

# Wrangell St. Elias News

*"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"*

Volume Fourteen Issue Three

May & June 2005

Two Dollars

## Spring break 2005

"Unbeknownst to him, he was actually riding his Tundra on the edge of a large cornice suspended from the leeward side of the ridge, which hung out over about a thousand feet of nothing but air. With fiendish suddenness, a large crack appeared just under Dave's machine. The precipitous nature of his peril emblazoned itself on his consciousness in a flash. Apart from a real quick miracle, he was goin' down."

Story on page 5.



### **In this issue:**

**Area residents: major changes needed in access handbook** Page 9

**Governor takes action on RS 2477 routes** Page 12

**McCarthy residents fight to keep public lands** Page 13

**How big is the park?** Page 14

**Kennecott planning process** Page 16

**Chitina Leader—1913** Page 20`

## *A note from the publisher*

BY BONNIE KENYON

Spring break-up in McCarthy was short and (fairly) sweet, meaning the slush, water holes, and mud did not last long. Rick even managed to till our garden end of April—a sure sign break-up has run its course.

Everyone I talk to these days is pulling out the stops on getting a jump start on their gardens. We have such a short growing season here in McCarthy that we have to use whatever help we can get. The last week in April teased us with summer temperatures—highs of 70 degrees. I think that spurred on two of my neighbors, Anna Wallin and Laurie Rowland, to take a road trip to SAPA Greenhouses in Kenny Lake. There they found all sorts of amazing green things growing in abundance.

Another neighbor just called – Kevin Smith—telling me what all he had growing in his cabin window. He, too, is basking in the warmth and sunshine of McCarthy's weather these days.

Winter seems long (some say that is because it *is* long!) to those of us who call this place home. That is why we watch closely for the signs of spring and the benefits of summertime.

With outdoor chores calling, it is somewhat challenging to stay put at the computer and get the May/June issue off the computer, into the printer, the stapler/folder machine, into the post office's brown bags and in the mail to you! If you enjoy significant and informative topics relating to the McCarthy/Kennicott area, you will find several in this issue. On the cover is a sample of good fun and adventure with Keith and Laurie Rowland's story *Spring Break 2005!* You will find the entire account beginning on page 5. It is written with Laurie's usual touch—humorous and entertaining. Keith and boys manage to keep Laurie supplied with an abundance of adventures to write about.

If you tried unsuccessfully to reach a friend in the McCarthy area during much of the month of March, the problem might have been the Sourdough repeater site. It received quite an overhaul towards the end of the month. Keith writes an update for us on page 8.

Local residents in the McCarthy/Kennicott area are finding themselves deeply involved in the politics of a recently released National Park Service handbook. The draft publication addresses access to private property in our area and the boundaries of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve.

Because we are being encouraged to comment, town meetings and informative articles have come about since our last issue of *WSEN*. Susan Smith, chairperson for *Residents of the Wrangells*, presents her findings on the draft on page 9. This access handbook as presently written could effect the lifestyle of nearly everyone who calls this area home, whether it is year round or seasonal. If you own land in this area, you will surely want to read Susan's article and be informed.

For such a small community, McCarthy/Kennicott seems to stay on the map and in the news. It is a great place to visit or call "home." We work hard to keep it that way. Thank you, our faithful readers, for your support of this publication which does its best to keep you up on the happenings in our town, whether those happenings are adventuresome or more on the serious note.

*WSEN* welcomes aboard the following subscribers: Paul Bowman, AK; Patrick Bowman, CA; Arny and Leila Blanchard, AK; Mark and Lee Ann Fowler, CA; Douglas Ray Steiner, AK; Michelle Gay Ward, AK; Cecil Cuppett, PA; Court Ogilvie, VA; Jeremy and Allie Keller, AK; Steve Hodges, RI.

**Wrangell St. Elias News** (USPS 011301) VOL. Fourteen, Issue Three, May & June 2005.

Published every two months at McCarthy, Alaska. McCarthy, PO Box MXY, Glennallen, AK 99588-8998. Phone (907) 554-4454. FAX (907) 554-4494 E-mail: [WSEN@wsen.net](mailto:WSEN@wsen.net) "Copyright © 2005 by Wrangell St. Elias News. No part of this publication may be reproduced by any means without the express permission of the publishers."

Contributors to this issue: Peggy Guntis, George Cebula, Neil Darish, Don Welty, Susan Smith, Keith & Laurie Rowland, Stacie Miller, Tim Mowry, Tracy Gressel and Ned Rozell.

Subscription price is \$11 for one year in the USA. Canada \$12.50. Other countries \$20. Advertising rates upon request. Deadline for publication in next issue is June 15.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT GLENNALLEN, AK. 99588.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Wrangell St. Elias News, McCarthy #42, PO Box MXY, Glennallen AK 99588-8998.

# Items of Interest

BY BONNIE KENYON

**Terry and Dee Frady:** An item of utmost interest is the exciting news that the Fradys are relocating their business – *Fireweed Mountain Arts and Crafts* – to Kennicott. “It is the same business, minus Terry’s tire repair, as it has been for the last 14 seasons. Books, gifts, arts and crafts,” says Dee. The move is a “test” for the Fradys and a desire to try something different.

The new setting is the entire top floor of the Jurick Building in downtown Kennicott. Although the view from their original log cabin shop at mile 55 is spectacular, the scenery from up the mountain offers a fresh outlook for the Fradys and our area’s visitors.

Dee says they hope to open Saturday, May 28, in time for the Memorial Day weekend starting with the hours of 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Congratulations, Terry and Dee! We wish you all the best of the season.

**Ralph, Linda, Tyee, Teal, Trae and Robin Lohse:** Now that winter is over, spring is here and summer just around the corner, significant changes occur at Long Lake for the Lohse family. When I called their place today, I discovered from Tyee that the “changes” have already begun – big time! Any day now we expect to hear Teal and Tyee announce purchases of new (to them) fishing boats. A brown bear sow and cub were sighted near their house, the boys and their dad are busy planning their commercial fishing season and Robin, Tyee’s sister, is gearing up for another season for her ice cream/coffee business. *The Copper Cup*, located just south of the Lakina Bridge at about Mile 45 of the McCarthy Road, is a perfect place to pull over and rest

or, if you’re in a hurry, grab of cup of coffee to go or an ice cream cone.

Trae, Teal and Ralph are presently in Tok taking “bird” taxidermy instruction. Linda, I’m sure, is enjoying what is left of the slower-pace of winter and looking forward to visiting other family members in Cordova this summer and spending time with daughter Robin at Long Lake.

**McCarthy students take tests:** The Chugach School District and the Galena City School District (Mat-Su IDEA) teamed up to provide their McCarthy area students with facilities, a teacher and a proctor to oversee the administering of Standards Based Assessment tests.

On April 5-7, Kaleb, David, Daniel and Hannah Rowland as well as Tracey and Carl Gressel, Kelsey Smith and Tessa Bay met at the McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church to be tested in Reading, Writing and Math. Chugach teacher (and McCarthy resident) Cynthia Shidner and Bonnie Kenyon, also of McCarthy, and proctor for Galena, administered the tests and provided oversight to the students. The grades represented ranged from 4 to 10.

**Troy says, “Thanks!”** in his own words: “As most of you already know, my house (the tree house), burned to the ground on March 17<sup>th</sup>. The fire took all my food, clothes, bedding, pictures, and many personal items that can never be replaced. But, thanks to all of you, most anything that one can think of was promptly replaced by friends and neighbors. I can’t easily express how lucky this makes me feel to live here with all of you. This has reaffirmed what drew me to live here in the first place. It’s not so much the people or the scenery as it is the beauty of the people living in this area. I would

like to say thank you for all the generosity, helping hands, and kind words. Thank you!”

**Long Lake fish derby is a success:** March 26 started and ended as a beautiful, fulfilling day for the people who attended the first Long Lake fishing derby. The event was the brain storm of Jim Kreblin who lives on the lake. Approximately 20 adults, teens and young people turned up to test the multiple ice holes that the earlier arrivals drilled for those of us who filtered in at various times. Transportation to the lake was by vehicle, 4 wheelers, snowmachines and airplane.

By the time Rick and I arrived, a lot of fishin’ had been going on! Hannah Rowland (6) was busy pulling out those Dolly Varden trout. One would think by first glance that Hannah had been doing this for years. However, this was her (and all the Rowland kids’) first fishing adventure. I could tell by the look on Hannah’s face it wouldn’t be the last!

Although there were prizes, such as tackle boxes and lures, (I think Jim is trying to lure us all back to the lake next year) for all participants, the last word is that Lynn Welty brought in the largest Dolly with Kaleb Rowland a “very” close runner-up.

Mark Vail and Jubal Rowland hauled in the “most unusual and rarest” of all – Mark, a frog, Jubal, a tuna. For some reason, I had the feeling that Mark had these rare catches stashed for such a time as this! (For you outside-of-McCarthy readers, the tuna and frog were not living specimens, only look-alikes.)

Not everyone wet a line, but there was plenty of excitement to go around for those who did—well, except for John Adams who seemed to find all the fishing clatter relaxing.

He actually managed to get a few winks in spite of the noise.

Seeing John's lack of enthusiasm, Jim must have been prompted to bring out the food. That got everyone's attention. Mark and Jim had expertly put together homemade chili. Did that ever taste good!

The day was ended with a bonfire on the lake and a "curling-with-the-milk-jug competition." The milk jugs were filled with frozen ice. Tyee says there were no prizes for this event, just a fun thing to do. Frankly, I think the entire day was filled with fun things to do at the lake. I'm hoping this year's Long Lake fishing derby is just the beginning of good things to come!

**Church fish fry:** The majority of the fish caught at the "derby" went to feeding a multitude of local church goers on April 3 at the McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church. Ralph Lohse was the head fryer for the occasion and there was more than enough deep fried fish to go around. In fact, plates of left-over fish and hush puppies were sent home with several people. Many thanks to Don Welty and Tyee Lohse for the tedious job of cleaning and fileting the fish.

**Don, Lynn and Rene Welty:** The Welty family enjoyed a "long, spring break" this year, says Lynn. The third week in March daughter Sarah took a break from her studies at University of Alaska Fairbanks and joined her family once again for a stretch of outside fun with friends and neighbors. Time was spent snowmachining, cross country skiing and snowboarding.

Life has returned to normal now at the Welty homestead. Don left for hunting camp, Lynn, Rene (and Sarah) returned to their studies.

The south windows of their cabin are overflowing with vegetable starts for the garden and greenhouse. Lynn and I are convinced spring is here early this year and we are not complaining!

**Howard and Chris Haley:** The remaining snow won't last long at today's temperatures. It is April 29<sup>th</sup> and at 70 degrees one would think it is summer instead of spring. Rick and I took our walk down the road a few minutes ago and met Chris on her 4 wheeler. She was out enjoying the day with two friends from Valdez. The two 4 wheelers were not only carrying the 3 adventurers but also a picnic cooler complete with sandwiches, said Chris. They were headed up to Kennicott and maybe beyond to find themselves a nice, quiet spot for a spring picnic.

I forgot to ask Chris where Howard was stashed, but on further thought I figured he stayed home to finish up the dry wall project on their new addition. I'm sure he is eagerly looking forward to finishing that project so he can start another; this time it will be his shop. I know he has plenty of ideas for making good use of that building.

**Hannah Rowland:** Hannah is an eager student. Lately, however, she is more-than-eager to complete her studies. She and her mom, Laurie, are planning a trip to California. Hannah can hardly wait until May 23 rolls around.

Seeing "Grandpa and Grandma Person" is the reason for her visit to Willow, CA. She will stay until the first week of July when she will accompany her Aunt Carla back to McCarthy. Laurie will return after a week's stay.

Hannah tells me she will attend a piano concert given by her cousin Katherine Harris. Therefore, her suitcase will include at least one dress to wear to this very special occasion. Have a great time, Hannah, Your adventure will make a good item of interest!

**Announcement:** News of the retirement of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park's Asst. Superintendent/Chief Ranger Hunter Sharp has reached the desk of WSEN. Joining him in retirement is his wife, Devi Sharp, Chief of Re-

source Management. According to a park service spokesman, the Sharps will be leaving their posts around the first of June. Their future plans include selling their home in Copper Center, purchasing a sail boat and leaving the area sometime in the fall. We wish them safe sailing in the days ahead.

**Copper Valley Arts and Crafts Fair July 2, 3 & 4<sup>th</sup>:** I know July is a long ways off, but just in case our next issue doesn't get into your hands until after the holiday, I encourage you to make note of this year's annual event. You might want to include it on your personal calendar of items of interest.

The fair is a perennial favorite with many Alaskan artisans and food vendors - a great venue to sell handmade art and craft goods and food. The location is at the hub of the Glenn and Richardson Highways. For information on how to be involved, you may contact Arlene Rosenkrans at 822-5111 or email: [cvedc@vinternet.net](mailto:cvedc@vinternet.net).

**Public Notice**

"Claim of Ownership of Abandoned Vehicles by Private Property Owner- McCarthy"

(In the spirit of offering an attractive welcome to visitors and locals.)

Dave Syren as the owner of Lot 1 BLK 6 of the West McCarthy Subdivision and under provisions of Alaska Statute (AS 28.11.025) is claiming ownership of all abandoned vehicles per (AS 28.11.020 & AS 28.11.030) within the subdivision easement and/or on platted lot at above location (i.e. East end of West McCarthy pedestrian bridge over main Kennicott River Channel). All vehicles will be sold or destroyed unless removed by June 15, 2005. Unattended vehicles not properly licensed, placarded, and insured are subject to removal after June 15, 2005. For further information please contact Dave Syren at (907) 274-9046.

# Spring break '05!

BY KEITH & LAURIE ROWLAND

**M**CCARTHY, AK—March is our favorite time of year here in the Wrangell Mountains. Rivers are frozen highways, snow is at its maximum depth, skies are often clear, and a returning sun means even a nippy night turns into a pleasant afternoon. All winter long we dream of places to go and things to do. The children work hard at their school lessons, and then—“YIPPEE!” It’s a Friday afternoon in March, school is out, and spring break is finally here.

We always try to share our spring break with a passel of out-of-town friends and relations. This year our spring fun crew consisted of Fairbanksans Dave, Renée, Lee, Wyatt, and Ben Persón; Jay, Kim, Erin and Nick Williams; Scott, Kathy, Wil, Lora and Sara Randby, and Jeff Green. The following is an account of this year’s activities.

Saturday, March 12—Our friends and relations all arrived at the end of the McCarthy Road with pickups sagging under the ponderous weight of multiple snowmachines, sleds, fuel, food, gear, and people. Excitement and anticipation shone from each eager face amidst the hustle and bustle of getting all the machines and gear unloaded and everyone comfortably settled in.

Sunday, March 13—After the morning service and lunch at McCarthy Kennicott Community Church, we pointed our snowmachines towards Bonanza Bowl, halfway up the mountain behind the Kennecott Millsite. Five feet of powder was awaiting our twenty-one snowma-

chines, skis, snowboards, and more than 30 bodies. Although increasing cloud cover made it hard to see the terrain, snow fun seemed inevitable.

For a couple hours, some of the boys bombed around on Tundras and an Élan while other kids skimmed down the slopes on skis



Photo courtesy the authors

Upper Young Creek. (l to r): Dave, Jeff, Scott, René, Lee, Wil, & Don

and snowboards. The men were doing the important and necessary chore of carting these future Olympiads on snowmachines up the hills to ever higher jumping off places (also high-marking and doing jumps), while the women at the top of the bowl cheered and hooted them all on to greater feats of bravado.

Old and young alike were having a great time—until. Don’t you just hate the ‘untils’ of life? Of course, in retrospect, the light was bad, we had already had enough fun, we should have quit half-an-hour earlier—but how could anyone have known? At any rate, all were having fun—until Erin, René, and Lora, all in their mid-teens, were making their second snowboard run—

*lickety-sizzle!*—down a near-vertical slope.

Somewhere near the middle, Erin went down. As she did, her right arm flung out behind her and, in that awkward and unyielding position, received the whole weight of her body as it came crashing down. Her screams filled the air and she instinctively began holding her arm to try to relieve the blinding pain. By the time someone reached her, it was obvious that something was badly wrong with her arm.

Using belts and scarves, we stabilized Erin’s arm as best we could, then headed slowly back down the bumpy snowmachine trail in a long, woebegone procession. The roar of twenty-one snowmachines was not quite sufficient to drown out Erin’s screams. We offered her mom some earplugs, and

kept going.

When we finally got back to our house, all the men over the age of 11 began preparations for the big Young Creek overnight expedition, the women and children cranked ice cream, and Erin’s parents, Jay and Kim, loaded her into the Suburban to take her to Crossroads Medical Center in Glennallen.

Monday, March 14—First thing in the morning, the phone rang. It was Jay, calling from Kenny Lake. A wee-hours inspection at Crossroads had revealed that the arm had not been broken, as we suspected. Instead, it turned out that she had dislocated her shoulder. Medical staff had repaired the shoulder, and the Williams were returning to McCarthy as quickly as their rig would safely carry them! Jay promised to

try to catch up to us at Young Creek as soon as possible.

The Young Creek party included Keith and sons Kaleb and David Rowland; Dave and son Lee Persón; Scott and son Wil Randby; Jeff Green; and Don and daughter René Welty. For you sled-heads who might be interested in our machines, we had mostly Tundras and Bravos, one Skandic LT, two 700 RMKs, and one Long-track Arctic Cat. One of the RMKs was being driven by René, who had been promised this treat by her dad as a reward for singing a solo in our church Christmas program. I assure you, she was smiling.

Once out of McCarthy and across the Nizina River, we began winding our way up the Young Creek drainage. As we broke trail through the deep snow—I on my Skandic, David on our Tundra, and Kaleb coming along behind on the 700 RMK pulling our gear in a sled—the only other tracks we could see belonged to wolf, moose, and wolverine. There were few obstacles, so we all reached Big Bend Lakes, 46 miles from our home, before noon.

But wait! Where are Scott, Jeff, and Kaleb? Soon we saw them coming—on two machines. And I could see that Kaleb was double-riding with Scott. Oh, no... where's my ticket to fun, my ego-creating high-marker, my super-duper powder machine, my indispensable toy, my 700 RMK paddle-track???

"Uhhh, Keith?" Scott mumbled, "The track locked up on your RMK, and we couldn't get it going. The chain case is smoking hot and seems to be out of oil. It doesn't

look real good. By the way, we scorched the drive belt trying to get it to move. Your machine is down at the end of the lake."

*Oh, great, I muttered as I turned away, That was a brand new \$75 belt they just ruined!* I decided



Photo courtesy the authors

The author, having fun

I'd look at the machine after we set up camp, so Kaleb, David and I packed down some snow and set up our 10' x 10' Arctic Oven tent. Then we unrolled our sleeping bags and threw our gear in. Home, sweet home.

My machine was less than a mile from our camp. I took my tool kit and began investigating the problem. It was indeed the chain case. An oil seal had failed, the chain case had run out of oil, gotten real hot, and exploded. I disassembled the chain case and was able to free up the track, but the machine was now unable to function. Disgusted, I simply left it where it was.

So much for the ego-creating, high-marking, super-duper powder hurling 700 RMK paddle-track.

Once everyone had their respective camps set up, we began to have fun. Kaleb and David, the youngest of the party, stayed near the lakes and camp. They had brought fishing gear, muskrat traps, .22s, and snowshoes, which they immediately began putting to good use. They snowshoed around the willow

patches and shot ptarmigan. They searched for muskrat pushups on the lake, which they carefully opened, then placed #1 stop-loss traps. In the in-between times, they augured some holes through the ice to try for grayling. It was a Boys' Paradise.

Meanwhile, the rest of us headed for the steepest country we could find for some real technical riding. We went several miles up Canyon Creek, but the snow was so deep and soft that most of the machines were having trouble on the level. Next, we climbed MacColl Ridge, spending the rest of the afternoon roaming the peaks, taking turns losing control and rolling our machines down the mountain.

Sometime in the afternoon, we spotted far below us a lone snowmachine approaching our camp. It was Jay. He dropped his sled, found our tracks, and was soon hightailing it up the slopes toward us.

It was dark that night when we returned to camp, and the odometer on my Skandic showed 92 miles for the day. Satisfied with our day's adventures, the boys and I turned into our bags in the Arctic Oven for a good night's sleep.



Photo courtesy the authors

René Welty at Pyramid Peak

Tuesday, March 15—We woke up to clear skies, cooler temperatures, and dramatically improved snow conditions. This day's ride would be up the left fork of upper Young Creek. There are numerous small cirque glaciers flowing from Pyramid Peak, and we climbed them all, as well as some on the other side of the valley. There were more demonstrations of unique machine rolling techniques on the steep slopes. All impromptu, of course.

Overall it was a pleasant and exhilarating day, but we did have one tense moment. We were at 5000 feet on the pass between Young Creek and Copper Creek, and Dave was cheerfully riding his Tundra on top of the ridge—or so he thought. Unbeknownst to him, he was actually riding his Tundra on the edge of a large cornice suspended from the leeward side of the ridge, which hung out over about a thousand feet of nothing but air. With fiendish suddenness, a large crack appeared just under Dave's machine. The precipitous nature of his peril emblazoned itself on his consciousness in a flash. Apart from a real quick miracle, he was goin' down.

Dave suddenly exploded into frantic action. Straining every fiber of his being, he lunged toward the left and safety, pulling maniacally up on his handlebars as he did so. At the last moment, he let go of the handlebar of his sagging machine and made a desperate leap for terra firma. With only one ski resting on the edge of the embankment and the rest of the snowmachine lodged half in, half out of the yawning chasm, it seemed Dave had his miracle after all. Neither he nor his machine went down. But he stayed a little further from the edge from then on.

Early that afternoon, we headed back to camp for our gear. While we were gone, Kaleb and David had caught two muskrats and shot several ptarmigan, but struck out on grayling. We roped the skis of the damaged RMK to the Skandic, and headed for home.

We all arrived without incident at Rowland Headquarters in McCarthy and discovered that the women had prepared a sumptuous feast topped off with large quantities of homemade ice cream as a fitting finale to our Young Creek Expedition. Ah—it's good to be home.

Wednesday, March 16—A relaxing day. The Williams and Randbys

returned to Fairbanks with glorious memories tumbling around their minds in a big happy jumble. The Persón boys and our kids took advantage of the slow day to make good use of the Rowland ski hill.

Thursday, March 17—Dave, Lee, Kaleb, and I made our bid for the Kennicott Glacier. A few weeks before, Don Welty had flown me around in his Super Cub to scout a route through the chopped-up lateral moraines of the glacier. From the air, we could see that a crevasse field where Packsaddle Glacier joined the Kennicott Glacier could mean the turn-around point of a snowmachine trip.

Starting near Kennecott, we quickly found our way out onto the Root Glacier. Late winter thaws had left an unusually hard crust on the snow, which was ideal for crossing the rocky moraines. Once out on the Root Glacier, we were surprised to get a low altitude buzz from Don in his Super Cub—he was shuttling his family to nearby Donoho Lakes for a family ski day, and checking on our progress.

We soon found our previously reconnoitered route and crossed through the medial moraine onto the ice of the Kennicott Glacier. Now we were on a vast river of ice three miles wide which stretched away toward 16,390-foot Mt. Blackburn, some twenty miles in the distance. After ten miles or so, we gained enough elevation to leave the crusted snow behind, and now we were traveling in sparkling fresh powder. It was a sunny, cloudless day and the sights were incredible. All around us, hulking masses of glacial ice oozed through high mountain passes, falling down in infinitesimally slow motion to join the Kennicott Glacier. Our minds were stretched beyond all limits in the effort to take in the sheer magnitude of our surroundings.

Dave had been leading this trek so far, as I was keeping my digital camera busy. I had warned him that

we would probably have to turn around at Packsaddle Glacier because of the crevasse field that I had seen from the air.

However, when Dave is in the lead, all you see is tail lights. "Crevasses—what crevasses?" was his droll query, as he zoomed relentlessly off toward questionable territory.

We were soon past the obvious danger and onto a large snow field, with nothing between us and lofty, ice and snow-encrusted Mt. Blackburn. We put our machines in "cruise control"—throttles firmly fixed in the wide open position—and before long we found ourselves at the foot of the Behemoth.

Although we were at 5500 feet elevation, more than two vertical miles of mountain rose in majestic splendor above us. Here the snow never completely melts, even in summer, and we could only surmise the immeasurable depth of the ice underneath us. Surrounded by colossal glaciers cascading down sheer cliffs, we stood in hushed wonder at the glorious magnificence of this other-worldly sphere. Into the awed silence came rumblings and grumbings from the mountain itself, as jagged slabs of glacial ice cracked and slid down vertical faces all around us.

We reluctantly started back as evening shadows overtook the sunlight. From our home on the Kennicott River, it was a 70 mile round trip.

This ended our spring break activities. Our friends and relations returned to Fairbanks, our children returned to homeschool, and the glaciers, mountains, and valleys returned to their quiet solitude.

BUT... We are already dreaming and planning for Spring Break '06. God's country is beckoning, and we just can't say 'no'...

## Sourdough repeater site gets power upgrade

BY KEITH ROWLAND

**M**CCARTHY, AK—A few local Copper Valley Telephone customers have noticed a drastic improvement in phone service recently.

Over the winter, local residents in the area who rely on the Sourdough Ridge cell site for phone service were experiencing repeated outages. The generators at the site were “houred out” and the batteries had deteriorated from repeated freezing. Most days the only phone service was during the few hours when the sun’s rays could reach the solar panels at the cell site and generate a minuscule bit of power. Plans got underway to remedy the situation, but the logistics of transporting men and equipment to the remote cell site presented some formidable obstacles.

The Sourdough Ridge cell site consists of two small buildings (8 x 12) connected by a nine-foot catwalk. One building contains two generators and half of the battery pack. The second building houses communications equipment and the

other half of the batteries. The buildings are equipped with a solar array, having 18 panels each.

In late March, plans turned to action when Copper Valley upgraded the site with two new Kubota generators and sixteen dry-cell maintenance-free batteries weighing 700 pounds apiece. This replaced the old system, which used 64 L-16 type batteries weighing 120 pounds apiece.

A five-man crew from CVTC and ABS Alaskan (Alaska Battery Mfg) arrived on March 18 to begin tear-down of the existing system to make room for the new equipment. Transportation was by snowmachines, which were rented from several local residents. The daily round trip from the McCarthy Lodge was 20 miles.

Lift Day was Monday, March 21. Jim Acker of Northern Pioneer Helicopters, Big Lake, AK brought his Huey B-model chopper to transport the heavy freight, which was staged near McCarthy, to the site. This aircraft burns 1½ gallons of fuel per minute and has a maximum lift ca-

capacity of 3,500 pounds. The cost is \$1600 per hour. Jim transported four lifts of battery modules at about 3,000 pounds apiece, and then transported two generators and four propane tanks. On each return trip, he hauled out old batteries or garbage from the site. Jim did an excellent job of precisely placing the ponderous loads on the catwalk between the two buildings, even though the last several trips were hampered by high winds. He completed the work in about two hours and headed back to Big Lake.

Two days later, the site was up and running, and has since been providing reliable service. Richard Hood of Copper Valley Wireless in Valdez has projected the total cost of the upgrade to be in excess of \$100,000.

Plans are underway for further upgrades to the Sourdough site in early June. According to Mr. Hood, “At that time we plan on installing an upgrade to the solar panels that will increase the efficiency of the panel output by 20%, further adding to the power reserve of the site.”

## McCarthy Centennial Project Update

BY NEIL DARISH

**T**he McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum is looking for your input and assistance with the McCarthy Centennial Project.

The scope of the project includes many opportunities for residents to participate in ways that range from creating new exhibit ideas, to the final construction and installation of displays. Much of the project build phase will take place between October 2005 and May 2006.

Imagine the museum as your canvas, what piece of the history puzzle of this town most interests you? Want to work with your neighbors on an interpretive display of a subject you feel is important?

Perhaps your kids could be encouraged to design and build an exhibit on what it was like to grow up in McCarthy in 1926? Maybe this would be a great home schooling project? Are there parallels and contrasts to home schooling today versus how the parents of McCarthy’s children approached education in the past? What would our museum guests learn about ed-

ucation in a remote Alaskan setting, and how has this changed over the last 100 years? An artifact such as a school desk can function as a focal point to a larger story. We have a special advisory board for the Centennial Project, and they can assist in the process of creating an enlightening humanities based exhibit. Wouldn’t the history and perspectives of education in a remote community be best expressed by our own students?

We know that everyone who calls McCarthy home loves the historical context of the area. Now is the time to start thinking of apply-



ing your knowledge, interest and enthusiasm to a subject that appeals to you!

A traveling version of the McCarthy Centennial Project will take place in April of 2006. A box car, donated by the Alaska Rail Road, will stop in Seward, Anchorage and Fairbanks during 3 separate weekends. Inside this boxcar, an exhibit

of interpretive displays will be coordinated with fundraising events in each town to benefit our Museum. The main goal of this traveling version of the McCarthy Centennial Project is to create awareness about our community to fellow Alaskans. Local businesses will appreciate how a successful weekend exhibit in several Alaskan towns will help create

excitement about an area that most Alaskans have known about but many have yet to visit.

How can you get involved? Email the project coordinator (Neil Darish) at: help@mccarthylodge.com or call the lodge at 907-554-4402.

## Area residents: major changes needed in access handbook

BY SUSAN SMITH

When residents of the Wrangell-St. Elias Park (WRST) met last summer with NPS Regional Director Marcia Blaszk and Deputy Director Vic Knox, they were told that a User's Guide was being prepared by federal and state officials to clarify how access would be authorized to privately owned parcels within the park. A draft of *A User's Guide to Accessing Inholdings in a National Park Service Area in Alaska* was released in February.

Comments are being accepted on the document in writing or online until May 13, 2005. As a part of the comment process, meetings were held in March in Anchorage, McCarthy, Slana and Fairbanks. Another meeting was scheduled for early April in the Tok area.

The draft outlines a strict statewide procedure for obtaining permits for access across federal land, charging application, administration, assessment, monitoring, and annual rental fees to landowners. In response, approximately 30 residents packed the Tony Zak house in McCarthy on March 16<sup>th</sup> to meet the new WRST Superintendent Jed Davis and voice their concerns about the existing draft document. WRST Assistant Superintendent Hunter Sharp, Park Planner Vicki Snitzler, Lands Manager Danny Rosencrantz, and Ranger Marshall Neeck were also in attendance.

Superintendent Davis introduced himself and opened with a brief statement. He expressed his desire to work with residents to document their access routes and find solutions which will meet the needs of property owners, yet abide by NPS regulations. Davis acknowledged that members of the greater McCarthy community are an important asset to the park. He encouraged the audience to be frank in their comments, guaranteeing that all suggestions would be taken and considered seriously. He didn't see the draft as a document "set in stone" but rather as a starting point in the process.

Hunter Sharp explained that any private property abutting a state road already had legal access. NPS agency regulations outline how to establish a right-of-way in NPS units nationally, but they were written with lower-48 parks in mind. These regulations make no allowances for the special rights of residents in ANILCA parks. The Department of the Interior set up new regulations for Alaskan parks, but some sections refer back to agency regulations which are unworkable here for NPS and landowners alike.

Vicki Snitzler passed out comment forms and copies of the draft to the audience, informed us of the May 13<sup>th</sup> deadline, and explained that comments could also be written on the NPS web site. Then Davis opened the meeting for comments.

After some discussion about local trails needing permits, I brought up some issues that concerned the *Residents of the Wrangells* organization. The draft cover letter claims it was written to describe how landowners "can secure rights" to access their property. However, ANILCA law already gave private property owners the right to access. NPS is essentially asking landowners to give up their right in exchange for a privilege, accompanied by permits, fees, and restrictions.

NPS quotes Director's Order #53 in their guide, in effect from 2000-2004. This order mandates charging fees to recover costs unless the use "...involves a right rather than a privilege." By definition in this order, a right is based upon property ownership or legislative entitlement, and we clearly have both. NPS regulations should be amended to provide an exemption for Alaskan inholders with respect to fees.

We proposed coming up with a process to document routes currently in use without permits or fees. Landowners abutting designated park roads require no permit. Could all roads to private property be declared park-designated? Or, could a categorical exclusion be applied, as suggested by Governor Frank Murkowski to provide access without permits?

The National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) requires,  
(continued on next page)

in most cases, that assessments be made before rights-of-way are granted. Deputy Director Knox introduced the idea of a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) last year. A number of existing routes with similar traits would be grouped into a class of rights-of-way. NPS would then conduct a PEA for that general class, at their expense, to meet NEPA requirements. Clearly, preparation of individual EAs for each access route would be a daunting and expensive task. The PEA is a novel approach but is not mentioned in the draft.

The governor also suggested creation of an oversight committee to handle ANILCA-related issues and appeals. The current draft offers no appeals process, other than asking for reconsideration by Regional Director Blaszak or suing in federal court. Many in attendance reinforced the need for a board to mediate between NPS and residents when disagreements arise. We also asked if residents could take part in the draft revision process.

Many agreed that future requests to construct rights-of-way across previously undisturbed land may need to be controlled with assessments and some kind of procedure. However, locals who have used their routes to get home for 25 years without NPS interference require special consideration. The draft refuses to recognize any RS2477 rights-of-way or section line easements as legal access.

The draft also proposes permits laden with restrictions, maximum 10-year terms, and possible revocation. Frequency and number of passes could be limited, ranger escorts required, or seasonal use imposed. Annual rental fees are proposed for commercial properties, although ANILCA guarantees use for "economic and other purposes." Monitoring fees would have land-

owners paying NPS personnel to watch over their routes in the future. Residents suggested that monitoring should be funded as a part of the normal NPS budgeting process.

The guide states that the use of motorized vehicles or performance of any maintenance requires a permit. Speakers urged NPS to accept the use of traditional vehicles on our rights-of-way with a certain amount of maintenance allowed, such as filling potholes, clipping willows, snow removal, and clearing of deadfalls or windfalls.

McCarthy residents were almost unanimous in voicing their opposition to permits and fees of any kind and asked for a rewrite of the draft with another comment period. No one wanted to see a final document prepared which would remain largely in its present state, but would become final law.

Two days later, Superintendent Davis and his staff held another meeting in Slana. Again, at least 30 people filled the room to voice opposition to the current User's Guide draft. They, too, objected to the use of permits and fees for current landowners with established rights-of-way. Davis was asked what he needed to see as an end result of this access process. He replied that he wanted folks with developed access to be "hard-lined" on a map, documented, and on file. He mentioned that he is not "married to" the idea of fees.

One man suggested a mere registration process rather than a permitting process for existing routes. A simple form would document the landowner along with the route's location, age, and description of use. This signed form could then become a legal access document for the landowner and his successors.

Trails are a sensitive issue in the Nabesna Road area and discussion centered around improving and

opening additional trails. Several people blamed non-resident recreational users for damage to local trails. Landowners should not be held responsible for these situations and recreational users should be taught low-impact skills or fined for damaging trails. Damage is an enforcement issue, not a landowner fee issue.

Superintendent Davis was asked to support the idea of local volunteers working to improve trail conditions. A large group of local volunteers stands ready to donate time and materials to reopen previously closed trails in the area and build up other trails to prevent damage. He stated that he won't close trails unless resource damage has been assessed.

In closing, Davis stated that a revision of the draft will be prepared; it will be presented a second time for public comment. He sees WRST as a grand experiment. We are a different kind of park from those in the lower-48. WRST is as much about people living a subsistence life-style as it is about wildlife or grandeur. Others outside dream about living as we do; the fact that we are here doing it is important. He feels that it is important that NPS recognize that fact for our sakes and for others across the country. Those comments were met with a burst of applause from the audience.

We are encouraged by what we see in Superintendent Jed Davis. He has brought a well-needed breath of fresh air to the WRST administration. He appears to have a sincere desire to work out the access issue quickly with a solution that landowners can accept. We remain optimistic for a future when access is documented and we can go about our traditional activities on rights-of-way protected for our lives and the future of our families.

---

**"Liberty is not a means to a higher political end. It is the highest political end."**

**—Lord Acton**

## McCarthy Area Council pursues representation for access rights

McCarthy: – Access to private property within the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve is a serious matter for members of the McCarthy Area Council (MAC) these days. The February release of *A User's Guide to Accessing Inholdings in a National Park Service Area in Alaska* brought local residents together around a common denominator – the right to access their homes without permits and fees imposed on them by the National Park Service.

On March 18 twenty-three people – of which the majority were McCa-

rthy area residents – attended a MAC meeting held at the Blackburn Center. The access issue was a major topic on the meeting's agenda. Jeremy Keller, president, opened the discussion by encouraging everyone to submit a written opinion on the user's guide to the National Park Service. Jeremy voiced that he wanted to know that access to his property is "as good as law." The guide is still in draft form and comments can be submitted until May 13. The council agreed to prepare a statement on the group's position.

Long-time McCarthy resident and owner of Wrangell Mountain Air, Kelly Bay, stated that the community needs to have non-NPS people, including a MAC member, at park service access meetings in the Regional Office. Another member suggested that representative landowners also be included on the delegation.

This discussion led to MAC passing a resolution requesting a representative body from both the north and south sides of the Park to accompany the access issue to its conclusion at the regional, and if necessary, to the national level.

## "No permits, no fees," declares McCarthy Area Council members

McCarthy: – Another meeting of the McCarthy Area Council took place on April 22. Seventeen people met to discuss and choose the group's stance on *A User's Guide to Accessing Inholdings in a National Park Service Area in Alaska*.

The majority of the members see access to their private property or businesses as an existing "right" not a privilege to be purchased with a permit or fee. Rick Kenyon described the helicopter-only access permit that Copper Valley Telephone Co-Op was required to purchase for the maintenance of their Sourdough Repeater Site as "onerous" and expensive.

Another local resident stressed the need to make a strong stand against the permitting process cautioning the group to "not go down this road!" If one person succumbs to a permit, the park service will use it for a "public example." Should we even respond? The park service will just say the public process has been accomplished.

The members discussed the seriousness and the extent of retaining their right to access. Would the group carry their stand of "no permits, no fees," even as far as the Supreme Court, if necessary? The group was united on this question, with no abstentions and no opposition.

Major points of agreement around the room consisted of: The right of access based upon ANILCA's promise and guarantee of residents and property owners' sovereign rights for access, a united stand against any requirements for permits or fees for access to private property within the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park boundaries and any private property pre-dating the park, should be documented by NPS and MAC members offer their assistance in the documentation.

The next MAC meeting is set for May 6, after mail, at the Blackburn Center.

## Museum seeks volunteers

The McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum will have its Annual Meeting on Saturday, May 28, 2005--that's Memorial Day weekend--at 10 a.m. at Meg and Ed's house in McCarthy (last house on the right before McCarthy Creek). All interested persons are welcome to attend. If you wish to participate by teleconference, please contact Meg by May 20 at 907-554-4408 or mihunt@aol.com

The Museum is seeking two volunteer attendants for the summer of

2005. The Museum is open from 10 to 6 every day from Memorial Day to Labor Day. If we have only one attendant, that person would be on duty 4 days a week; if two attendants, then each works 3 1/2 days, or any other arrangement made agreeably between the two volunteers. We can offer bush-style housing and a stipend of \$400 per month for expenses, paid monthly; travel to McCarthy is the responsibility of the volunteer (though we might be able to help find rides within Alaska). We would like

commitments for as long a portion of the summer as possible. As of this summer the Museum is not wheelchair accessible, though we hope to change this in the near future. A job description and notes about McCarthy are available upon request. Interested persons should contact:

Meg Hunt 907-554-4408

mihunt@aol.com or Dianne Mil-liard 907-554-4461.

Thank you for your help!

## The state of the parks

President Bush made the troubled national parks system the centerpiece of his rather modest environmental agenda during the 2000 campaign, chastising the Democrats for allowing the parks to decay and pledging to spend \$1 billion a year in new money over five years to eliminate a backlog of repairs, then estimated at \$4.9 billion.

It seemed an easy enough promise at the time, but recently the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service pegged the probable backlog at half again that amount, and administration officials—most recently, Fran Mainella, the beleaguered National Park Service director—have been forced to concede that the best Bush can do is to “address” the backlog.

Over the past twenty-five years, Congress has added more than 80 parks to the system, bringing the number to 388. Some of these are valid historical sites, while others are pork-barrel parks, added to the

system to enhance the careers of their congressional sponsors. There was an effort several years ago to evaluate these parks and close some of them, but the effort predictably failed.

The result is that hardly any part of the system is trouble-free. Many of the 25,000 or so historic buildings are falling apart, roads and bridges need repairs, and sewer systems are wearing out. And still the visitors keep coming, nearly 300 million last year, adding further stress to the system.

Bush’s 2006 budget includes a new “comprehensive asset management strategy” that has enabled the Park Service for the first time to “inventory its assets and measure the condition of its facilities.”

Yet the study remains under wraps, so one concerned congressman, Rep. Mark Souder, R-Ind., has begun an inventory of his own.

Over the next two years, Souder plans eight to 10 hearings around

the country to investigate the true state of the parks.

Souder is devoted to the parks and to the philosophy of stewardship that underlies them, and he is deeply troubled about their future.

Souder’s bona fides on this issue are further underscored by the fact that he is co-sponsoring an adventurous, bipartisan bill recently introduced in the House that would try to raise serious money for the parks by, among other things, providing a voluntary checkoff device for taxpayers on their returns.

The purpose is to put the system on a solid footing by the park service’s 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2016, to finance long-neglected cultural and educational needs, to better protect nature and to eliminate the backlog.

Congressman Souder can be reached at [souder@mail.house.gov](mailto:souder@mail.house.gov) or at (202) 225-4436.

## Governor takes action on RS 2477 routes

(ANCHORAGE) — Governor Frank H. Murkowski announced April 11 the filing of a lawsuit against the United States and Gale Norton, in her capacity as Secretary for the Department of the Interior, to quiet title to the state’s rights-of-way for the Coldfoot-Chandalar Lake Trail and Caro to Coldfoot trail. Several other non-federal stakeholders with claims to land adjoining or surrounding the trails were named as defendants in this lawsuit.

“As far back as 1906 this trail was used to access gold in the Chandalar area,” said Murkowski. “As such, the trail is one of many rights-of-way under federal law located

within Alaska. Establishing clear title to these historical routes, including the Coldfoot-Chandalar trail, is key to preserving our statehood rights and critical to this administration’s priority to open access across the state.”

This trail is one of many access routes commonly referred to as Revised Statute 2477 (RS 2477) rights-of-way. They were granted by the United States to encourage miners and settlers to move and expand outward into our western states and Alaska. The statute grants a right-of-way over federal land that is not otherwise reserved for public use. RS 2477 was repealed in 1976 but existing rights-of-way created under

this measure were preserved under federal law.

In addition to the 65-mile long Coldfoot-Chandalar Trail (designated as RST 9 in the state’s land records) the state’s suit also seeks quiet title to the 85-mile long Caro-Coldfoot (RST 262). These routes were selected for a number of reasons, including:

- Well documented historical usage;
- Current use for mining, hunting, subsistence and recreation purposes;
- Access to over a million acres of state land.

“Confirming title to the trails has minimal impact on federal interests because none of the routes involved cross over any national parks or refuges,” said Murkowski. “The private property interests impacted here range from individual mining claims to corporate interests. It is our belief that Alaska holds legal title to these access routes, and that this action is compatible with existing private interests and uses.”

The governor’s action is interesting to area residents because of the recent efforts by the National Park Service to require permits for access to inholdings.

The governor has said that he does not want Alaska to become a “permit society.”

“We were assured there would not be a permit requirement,” Murkowski said, referring to the passage of the Alaska National In-

terest Lands Conservation Act that designated 106 million acres of Alaska land as federal conservation units. “That gets in the craw of some old-timers.”

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources provides detailed information and answers to frequently asked questions involving RS 2477 rights-of-way, online at: <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/mlw/trails/rs2477/>.

## McCarthy residents fight to keep public lands

BY RICK KENYON

McCarthy area residents have shown a rare unity in opposing state legislation that would transfer 12,500 acres of state land to the University of Alaska.

Some oppose the bill because they are concerned the University will quickly subdivide and sell the land in small parcels, though they have proceeded slowly on the 8,800 acres they already own in the McCarthy area.

Others oppose the bill because they believe the land will end up going to the National Park Service.

The House bill, known as HB 130 has passed to the senate, with lawmakers ignoring a petition signed by 70 McCarthy area residents, and impassioned pleas to remove the McCarthy lands over a teleconference link. Representative Woody Salmon introduced an amendment to exclude the McCarthy lands, but it was rejected by the House.

The Senate bill is known as SB 96 and is working its way through committees as we go to press. Senator Seekins, of Fairbanks, introduced an amendment that would try to prevent the land ending up in conservation units. Land managers, including University Lands Manager Mari Montgomery, say the effort is futile. “Federal law trumps state law,” said Montgomery.

There has been considerable confusion about the land transfers since Senator Lisa Murkowski introduced federal legislation about the same time as the state proposals. Her bill would offer 250,000 acres to the University, plus an additional 250,000 acres as a “matching grant” should the state measure pass.

But, included in the federal bill, known as the University of Alaska Lands Bill (S.293), is the provision that the University would have to turn over their present land holdings within the boundaries of Wrangell-St. Elias and several other national parks.

Critics question turning over current land holdings to the National Park, then replacing them with state land that has been important to area residents for wood and gravel harvesting, and provides access to several area inholdings that would be threatened if it becomes park land.

Meanwhile, the Park Service and their lobbying arm, the National Parks and Conservation Association, has been strangely quiet—lending support to the idea that all of the land may eventually end up as federal land.

“Our administration has asked that McCarthy lands be removed from the list of lands scheduled to be transferred to the federal government under S.293,” said Mari Montgomery.

Montgomery also stressed that it was the Department of Natural Resources, not the University, that originally put the 12,500 acres near McCarthy on the state’s list—though she said they would be happy to get them.

---

*“Government schooling is the most radical adventure in history. It kills the family by monopolizing the best times of childhood and by teaching disrespect for home and parents.” —John Taylor Gatto*

*“If I knew that a man was coming to my house with the conscious design of doing me good, I should run for my life.” —Thoreau*

# How big is the park?

BY RICK KENYON

“Wrangell-St. Elias is the nation’s largest national park at 13.2 million acres.” Have you ever heard that statement?

Ever since the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park was established in 1980, area residents have rankled

when the National Park Service (NPS) made statements like that. The reason being that nearly one million acres (at that time) were not federal lands.

Why do we hear statements to the effect that the park is over 13 million acres? Because that is the

way the NPS carries the land on its books

I asked Chuck Gilbert at the NPS Regional Headquarters in Anchorage if he could give me the in-house figures of land ownership. He sent me the document you see below.

## WRANGELL ST. ELIAS NP/P LANDS STATUS

### SUMMARY ESTIMATE:

LANDS TYPE	ACREAGE NON-FEDERAL	
<b>Total WRST</b>	<b>13190000</b>	
Wilderness	9677000	
Park	8330000	
Preserve	4856000	
Native Ahtna, conveyed	620478	620478
Native Chugach conveyed	51809	51809
Native Selections, Ahtna	650000	
Native Selections, Chugach	97074	
DNR, State of Alaska	25600	25600
University of Alaska	8830	8830
Native allotments (#36)	3650	3650
Mining claims unpatented (6 claim blocks containing 27 claims)	491	491
Mining claims patented (55 claim blocks containing 292 claims)	5737	5737
Small private tracts (#64)	4874	4874
Kennecott area (#73)	186	186
External NPS lands (#7)	272	
ANCSA 17b easements 17b (#90)	700	
<b>Total non-federal</b>	<b>721655</b>	

That number on the right, 721,655, was listed as 988,800 in 1986. That is a net loss of 267,145 acres.

The number at the top, 13,190,000, is almost identical to the number listed in 1986 which was 13,188,000. A net gain of only 2,000 acres.

Why does that matter?

Although there is no statutory acreage ceiling at WRST, only

23,000 acres may be added or subtracted without congressional approval.\*

Yet NPS has been able to add over a quarter million acres to its federal holdings without going to Congress by simply treating the books as though all of the lands within the boundary—yours, mine, native, state and university—were “park lands.”

When they acquire private land, they simply move the acreage from

the right column into the left column.

The number at the top stays the same.

Clever, eh?

If any of this interests you, see FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION on page 38.

\*WRST General Management Plan page 59.

# BLM Management Plan input sought

BY RICK KENYON

The Bureau of Land Management Glennallen Field Office has released the East Alaska Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) and associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for public review and comment. The plan covers 7.1 million acres of BLM managed lands including the Denali Highway, the Gulkana and Delta National Wild and Scenic Rivers, the Bering Glacier, the Glenn and Richardson Highways, the Thompson Pass area, and the Tangle Lakes Archaeological District. These lands border the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park to the west.

The Draft presents a range of alternatives that address 7 issues identified by the public during scoping. Those issues include: travel management (OHV use, trails, road construction); recreation (commercial use, wild and scenic river management, public cabins); physical and cultural resources (wildlife habitat, soil, water, vegetation); lands and realty actions (leases, permits, withdrawals); vegetation management (fire and forestry practices); locatable and leasable minerals (which areas will be open or closed to mineral extraction); and how subsistence is affected by the previous 6 issues.

BLM is considering four alternatives.

## Alternative A: No Action

- Continues current management under 1980 MFP.

## Alternative B: Resource Development

- Lays groundwork to facilitate resource development.

- Protects resource values in specific areas, not broad-based.
- May significantly affect subsistence users.

## Alternative C: Resource Conservation

- Takes measures to protect and enhance resource values.
- Resource development more constrained than B and D.
- Selected lands treated same as that of federal ownership.

## Alternative D: Preferred Alternative

- Moderate protection, use, and enhancement of resources.

For many area residents, alternative B has the potential to affect subsistence use, particularly of caribou. Much of the lands currently open to subsistence hunting of caribou lies within the pipeline utility corridor. Alternative B includes revoking Public Land Order (PLO) 5150. PLO 5150 withdrew the pipeline utility corridor from state and native selections. The purpose at the time was to facilitate the construction of the pipeline.

The state of Alaska has asked the secretary of the interior to revoke PLO 5150, which would validate existing state selections on the pipeline corridor. Only unencumbered lands are open to federal hunting. Unencumbered lands are lands that do not have valid selections on them.

If PLO 5150 is revoked, 63% of the BLM managed land in unit 13 would no longer be under the jurisdiction of the federal subsistence board, and federal hunting regulations would not apply. The land would continue to be open to hunting under state regulations. Alternative B is not the BLM's preferred

alternative, but it is still a valid alternative and the public needs to be aware.

The different alternatives treat OHV use differently, as well as whether the remaining lands in the Slana area are sold to the public.

There is a 90-day comment period which was scheduled to start in late April.

## Key issues/items to keep in mind while reviewing the draft

- The purpose of this public review is to gather input as to which alternatives, or components of alternatives, are supported or opposed by the public. BLM's preferred alternative is identified as Alternative D throughout the plan. The BLM is not locked in to adopt only Alternative A, B, C, or D. The final decision can be a combination of actions proposed from each alternative. Reviewers should keep that in mind while reviewing the plan.
- Alternative B proposes to revoke the withdrawals for the transportation and utility corridor to allow for conveyance to the State. This would have significant impacts to the federal subsistence hunting areas and is the reason public subsistence hearings are being held.
- Trails management – this plan states if an area is going to be open, limited, or closed to OHV or snowmachine use. Any site specific closures or limitations would be decided by an implementation level plan that would include more public involvement.

---

*"I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect has intended us to forgo their use." —Galileo Galilei*

## Area residents speak out on Kennecott plans

**M**cCarthy, April 13— Twenty area residents met with 4 National Park Service (NPS) representatives and discussed plans to spend an estimated \$15 million dollars in the next few years.

The project is called the Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark Support Facility Plan Environmental Assessment.

"The focus of the effort is to develop ways to support operations and improve visitor opportunities within the planning area by siting facilities both inside the NHL and along the last section of the McCarthy road corridor," said Jed Davis, superintendent of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park (WRST).

The meeting was moderated by Chris Beck, a private consultant who is working with the National Park Service on the project.

Recent NPS philosophy places an emphasis on "partners" and "partnerships."

"Some of the facilities that are recommended may not be located on federal land," says Davis. "These recommendations require partners and some have been identified by not only the NPS, but by local residents or local community groups," he said.

Beck stressed that the community could take advantage of NPS plans to make improvements in water systems, power generation and solid waste management.

"There is a need for a change in federal regulations regarding solid waste management," says Beck, adding that community participation is needed to get needed changes.

Visitor amenities at the end of the road got a lot of attention by meeting participants. There was a lot of interest in helping the NPS

develop its kiosk/information area at mile 59 of the McCarthy Road. Participants cited the areas attributes as having plenty of room for parking, toilets, visitor information and the potential to have shuttle service to Kennecott. A scenic walkway over the glacier to the footbridge also had considerable support.

The group discussed shuttle service problems such as lack of regulation and difficulty in providing service at the times requested by the NPS. Issues such as licensing, insurance and safety were at the top of the list of concerns.

The comment period on the Kennecott EA closed April 30. Once all comments have been reviewed, and assuming no potential significant impacts are identified, the NPS will issue a Finding of No Significant Impact. This plan will guide long-term development of Kennecott NHL support facilities and services.

## Access dispute dogs fishery

BY TIM MOWRY

**T**he Chitina Native Corp. has drawn a line in the silt. But instead of daring dip-netters to cross it, the corporation plans to put up a chain-link fence to keep them out.

The Copper River may be frozen but the feud surrounding access to the popular dip-net fishery at Chitina that has simmered for the past 20 years is at a full boil, even though it will be another two months before dip-netters begin descending on the small town at the end of the Edgerton Highway to scoop salmon out of the river.

In a March 9 letter to the state Department of Natural Resources, the Chitina Native Corp. said it will replace the concrete barriers it put

up last year with a chain-link fence to keep dip-netters from crossing a small strip of private land to reach a popular boat launch and parking area. The Native corporation has told the state it wants \$200,000 to \$300,000 in trespass fees for dip-netters to use O'Brien Creek for access. The fee would be similar but larger to one that dip-netters paid for 15 years before it was erased last year by the Alaska Legislature.

At this point, no deal is on the horizon.

"We're not giving up but we've got some pretty big challenges to make something work," said Wynn Menefee with the Department of Natural Resources in Anchorage.

The Chitina Native Corp. has turned down the state's offers to

purchase the land or negotiate a land or easement swap, he said.

"They have made it extremely clear they are not willing to give up land property rights there," said Menefee.

If no agreement is reached, dip-netters will find the situation much the same as last year. There will be limited access to reach charter boats operating at O'Brien Creek, but dip-netters won't be able to launch boats and there will be less parking space available.

The controversy surrounding access at Chitina has been brewing since the state established a personal-use fishery there in 1984.

The Ahtna and Chitina Native corporations have claimed for years that dip-netters have been trespass-



ing on their land to catch fish. The state hasn't necessarily disagreed, which is why for 20 years dip-netters paid a trespass fee to the Native corporations ranging from \$10 to \$25 a permit to guarantee access.

While the idea of paying a trespass fee riled some dip-netters, most were content to pay the fee if it meant they could get their salmon without a hassle.

Each year, thousands of dip-netters make the long drive to Chitina to scale down steep cliffs, tie themselves off to trees and stand on rocks along the river to scoop salmon out of the Copper River. Last year, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game issued 8,145 permits and dip-netters filled their freezers with almost 111,000 salmon, the vast majority of which were reds.

With a large gravel bar offering the only significant parking space on the narrow, winding eight-mile road that parallels the river and a freshwater creek to clean the fish they catch, O'Brien Creek has served as one of two main staging points for the thousands of dip-netters who annually venture to Chitina.

The other take-off point was at Haley Creek, at the end of the road, but a landslide a mile past O'Brien Creek cut off access to Haley Creek almost four years ago and the road remains closed, leaving O'Brien Creek as the main gathering point for dip-netters.

The land in question at O'Brien Creek is a 2 1/2-acre strip that is located between the state right-of-way and the ordinary high water mark. The strip of land ranges from 20 to 100 feet wide.

"It does not matter how much land there is, it is still private property," Joe Hart, president and CEO of the Chitina Native Corp., wrote in a letter to DNR.

In its four-page letter to DNR, the Native corporation detailed several concerns surrounding the situation at Chitina, from lack of trespass enforce-

ment by Alaska State Troopers to a feud with the Chitina Dipnetters Association, a group that represents dip-netters and has pushed hard for access at Chitina and elimination of any trespass fee. The corporation has talked about setting up their own fee program at O'Brien Creek or even building an RV park, but it won't even consider doing that if troopers won't enforce trespass laws, Hart said in his letter.

The Legislature would have to approve any kind of trespass fee and that doesn't appear likely, said Sen. Ralph Seekins, R-Fairbanks, who is leading the legislative charge to win access at O'Brien Creek. Paying that much to use a 15- or 20-foot strip of land amounts to extortion, if you ask Seekins.

"It's an outrageous sum," he said. "I doubt you'll see that come out of the state budget."

Actually, it wouldn't be all that much more than dip-netters were paying two years ago. In 2003, \$18 of the \$25 fee charged to the 6,440 dip-netters who got a permit went to the Ahtna and Chitina Native corporations in the form of a trespass fee. That translated to about \$115,000. Under the same formula, dip-netters would have paid almost \$150,000 in trespass fees last year because there were more permits (8,145) issued.

But the Legislature eliminated the fee for 2004 when a state survey indicated that 80 percent of the land in question along the road was within the state right of way. Figuring there was enough access to accommodate dip-netters, the Legislature dumped the fee. The only problem, and one that legislators evidently didn't recognize or chose to ignore, was that the survey showed the Chitina Native Corp. did indeed own a small strip of land at O'Brien Creek.

"I tried to point it out but everyone was so enthused with the 80 percent number no one thought about it," said DOT's John Bennett, who handles right of way issues for the northern region.

While he said "there are other ways to skin the cat," Seekins didn't

offer any other than to suggest that DOT could condemn the property and then purchase it for fair market value, something the DOT has done previously for recreational projects such as bike paths.

That possibility has been raised; it's a "very last resort," said Bennett.

"I think the commissioners (of DOT and DNR) want to look at every other option out there before we do something like that," he said.

As for the landslide that has blocked the road, there are no plans to repair the road in the near future, according to DOT spokeswoman Shannon McCarthy. The job is still on the DOT's list of projects but there is no funding for it. Repairing the road will cost at least \$10 million, she said.

"It's going to cost us \$4 million just to stabilize the slide and we don't have the funding for that," she said.

Even if DOT did have the money to fix the road to Haley Creek, a similar situation exists there, Bennett said. The Ahtna Native Corp. owns a small chunk of land there, he said.

Even with the presence of the concrete barriers and the controversy surrounding the access issue, dippers enjoyed their best season in three years at Chitina last year. According to preliminary reports, the state issued more dip-net permits last year—8,157—than it has since the 2001 landslide, when 9,500 permits were doled out. The state issued 6,417 permits in 2003 and 6,804 permits in 2002.

Dip-netters took more fish home, too. Last year's harvest of 110,000 salmon was the best in three years. The harvest was 85,000 fish in 2003 and 90,000 in 2002.

"People were able to work around it last year and still catch fish," said Glennallen sport fish biologist Tom Taube.

*Originally published in the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner Saturday, April 09, 2005 <http://www.news-miner.com/>*

*News-Miner staff writer Tim Mowry can be reached at [tmowry@newsminer.com](mailto:tmowry@newsminer.com) or 459-7587.*

# Kennicott/McCarthy Volunteer Fire Department update

BY STACIE MILLER

The Kennicott/McCarthy Volunteer Fire Department (K/MVFD) wanted to take this time to update everyone in the community on the progress that we have made thus far, as well as our goals and hopes for the future.

This past summer (2004) a meeting was held at the Tony Zak building to get the ball rolling on community involvement, and the long (very long) paperwork processes of forming a viable fire department. The community was very supportive and, acting on its behalf, James Sill, Matt Smith, Julie Miller and Stacie Miller have been working towards these ends.

As a new organization, it has taken sometime to get all of the paperwork in order; however, on January 18, 2005, we were incorporated by the State. We have applied to the IRS for (501)(c)(3) status and should hear back in about six months. We just heard back from the State Fire Marshal on our registration application, which was approved. With this we can now request surplus equipment from other fire departments around the State and are working on trying to get a brush truck and other needed equipment for the fire season.

On March 17, 2005, the K/MVFD held its first annual meeting. The goals of this meeting were to inform the community of what had been accomplished so far, to vote in the by-laws, and to elect the Board members. The by-laws were voted in 19 for/0 against (copies available, please request) and the election of

Board members went as follows: President, Stacie Miller (18/0); Vice-President, Matt Smith (18/0); Secretary, Julie Miller (18/0); Treasurer, David Hollis (18/0); and Fire Chief, James Sill (18/0). At this meeting we also signed up 15 volunteer firefighters for training, which starts on May 21-24 with "Red Card" training and certification (to volunteer please contact a Board member).

For the foreseeable future, the K/MVFD will be a wild land and fire containment department. At this time we have neither the training or the resources to enter a burning building; however, we hope to contain any fires that do break-out and keep damages to a minimum. We are working in conjunction with DNR and the NPS to formulate a fire contingency plan for the park and surrounding area.

We have recently received a grant from the Department of Community and Economic Development to purchase land for a fire house and equipment. This is a matching funds' grant and the fire department needs to raise \$5000.00 for its part. The K/MVFD is asking the residents and business owners of our community to help us raise this money.

The fire department has its work cut out for it this summer. Training meetings will be held on the second and last Wednesday of each month throughout the summer, starting after the completion of the "Red Card" class. We will continue to plow through the piles of paperwork that need to be filed for the department (if anyone wants to help??). We hope to have a series

of raffles and fund-raisers this summer to help with operating capital that isn't covered under the grants, i.e. insurance, office supplies, etc. Anyone interested in volunteering or donating time or money, please contact a Board member. We are also open to any questions, comments or concerns.

This summer is already shaping up to be another bad fire season, and while the fire department hopes to be fully functioning this season, we still need the individuals in the community to help us. PLEASE keep an eye on any fires in your neighborhood. All it will take is one unattended campfire or burn barrel to devastate the valley. Also, clear brush and trees from around your houses and out buildings. A cabin in the woods may be cute, but a cabin with a clearing is defensible. Please be fire aware and fire safe.

The K/MVFD would like to thank the people of McCarthy and Kennicott for their continued support, the Blackburn Heritage Center for allowing us to use the Zak building and property for a temporary base of operations and Lane Moffitt for his work on the DCED grant.

Contact information: K/MVFD, PO Box MXY 64, McCarthy, Glennallen, AK. 99588.

Stacie Miller:  
[staciejmillerak@yahoo.com](mailto:staciejmillerak@yahoo.com)

Matt Smith: (907) 554-4426

Julie Miller: (907) 554-4419

David Hollis: (907) 554-4435 or (907) 222-0460

James Sill: (907) 554-4429

---

*"Freedom is not a luxury that we can indulge in when at last we have security and prosperity and enlightenment; it is, rather, antecedent to all of these, for without it we can have neither security nor prosperity nor enlightenment."* —Henry Steele Commager

# The World Around Us

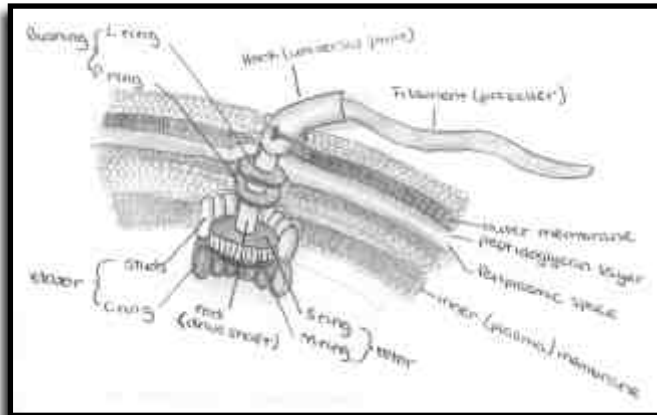
BY DON WELTY

In our last issue we looked at the extreme complexity of a single cell and some of the implications raised. In this issue we will look at an important, but unpleasant single-celled organism named "Giardia lamblia." Giardia is a protozoan bacteria referred to as a flagellate due to its type of propulsion. Giardia is well-known by outdoors' people, often cutting their trip short after ingesting this parasitic flagellate from untreated water in the backcountry. Giardia infestation, sometimes referred to as "beaver fever," or more commonly as giardiasis, can cause moderate to severe intestinal problems and dehydration within a week of exposure, sometimes lasting weeks if untreated. Many people here in the Wrangells use some sort of filtration or purifying system when drinking water of unknown quality in the backcountry to avoid these unpleasant symptoms.

This so-called "primitive" single-celled protozoan touts a marvelous swimming device, the flagellum is a long hair-like filament embedded in the cell membrane. It acts as a rotary propeller, which spins one direction causing the rest of the cell to spin the opposite direction. The external part of the flagellum that is the "paddle" is composed of a protein called flagellin. Near the outer membrane of the cell, this flagellin filament has a bulge where it attaches to a rotor drive. The attachment material is comprised of a "hook protein." This rotary motor, which looks remarkably like that of a turbine engine in a jet, is driven

by the energy generated by a flow of acid through the bacterial membrane. The requirements for a motor like this are quite complex and are the focus of quite frequent research. Because of the three necessary parts—the paddle, rotor and motor—the flagellum can be considered irreducibly complex. In other words it would be useless unless all three parts were functional at the same time. This puts major hurdles in an attempt to explain how gradual evolutionary change could account for it.

Biochemical analysis shows that over two hundred different kinds of proteins are contained in one of

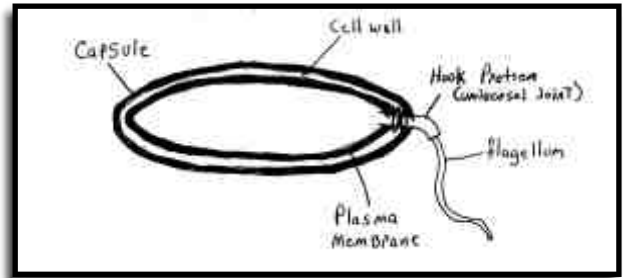


Drawing by René Welty

Close-up of the flagellum

these turbine type propulsion systems, and a complexity enormously greater than what was expected by researchers. Most of the functions of these proteins are not yet known but probably include: timing, control of elasticity, on/off switches, bushings, assembly assistance and other protein production.

As biochemistry reveals more and more staggering complexity of



once thought, simple structures, like the flagellum, the difficulty of gradually putting the system together through evolution becomes exponentially more difficult. This is especially apparent in the light of the fact that no mechanism has ever been observed that will increase genetic information that would drive the development of even simple structures. Mutations and natural selection always redistribute existing information or lose information, which could be described as devolution. This devolution is often touted as evolution in action, and can be beneficial under certain environmental conditions, but biochemistry has proven otherwise.

As we move on to more complex organisms in our next issue, intelligent design becomes more and more harmonious with scientific evidence. I hope you are able to stay far away from this amazing protozoan and closer to this intelligent designer.

References:

Voet and Toet, pp. 1259-1260

Ohio State website [www.biosci.ohio-state.edu/~parasite/giardia.html](http://www.biosci.ohio-state.edu/~parasite/giardia.html)

Michael J. Behe (1996) Darwin's Black Box, The biochemical challenge to evolution. Pp. 69-73

*"We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount... The world has achieved brilliance without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants." —General Omar Bradley*

# THE CHITINA LEADER

May 1913 June

## NEWS OF NEIGHBORHOOD

The expected annual trouble is now being experienced at the Chitina trestle bridge, that crosses the Copper River. Five bents have gone out since Saturday. Today the ice is still running and the water continues to slightly rise. Carpenter crews are on both sides of the bridge prepared to start the work of rebuilding so soon as the elements will permit. The weather about Chitina is mild, about twenty degrees warmer than it is at Cordova. It is possible that two or three more bents may be carried away. Last spring eight bents went out, and no trains were able to cross the bridge for eight days. In 1911 the bridge was tied up for twelve days. It is figured that after the work of repair can be started that four or five days will be necessary to get everything in good order again, so that trains can run on the Kennicott branch.

---

The Alaska Road Commission at Valdez states that the work of the Commission for the balance of the year will consist mainly of work planned last year and the completion of work already undertaken, and the repair and maintenance of roads and trails now built. The work is scattered over all parts of the territory. One of the most important pieces of construction will be the bridge across the Nizina River, the material for which is now at McCarthy. The bridge across the Gulkana has been about completed and the Klutina Bridge will be rebuilt. At Nome a bridge was built across the Nome River at a cost of \$6,000. W. J. Rowe, a local transfer man, hauled all the material for the bridge a distance of four miles without compensation.

May 13

## CHITINA HOTEL GRILL

T. W. Cloninger, the genial proprietor of the Chitina Hotel, has purchased the Chitina Grill from C. H. Saindon, the former proprietor. After thoroughly renovating and repairing the place, Mr. Cloninger has engaged Senator Hurst, well and favorably known as one of the best Chefs in the business in Alaska, and last Sunday opened the Grill with a special Sunday dinner which was enjoyed by a large number of people. The bill of fare would have done credit to a metropolitan café, and those present stated that they could not get as good a meal in Seattle at the price. Mr. Cloninger promises to make the Sunday dinner a feature of the Grill throughout the summer.

## GENERAL ALASKA NEWS

The international boundary survey parties have arrived in the White River country, and have resumed their work of marking the line between Yukon Territory and Alaska. The Canadian party munched overland from Whitehorse, while the American party, headed by Asa Baldwin, went from Cordova on the railroad to McCarthy, whence they secured horses and freighted in their supplies. It is expected that the remaining work will be completed by fall.

## INTERIOR MINING NEWS

A party of eight arrived on the Alameda and will take the train on Monday for the interior, going on a prospecting and hunting expedition to the Tiekkel River country. In the party is a family of three from Lead, South Dakota, consisting of W. C. Hoppe, wife and boy. Others are Williard Clark, Alex Buchanan, Ole Bravick, Mr. and Mrs. Jas. Lewis. Mr. Lewis is known as "Black Beaver,"

the trapper. He is one of the old time fur traders and explorers who has spent upwards of twenty-three years in all parts of Alaska. In 1893 he made a trip by dog team from St. Michael to Point Barrow, and from there to the mouth of the Mackenzie River. Mr. Lewis will be in charge of the present expedition, which will later be joined by two others from the East. They will hunt glacier bear and do some prospecting during the summer. They have purchased material from the Arctic Lumber Company and will erect permanent quarters at Tiekkel. Expeditions will be made from there.

---

Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Andrus, of New York, who have been in town for a week past, left for the interior on the morning train. They expect to cross the Copper River at Chitina in a small boat and will then go on to McCarthy. From there they will take horses and ride twenty-five miles to their camp on Rex Creek. Mr. Andrus and George Max Esterly are associated together in working vast deposits of placer property. Mr. Esterly is on Chititu Creek, about three miles distant from the Andrus camp. Mr. Andrus took with him this morning more than twenty men, as Mr. Esterly had wired that the present force should be increased. They have been working these properties for several years and have all the necessary hydraulic machinery installed to make a good gold clean-up this season.

---

George E. Baldwin is very hopeful of future results from the property of the Mother Lode Mine Company on McCarthy Creek. He

returned from there on Friday, and in an interview states:

“A tram 6,600 feet long, which was manufactured in St. Louis and shipped to the claims has been delivered on the ground, along with 60,000 feet of Washington fir and the crew of ten men are now working to install the tram that the ore from the upper tunnels may be sent to the creek and later freighted to the railroad at the mouth of the creek.

“The engineers who have examined the property claim that more than 8,000 tons of high grade ore has been blocked out by the work done and that the success of the mine has been assured.

“The company will be on a shipping basis early this fall and will continue shipments to Tacoma all winter. The ore is of the same grade as that shipped from the Bonanza, and the claims join the Guggenheim property.”

May 20

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

Two pack saddles and a basket of ranch eggs were recently received at the Cordova post office, from the states, parcel post.

Mrs. Clara P. Babbage, widow of the late C. W. Babbage, jeweler at Cordova and Chitina, recently died at Ketchikan. Deceased was 57 years of age.

S. O. Breedman received word from J. W. Forester, who recently went to the states, that he has shipped one hundred Plymouth Rock chickens to him, which he will take to his ranch at McCarthy.

The first threshing machine ever brought north will reach Fairbanks

in July and will be placed on the Rickett homestead.

June 3

#### MINING NEWS

One of the richest samples of gold quartz ever shown in Cordova was brought to town last night by Malcom Brock from Chitina, and after an acid test, it is practically a mass of solid gold. This specimen was taken from the new strike made nine miles north of Camp 140 on the Copper River Railway, on a tributary of the Kotsina River, by two section men named Centenio and Canning, who purchased a grubstake last fall and spent the winter prospecting.

A ledge 600 feet long and 2 ½ feet wide has been uncovered. The rich quartz is only 2 inches wide on the foot wall for a length of fifty feet, but the rest of the ledge containing free milling quartz. The owners of the property are now opening up the ground and the extremely rich quartz is being taken out for treatment. The paystreak is covered with gravel from three to six feet deep.

Since the news of the strike has spread, over sixty claims have been stake in that vicinity.

A tramway is being constructed on the Mother Lode copper property at Kennicott, and upon its completion another mine will be shipping ore.

June 10

#### OF GENERAL INFORMATION

A fine run of salmon is reported at Abercrombie canyon. Mark Thompson's men made a catch of a thousand one day this week.

**BLACKBURN**, June 17 – Despite the fact that this is the “between season,” when everyone is at work, there is considerable activity about the city of Blackburn, and a number of real estate deals are recorded.

School is now fairly under way, and thirteen pupils were enrolled for the first day. Miss Smith is very much pleased with the outlook. So far as known, the Blackburn school has the record for getting action quicker than any other government school in Alaska. The election was held on the fifth day of May, and had the teacher been here it would have been opened June first. Messrs. Seagraves, Hancock and Bloomquist, the school board, went ahead and built a school, got the supplies and hired a teacher on their own responsibility, feeling certain, however, that the money would be forthcoming from the government in due time. The Kennicott Mines Company furnished the lumber at cost and John Bloomquist did the work.

---

Harry Iverson and his sister have taken over the Paulson restaurant.

---

Peter Johnson is planning improvements to his present place.

---

Breedman & Church are figuring on constructing a large warehouse for warm storage during the winter months

---

“Fatty” Reed, the genial engineer, and Oscar Larson, the conductor, came with the train from Cordova this week and greeted their many friends. It made the natives around here stare to see a real live passenger coach in place of the old caboos. They are now hoping that a landing will be furnished Blackburn for passengers and freight.

JUNE 17

# Debunking the Myth of Polar Bear Hair

BY NED ROZELL

Look for the largest land-dwelling mammals in Alaska and you'll find them in the north. Polar bears prowl on the northern rim of the state and on sea ice off the coast, as well as on the northern coasts of Russia, Canada, Greenland and Norway. A thick coat of white fur helps bears survive in these latitudes. During the past few decades, scientists have speculated that this fur keeps bears warm because each hair routes warm sunlight to a polar bear's skin.

Daniel Koon, a physics professor at St. Lawrence University in New York, became fascinated by the subject when he first read about it in a physics text book. His interest led him to assemble an Internet site that holds a few dozen newspaper and magazine articles that describe how light can travel the length of a polar bear hair in the same way water flows through a pipe. The theory goes like this: Sunlight is captured by each hair, directed to the bear's black skin, and converted there to heat, thereby providing warmth to the polar bear.

The hypothesis emerged with a study in the mid-1970s by zoologists from two universities, the University of Guelph in Canada and the University of Oslo in Norway. The scientists discovered that polar bear pelts reflect very little ultraviolet light, which is invisible light that causes tans and sunburns. A few decades

later, a team of researchers from the Boston area proposed that polar bears were using the ultraviolet light to warm their skin. Their hypothesis was based on the fact that polar bear hair is transparent. They claimed the hair might work as a fiber-optic cable, through which light energy travels like electricity through a power wire. Though they did not test the theory, it found its way into the mainstream, inspiring articles in the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *New York Times*, and *Time* magazine.

Koon decided to test if a polar bear's hair could actually conduct light. Koon and a student, Reid Hutchins, got a few hairs from a male polar bear that lives at a zoo in Rochester, New York. Their research revealed that the popular notion was not correct: They found that less than .001 percent of red light and less than a trillionth of the violet light transmitted made it through a typical, inch-long hair.

Even less ultraviolet light made it from the tip to the base of the hair.

Koon compared a polar bear hair to a pane of window glass. We can see through a window, but if that same sheet of glass is stacked like plywood and viewed through its edge, the glass appears green. In the same way, a polar bear hair looks transparent when lying on a table, but if you picked it up and tried to see through it lengthwise,

as you would look through a telescope, the hair would no longer be transparent.

If a polar bear's skin is not absorbing ultraviolet light, where is the light going? Researchers at Penn State University had long ago suggested that the ultraviolet absorption of polar bears was due to keratin, the protein from which hair is made. Koon agrees that keratin is probably the substance that prevents polar bear hairs from carrying light to the skin.

More importantly, he thinks the widespread belief in polar bear hairs as light carriers illustrates a problem in science: People want to believe in the fantastic and the fantastic is often accepted without being tested. As writer Bertand Russell pointed out, even Aristotle—the most famous scientist of his day—claimed that women have fewer teeth than men, though it never occurred to him to check Mrs. Aristotle's mouth. The moral of Koon's study is that a little dose of skepticism never hurts.

*This column is provided as a public service by the Geophysical Institute, University of Alaska Fairbanks, in cooperation with the UAF research community. Ned Rozell is a science writer at the institute. He can be reached by e-mail at [nrozell@gi.alaska.edu](mailto:nrozell@gi.alaska.edu) Editor's note: This column first appeared May 28, 1998*

## New rate plans for local wireless

Just as we were going to press an email came in from Copper Valley Wireless. They are announcing the implementation of a new suite of rate plans that are starting up May 1.

Mandy Hale, CVW's spokesperson, informs us that all of their most popular plans now include Alaskan roaming minutes. "We have increased the number of minutes in most of our plans, too, and now cus-

tomers can use all those minutes 'anytime' – no more peak and off peak categories."

Look for CVW's ad in this issue, page 31.

# McCarthy/Kennecott Science Expo!

BY TRACEY M. GRESSEL

Last Friday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, Chugach School District students participated in a Science Expo hosted by Peggy Smith. Four projects were presented at the expo. From 10:00 in the morning to 12:30 the students presented their experiments and research projects to each other, with a short break for chili, cookies, and Country Time Lemonade.

Tessa Bay, 11, did an experiment on the molding properties of sourdough bread, complete with the completed samples of bread. Kelsey Smith, also 11, did a project on tree growth, comparing Aspen, Spruce, Willow and Birch trees, with sanded, varnished samples of each. Tracey

Gressel, 16, did a project on simple machines (pulleys, levers, inclined planes, etc.) with a K\*nex set roller coaster on display. René Welty, 17, did a research project on lift complete with wonderful visuals of all the components to create lift. This follows right along with her desire to get her Private Pilot's License.

"Neighbor" Dan Eldridge was the scientific commentator. He presented some of his work on snowflakes to the students, explaining how someone would take a mold of a snowflake. Another experiment he did was to make basic candy and show what happened at each temperature. (Some of it did burn, but eating it was great fun!) Peggy Smith did an experiment with popcorn, leading students through

proper scientific methods of question, hypothesis, etc. Which would pop better, equal parts fresh popcorn or dried out popcorn? "FRESH!" "DRIED OUT!" rang the cries of future scientists. After that experiment, we changed it a bit. What happens if the dehydrated popcorn is re-hydrated? Guessing was a lot of fun, but again, eating it was a little better!

The students learned a lot, and the rest of the community learned a lot too, including the parents! Fun was had by all and even those who chose not to participate are thinking of next year. All the participants worked very hard and did a great job. Now we know how to have a fun time in McCarthy!

## Homeschool.com

BY RICK KENYON

People all over the country are learning what McCarthy area residents have known for years: that the job of educating their children is best done by parents, rather than the government. By some estimates, the homeschooling movement is growing at a rate of 15% per year.

Things have changed since Bonnie and I homeschooled our son Rick Jr. in the late 70s and early 80s. Back then the McCarthy area was still years away from having a telephone system, let alone Video, DVD and Internet!

One excellent resource for parents that homeschool is homeschool.com. Called "your virtual homeschool," this website has a bevy of resources to help ease the considerable task of being teacher,

school board and principal of your own school.

Homeschooling is not just for those of us who live in the bush. For those who may be contemplating educating their own children, they offer a *Getting Started Kit*. According to the folks at homeschool.com, the *Kit* will "help you learn how to provide an education at home that can far exceed any public or private school education and can help you decide whether or not homeschooling is the right choice for your family."

A wide range of subjects are covered on audio CD's offered on the site. Having recently read Robert T. Kiyosaki's best selling book *Rich Kid Smart Kid*, and his philosophy on why the public school system is failing so miserably, I was intrigued to see one that is called

*Eclectic Homeschooling* and included such topics as "How to use games for your curriculum," and "Discover your child's personal learning style." Other subjects are *Christian Homeschooling* and *Homeschooling the Special Needs Child*.

Homeschool.com also offers numerous curriculum including online, DVD and book based, secular and Christian. Just a few are the *Calvert School*, *A Beka Book*, *The Learning Company* and *The Learning Lighthouse*.

They even offer something called *The Learning Lighthouse*, which features real-time online tutoring with personal tutors to help with math, English, and science.

If you are a homeschooler, or are interested in the subject, take a look at [www.homeschool.com](http://www.homeschool.com).

---

"Real valor consists not in being insensible to danger, but in being prompt to confront and disarm it." —Sir Walter Scott



# Burn Permit

Division of Forestry, Alaska Department of Natural Resources



ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT WILDFIRES

**BURNING PERMIT NUMBER: C05 - \_\_\_\_\_**

In accordance with the laws and regulations of the State of Alaska, the undersigned is hereby granted permission to burn: **One pile of debris 4 ft high x 10 ft in diameter and/or less than one acre of mowed lawn/field with grass 4 inches in length** on the following described property:

Section: \_\_\_\_\_ Township: \_\_\_\_\_ Range: \_\_\_\_\_ Meridian: \_\_\_\_\_

Burn Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**BURNING IS AUTHORIZED SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING TERMS AND CONDITIONS:**

1. Construct a firebreak 15 ft. wide to mineral soil around material to be burned before lighting fire or, for lawns/fields, mow, rake, and wet down outer 15 ft of perimeter.
2. Have a minimum of 1 adult in attendance at all times while burning.
3. Have sufficient water and tools on site to control the fire.
4. Burn with winds less than 5 mph.
5. Fires must be completely extinguished before leaving.
6. Do not burn within 50 feet of structures or under powerlines.
7. No burning is allowed of any substance that creates black smoke, toxic gases, or odors which affect nearby persons.
8. Permittee is required to activate this permit by phone or on-line each day before burning. (See activation number below)

This permit is issued under the authority of AS 41.15.050 and AS 41.15.060 of the Public Resources Statutes governing the establishment of fire seasons and regulations of burning permits. Permits are required for open fires May 1 through September 30. This permit may be modified, suspended or revoked at any time.

The permittee shall have this permit in their possession at all times when burning and shall display on demand to any duly authorized agent of the commissioner.

Permittee agrees to hold the State harmless from any claim or damage caused by negligent acts or omissions of permittee, his/her employee, or his/her agent, arising during or as a result of activities covered by this permit.

**WILLFUL OR NEGLIGENT DISREGARD OF THE TERMS OF THIS PERMIT CONSTITUTES AN ILLEGAL ACT AND MAKES YOU CRIMINALLY LIABLE.** This permit does not relieve the permittee from responsibility for fire damage.

DATE ISSUED: \_\_\_\_\_ PERMIT EXPIRES: September 30, 2005

Name of Permittee: \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE: 907-\_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ **not valid without signature**

ISSUING AGENCY: Valdez/Copper River Area Office Telephone No: 907-822-5534

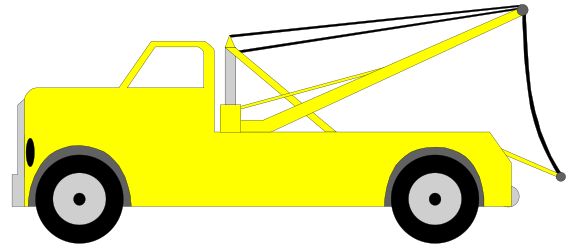
Issued by: \_\_\_\_\_ **Permit Activation Number: 907-822-5536**

You may also get or activate a burn permit online at: <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/forestry/burn>

Permit is non-transferable.



- ✓ Used tires
- ✓ Flats fixed
- ✓ Brake repair
- ✓ Auto repair
- ✓ Oil changes
- ✓ Takes in used oil for Fire Dept.
- ✓ Lock Outs
- ✓ Towing available - Fully insured and bonded
- ✓ Pickup service for cars that need to go to Anchorage



Located behind Chitina Trading Post - look for the radio antennas and towers

**823-2251 Fax: 823-2291**

**PO Box 53, Chitina, Alaska 99566**

## **DAN'S TIRE AND AUTO REPAIR**

Home of the Happy Hooker Two

## **BUSINESS NEEDED A BOOST?**

### **WE CAN HELP!**

Would you like 150 people each day to hear about your business? People who have an interest in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park area? That's how many people log onto [wsen.net](http://wsen.net) each day.

We can link these people to your website for a surprisingly modest cost.

If you don't have a website, we can design and host one for you at prices starting at just \$10 per month.

Contact us at [wsen@wsen.net](mailto:wsen@wsen.net) for details. (Or phone us at (907)554-4454.)

## Valdez May Day Fly-In & Airshow—a success!

**V**aldez: – The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual May Day Fly-in and airshow got off to a flying start again this year. An amazing aviation experience awaited all those who turned out for the April 29-May 1<sup>st</sup> event. There was fun and excitement whether attendees participated in the flying skills competitions, watched in amazement the dazzling demonstrations of aviation aerobatics and skydiving, or simply enjoyed the good food!

There was something for everyone including static airplane displays, aerial displays, an air show and competitions. The contests included Flour Bombing, Poker Fun Run, Light-Touring Take Off and Landing, Heavy Touring Take Off and Landing and the ever challenging Alaskan Bush Take Off.

The May Day Fly-in had fun for all ages: historical aviation displays, flightseeing rides, a vendor and concessions fair, pancake breakfast, raffles and more.

Friday evening kicked off the event with a session of hangar flying with burgers and brews at the Landing Lights restaurant inside the airport. Joining the festivities was the

NASA CFO, Gwen Brown and her Assistant, Jason Sharp, presenting information on NASA and the excitement of flights beyond the blue skies. The kids of Valdez got first dibs, though, as these NASA reps visited the schools earlier in the day!

Kids and adults alike were able to get up close and personal with the skies over Prince William Sound. Several skilled pilots offered airplane rides for a small fee. People also had the option of actually taking a private airplane lesson with Marc Paine of Unusual Attitudes. “Taking to the sky and learning to fly is what this event is all about. I am thrilled to be able to participate and offer the opportunity for people to experience aviation first hand.”

Congratulations to the following Air Show/Competition pilots:

**Poker Fun Run:** 1<sup>st</sup> Tom Richardson, Palmer, Full House (3 Jacks, 2 Threes); 2<sup>nd</sup> Randy Maag, Valdez; Full House (3 Fours, 2 Threes).

**Flour Bombing:** 1<sup>st</sup> Mike Stitzel, Valdez, 0’10”; 2<sup>nd</sup> Troy Tirrell, Cordova, 4’3”.

**Light Touring - Take Off:** 1<sup>st</sup> Allen Gililend, King Salmon, C-180,

132’; 2<sup>nd</sup> Kevin Easley, Anchorage, C-170, 141’.

**Light Touring - Landing:** 1<sup>st</sup> Kyle Carr, Palmer, C-170, 204’; 2<sup>nd</sup> Allen Gililend, King Salmon, C-180, 249’.

**Heavy Touring - Take Off:**

1<sup>st</sup> Mitch Cullom, Anchorage, C-182, 178’; 2<sup>nd</sup> Jason Weimer, Wasilla, C-185, 199’.

**Heavy Touring - Landing:** 1<sup>st</sup> Mitch Cullom, Anchorage, C-182, 257’; 2<sup>nd</sup> Jason Weimer, Wasilla, C-185, 262’.

**Bush Take Off:** 1<sup>st</sup> Chuck MaMahon, Gakona, PA-18, 78’; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cole Ellis, Nabesna, PA-18, 82’.

**Bush Landing:** 1<sup>st</sup> Matt Piatt, Wasilla, PA-11, 99’; 2<sup>nd</sup> Mike Stitzel, Valdez, PA-18, 152’9”.

**Experimental—Take Off:** 1<sup>st</sup> Bill Wilcox, Valdez, Zenith CH801, 139’; 2<sup>nd</sup> Bill Montagne, Palmer, Mtn. Goat, 147’.

**Experimental—Landing:** 1<sup>st</sup> Steve Bryant, Anchorage, Producer, 247’; 2<sup>nd</sup> James Frisby, Palmer, Zenith CH801, 248’.

According to the organizers of the 2004 Fly-in, the event last year was so much fun, they decided they just had to do it again – and that they did!

## WSEN welcomes Internet-only subscribers!

BY RICK KENYON

**T**he advent of satellite-based high-speed internet has had a profound impact on McCarthy area residents. One of the many benefits here at the *Wrangell St. Elias News (WSEN)* is that we can now offer our readers the option of downloading their *WSEN* directly from the Internet.

Advantages that readers have expressed to us are being able to read their *WSEN* much earlier than if they wait for “snail-mail,” and the savings in newsprint.

“If there is one particular article or page that I want/need I can

print that off,” writes our newest online subscriber, Kristen in NH. “The environmentalist in me is thankful that I have the option of the online subscription.”

Subscribers who opt for the online version will get an Email each time a new issue is posted to the Web. The Email will contain two links—one to the html “mini” version of the current issue, the other link will take you to a PDF file of the entire issue of *WSEN*—just like the print version. You are welcome to print a page, or the entire issue if you desire.

The html version normally has 6-8 of the feature stories for that issue.

I know that many of you like to keep your print editions of the *WSEN*. It always gives Bonnie and I pleasure to see someone’s archive of our little publication! But, if you would prefer to read *WSEN* online and want to save a tree or two, let us know and we will put you on the list to get the links and hold back your printed copy.

Drop us a line at [WSEN@wsen.net](mailto:WSEN@wsen.net)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (continued from page 39)

Now, Mr. Young. Nobody, including me, has questioned Grey Owl's accomplishments. Nor would it be appropriate to discuss his excesses since he is dead and cannot defend himself. I agree, and I never said differently, that the area around Asawan has changed very little as it is "wilderness." The fact that the lakes were "down" some four feet has nothing to do with the outfitters, but rather the severe drought. You will notice, Mr. Young, that most of those lakes are back up a few feet due to last years rains and snow-melt.

I am pleased you take your photography seriously and that you are concerned about the pristine nature of our forests. If you are truly a "conservationist" and a "preserver" you will look seriously at lending some support to the Frederick's efforts to maintain the dignity of the landscape there. You will see that the US Government, in pushing them away from the picture, will simply open the way to the major oil companies. But, Mr. Young, if that is your agenda, so be it. It is not shared by thinking Canadians.

*Editor's note: Winter resident Jay Bitely sent this letter to his hometown newspaper in Michigan's Upper Peninsula (UP). He said we could reprint it in WSEN.*

Greetings from Alaska!

Just under a year after returning from my 2-year stint as a Peace Corps Volunteer in East Africa I am back to gauging the passing of time by the moon phases. Many of you are familiar with my African experience from past Letters to the Editor so I'd like to attempt to fill you in on how it relates to my current adventure.

I am living 2 miles from a little town called McCarthy (population: 4). You may wonder how I ended up spending the winter here. In an-

swering this I must tread the fine line between free will and determinism - basically, it just fell onto my lap and I was unable to pass up such an opportunity. After a wonderful spring/summer/fall spent in Curtis working at Birch Shores Resort I was itching for a wintertime adventure. In September I received an e-mail from my former boss in Africa welcoming me to stay and cabin-sit on his McCarthy property. Upon grabbing an atlas and searching for McCarthy I saw that the 60-mile road connecting it to Chitina, AK was but a white dotted line, signifying a seasonal road. Perfect. The plan of spending the winter traveling in India was scrapped and a month later I found myself in one of the most pristine areas of the world.

As with my African adventure, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. The stipulation of staying in the cabin was that I needed to get a stove hooked up for heat. I liken it to the T.V. show 'Survivor'. The contestant <me> is dropped off in Bushland, Alaska and given a cabin complete with no electricity nor running water, no tools, 50 neighbors in a 30-mile radius <none known before arrival> and told to get heat in the cabin. After a month of living in below freezing temperatures the stove was up and burning. Almost everybody in the community was in some way involved in the process of getting heat in my cabin. It was far from an unpleasant process, just long and cold. It allowed me to meet some amazing and wonderful people. This area is similar to Africa in the hospitality of the people. I know I could show up at any cabin and be welcomed and offered something to drink and eat along with stimulating conversation, this time in English rather than Swahili.

McCarthy resides 61' north of the equator in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, the largest national park in the nation (13 million acres) and contains 10 of North America's 15 highest mountains. Together with Canada it encompasses the largest protected area in the world. The nation's largest glacier system resides in my backyard. Much of my time is spent hiking, snow shoeing or cross-country skiing. It is much different from the African landscape but just as awe-inspiring. Like in Africa there is very little choice but to stay active, healthy and in shape. The only mode of transport is my feet whether hauling water or visiting neighbors a few mile away. The outhouse is a five minute walk away and is equipped with a standard long drop, but unlike Africa I can sit as opposed to squat. It does get interesting when the temperature is -40'. I have experienced colder temperatures here than in the U.P. but much less wind and snow.

The nights here are spectacular, constantly aglow with moonlight and/or northern lights. Nighttime is my favorite time to hike. On the Winter Solstice the sun crossed the horizon in just under 4 hours. When I am not out enjoying the splendors of the great outdoors, dizzying myself while trying to take in all the postcard-worthy sights surrounding me, I spend my time reading, writing, drumming, meditating or tutoring home-schooled kids in math. This has been a wonderful experience all around.

That's all from The Last Frontier . . .

Jay Bitely

McCarthy, Alaska

# *Scheduled Air Service from Anchorage to McCarthy with stopover in Gulkana!*

Now you can leave Anchorage at 8:30 on Wednesday or Friday morning and arrive in Gulkana at 9:45, McCarthy at 11:00. Or, you can leave McCarthy at 11:15 and be back in Anchorage by 2:00pm the same day! (Leaves Gulkana at 12:45) This service is year around.



<http://www.ellisair.com>

## *Ellis Air Taxi, Inc.*

Phone 822-3368

800-478-3368

Gulkana Airfield Box 106, Glennallen, AK 99588

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEPARTURES, ARRIVALS, CONNECTIONS.

Ellis Air will not be responsible for damages resulting from the failure of flights to depart or arrive at times stated in this timetable, nor for errors herein, nor for failure to make connections to other airlines or of this company. Schedules are subject to change without notice. Schedules shown are based on expected flying times. Because weather and other factors may affect operating conditions, departures and arrivals cannot be guaranteed.

# **Copper River Cash Store**

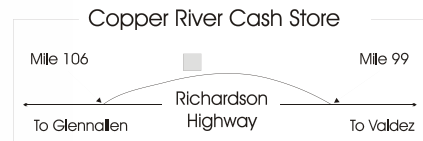
We handle BUSH ORDE  
With SPECIAL CARE!  
PO Box E  
Copper Center, AK 995

We take VISA  
Master Charge  
Quest Card  
FAX 822-3443



Everyday  
**LOW PRICED ITEMS:**  
Drive a little & SAVE \$\$\$\$

Stop by and Check  
For the Weekly  
**IN-STORE SPECIALS**



**Downtown Copper Center 822-3266**  
**Store Hours 10 am to 6 pm, Monday - Saturday**



## Valdez Realty

"The Dirt Merchant"

WALTER M. WOOD  
BROKER  
(907)835-2408  
Fax (907)835-5462

Cor. EGAN & HAZLET  
P.O. BOX 868  
VALDEZ, AK 99686  
vldzrlty@alaska.net

Recreational lots at Chokosna River Tracts—approx.  
Mi. 27 McCarthy Hwy. 1 ¼ acre and up—some / hwy  
frontage, some / Chokosna River frontage.

## www.PropertyRightsResearch.org

Julie Smithson, Researcher  
213 Thorn Locust Lane  
London, Ohio 43140-8844  
propertyrights@earthlink.net  
749-857-1239 (voice/no fax)



*Spoil Yourself  
or Someone  
You Love!*

NATURAL SOY CANDLES

• BUG POTION #9®

HANDMADE SOAPS

SUGAR & SALT SCRUBZ® • DREAM WHIPZ®

• MOOSE LIPS® Lip Balms •

• NATURAL HEALING & PAIN RELIEF •

...AND MUCH MORE

SELECT ITEMS AT MA JOHNSON'S HOTEL

COMPLETE ONLINE STORE AT  
[WWW.AKNATURALS.COM](http://WWW.AKNATURALS.COM)



PO Box 670889 Chugiak, AK 99567  
907-688-0240 fax 907-688-0241  
RETAIL / WHOLESALE / CUSTOM ORDERS



# HOMESTEAD SUPPLY

*Lumber, building materials and hardware delivered  
to the McCarthy area at Anchorage prices!*

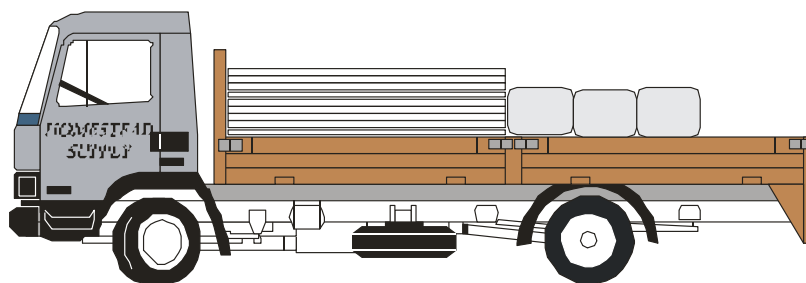
Give us a call or come in and browse our new ACE  
Hardware store.

*NEW! Greenhouse and potting supplies!*

**1-800-478-3987**

or

**FAX 822-5209**



Mile 115.5 Richardson Highway (Box 49) Glennallen

shop MARY KAY<sup>®</sup>  
**Online**

Need a new lipstick? Want quick gift ideas?

You'll find it all at my Web site. It's fast. Easy.

And you can shop online any time that's convenient for you. 24 hours a day. 7 days a week.

**Tammy Rowland**  
**Independent Beauty Consultant**  
**[www.marykay.com/trowland1](http://www.marykay.com/trowland1)**  
**(907)581-5881**

**Wrangell B  
St. Elias &  
News B**

◆ **Now taking reservations for 2005.**

Phone **(907)554-4454** or Email **WSEN@starband.net**

See us on the WEB at  
**Wsen.net/WSENBB.htm**

*Your hosts, long-time residents Rick & Bonnie Kenyon.*

♡ *McCarthy* ♡  
**Bed & Breakfast**

Cozy, quiet cabins, all with private bathrooms & showers. Pull into our conveniently located homestead on the McCarthy Road, 1/2 mile from the Kennicott River footbridge.

- Continental breakfast & fresh coffee
- Private baths
- Gazebo kitchen
- Picnic area
- Tire repair

**[Jwadam@mycidco.com](mailto:Jwadam@mycidco.com)**  
**PO Box MXY Glennallen, AK 99588-8998**  
**(907) 554-4433**

**McCarthy  
Building  
Services**

Owners *John & Carmen*

**907-554-4433**

Local bonded and insured business specializing in frame cabin building.

Contact us for your building needs.

## McCarthy Kennicott Community Church

An inter-denominational church  
All faiths welcome

"The church on the island"

**Sunday morning service  
11 a.m.**

**Jesus is Lord!**

## *Sportsmen's Paradise Lodge*

Mile 28.5 Nabesna Rd. HC 63, Box 1320,  
Slana, AK 99586 Phone 907-822-7313  
E-mail: dfrederick@starband.net

**Comfortable Cabins and boats  
for rent at lodge and  
at Copper Lake.**

*"Great Alaskan Hospitality"*

Hosts: Doug & Judy Frederick

Wells  
by

## *Sourdough* **Drilling**

Contact Kirk Shively at:  
Phone 373-5917 Cell 354-6917  
6771 W. Sourdough Dr.  
Wasilla, AK 99654



*We at Copper Valley  
Wireless welcome visitors to  
this great area!*

We here at Copper Valley Wireless are excited about our new suite of rate plans, designed with you in mind. Now it is more economical than ever to have service from the wilderness to the world!

The new rates have more minutes—even an Unlimited plan—and include a number of minutes roaming within Alaska at no extra charge. Call or email us for the details!

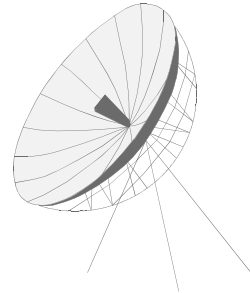
**1-800-235-5414 or \*611**  
**help@coppervalleywireless.com**

The New **Caribou Hotel**

*Getting tired?*

*Stop at the Caribou Hotel!*

*The coffee pot's always on!*



**Warm atmosphere — Hot Tubs — Satellite TV  
Full Menu Restaurant**

Mile 187 Glenn Hwy. 822-3302 Glennallen, AK



**Service Oil & Gas**

**RESIDENTIAL ● COMMERCIAL**

- Heating oil
- Gasoline and Diesel Fuel
- AvGas and Jet Fuel
- Chevron Lube Oils and Greases
- Fuel Tanks and Accessories

*Service sometimes means going more than the extra mile.*

*"We appreciate all our BUSH CUSTOMERS"*

**For the First Name In Service, Call  
SERVICE OIL & GAS**



**Chevron**

PHONE: 822-3375  
Mile 188.5 Glenn Highway  
Box 276  
Glennallen, AK 99588



### House for Sale in Kennicott, Alaska (on Silk Stocking Row)

Original house (built in 1918) with many improvements including gray water system, stabilization, solar electrical system, two new outbuildings, new furniture throughout, kitchen items, new propane refrigerator.

For more information, call Rans Kennicott at 540-955-0962.



## WSEN.NET

Your connection to the McCarthy-Kennicott area.

## WSEN Mini-Storage

Store your stuff!

**NEW!**

ATV's

Snowmachines

Chainsaws

Tools

Bicycles

Cars—Trucks—Motorhomes

Stuff!

Call (907)554-4454

Email [WSEN@starband.net](mailto:WSEN@starband.net)

## Copper Center Lodge

*Family owned and operated*



Open 7 days/wk Year Round

**822-3245**

Winter Hours

7:00 AM — 8:30 PM

On the "Loop Road"  
In Copper Center

*Serving Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner*

[www.coppercenterlodge.com](http://www.coppercenterlodge.com)

### CLASSIFIED

**WANTED:** Five to sixty acres in McCarthy area. \$10,000 to \$50,000 range. Contact Ron at (303)940-6539

**FOR SALE:** 5 acres, Lot 25, Kennicott River Land Tracts Addition. 40,000.00 obo. will owner finance. David Adams PO Box 921226, Dutch Harbor AK 99692

**FOR SALE:** Motorola Star-Tech cell phones \$20 each (Three available) call 554-4454 email [RickK@starband.net](mailto:RickK@starband.net)

## **ROWCON SERVICES**

GENERAL CONTRACTOR  
McCarthy, Alaska 554-4498

Keith Rowland, Owner  
Lifetime Alaskan

Excavation & Gravel Products  
DEC-approved septic

♪ Over the river and  
through the woods, ♪  
a-freighting we will go.

Lowboy & Heavy Freight Service



## A Visitor's Guide

to

# Kennicott & McCarthy

## 2005

**AFFORDABLE ADVERTISING IN THE AREA'S PREMIER VISITOR GUIDE.**

**COVERS THE ENTIRE COPPER RIVER VALLEY.**

**Contact Kenyon Services**

**(907)554-4454 [wsen@wsen.net](mailto:wsen@wsen.net)**

## OF GENERAL INFORMATION

ROWCON Services is pleased to announce that we will be providing ready-mix concrete for the McCarthy-Kennicott and surrounding area this coming 2005 construction season. We have placed in service a factory-reconditioned CemenTech MCD8-130 Mobile Concrete Dispenser. This mobile batch plant is capable of both small and large pours. We will also have some concrete accessories on hand, such as rebar and form stakes. Available for rent will be a power trowel, power screed, and vibrator.



ROWCON Services would like to wish everyone a pleasant and successful summer.

# Your gateway to adventure...

McCarthy Lodge Ma Johnson's Hotel

Explore the possibilities at [www.mccarthylodge.com](http://www.mccarthylodge.com)

1-907-554-4402

# Cooking with Peggy

BY PEGGY GUNTIS

Dear Friends,

If you read my page last month, you'll know that I featured recipes given to me by my special friends in Virginia. This month I'd like to share those given to me by friends here in Tucson. While I'm in McCarthy this summer I hope some of my friends there will give me some of their favorites to pass on to you. . . so McCarthy friends, gather all those favorites together because I'll hit town in early June! The first is from my longtime friend Vicky Van-deZande. It was so-o-o good that when we had eaten the pork chops I practically licked the pan of the few apples that were left. It's easy to make, too, but perfect for company.

## **Pork Chops with Apples**

6 pork chops, seasoned  
3 or 4 unpeeled apples, cored & sliced  
1/4 cup brown sugar  
1/2 tsp cinnamon  
2 tablespoons of butter

Heat oven to 350. Brown chops on both sides in hot fat. Place apple slices in greased baking dish. Sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon; dot with butter. Top with pork chops. Cover and bake 1 1/2 hour.

*The next is from my friend, Joann McBride. When she e-mailed it to me she added a little extra background material that I'd like to include here. She said, "My mother and I were in a restaurant in the '50's, before I was born, of course,*

*(sure!) eating salads when we were served this great dressing. She asked for the recipe; they told her it was in the Joy of Cooking. Well, in Mattoon, Illinois, in the late 1950's there were not many copies of the Joy of Cooking... so we went to St. Louis and found one. The recipe was called, cleverly, 'French Dressing with Tomato Soup'. You may remember that in the '50's and '60's cooking with soup was all the rage. So that's 45 years ago, at least, and at all family parties I still have a cruet of Mom's French Dressing."*

## **Place in a jar with a screw top:**

1 can tomato soup, 10 1/2 oz.  
1 cup vinegar (malt, cider, tarragon or comb. of all 3)  
1/2 cup oil  
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce  
2 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon paprika  
1/2 teaspoon pepper  
1/2 teaspoon dry mustard  
1/4 cup sugar  
1 teaspoon onion juice  
1 peeled clove garlic

Chill. Shake well before serving. About 3 cupfuls.

*And now from my friend, Vivian Seymour. Vivian and I met in a restaurant last fall when I stopped at her table and asked her what she was reading. We've been meeting for lunch in bookstores ever since! This coffee cake is delicious, not too sweet but is moist and keeps well. Vivian says it cannot fail and the*

*beauty of it is that you can use all kinds of substitutions if you're out of something and it still turns out great. Sounds like my kind of cake.*

## **Coffee Cake**

Mix together:

3 cups flour (sifted, all purpose, white, or wheat)  
pinch of salt  
4 teaspoon of baking powder  
1/4 lb. butter  
1/4 lb. margarine  
2 cups sugar (brown or white)

Mix as for a pie crust (I mixed on low to break up margarine and mix ingredients). Set aside 1/3 cup of mixture.

Add:

2 eggs  
1 large can evaporated milk—12 oz. (whole, fat-free or whatever)  
1 teaspoon vanilla

Pour into greased 9 x 13 pan. Mix left-over 1/3 cup with cinnamon (as much as you like) and ground walnuts, or pecans if you like and sprinkle over the top. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 - 45 minutes.

*Speaking of water and flour — How come when you mix water and flour together you get glue? And then you add eggs and sugar and you get cake? Where did the glue go? You know darn good and well where it went! That's what makes the cake stick to our waist! or where ever! See you next month. You can write to me at jgelec@starband.net.*

---

**"The judiciary of the United States is the subtle corps of sappers and miners constantly working under ground to undermine the foundations of our confederated fabric. They are construing our constitution from a co-ordination of a general and special government to a general and supreme one alone." —Thomas Jefferson**

**"On every question of construction carry ourselves back to the time when the Constitution was adopted, recollect the spirit manifested in the debates and instead of trying what meaning may be squeezed out of the text or invented against it, conform to the probable one in which it was passed." —Thomas Jefferson**

# A LOOK AT THE WEATHER

BY GEORGE CEBULA

February was just about average in both temperature and precipitation. March was warm and dry.

The high temperature for February was 41 on the 8th and 10th (44 on Feb. 21, '04 and 44 on Feb. 5, '03). The lowest temperature recorded at McCarthy in February was -40 on the 5<sup>th</sup> (-15 on Feb. 27, '04 and -12 on Feb. 20, '03). The high was 40 or above on only 2 days and the low was -10 or lower on 6 days. The average February temperature was 12.3 (14.9 in '04 and 23.6 in '03). This is still mild compared to -5.9 in '99. *Silver Lake had a high of 40 on February 24th (40 on Feb. 22, '04 and 45 on Feb. 5, '03) and a low of -41 on February 6th (-38 on Feb. 1, '04 and -10 on Feb. 18 '03). The average February temperature at Silver Lake was 9.5 (22.9 in '04 and 12.6 in '03).*

The February precipitation was 1.17 inches of liquid (1.46 in '04 and 0.70 in '03). Total snowfall was 16.4 inches (4.3 in '04 and 7.3 in '03). *Silver Lake had 0.83 inches of liquid (0.27 in '04 and 0.09 in '03) and 10.0 inches of snow (5.0 in '04 and 1.0 in '03).* McCarthy began February with 24 inches of snow on the ground and ended the month with 30 inches. *Silver Lake had 8 inches on the 1st and ended February with 9 inches.*

March saw the return of warmer temperatures and plenty of sunshine. The high temperature for March was 51 on the 11<sup>th</sup> (45 on Mar. 29, '04 and 46 on Mar. 28, '03). The low temperature for March was -5 on the 21<sup>st</sup> (-21 on Mar. 20, '04 and -32 on Mar. 14, '03). The average March temperature at McCarthy was 28.7 compared to 21.0 in Mar. '04 and 16.5 in Mar. '03. The high reached 50 or higher on 3 days and the low was 0 or below on only 4 days. *Silver Lake had a high 46 on March 11<sup>th</sup> (41 on Mar. 24, '04 and 44 on Mar. 4, '03), a low of -5 on March 26<sup>th</sup> (-17 Mar. 21, '04 and -26 on Mar 14, '03). The March average temperature at Silver Lake was 27.2 (16.6 in Mar. '04 and 14.9 in Mar. '03).*

March liquid precipitation was 0.12 inches (0.67 in Mar. '04 and 1.02 in Mar. '03) and snowfall was 0.8 inches (10.1 in Mar. '04 and 11.3 in Mar. '03). *Silver Lake had 0.0 inches of liquid (0.27 in Mar. '04 and 0.59 in Mar. '03) and snowfall of 0 inches (5.0 in Mar. '04 and 6.0 in Mar. '03).* By the end of March the snow cover was 18 inches at McCarthy and only a trace at Silver Lake.

The total snowfall for '04-'05 was 79.4 inches (110.6 in '03-'04, 44.5 in '02-'03, and 67.1 in '01-'02). The greatest snow depth was 30 inches on February 28<sup>th</sup>. This compares with an average ('80-'04) of

64.9 inches and a snow depth of 27 inches. The greatest snow fall was 110.6 inches in '03-'04 (99.9 inches in '90-'91) and the lowest was 27.3 inches in '86-'87. The greatest snow depth was 42 inches '03-'04 (39 inches in '90-'91) and the lowest was 16 inches in '86-'87 and '98-'99. *Silver Lake had a total snowfall of 45.2 inches and the greatest snow depth was 10 inches.*

The average temperature for November was 16.9 (8.6 in Nov. '03 and 27.6 in Nov. '02). The total liquid precipitation for November was 1.30 (3.38 inches in Nov. '03 and 4.26 in Nov. '02) with 8.2 inches of snow (40.7 in Nov. '03 and 2.6 in Nov. '02).

The first part of a gradual warming of temperatures has occurred during April. By the 30<sup>th</sup> we are observing lows near 30 and highs in the mid 50s. There is about 6 inches of wet snow left, but more open patches of ground are appearing each day. It is safe to say that breakup is almost over.

May should see a rapid increase in temperatures with highs in the 60's by mid month. Precipitation is usually on the light side with an average amount of less than an inch.

June is usually the warmest month at McCarthy with an average temperature in the mid 50's, highs in the 70's and about 2 inches of rain.

---

**"For the West — for America, the time has come to dare to show to the world that our civilized ideas, our traditions, our values, are not — like the ideology and war machine of totalitarian societies — just a facade of strength. It is time for the world to know our intellectual and spiritual values are rooted in the source of all strength, a belief in a Supreme Being, and a law higher than our own." —Ronald Reagan**

**"The things that will destroy us are: politics without principle; pleasure without conscience; wealth without work; knowledge without character; business without morality; science without humanity; and worship without sacrifice." —Mahatma Mohandas Gandhi**

# FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

“Wrangell-Saint Elias National Park, containing approximately eight million one hundred and forty-seven thousand acres of public lands, and Wrangell-Saint Elias National Preserve containing approximately four million one hundred and seventeen thousand acres of public lands, as generally depicted on map numbered WRST-90,007, and dated August 1980.”<sup>1</sup>

With those words, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST) came into being through the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, or ANILCA.

If you add those two acreage numbers mentioned in ANILCA, you come up with roughly 12.2 million. Yet, for a number of years, WRST has been said to contain 13.2 million acres. The discrepancy can be found in two small words in the enabling legislation: Public lands.

By definition, WRST consists of 12.2 million acres of public lands. For at least 19 years, however, the National Park Service (NPS) has been erroneously using the 13.2 million figure—a number derived by adding all of the private, native corporation, state and university lands that lie within the boundaries of the map mentioned above to the public lands that Congress said comprised the park/preserve.<sup>2</sup>

One might wonder what the purpose of such a manipulation of numbers might serve. Consider this.

According to federal statute, only 23,000 acres can be added to or deleted from the total acreage of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park without specific approval from Congress. Apparently Congress thought 12.2 million acres was big enough.

Congress also said that residents were to be left alone; “to continue their way of life to the

maximum extent compatible with the purposes of [the park].”

But the NPS has neither left the residents alone nor left the park size alone.

Since 1980, the NPS has acquired fee simple interest in 267,145 acres—a quarter million more than they were allowed under ANILCA and the General Management Plan (GMP) for WRST.

The official numbers do not reflect the new acquisitions. NPS officially claims that the park/preserve is 13.2 million acres, the same size it was in 1986!

When Congress sees the “size of the park” figures, it sighs contentedly. On paper, nothing has changed much at all since 1980. The official numbers were 13,188,000 in 1980, 13,190,000 in 2005—a gain of only 2,000 acres. But the reality is much different.

According to the GMP, “...it is not the intention of this plan to imply a wholesale fee acquisition program for Wrangell-St. Elias.”

More than a quarter million acres of additional land may not be considered “wholesale,” but you have to admit it is significant. And it *does* exceed the 23,000 figure set by Congress.

Official park policy is to acquire control over all of the lands within its boundaries. NPS has slated another half-million acres for fee simple acquisition, and plans to control the rest by easements and covenants.<sup>3</sup>

Land is changing hands at an increasing rate. While there was Congressional support for limited NPS acquisition of *unimproved* private property,<sup>3</sup> many of the recent acquisitions have been small businesses or private residences.

About a thousand acres near Long Lake, just west of McCarthy are slated to be traded to the park for land down in Gustavus.

It seems likely that an additional 8,800 acres of University lands near McCarthy, including a large tract at Strelna, will be conveyed to the federal government under a federal land grant bill introduced by Senator Lisa Murkowski. It is entirely possible that an additional 12,500 acres of DNR land may end up belonging to the Park Service as an unintended consequence of the States desire to help the University with its own land grant bill.

We welcome the new superintendent at WRST, Jed Davis. But a change in personnel is not enough. It is time for a major policy change. NPS must stop acquiring more and more private lands and start managing what they already have. They must let inholders rest secure in the knowledge they will not be badgered into selling their property to the NPS.

<sup>1</sup>ANILCA, TITLE II—National Park System <http://www.r7.fws.gov/asm/anilca/title02.html#201>

<sup>2</sup> To be more precise, WRST consisted of 12,264,000 acres as legislated in 1980. By 1986, the number was 12,199,200, apparently because of boundary adjustments. Today it is 12,468,345. Yet in the 1986 GMP total park acreage was listed as 13,188,000. Today’s figure is 13,190,000—only 2,000 acres more than in 1986.

<sup>3</sup> WRST GMP Land Protection Plan <http://www.nps.gov/wrst/GMP1986/GMP.htm#landprotectsum>

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

March 27, 2005

Dear Editor:

I have a concern regarding the publishing of inaccurate article containing misinformation / your published webpage... Contained is an article copied from your webpage which lacks substance and accuracy. I suggest you do your homework... I have lived in Prince Albert for a good many years and do not share the same views as Mr. Thompson. In fact the Grey Owl area has changed very little in the last 30 yrs... The lakes were down approximately 4 ft since the mid 70's... We experienced a drought... Last years rain brought the lakes up about two feet. Fishing is better now than before. There are more types of birds in PANP and greater numbers of ungulates than ever before... I enjoy photography as a hobby and spend a great deal of time in the back country...

I seriously doubt that Mr. Rodney Thompson is Rod Thompson...

Have a good day and please print accuracy.

Sincerely,

Rod Young

*Editor's Note: Mr. Young was referring to the following letter that appeared in the March & April 2004 issue of WSEN.*

Editor:

I am writing about the situation at "Sportsmens' Paradise" in Alaska.

I am a former outfitter, sportsman, lover of nature and environmental protector. I am a 69 year old Canadian, living in northern Saskatchewan, an area of our shared continent that has some 100,000 lakes of pristine beauty and the massive Churchill River chain that is one of our continent's remaining unpolluted source of fresh water.

I have witnessed the destruction of many fine "sportsmens' paradise(s)" here by industry, by mining, and, indeed, by park development that developed roads which ultimately led to roads to resources. If you look at a map of northern Saskatchewan, you will see the Prince Albert National Park that now rises to some 30,000 people on a summer weekday. It has some 200 permanent employees there in winter.

Another 100 miles north, you will see Lac La Ronge, once a fishing paradise with 25-100 pound Lake Trout, 7 pound Walleye and 20-30 pound Northerns. The paved road to that location was designed to provide for the lumber industry to cut the forest down for a 1000 ton mill in Prince Albert.

You might look up the story of Grey Owl, an Englishman named Archie Delaney, who, in the 1930's lived in the National Park mentioned, even before it was made a Park. He wrote extensively of the importance of being in tune with nature.

These fishing and hunting areas have been transformed and the animals, the fish, the birds, the flora and the fauna---their existence is in severe jeopardy. This is called "progress!"

I read about the gross treatment of Doug and Judy Frederick in Alaska. I have every right to comment as we are all citizens of this continent, indeed this earth. I see the governments establishing parks without consideration to all the implications. Your government, for example, is talking of the massive development of oil resources, within and without your parks. When they are done with that, what will you do with the mess, the new Valdez?

The Outfitters like the Fredericks, are the true conservationists and for the National Park Service to

be initiating such aggressive action against them is not only inhumane, it is downright fraudulent-a means to hide their own agenda.

Wherever this situation may lead, the Parks people are surely confiscating the Frederick's livelihood. They cannot do this, surely, without compensation. This entire exercise smells of bureaucratic bungling, surely.

Rodney G. Thomson

S6V 1M7

Phone 306 763-3350

*Mr. Thomson responds to Mr. Young.*

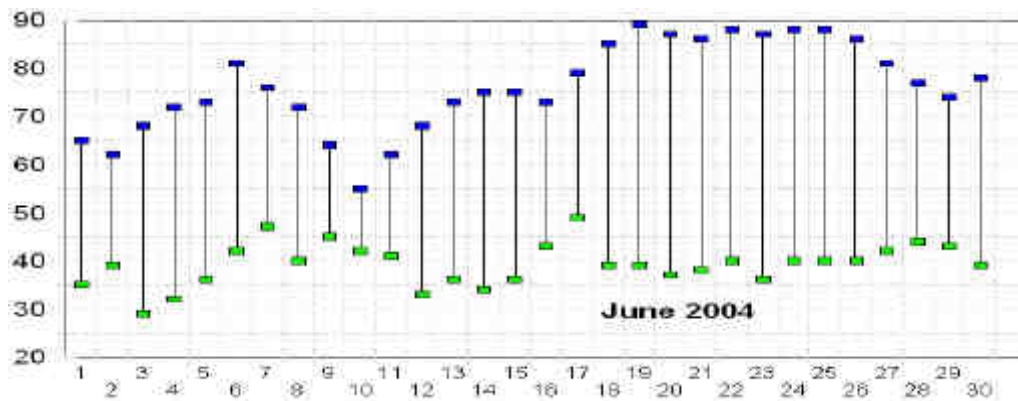
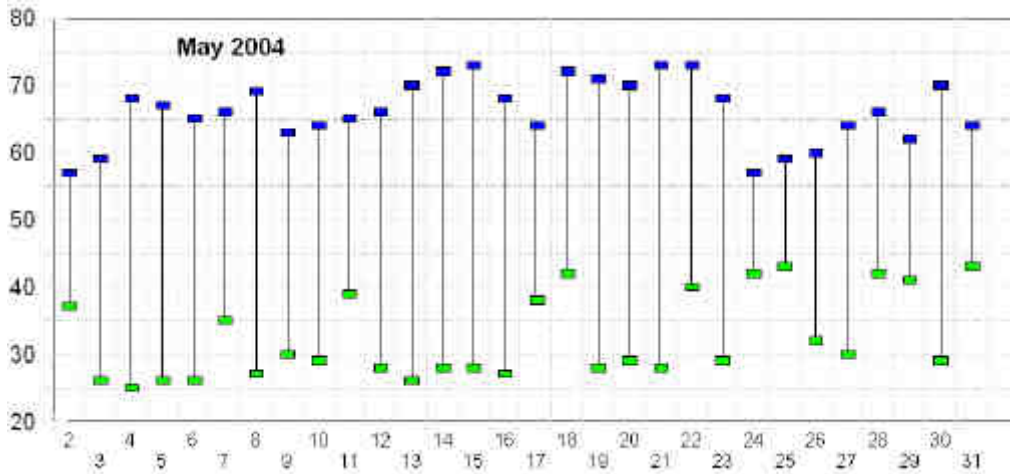
March 29, 2005

I read Mr. Rod Young's comments today and am amazed, first of all, that he questions the integrity of my name and, secondly, that he would take issue with the statements in my correspondence with respect to the Frederick's situation. Do I take issue with the oil and has development now planned for Alaska? Indeed I do. Do I have a concern for a pipeline that will wend its way down the Mackenzie? Indeed I do. Have I witnessed the destruction of a fine fishing lake in La Ronge due to the development of the Pulp Mill and the attending all-weather roads and the almost unrestricted commercial fishing? Indeed I have. Have I ever seen one of our lakes fished out by sports fishermen? Not likely.

Now, Rod Young, do not doubt who I am. I have lived here continuously since 1960 and I did, in fact, own and operate Rod & Gun Fishing and Hunting Lodges Ltd. with 29 cabins, 29 boats and motors, 2 tackle shops, 2 grocery outlets, a gas outlet and a filleting plant. It took us about 7 years to go broke. You have seen my phone number on the article you quoted. It has not changed.

(Continued on page 27)

Wrangell St. Elias News  
McCarthy #42  
PO Box MXX  
Glennallen, AK 99588



# Wrangell St. Elias News

# B & B



*Your hosts, long-time residents Rick & Bonnie Kenyon.*

- ◆ **Private** cabins for 2 to 4.
- ◆ **Convenient** access by automobile.
- ◆ **Historic** homestead setting. Enjoy Alaskan bush living.
- ◆ **Quiet** location away from the crowds!

Phone (907)554-4454 or Email [WSEN@starband.net](mailto:WSEN@starband.net)

See us on the WEB at <http://mccarthy-kennicott.com/WSENBB.htm>