



ALASKA CENTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

SUMMER 2006

Center News

BECAUSE YOU LOVE ALASKA

**RECREATION -
ALASKA STYLE**
A LOOK AT
ENVIRONMENTALLY
RESPONSIBLE
RECREATION IN THE
LAST FRONTIER



Center News, the newsletter of ACE, is published four times a year. Subscription rate is \$35 annually and includes membership. For subscriptions or information contact:

Center News / Alaska Center
for the Environment
807 G Street, Suite 100
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
(907) 274-3621 / FAX: 274-8733

E-mail: ace@akcenter.org
www.akcenter.org



Staff

Randy Virgin, *Executive
Director*

Thomas Burek, *Trailside
Discovery Camp Director*

Butch Allen, *Oceans Program
Coordinator*

Alan Baldvieso, *Conservation
GIS Analyst*

Andre Camara, *Anchorage
Issues Coordinator*

Emily Doherty, *Juneau
Watchdog*

Margaret Hazeltine,
Membership Assistant

Brook Kintz, *Outreach and
Communications*

Dwayne Lee, *Financial Officer*

Lena Kilic, *Membership
Development and Relations*

Bobbie Jo Skibo, *Forest
Conservation Coordinator*

Clare Stockert, *Membership
Director*

Eric Uhde, *Public Lands
Advocate*

Board of Directors

Tim Seaver, *President*

Jason Geck, *Vice-President*

Jimmy Jackson, *Treasurer*

Mimi Hogan, *Secretary*

Dan Cheyette

Jeff Conaway

Laura Grant

Kay Gouwens

Karla Kolash

Martha Levensaler

Cover photograph: Campers enjoy a sunny afternoon in Twin Falls Valley, Chugach State Park. The peak in the background is Eagle Peak. (photo by JT Lindholm)



layout by
Great Bear
Graphic Design



from the

DIRECTOR

LEAVE NO TRACE

IDEAS FOR REDUCING YOUR IMPACTS IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS



By Andrew Cutting, Community Outreach Coordinator, Anchorage REI

Alaska is a huge playground for outdoor enthusiasts, and yet within our state it is easy find places that have been over-used or even abused by people that don't know how to take simple steps to protect Alaska's delicate environment. Leave No Trace is an international program designed to assist outdoor enthusiasts with their decisions about how to reduce their impacts when they hike, camp, picnic, snowshoe, run, cycle, hunt, paddle, ride horses, fish, ski or climb.

Leave No Trace is best understood as an educational and ethical program, not as a set of rules and regulations. Through the program we strive to educate all those who enjoy the outdoors about the nature of their recreational impacts as well as techniques to minimize such impacts. While unique circumstances that require special consideration always exist, there are seven general principles of LNT to remember:

PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you'll visit.
- Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.
- Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.

TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES

- Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow.
- Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes and streams.
- Good campsites are found, not made.

IN POPULAR AREAS:

- Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites.
- Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.
- Keep campsites small. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.

IN PRISTINE AREAS:

- Disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails.
- Avoid places where impacts are just beginning.

DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

- Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter. Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.

- Deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished.

- To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater.

LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

- Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts.
- Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.
- Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS

- Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry. Use a lightweight stove for cooking and enjoy a candle lantern for light.
- Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires.
- Keep fires small. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.
- Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, then scatter cool ashes.

RESPECT WILDLIFE

- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them. Never feed animals.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.
- Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS

- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
- Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises, except in bear country.



WILD ALASKA



by Eric Uhde, Public Lands Coordinator

A CLOSER LOOK INTO ALASKA'S GATEWAY COMMUNITIES

Denali Park. Talkeetna. Whittier. Homer. Seward. Each of these communities is a gateway to Alaska's spectacular outdoor opportunities. Over the years, these once sleepy towns have increased their role in providing services for adventure seeking visitors, with new restaurants, bed and breakfasts, and guiding services opening and expanding each year. The neighboring lands of Denali National Park, Chugach National Forest and Kachemak Bay State Park draw in families, retirees and seasonal workers from around the world.

Along with the influx of new residents and visitors comes change. Can these small towns preserve their unique character and at the same time have room for change and growth? Change is almost certainly inevitable. The real issue is how community leaders steer development to benefit their communities and derive a balance between generating economic growth through tourism and maintaining

the image of a natural, unspoiled destination. Planning and forward thinking by the residents are key ingredients to successfully managing these challenges.

If you have ever driven down the Seward Highway behind the train of RV's bound for the Kenai or braved the tourist shops of "Glitter Gulch" near Denali Park's East Entrance, then you've seen some of the pressures these communities face. The towns that keep their distinctive Alaskan feel are the ones that maintain and add to their sense of place, securing the Alaska lifestyle and making their towns more attractive to outside visitors.

DENALI PARK

Denali Park and the surrounding towns of Cantwell and Healy are portals to Denali National Park and Preserve. Over the past decade, each community has had to deal with increased demand from visitors seeking

the Denali experience. New lodges and lodge expansions, increasing numbers of tourists wanting park access, snow machine and ORV use within the Park, and contracts for Park concessions are just some of the growth issues that nearby residents are currently addressing.

With its haphazardly placed buildings and bargain-hunting tourists darting across a busy highway, the 'Glitter Gulch' area outside of Denali is perfect example of the negative affects of uncontrolled growth. One solution that seems to have been successful in making the area more visitor-friendly is the recently completed AK Dept. of Transportation project, which added pedestrian walkways and crosswalks and traffic signals.

This spring, Denali area residents stopped state funding for construction on the Stampede Road, near Denali National Park's northern boundary. Concerns over the purpose and need for this road project were critical in halting the plan. Stopping the proposal to improve the Stampede Road is a prime example of locals taking control of their sense of place.

TALKEETNA

Just down the highway from Denali, the town of Talkeetna is growing. Talkeetna saw 30,000 visitors a year in the early 1990s and today that number is 100,000 - due in large part to new lodges and major tour operators choosing to use the town as a destination. In order to get a handle on this rapid growth, the Talkeetna Community Council began working with consultants to develop a vision and a plan for the town. This foresight and planning has the potential to allow for Talkeetna to



THE TOWN OF WHITTIER is a launching point for thousands of visitors on their way to explore Prince William Sound.

handle the increased pressure from tourism, provide for economic growth, and still preserve the undeniable spirit of this unique community.

In the past year, upper Mat-Su Valley residents have had an impact on a variety of issues that affect the quality of life in the region- planning for South Denali, a visitor center destination in Denali State Park has been shaped by local input and large scale, industrial logging off of Petersville road was stopped by residents who wanted to have control over their sense of place.

WHITTIER

Whittier is a town that is transforming into Southcentral Alaska's gateway to Prince William Sound. What used to be an old army station, fuel depot and railroad yard is now an up-and-coming tourist destination. The Whittier tunnel has been open for over five years, and while the town has not blossomed as quickly as some had predicted, its easy access to the Sound and proximity to Anchorage means that future growth is almost inevitable.

On busy summer weekends with cruise ship passengers, boaters, fisherman and kayakers, thousands of people converge on Whittier. The town is flooded with tourists, stressing the few facilities that are there for the public to use.

Thinking into the future, Whittier is planning for a big growth spurt. Projects include the construction of a road to Shotgun Cove for residential development, additional shopping areas on the waterfront, and construction of a new marina and harbor master's office near the dock facilities. Time will tell how this growth will affect the community and its nearby natural resources.

SEWARD

Seward is now proudly known as the gateway to Kenai Fjords National Park. This, however, is not a title that was always embraced by this small coastal town sitting at the head of Resurrection Bay. During the late-1970's passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands

Conservation Act (ANILCA), the act that officially created the National Park, the city council passed a resolution opposing such designation.

How the times have changed. Seward nowadays is a top tourist destination. Business has grown because of the park. Whether its cruises of the fjords, premier fishing trips, sea kayaking, visiting Exit Glacier, or Fourth of July festivities, Seward has something for everyone.

Still the community struggles with tough issues. Long-time residents are expressing concern with rapid changes to downtown, including the building of new Park facilities. Locals are also expressing concern with the need to strike a balance between pollution from shipyards, cruise ships, and fish processing and protecting the natural amenities that make Seward a desirable place to live and visit.

HOMER

Homer used to be an Alaskan secret. Not anymore. Throughout the years, many magazines have highlighted Homer in their tales of Alaska and this town, overlooking Kachemak Bay, is a favorite spot for tourists from Alaska and around the world. Homer is the staging grounds for many adventures to Southwest Alaska. If you are headed to Katmai or Lake Clark National Parks,

or visiting Kachemak Bay State Park, there are many business in town that can show you the way.

Concerned with over-use of Kachemak Bay State Park, residents are currently mounting a campaign to create better and safer access to the park, provide needed maintenance to trails, and construct basic facilities. In addition to finding a balance with tourism, locals are also working to protect their community from the harmful effects of coal bed methane development and the possibility of Homer becoming a staging area for mining activities in the Bristol Bay area.

Alaska's unparalleled access to wilderness and recreation activities on public lands and waters has a profound impact on the character of Alaskan towns. While these activities provide the opportunity for sustainable recreation tourism economies, many towns face pressure both from rapid growth and development of large-scale extractive industries such as oil and gas production mining, and logging. Both of these can conflict with the very thing that draws locals and tourists: the unique character of Alaskan lifestyles and natural beauty. Preserving that character even as we grow and change is critical to maintaining an Alaska we want to call home.



DENALI NATIONAL PARK is a popular destination for travelers from Alaska and around the world.

TAKE PRIDE IN ANCHORAGE



by Andre Camara, Anchorage Issues Coordinator

FINDING WILDERNESS RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES IN ALASKA'S LARGEST CITY

Alaska is an outdoor enthusiast's paradise. But don't forget, you don't have to leave town to enjoy nature's splendor. Thanks to the foresight of city planners, leaders, and volunteers, Anchorage provides a wide variety of activities waiting city limits. Anchorage boasts over 10,000 acres of municipal parkland encompassing 200 parks, salmon-bearing streams, over 250 miles of trails and greenbelts, and abundant wildlife. These parks, trails and natural areas are unrivaled among most U.S. cities, and are an essential component of our quality of life and economic vitality.

Anchorage parks and trails afford residents and visitors the opportunity to experience wild Alaska without

stepping outside of the city. Places like Chester Creek Greenbelt, Ship Creek, and Kincaid and Bicentennial Parks bring the great outdoors right to our backyard. Wildlife viewing is a year-round attraction and within Anchorage's boundaries you can see bears and moose roaming streets or trails, observe a wide variety of birds in their natural habitats, and watch Beluga whales chase the incoming fish. As Mayor Begich likes to brag, there are very few cities in the world where it is possible to land a 45-pound king salmon and then walk to see a Broadway play and eat at a four-star restaurant.

There are scores of uses for Anchorage parks- athletic events, nature appreciation, neighborhood celebrations, youth activities, arts

festivals, and musical and theatrical events. Virtually every Anchorage resident has memories of one or more of the city's parks, whether it is a childhood experience at a playground or yesterday's walk on a neighborhood trail. As Anchorage continues to grow, our parks, greenbelts, trails and natural open spaces will play an important role in the quality of life that residents have come to enjoy and depend on.

Unfortunately, park systems do not just "happen." Wild areas don't automatically protect themselves from development and funding doesn't just appear from thin air. The Anchorage Parks are a world class system because of the forward thinking and hard work of community activists and city leaders. To ensure the future success of the parks, the city of Anchorage recently finished revising its 18-year old 'Park, Natural Open Space and Recreation Facility Plan' to reflect current and future recreation, economic, demographic and land use trends. Dedicated citizens and community officials put in countless hours over the past few years to make this plan as comprehensive as possible and it will be a guiding force for park maintenance and improvements for years to come.

In addition to a comprehensive plan with community buy-in, a second necessity for park success is adequate funding. The defeat of the Parks Bonds in this spring's municipal elections was a set back for park funding, but luckily there are several other sources of money to provide for parks. Established in 2004, the Anchorage Park Foundation was created to raise



GLEN ALPS IN CHUGACH STATE PARK is just one of many beloved parks and trails within the Anchorage city limits. (photo by Richard Stromberg)

money to meet the parks and recreation needs of the community, and bridge the gap between growing needs and limited financial resources. And this year, the state legislature approved \$4.8 million to improve city parks and facilities, including \$1 million for Chugiak Senior Center, \$500,000 for the South Anchorage Sports Complex and \$1.5 million for Kincaid Park improvements.

As well as the individuals and government officials who work on behalf of the parks, there are many organizations working together to ensure the growth and success of parks, including Anchorage Waterways Council, Alaska Community Foundation, Rasmuson Foundation, Anchorage Park Foundation and Alaska Center for the Environment. If we all work together, we can ensure that Anchorage's parks continue to be a lasting legacy for generations to come.

ENJOYING ANCHORAGE'S AMENITIES

Here are some great web sites to help you enjoy your Anchorage park experience:

Anchorage Parks Department:
www.muni.org/parks/index.cfm

Trail Maps available at:
munimaps.muni.org/trails/reference.htm

Fishing information for Ship Creek:
www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us/Region2/weekly/update.cfm?area_key=1

Trailwatch:
www.muni.org/TrailWatch/

Volunteer Opportunities, such as Adopt-a-Park or Adopt-a-Trail:
www.muni.org/parks/volunteer.cfm

ANCHORAGE'S TOP TEN PARK TREASURES

1. The Coastal Trail

The Coastal Trail is Anchorage's most popular walking, biking, and jogging trail. It winds gently along the coast for 11-miles, from downtown to the chalet at Kincaid Park.

2. Kincaid Park

Kincaid Park offers the easiest way to get deep in the woods right in town. This 1400-acre forest sits atop an old glacial moraine and offers one of America's top trail systems as well as Anchorage's largest moose population.

3. Glen Alps and Flattop Mountain

Flattop is Alaska's most visited peak. Ascend the 1.5-mile, 1,350 vertical foot trail to the rocky, football field-sized summit in about an hour and take in panoramic views from Mt. McKinley to the Aleutian Islands.

4. Eagle River Nature Center

Forty minutes from downtown lies Eagle River Nature Center, a gateway to Chugach State Park and a glacial river valley as wild and dramatic as any in Alaska.

5. Chester Creek Trail

The Chester Creek Trail follows a flat, forested, mountain-fed creek 6 miles from Westchester Lagoon, near downtown, to Russian Jack Springs Park. Cross wooden bridges, linger at waterfowl-filled ponds, and pass through grassy parks.

6. Turnagain Arm Trail

The Turnagain Arm Trail, ten miles south of downtown, traverses mountainsides above the Seward Highway. This hike offers breathtaking views of Turnagain Arm.

7. Bird Ridge Trail

One of many highlights along the scenic Seward Highway, Bird Ridge Trail climbs 3,000 feet in a little more than a mile to magnificent views of the fjord-like Turnagain Arm.

8. Far North Bicentennial Park

Explore the 4000-acre Far North Bicentennial Park to experience true wilderness within Anchorage.

9. Campbell Tract

The well-maintained trails of the BLM's 730-acre Campbell Tract Facility are open for non-motorized recreation, from hiking to horseback riding. Bordered on three sides by city parklands-including Far North Bicentennial Park-the tract creates an unbroken connection to the Chugach Mountains to the east. The tract is also home to the Campbell Creek Science Center, which provides outdoor education programs including ACE's Trailside Discovery Program.

10. Your Favorite Park or Trail

With so many parks and trails to choose from, it is impossible to pick just 10. From the playground at the end of your street, to the vast expanse of Chugach State Park, each place holds a special value for the people who use it and is important in its own way.

HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE HUNTER

TIPS ON ALASKA'S HUNTING RULES AND REGULATIONS

Hunting in Alaska is a unique and special opportunity. Many Alaskans choose to hunt to reconnect with the land, and the meat is usually healthier than store-bought products, which are higher in fat and often laced with antibiotics and hormones. When done properly, hunting wild game also takes a lesser toll on the land than large scale cattle ranches and poultry farms.

With hunting comes a responsibility to protect and give back to the land and wildlife that provides for us. Before your next hunt, familiarize yourself with the rules of the unit you plan to hunt in and the regulations of the species you will be hunting. **You can review the rules and report your hunting activities**

at www.wildlife.alaska.gov/

To help you get started, here is a list of the some of most commonly violated Alaska hunting regulations and statues.

- **Familiarize yourself with protected streams** in the “Anadromous Waters Catalog and Atlas” (found at the Fish and Game offices) to ensure you will not cross a stream with your motorized vehicle in which salmon, steelhead, sea run cutthroat and a slew of other fish spawn, rear, or migrate.
- **Hunting parties cannot share permits or tags, or fill each others’**

bag limits.

- **You should know who owns the land** where you are going to hunt. State Park, State Refuge, federal land, native corporation land, military land? Are you in the unit that you were awarded or assigned to? Is it a closed area or a controlled use area and are you educated on the differences between hunting rules? You should know exactly where you are hunting and familiarize yourself with boundaries of federal versus state versus private lands. Not all public land is open to hunting and regulations vary depending on who owns the land. You cannot hunt on National Park land, for example.

WILDLIFE VIEWING HITS THE HIGH SEAS

HOW TO VIEW WILDLIFE RESPONSIBLY ON YOUR NEXT BOATING ADVENTURE

by Butch Allen, Oceans Program Coordinator

Summer is here and the open ocean calls. Whether you are heading out in a kayak or a Bayliner, Alaskan oceans are full of opportunities for wildlife viewing. Here are a few tips that can help you get the most out of marine wildlife encounters, from Prince William Sound to Kachemack Bay.

Learn before you go. Read about the wildlife, viewing sites and local regulations to get the most from your wildlife viewing experience. Many species live only in specific habitats such as estuaries, coral reefs, sand dunes or the open ocean.

Keep your distance. Use technology (binoculars, spotting scopes and cameras with zoom lenses) not proximity to get a closer look. Marine wildlife may be very sensitive to human disturbance, and if cornered, they can harm the viewer or leave the area. If wildlife approaches you, stay calm and slowly back away or place boat engines in neutral. Remember: wildlife always has the “right of way.”

Hands off. Never touch, handle or ride marine wildlife. Touching wildlife, or attempting to do so, can injure the animal, put you at risk and may also be illegal for certain species. The slimy coating on fish and many marine invertebrates protects the animal from infection and is easily rubbed off with a hand, glove or foot.

Do not feed or attract marine wildlife. Feeding or attempting to attract wildlife with food, decoys, sound or light disrupts normal feeding cycles, may cause sickness or death from unnatural or contaminated food items, and habituates animals to people.

Lend a hand with trash removal. Human garbage is one of the greatest threats to marine wildlife. Carry a trash bag with you and pick up litter found along the shore and in the water. Plastic bags, floating debris, and monofilament line pose the greatest risk to wildlife.



(Adapted from the Watchable Wildlife Marine Viewing Working Group, made up of representatives from the National Park Service; NOAA Fisheries, Office of Protected Resources; NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries; The International Ecotourism Society; U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society; Wildlife Conservation Society; and Watchable Wildlife, Inc. For more information about marine wildlife viewing and this working group, visit www.watchablewildlife.org.)

HELPFUL GUIDELINES FOR MAXIMIZING YOUR FISHING EXPERIENCE WHILE MINIMIZING YOUR IMPACT ON ALASKA'S MAGNIFICENT SPORTFISHERIES

by Kyle Kolodziejski, Sportfishing Program Director and Professional Guide, Alaska Wildland Adventures

Whether you fish for fun, food, or both, there are several things to prepare and consider before leaving home and making your first cast. One of the first questions anglers should ask themselves before making their way to the water is, "Am I going to catch and release or catch and retain?" Making this decision in advance can enhance your fishing experience as well as minimize your impacts on the sportfishery. The following list, while not comprehensive, contains some helpful guidelines to employ while you're out fishing this summer.

CATCH AND RELEASE.

When using this method, having the right tools and being efficient while handling fish are paramount in keeping fish mortality rates as low as possible. Here are some things to consider before and during your time on the water:

Is my camera ready and do I know how to use it?

Am I using barbless hooks? Are they the right size for the fish I'm after? Using barbless hooks in the right size will aid in fast and easy hook removal as well as prevent unnecessary damage to the mouth of the fish.

Am I using the appropriate line test? When in doubt use a heavier line to avoid breaking fish off and to help land fish faster.

Land fish quickly to avoid overly exhausting the fish. Try to fight and land the fish in slow moving or still water.

Do I need to net this fish? If so, is my net fish-friendly (i.e., rubberized, tangle-free, the right size, etc.)?

When handling a fish: wet your hands first, remove the hook quickly, and always keep the fish in the water. Minimizing your handling of the fish is critical!

CATCH AND RETAIN.

If you plan on keeping fish for food the following are a few things to think

about before putting your first fish on the stringer:

"Waste not, want not" – Take only what you will consume. Be conservative in this regard. Just because the bag limit might read three Sockeye Salmon per day, do you really need that much? If you plan on sharing your harvest with friends or family you might ask them in advance how much they would realistically consume?

Practice "fair chase" angling. Give the fish a fighting chance, release foul hooked fish even if you plan on harvesting. Along these same lines, release blushed or red-colored salmon. Chances are they have already started to spawn and their flesh is not good eating anyway.

Keep fish if you cause them to bleed from the gills, even if they are not the size you were hoping to bring home. Due to differing regulations across the state, be sure you are in compliance in the specific area that you are fishing when practicing this.

Have a means to keep the fish from spoiling to prevent unwanted waste. Did you bleed the gills after retaining? Will I need to bring a cooler of ice for the boat or the long ride home?

Do I have enough room in the freezer at home to store my catch?

Consider keeping trophy fish in the gene pool by settling on taking average size fish rather than the biggest ones.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR AN ETHICAL ANGLER

Use eco-friendly fishing equipment when possible (i.e., use steel or tin weights rather than lead, etc.).

Read and understand all fishing and boating regulations and signage.

Retire old 2-stroke outboards and replace them with newer, quieter, and fuel efficient 4-stroke models.

Be a watch dog, report problems (i.e., pollution, unlawful activities)

Do all that you can and think outside of the box. No one is perfect but we can all strive to be better anglers and stewards of Alaska's wildlands and waterways.

Please contact me at kolodziejski@yahoo.com for further advice, tips, or to give feedback. I wish everyone a safe and successful fishing season. Tight lines!



To book a trip or for more information on Alaska Wildland Adventures fishing program visit: www.alaskasportfish.com or www.alaskawildland.com

WILD CHUGACH



by Bobbie Jo Skibo, Forest Conservation Coordinator

OF SKIS, SNOW MACHINES, AND WILDLIFE: KENAI WINTER ACCESS PLAN DECISION EXPECTED THIS SUMMER

The Chugach National Forest released a draft management plan in late April for motorized and non-motorized winter recreation on the Kenai Peninsula. This is the most significant effort yet by the Forest Service to manage motorized recreation on the ever-popular Kenai in a way that doesn't compromise wildlife, local communities, and the needs of quiet recreationists.

Areas under discussion include: Resurrection Pass, Carter-Crescent Lakes, north and south forks of Snow River, Russian River and Summit/Manitoba.

As part of the 45-day comment period, the Forest Service scheduled a round of collaborative workshops where "citizen planners" could participate in determining the future of winter recreation on the Kenai Peninsula.

ACE joined fellow conservation groups, backcountry enthusiasts, and concerned residents at the workshops to seriously consider the needs of all user groups, and eventually advocated for the most balanced alternative: Alternative 1. Our goal was to encourage responsible use of our public lands—use that leaves the land healthy, protects our wildlife and wildlife habitat, and allows for the continued enjoyment for current and future generations.

Alternative 1 is the best management scenario at achieving a better balance of motorized and non-motorized areas for all users every year. It offers the best mix of terrain and cabin availability, best protects wildlife and wildlife habitat; and ensures that there will always be an opportunity for high-quality quiet recreational experiences on the Kenai.

This was a unique opportunity to develop a more balanced management plan for motorized and non-motorized

recreation on the Kenai Peninsula. Thank you if you were able to comment, and stay tuned for a final decision due out sometime this summer.

For more information and to view the Draft Plan go to: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/>

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Thank you to the community members and organizations of Cordova, Seward, Girdwood, Valdez, Cooper Landing, and Whittier who participated in Chugach Community Collaboration gatherings within the past year. I would also like to thank members of Alaska Citizens for the Chugach for their commitment to this process and for helping to organize and facilitate the events.

Community collaboration workshops are designed to engage members of the public who have a stake in the long term sustainability

of the Chugach National Forest region. Citizens, empowered to become active leaders in their communities, assess the current state of affairs and ultimately identify opportunities that may foster sustainable economies, preserve a high quality of life, and protect the natural resources of this region for current and future generations. Over 10 community gatherings were held and attended by over 200 diverse residents ranging from tribal leaders, political figures, commercial and sport fisherman, other sportsmen, and conservationists.

Some of the opportunities/issues that have been identified include (but are not limited to):

1. The need for more sport fishing education to minimize illegal and unethical practices across the entire forest,
2. The need to engage in the Kenai Winter Access Process to balance motorized and non-motorized winter recreation on the peninsula,



A SKIER enjoys a bluebird day in the Chugach range.

3. The need to designate additional lands in the Kenai River headwaters as part of the Kenai River Special Management Area (KRSMA),

4. The need to study the impacts of consumptive use permits within Prince William Sound,

5. And the need to monitor rapid development occurring within the Girdwood valley.

While most of the meetings within the past year focused on addressing current threats and issues, some communities have also begun discussing the future and their collective vision of what they would like to see 10-50 years from now.

The Chugach is not just a forest or a mountain range; it is our lifestyle, our home, our livelihood, and it represents what we would hope to leave for future generations to enjoy.

In order to sustain our unique way of life, I strongly believe that collaboration



MEMBERS OF THE CHUGACH CITIZENS COALITION gather at a retreat earlier this year to discuss the issues affecting their communities.

needs to be prioritized in order to find realistic solutions which balance conservation and the responsible use of our natural resources.

Community gatherings are currently being scheduled for Fall/Winter 2006.

To organize a community collaboration gathering or to get involved with the Alaska Citizens for the Chugach, please contact Bobbie Jo Skibo at 907-240-0539 or Bobbiejo@akcenter.org

FOR YOUR SAFETY AND FOR THE BEARS: TIPS FOR LIVING IN BEAR COUNTRY

Human-bear conflicts on the Kenai have been in the news in recent summers, and the Brown Bear population on the Peninsula is a species of special concern due to low numbers. With increasing pressure on the Peninsula's salmon runs and trails, bear safety is more important than ever. Be sure to follow these basic guidelines when fishing and camping this summer.

KEEP ALASKA'S BEAR'S WILD AND OUR NEIGHBORHOODS SAFE:

- Store pet food inside or in bear-resistant containers. Do not leave unattended food bowls outside.
- Take down bird feeders during active bear season (April 1- Nov 1)
- Install electric fences to keep bears out of livestock areas
- Use bear-resistant trash containers
- After a fishing trip, keep fish waste indoors until garbage pick-up day or drop-off directly at landfill after fishing. Store fish nets and lines indoors.

Go to www.alaskabears.alaska.gov for more information



EXXON RE-OPENER UPDATE

Thanks to all of the ACE members who called or wrote the Governor and their state legislators to urge the state to move the Exxon Re-opener forward. As a result of your hard work, the state legislature passed HJR 9 to pressure the Governor to trigger the Re-opener clause. As of this printing...insert update here...Please check www.akcenter.org for the latest updates.

JUNEAU WATCHDOG



by Emily Doherty, Juneau Watchdog

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP 2006

The theme for this year's legislative session was oil tax, oil tax, and more oil tax. However, the legislature did take some time to address the environment, for better and for worse. When the dust settled, Alaska's environment fared well, with few threat bills making the finish line and even a few positive bills left standing at the closing bell. Here are some highlights from the 24th Alaska Legislature 2nd Session.

POSITIVE BILLS PASSED THIS SESSION:

House Concurrent Resolution 30 creates an 11 person Climate Change Commission to assess the potential economic, health, environmental and social impact of climate change on Alaska and to then prepare a plan which offers ways to proactively mitigate and/or prevent the problems. The bill

received unanimous support from both the House and Senate.

House Joint Resolution 9, Pay Up Exxon, urges Congress to push Exxon to finish pending litigation and pay the punitive damages to victims of the spill, and also urges the state to file the "Re-opener for Unknown Injury" clause in order to claim the full \$100,000,000 potentially available to the state and affected communities.

House Bill 420, Riparian Protection Standards for Forest Resources & Practices, sets statewide riparian standards within the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act for tree "buffer zones" for rivers and streams containing anadromous or high-value fish. The bill is the result of a collaborative working group that included ACE's own Eric Uhde.

House Bill 307, establishing the Knik River Public Use Area, provides funding for three enforcement officers to address the lawlessness which has plagued the area for decades. It also allows Department of Natural Resources to consider implementing user fees as part of their future management plan. Thanks to Rep. Stoltze, Senator Huggins and Senator Green for responding to the problems facing local residents and users of this very special place.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY GAINS MOMENTUM

House Bill 445, the most successful of a flurry of alternative energy bills this session, was well-received but didn't clear the finish line this year. With virtually no fuel costs and with increasingly affordable and efficient technologies, renewable energy is poised to bring significant environmental, health, and economic benefits to urban and rural communities. The bill would have set up a grant program with funding tied to oil production, spurring the creation of reliable and reasonably priced supplies of energy. Watch for renewable energy to continue to be a popular favorite with Juneau's lawmakers next year.

THREAT BILLS PASSED THIS SESSION:

House Bill 318, Eminent Domain Prohibition, prevents private to private land transfers for economic development or the taking of a landowner's residence for recreational purposes. The bill incorporates a double standard that would protect



homeowners from takings for a trail project, while at the same time leaving them vulnerable to acquisition for mining, logging, and oil and gas development. We supported the prohibition of taking land for private development, but the recreational trail provision was clearly targeted at the Anchorage Coastal Trail, an issue better left to the local community.

For a full rundown of bills we were tracking and their final status, visit: www.akcenter.org/pages/programs/legislature/index.html

CAPITAL BUDGET

STAMPEDE ROAD PROJECT CUT FROM CAPITOL BUDGET

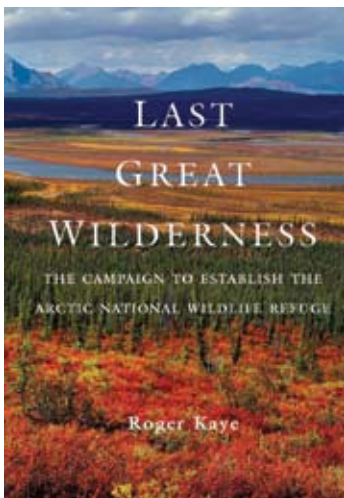
The Governor had requested \$9 million for a Stampede Road Project, an effort to bulldoze a northern access route into Denali National Park via the Stampede Road corridor. The National Park Service and the majority of local residents in the Healy area have been consistently opposed to this project, and after the public outcry the Stampede Road was removed from the capital project.

LEGISLATURE FAILS TO SUPPLEMENT FEDERAL FUNDING FOR BRIDGES AND ROADS TO NOWHERE

The legislature kept Murkowski's proposed federal funding for the "big three" mega projects (Knik Arm Bridge, Gravina Island Bridge, and Road to Juneau) intact. However, they did not contribute any additional funding in the Capitol Budget, leaving all three projects with severe financing shortfalls and casting further doubt on their feasibility.

**you have some space here - what would you like to do with it?
business member? recycling info?**

Could put the book review on the back with the canvass and the calendar.....



Last Great Wilderness: Campaign to Establish the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

By Roger Kaye

Published by University of Alaska Press

In bookstores June 2006

"Never again in American history will an area as vast and wild as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge be protected in a single political action. With extraordinary research skills and the passion of a lifetime spent exploring the Alaskan backcountry; Roger Kaye tells the story of the most aggressive act of wilderness preservation in America."

~Roderick Nash, author of Wilderness and the American Mind

TRAILSIDE DISCOVERY CAMP COMES TO THE MAT-SU



by Thomas Burek, Trailside Discovery Camp Director

The same program that has brought environmental education to Anchorage students for over 20 years is now providing the same great experiences to students in the Mat-Su Valley. Thanks to a partnership with Alaska Pacific University's Spring Creek Farm in Palmer, Trailside is now hosting field trips for Mat-Su classrooms during the school year, in addition to summer camp programs in July and August.

FIELD TRIPS

Trailside will offer day-long outings for classrooms grades 3-6 throughout the school year. Teachers can choose from seven activity-based classes to match their current classroom curriculum and the classes are all designed with learning objectives to support the Alaska curriculum benchmarks. Spring/fall classes include topics such as aquatic ecology, orienteering, forest communities and wilderness survival. As the seasons change, the classes change as well. Winter classes focus on owl study, snow shoeing, winter ecology and outdoor cooking.

The field trips are an excellent opportunity for children to take what they've learned in the classroom throughout the school year and apply that knowledge in hands-on experiments. Spring Creek Farm has extensive grounds which provide students the chance to get outside and study plants in the forest, aquatic life in the streams and learn how to start campfires and cook meals outside.

The program's first sessions last spring were met with great enthusiasm from students and teachers alike. The Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman followed a class from Snowshoe Elementary School this May and interviewed some of the participants. "The kids



STUDENTS learn more about aquatic life by viewing their water samples under microscopes.

are really pumped," teacher Vanessa Powell said in describing her students' enthusiasm leading up to the trip. "I'm excited because this ties into our science curriculum on ecosystems and wetlands." (Davidson, Joel. "Hands-on science." Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman 09 May 2006.).

Trailside is currently scheduling field trips for this fall. To sign up, call 274-KIDS.

SUMMER CAMP

As the fastest growing region in Alaska, the Mat-Su Valley has an ever-increasing need for summer programs for local students. Trailside is proud to offer summer camp programs to Mat-Su children for the 3rd year in a row.

Day programs are based out of the Spring Creek Farm and are available for students ages 6-12. In a similar

style to the programs offered in Anchorage, naturalists lead small groups, teaching natural history and the natural sciences, nature craft and social growth, as well as leadership and outdoor skills. The programs emphasize interactive, enjoyable, hands-on outdoor experiences.

The Mat-Su programs available are: 'Wetlanders Quest,' 'Tributaries to Tundra,' 'Rocks, Ice, Volcanoes, Quakes' and 'Outdoor Skill Adventure 1.' All of the classes take advantage of local geography and travel to uniquely Mat-Su areas such as the Talkeetna Mountains, the Matanuska Glacier and the Eklutna area of Chugach State Park.

Programs are offered July 10-Aug 4. For a detailed schedule and more information, call 274-KIDS.



ACE'S CONSERVATION GIS CENTER MAPS FEATURED IN NATIONAL PUBLICATIONS

by Alan Baldivieso, GIS Analyst

From targeting biological hotspots on the North Slope for priority conservation to identifying salmon rivers downstream of proposed open-pit mines and road right-of-ways through National Parks, maps are often a key resource for understanding complex environmental issues. The Conservation GIS Center has been busy analyzing geographic data and producing accurate and detailed maps to help the conservation community identify threats and prioritize their efforts, and to educate the public at large. Several of those maps have been reproduced for articles in national publications. Below are a few examples of where you can find maps that were made right here at Alaska Center for the Environment.

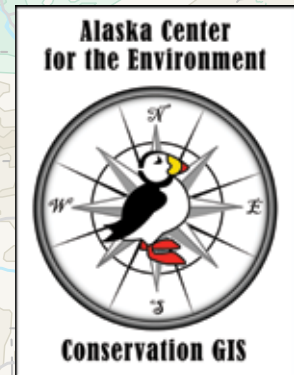
National Geographic Magazine – May 2006 – The ACE Conservation GIS Center provided area expertise and GIS data to National Geographic Magazine for its article on oil development on Alaska's North Slope (*Fall of the Wild*, May 2006). ACE input was used to support the article's companion foldout map on page 54.

Fly Fisherman Magazine – March 2006 – Rivers Threatened by the Proposed Pebble Mine

SUNY Press – 2006 – Oil and Gas Leases on Alaska's North Slope – 'Oil, Globalization, and the War for the Arctic Refuge,' by David M Standlea

National Parks – The Magazine of the National Parks Conservation Association – Summer 2005 – Map of RS2477s in Wrangell St Elias National Park and Preserve

Trout – The Journal of Coldwater Fisheries Conservation (Trout Unlimited) – Fall 2005 – Rivers Threatened by the Proposed Pebble Mine



Member Application/Renewal Form

Now you can donate online at www.akcenter.org.

Individual \$35-\$99 Family \$60-\$99 Advocate \$240-\$499 Champion \$750-\$999
 Student/Senior \$15 Supporter \$100-\$239 Leader \$500-\$749 ACE Visionary \$1000+

Amount \$ _____

Alaska Center for the Environment is Alaska's largest home-grown citizen's group working for the sensible stewardship of Alaska's natural environment. With 7,000 dues-paying members from around the state, Alaska Center for the Environment is your voice for public lands conservation, clean air, clean water, and livable places. The way we win is with our members (that's you). The more members we have, the louder our voice is to promote conservation in Alaska.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Credit Card# _____ Exp. Date _____

Give monthly or quarterly gifts by joining the Puffin Club

Monthly \$ _____ OR Quarterly \$ _____

I have enclosed a check for my first gift or have provided my credit card number above. Please transfer future scheduled gifts in the above amount directly from my checking account/credit card. I understand that future tax deductible gifts will be transferred directly from this account each month or quarterly as indicated above, and that a record of my contributions will appear on my monthly bank/credit card statements. If at any time you wish to increase, decrease, or suspend your giving, simply call ACE at (907)274-3639 and we will gladly accommodate your request.

REQUIRED FOR PUFFIN CLUB: Signature _____ Date _____

Return to: Alaska Center for the Environment • 807 G Street, Suite 100 • Anchorage, AK 99501



For the 11th year in a row, Alaska Center for the Environment campaign organizers will go door-to-door in neighborhoods across Alaska to discuss key environmental issues. It is a part of our summer membership drive and is an important way for ACE to reconnect with past members, renew current ones and reach new audiences. By going door-to-door, ACE is able to learn about the issues you care about and share information on our campaigns. So when you hear that knock at your door, be prepared for an informative discussion and opportunities to take action.

JUNE

June 7: World Oceans Kids Day –Delaney Park Strip, Anchorage

June 10: Alaska Oceans Festival. Noon to 10pm on the West Delaney Park Strip, Anchorage

June 21: Alaska Youth for Environmental Action-Summer Fundraiser, contact Polly Carr at 339-3907 for more information.

JULY

July 23- 29: Wild Chugach Days. Fun events will be taking place in communities across the Chugach National Forest this week. The celebration begins with a kick-off at Begich Boggs Visitor Center on July 23rd and ends in the Chugach Challenge and family picnic on July 29th. Check www.akcenter.org for event details.

AUGUST

Aug 12: 2nd Annual Alaska Renewable Energy Fair, sponsored by Renewable Energy Alaska Project. Noon until 10pm on the Anchorage Delaney Park Strip, between I & L Streets. Free!!!!

Aug 24- Sept 4: Alaska State Fair at the Palmer Fairgrounds. Visit the ACE booth or call Clare to volunteer 274-3626. Volunteers are also needed for Green Star recycling at the fair- contact Jeanne at 278-7839 to sign-up. Volunteers get free parking and admission.

SEPTEMBER- OCTOBER

October 19-22: Bioneers in Alaska at the University of Alaska Anchorage. The mission of Bioneers in Alaska is to stimulate local dialogue and action on all aspects of sustainability, inspired by the Bioneers satellite speakers and the synergy of our local workshops.



Alaska Center for the Environment

807 G Street, Suite 100
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
www.akcenter.org
(907) 274-3621

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 139
ANCHORAGE, AK