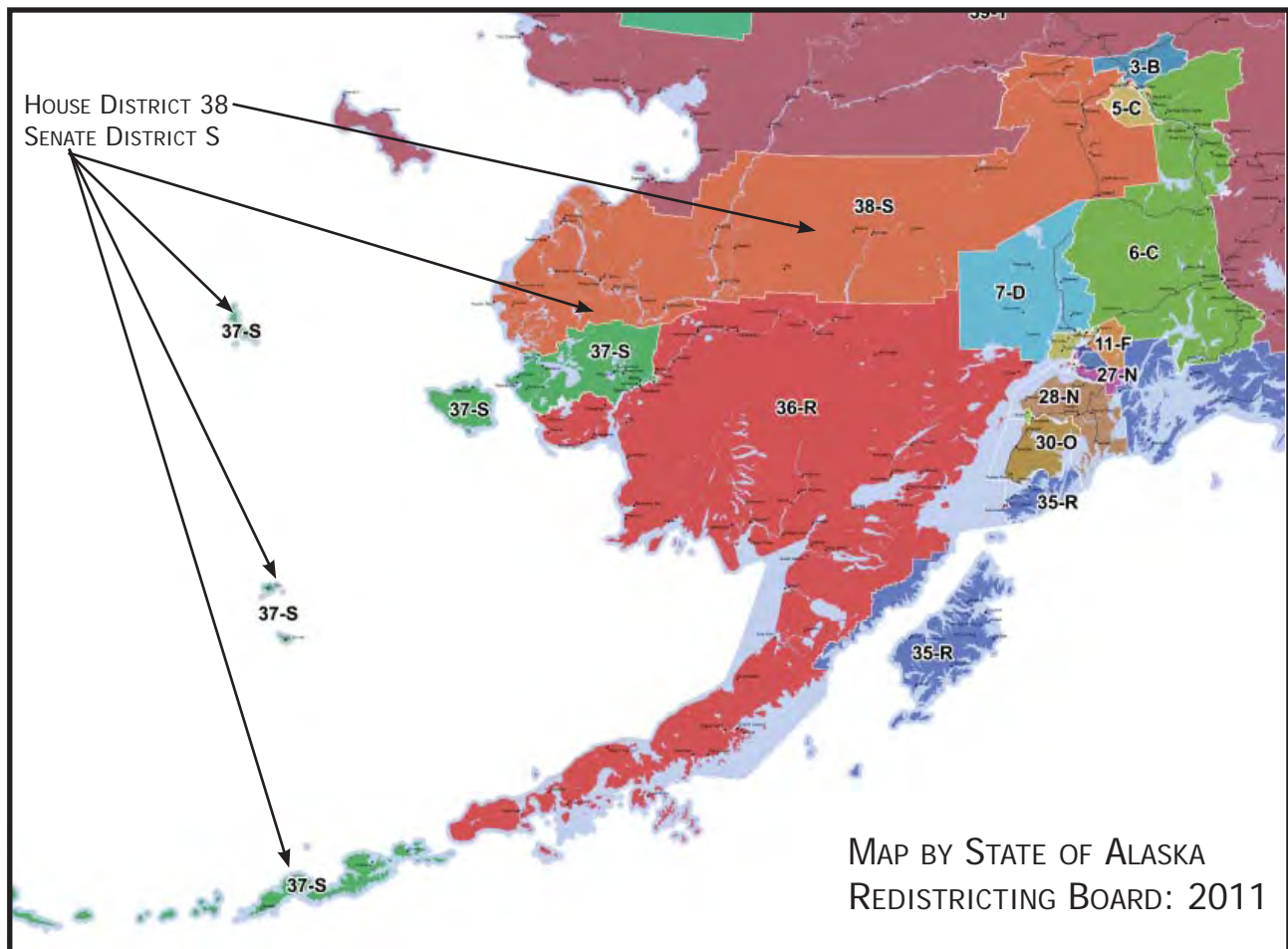
* wolf estimate = the calculated wolf density projected across 17,270 square km of habitat within park boundaries, north of the Alaska

ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD MAKES MASSIVE CHANGES IN DENALI ELECTION DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

by Nancy Bale

By law, the State of Alaska must review legislative district boundaries after every 10 year census of the United States, and must reapportion them to create a “one person, one vote” configuration. Changes in population since the last census, especially in rural Alaska, compelled the Redistricting Board to make some unique and new boundary designations. The final map, depicted below, was adopted on June 13, 2011, and, if not contested in court, will be implemented by the State of Alaska, Division of Elections. According to the Proclamation of the Redistricting Board, all but one Alaska Senator must run for re-election in 2012 in their new districts. The Senator for Denali, Joe Thomas, may no longer be able to run in our Senate District (S). A call to him for more information was not returned by press time.

Both the Denali Borough’s Senate District (S) and its Representative District (38) have drastically changed in size. Prior to 2011, these Districts virtually overlapped and incorporated only the Denali Borough and a portion of Fairbanks. Now, a tiny portion of Fairbanks remains, but the new districts incorporate significant portions of western Alaska, important communities on both the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers, the Pribilof Islands and the outer Aleutian Islands. Our legislators will acquire a diverse and complex load of issues and will need to travel extensively to address them. Fish politics will rank high on this list, plus economic needs in roadless rural communities. We are hopeful that legislative proposals such as the Stampede State Recreation Area will remain important to our future representatives, and that the Denali Borough’s unique qualities will not be lost in the shuffle. ☞



The House District (38) for the Denali region now cuts a tremendous swath across Alaska’s interior, and includes the mouth of the Yukon River and several villages on the middle and lower Yukon, the villages of McGrath and Nikolai, and the entire Denali Borough. The Senate District (S) adds the city of Bethel, among others, Nunivak Island and the outer Aleutian Islands.

DCC BOARD MEMBER CASS RAY STEPS DOWN

by Nancy Bale



Cass on the park road after a hike. When not sharpening his pencil, you will find him hiking the backcountry or biking the Parks Highway.

photo courtesy of Cass Ray

Cass Ray told us this spring that he would not be running for another term on the DCC Board. We objected vociferously, but could not convince him to stay. Cass has been an active, loyal board member. From the beginning, he was interested in learning our issues and participated meaningfully in our discussions and policy sessions. He dutifully attended meetings of widely varying interest and length, and kept his pencil eminently sharp.

Cass' prior journalism experience proved extremely valuable for our newsletter, and he was a regular article contributor. His loyalty to deadlines set a standard for all of us, even if it meant trudging over to the DCC cabin 'round midnight to finish and upload his article. As DCC Secretary this past year, Cass developed concise and on-time minutes of our meetings. Similarly, when it came time to proofread the newsletter, his red pencil was confident and involved. Oh, those capitalization, hyphen and comma discussions!

Cass has a strong attachment to National Parks, and appears to have found a long-term resting spot at Denali. He has made himself invaluable not only to DCC, but in his primary employment with NPS. There, he performed his duties in the interpretive division, and branched out to organizing Winterfest for several years, a job that can only be described as non-stop herding of cats.

Cass is a people person. He recognizes work and dedication, and sent the entire DCC Board a retirement email, praising each of us, and our organizers Julia and Molly, for our many fine attributes. Well, it takes one to know one, Cass. May you be happy in your further pursuits, campouts, bike trips, hikes and late night sessions "finishing up" whatever needs finishing. You are welcome to red-pencil our newsletter whenever you feel so inclined. Stay in touch! ☘



Alaskan Native Knowledge Network

INTERPRETIVE PLAN PROPOSED FOR PARKS HIGHWAY NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY

by Cass Ray

The future of the George Parks Highway, which gives access to the Denali Park Road, is important to DCC, and DCC was well-represented at the April 19 public open house for the highway’s proposed Scenic Byway Master Interpretive Plan. Of the dozen people in attendance at the hour-long session at the park’s Murie Science and Learning Center, three were DCC board members or DCC’s community organizer.

The purpose of interpreting the nation’s scenic byways, it was noted, is to “create a distinctive collection of American roads, their stories, and treasured places.” Among the goals of the proposed master interpretive plan are “reducing impacts to natural and cultural resources,” “promoting safe and responsible travel,” and “providing byway facilities that meet travelers’ basic needs.” Among the specific areas to be addressed are education, recreation, and safety. The proposed master interpretive plan is expected to go through at least three drafts through 2012.

“At this stage in the planning process” aimed at “highlighting the intrinsic qualities” of the scenic byway, noted the handout distributed at the open house, “no idea is too big, too small, too crazy, or too obvious.” The goal is the “establishment and maintenance of interpretive sites and services” along the highway. “You live here, work here, or simply love this scenic byway,” added the handout, “so you probably know things that we don’t” about the highway corridor. The deadline for submission of comments was only two and a half weeks after the open house.



Attendees listen as Nicole Acevedo talks about the scenic byway program and the proposed interpretive plan. *DCC photo*



Bill Kiger and Nicole Acevedo of state parks division of the Department of Natural Resources.

DCC photo

A few years ago, a DCC board member and the community organizer were active in efforts that resulted in 230 miles of the Parks Highway attaining National Scenic Byway status in 2009. That scenic byway stretches from the Chulitna River Bridge, at Mile 132 of the Parks Highway, seventeen miles north of Trapper Creek, to Fairbanks, at Mile 362.

The Parks Highway is one of only two highways in Alaska that have attained that national byway status; the other earning that designation is the Glenn Highway. Twelve Alaska highways, including 5,167 miles, have attained the status of State Scenic Byways. The third, and most prestigious, scenic classification is All-American Road; that coveted status has been attained by the Seward Highway and the Alaska Marine Highway—although at the public open house on April 19 it was noted by the two representatives of the state Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation that few of the nation’s highways would seem to boast better qualifications than the highway that offers spectacular views of the highest point in North America.

Those two representatives of the state parks division were Bill Kiger, manager of interpretation and education, and Nicole “Niki” Acevedo, natural resource specialist. The open house at the Murie Science and Learning Center was one of four hosted that week; the other three were in Trapper Creek, Nenana, and Fairbanks. ❧

BRIEF NEWS AND VIEWS

FOUND: TRASH AND CASH ON STAMPEDE ROAD

by Hannah Ragland

Friends of Stampede and the Panguingue Creek Homeowners Association joined forces on May 22nd to clean-up along the Stampede Road and in the Panguingue Subdivision. A five dollar bill was probably the most exciting find...junk tires, cans and broken glass were less exciting, but good to get rid of! Several carloads traveled to Eightmile Lake and enjoyed beautiful weather while cleaning up along the pull-outs and road. This area is the end of the summer-maintained road, with beautiful views and far-off glimpses of Denali. With the amount of use this area gets, it's no surprise that it wasn't hard to find trash. Friends of Stampede will be officially "adopting" Stampede Road, between Eightmile Lake and the Parks Highway, through the Alaska Department of Transportation Adopt-a-Highway program. This involves cleaning up three times a year, which will likely be spring, mid-summer, and late fall. The next Stampede Clean-Up is scheduled for July 23rd...visit <http://stampedefriends.wordpress.com> or email friendsofstampede@gmail.com for more information. ☘



Cleaning up trash along the Stampede Road were members of Friends of Stampede and Panguingue Home Owners Association. Getting rid of human trash means a safer, cleaner environment for the wildlife often spotted in the Stampede area such as the moose cow and calves seen near Touch of Wilderness Bed & Breakfast or the caribou seen just outside Henry's Coffee House.

Clean up photos courtesy of Jared Zimmerman. Moose and Cariobu courtesy of Julia Potter.

BRIEF NEWS & VIEWS

DCC RECEIVES GRANT FROM MOUNTAINEERS FOUNDATION

We're pleased and grateful to have received a grant of \$3,000 from the Mountaineers Foundation in Seattle, Washington to support our gas organizing and education activities in the Denali Borough. Whatever the outcome of our Gas Legal Appeal, DCC plans to continue its involvement as gas exploration and possible development move forward in the Denali Borough. The process of gas development is complex and multi-phased, requiring dedicated oversight and public involvement wherever possible. We intend to continue obtaining donations and grants to support that sort of presence in the Denali Borough. DCC has a grant request pending to the Conservation Alliance and a Letter of Inquiry to the Common Counsel Foundation. All of our grants focus on the importance of Stampede lands at the northeast boundary of Denali National Park, not only for the park's larger ecosystem, but for public recreation in the Denali Borough. To learn more about the foundations we have approached, you may visit their websites. ☞

Mountaineers Foundation – <http://www.MountaineersFoundation.org>

Conservation Alliance – <http://www.conservationalliance.org>

Acorn Foundation – <http://www.commoncounsel.org>

DCC GAS LEGAL APPEAL AWAITING REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

DCC recently submitted a request to the state of Alaska to fill some gaps in the administrative record of the Best Interest Finding for Healy Gas Exploration conducted by the state between 2005 and 2010. We pointed out that some meetings and public comments were missing from the record and asked that they be added in. We think that this gap will likely delay our court date, currently scheduled for July 6th. We are hoping that the state will agree to meet with representatives of DCC during any additional time that this delay may provide. It has been our intent to communicate and collaborate with both the developer and the state, whenever such a meeting can be arranged. DCC has do-able and reasonable suggestions to make the Finding stronger and better. A frank discussion of these suggestions can only be productive, in our mind. Stay tuned for more updates. Meanwhile, we welcome additional contributions to our Gas Legal Fund. Visit the DCC website for more information. ☞

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:

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Denali Citizens Council is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Our mission is to protect the natural integrity of Denali National Park and to promote a sustainable future for lands surrounding the Park.

Please join by filling out this form and mailing it to the address below.

Your contribution is tax deductible

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