

Wrangell St. Elias News

"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"

Volume Thirteen Issue Six

November & December 2004

Two Dollars

Local man survives grizzly attack.

"The ground shook and and I felt the jaws of the bear slip over my head. As he bit down I heard a sickening, crunching sound and was amazed I was still alive!"

Read this amazing first-hand account of an attack by a grizzly bear on page 6.



Photo courtesy Lynn Welty

A grateful Welty family. Rene, Don and Lynn. Daughter Sarah is in Fairbanks at UAF.

Is this cabin Alaska's best-kept National Park secret?

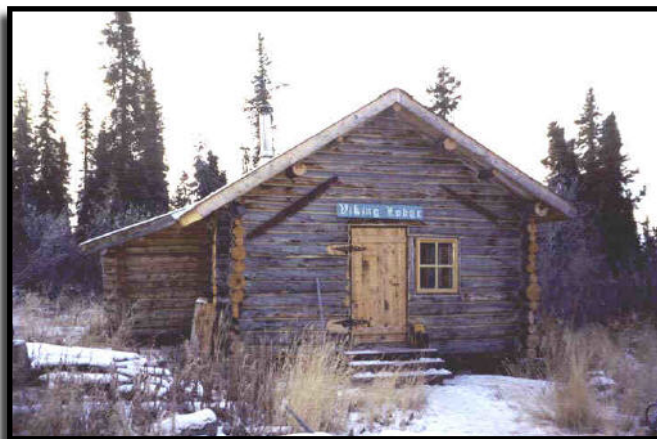


Photo courtesy Viggo Thor Brandt-Erichsen

This National Park Service public-use cabin is close to the road, nicely refurbished, and available for public use. Why won't the Park Service tell you about it?

Story on page 8

A note from the publisher

BY BONNIE KENYON

It is November 2 as Rick and I put the finishing touches on this issue of *WSEN* – the last issue for the year. The first signs of winter have arrived in the McCarthy area — snow, cold nights and the end of Daylight Savings Time. We awoke to a fresh 2 inches of snow on top of 6 inches accumulation. Almost enough to pull out the snowmachines — but not quite.

Rick is sitting nearby at his computer desk making the corrections to some last minute proofing. Layout is one of his many fortes and, I cannot help but think, “I’m glad he has that job!” I truly believe that if we had known we would be this involved in journalism, both of us would have taken our English/writing classes much more seriously. Thankfully, we did learn the art of typing; although the typewriters we used in high school are nothing like the curved computer keyboards we are presently using.

We have an exciting and uplifting story for you this issue. It was written by McCarthy resident Don Welty, a nearby neighbor and close friend of ours. We are so thankful that the ending of his true account of a serious bear encounter has a happy ending. Rick and I appreciate Don’s willingness to write his story in time to include it in this issue.

Subscriber Tonia Alexander, long-time homeschool mom, turned in a recipe for a successful one-house schoolroom. I know you “moms” will want to include this recipe in your daily teaching activities! Thanks, Tonia.

I want to thank our regular contributors, Peggy Guntis and George Cebula, for their faithfulness to our publication. Both are the first to get their articles finished and on to Rick’s desk. They always encourage

me to get “started!” Thank you, Peggy and George.

We have so much to be thankful for during this year’s Thanksgiving celebration. With the elections nearly finalized as we go to press, I cannot help but think what a great nation this is and how extremely blessed we are. Most of us Americans would readily admit we are not a perfect nation, but we value our freedom and long to remain that way. How many men and women gave everything they had to assure us our freedom? I am thankful for them. We are reaping what they sowed.

I think of Christmas and its meaning and, once again, I am thankful for the freedom that is depicted in the very heart of this holiday season. Wrapped up in this Gift is the freedom to be all that we were designed by our Creator to be. We are reaping what He sowed.

The following prayer that is taped above my computer screen came from an NPS employee. May it be a seed sown in your heart today as it was in mine. Have a blessed Thanksgiving and a joyous Christmas celebration!

Prayer before starting work

My Heavenly Father, as I enter this work place, I bring Your presence with me. I speak Your peace, Your grace, Your mercy, and Your perfect order into this office. I acknowledge Your power over all that will be spoken, thought, decided and done within these walls. Lord, I thank You for the gifts You have blessed me with. I commit to using them responsibly in Your honor. Give me a fresh supply of strength to do my job. Anoint my projects, ideas and energy, so that even my smallest accomplishment may bring You glory. Lord, when I am confused, guide me. When I am weary,

energize me. When I am burned out, infuse me with the light of the Holy Spirit. May the work that I do and the way I do it bring faith, joy and a smile to all that I come in contact with today. And, oh Lord, when I leave this place, give me traveling mercy. Bless my family and home to be in order as I left it. Lord, I thank you for everything You’ve done, everything You’re doing and everything You’re going to do. In the Name of Jesus I pray, with much love and Thanksgiving. Amen.

WSEN welcomes aboard the following subscribers: Suzi Weersing, CA; Mike Monroe, AK; Mark Nelson, WA; Dave Gutierrez, AK; Jamie Dowdy, AK.

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Items of Interest

BY BONNIE KENYON

George and Ted Cebula: September arrived and so did George's brother, Ted, of Milwaukee. Ted's annual visit to the McCarthy area usually signals us that the busy summer season is tapering off and fall chores are ready to commence. George's seasonal job as shuttle bus driver for Wrangell Mountain Bus came to an end but not his work.

Wood detail was the next project. Before long the Cebula brothers gathered a healthy-looking pile of winter wood. It soon was split and stacked in George's woodshed -- all ready for the next season to arrive. In the meantime, it was time to play!

One morning while Ted was over at our place sampling his first cup of coffee for the day, he suggested the four of us go to McCarthy Lodge for dinner. It was unanimous. Ted informed Rick and I that he and George would even pick us up and deliver us in style to downtown McCarthy. It was a grand night! Thanks for the invite, Ted and George!

Jim and Audrey Edwards: When we walked in the door of the lodge, we were pleasantly greeted by our neighbors Jim and Audrey Edwards. They, too, had decided to have dinner in town. Their guests were Ursel and Walter Mueller, our long-time friends from Switzerland. They were finishing up their dinner as we ordered ours.

Jim and the Muellers left for Kennicott for Jim's annual historic slide show. Audrey decided to stay behind and catch a ride back across the river with the Cebulas and Rick and I. She joined our table. Am I ever glad she did! You see, it was her birthday, September 14, and to help celebrate the occasion, the McCarthy Lodge staff brought forth a sampling of their special desserts. Audrey graciously shared her treats

with us and we humbly received them. Thanks, Audrey!

Stephen, Kelly, Carly and John Paul Syren: Now that October is here, people are coming and going -- mostly going. The Syren family had already left for the winter after closing down their seasonal parking lot and campground. What a surprise to receive a phone call from Kelly the other day requesting a reservation for a night or two at one of our cabins.

Come to find out Stephen and Kelly had purchased Pete Sennhauser's yellow school bus. They were coming in to take it out to Wasilla. The bus is going to receive a thorough make over, says Kelly. By next summer, the Syrens hope to have it outfitted as their new "home-on-wheels." I expect we won't recognize it when it returns to the end-of-the-road.

While the Syrens were here, Carly celebrated her 4th birthday. Nearby neighbor Dorothy Adler baked her a cake. John Paul tells me he likes school this year and Kelly says he is getting A's and B's. Now if she can just keep him from hiding his homework...

Michelle Casey, son Carl and daughter Tracey: Another nearby neighbor, Michelle Casey, decided to pull a joke on her daughter Tracey. The other morning when the Syrens were leaving our place, they made a quick stop at her driveway. Michelle woke Tracey up saying, "The school bus is here to pick you up for school!" As most of you know, there are no public schools in McCarthy, only home schools, and Tracey didn't fall for her mom's teasing.

I am happy to announce that Michelle, Tracey and Carl, (I know they are elated!) are now moved lock, stock, and new wood stove into their cabin. The two dormers are

done, roof is finished, doors and windows are in place as well and, thanks for a helping hand from neighbor Lynn Welty, the insulation is in place. Just in time, too. The ground is now covered in 6 inches of sparkling white snow.

Another nearby neighbor, Kaleb Rowland, came by the other day and assisted Michelle in constructing an outhouse. It is modeled after the Rowland kids' fort -- a willow teepee.

There is still plenty to do, like try out the new chainsaw, unpack and search for those especially important items. What is a neighbor for? Tracey appeared on my doorstep a little while ago asking to borrow a can opener. Theirs hadn't surfaced yet! Now that little tool can be a very important item of interest.

Tracey just returned home from visiting her dad in Sweethome, OR. (Carl is due back November 3.) She isn't letting too much snow pile up under her feet. She managed to find her box of schoolbooks and is now busy at work. Welcome home, Tracey, and congratulations to you all on getting moved into your new home.

The Keith Rowland family: Robin Harris, Laurie's oldest sister, visited the area this last week. It was a time of rejoicing in the Rowland home. Robin is a very popular member of the family and, although she and Laurie spent some time together last Christmas while visiting their parents in Northern California, there just doesn't seem to be enough quality time between the two sisters. Laurie says they worked on that while Robin was here.

Robin, her husband Bill, daughter Katherine and son James are presently living in Los Angeles, where Katherine and James are enrolled in Azusa Pacific University. Bill and Robin's plans include returning to Siberia in the near future

and continuing their missionary work.

On the evening of her arrival in McCarthy, Robin spoke at the McCarthy-Kennicott Community Church. The group, who supports the Harris' ministry, was glad to finally meet Robin in person and receive an update and a greater description of what life is like in Siberia.

I was quite surprised to learn that, for the most part, people do not live out in the bush like many do here in Alaska, but they congregate in towns and cities. Because the government controls the utilities, the people must go where their needs are met. I came away with a much greater appreciation for the Alaskan lifestyle and our ability to take care of ourselves without depending on the government for our basic needs.

The Rowland's school year has begun, says Laurie – principal and head schoolmaster. In case you have never been in the Rowland's house, the "pupils" (all five kids this year) have their own schoolroom and each student has his/her own desk. Anna Wallin is Laurie's right-hand assistant this year. Laurie is thankful for the help and reports things are going much smoother than last year. The Rowland kids are thrilled with the meager snow cover we have and have already broken out their skis and snowboards.

Anna Wallin: Speaking of Anna...this is her first winter in McCarthy; in fact, I think this is her first experience with snow! She is adjusting well to the many changes happening in her new surroundings. Shortly after her folks, Scott and Sally, left to return to their home in Tucson, Anna, and her dog Luna, moved into the Wallin's cabin. Besides traveling to the Rowland's schoolhouse 5 mornings a week, she busies herself preparing for the winter months ahead, and housesitting for several neighbors.

This next month she will travel to Tucson to spend the Thanksgiving holiday with her folks, her grandparents, Jim and Peggy Guntis, and a host of other family members. She plans on returning to McCarthy shortly after Thanksgiving.

The Welty family: Don, Lynn and daughters Sarah and Rene have undergone quite a traumatic family incident since our last issue. On September 23 Don had a serious encounter with a grizzly bear while out at a hunting camp where he works during the fall season. He spent several days in an Anchorage hospital and was treated for head wounds. Lynn, who was finishing up her summer seasonal job, flew into town to be with him. Rene, who was working as an assistant cook at the camp, accompanied her dad to Anchorage as well. Sarah remained at the University of Fairbanks where she is attending school this year. Don recuperated quickly and was able to return to the hunting camp the first week in October to finish out the hunting season. Rene also returned to complete her stint as a camp cook. Lynn was able to spend a week and a half at the camp with Don and Rene. Don and the ladies are now back home. Rene has begun her school subjects. The entire Welty family has much to be thankful for this Thanksgiving holiday. Be sure to read about Don's bear encounter in his own words on page 6. They are very thankful for all the prayers and support from friends, neighbors and family members.

The Lohse family: Linda answered the phone when I called Long Lake yesterday afternoon. She said she is holding down the fort while Ralph and the 3 boys are on a shopping trip. I know Linda will take good advantage of her quiet time and expect that will include knitting. When any of us ladies have a question on knitting, we know who to call – Linda! That brings me to the exciting news that Kopper Kupboard (Linda's home-based busi-

ness) is full of knitting yarn and supplies, just waiting for interested customers. With the Christmas holiday season just around the corner, you may want to visit the Lohse family for that local handmade quilt, berry syrup for hotcakes, hand-carved birch spoons and a locally-made gift for those special folks back home.

Ralph and the boys, Tyee, Trae, and Teal, have a new Lakina River enterprise to offer to the McCarthy area folks – Buildings on Skids. They can build your outhouse, sauna, shed or small cabin (4'x4' to 12'x16') on skids so locals can skid to their own site. Now is the time to

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give Ralph and boys a call. They can build it in the winter for your use in the spring. Just in case you don't have their phone number, it is 907-554-4471 or you can write them at Box 89, Chitina, AK. 99566.

The Lohse family lives at Mile 44½ of the McCarthy Road. Maybe you remember the ice cream/coffee shop that daughter Robin operated this last summer. It sounds like we can expect to see Robin there again this next summer season!

End-of-season social event: A special dinner put on by Chef Serge and McCarthy Lodge owners, Doug Miller and Neil Darish, took place on September 17. Special invitations were given out to a variety of folks. Those who attended were: Kelly and Natalie Bay, Gary Green, Jim and Audrey Edwards, Guy Holt, Jason Lobo, Beth Hammond and Rick and Bonnie Kenyon.

The four-course meal began with one of Serge's mouth-watering salads, followed by locally-harvested Spruce Hen (Serge got them himself) served over a pastry stuffed with mushrooms. If that wasn't enough, Serge served the group pork chops over pasta. Delicious! All this was followed up with a delectable dessert. Thank you, Serge, Doug and Neil for such a pleasant evening with a group of special neighbors.

McCarthy Area Council meets: The McCarthy Area Council (MAC) held their annual meeting on September 24 at the Blackburn Center in McCarthy. Eighteen members were present to nominate and vote in the following officers and Board members. President, Jeremy Keller; Vice President, Natalie Bay; Secretary, Cynthia Shidner; Treasurer, Andy Shidner. The remainder of the Board now includes the following people: Neil Darish, Ed LaChapelle, Malcolm Vance, Rick Kenyon, Kris Gregory, Rick Jurick and Mark Vail.

The items on the agenda included the Capital Projects Improvement Grant in which a large portion has already been spent to replace

the foundation of the Museum. The other item in the grant request was for a community incinerator project which is still in the planning stages.

The McCarthy Creek Tram project was brought up for discussion. Past MAC involvement — stated several members — was only "in the form of a resolution of September 2001, which was to support the design of a tram across McCarthy Creek, providing the majority of landowners on the south side of the creek approve." It was decided that the opinions of all those affected, on both sides of the creek, was not known. Therefore, any action by MAC at this time was tabled.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, November 17, after mail.

Our condolences and prayers are with the following people: Subscribers and friends, **Linda Warren and Fran Gagnon** of Phoenix, Arizona, have lost Charles Clinton Cooke, 29, who was Linda's son and Fran's grandson. "Clint" died October 17, 2004, as the result of a motor vehicle accident. He resided in Fairbanks until age 5 when the family moved to Oregon and he graduated from high school there. Clint returned to Fairbanks in June 2003. He wanted to be reacquainted with family members in Fairbanks and Minto and learn about his Athabaskan heritage and traditions. He had made many friends while working at the Tanana Chiefs Conference. Clint loved hunting, fishing and reading. He enjoyed helping others when he could. His family said, "We loved Clint dearly and will miss him always." He was preceded in death by his grandfather, Williard Peters. Clint is survived by his father, Arnold Cooke of Newberg, Oregon; his mother, Linda Warren of Phoenix; brothers, Tony Cooke and Donald Cooke, both of Oregon; his sister, Susan Cooke, of Oregon; grandparents, Donald and Doris Cooke of Newberg; Frances Gagnon of Phoenix and Berkman and Sarah Silas of

Minto; adopted grandparents, Richard and Anna Frank of Fairbanks; many relatives in Minto, Fairbanks and Oregon; and many friends. A funeral was held on October 20 at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church. Clint was laid to rest in Newberg, Oregon.

Please know, Linda and Fran, our prayers are with you and your family!

Subscribers and friends, **Carol and Sy Neeley** of Glennallen, were in a serious auto accident on Wednesday, October 6 while driving south in Canada on the Alaska Highway near Fort St. John, BC. Both survived the accident, and were transported to Fort St. John, but, due to the extensiveness of their injuries, were taken by air ambulance to the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton, Alberta. According to a family member, the auto accident caused a severe tear in Sy's Aorta artery where it was attached to his heart. As he was being prepped for surgery, the artery completely severed. Sy went home to be with the Lord right before midnight.

Carol withstood numerous breaks in her right arm and in the fingers of her right hand and right leg. The day after the accident, she underwent surgery for a new hip and a thigh plate. She was eventually moved to an Anchorage hospital.

Funeral services for Sy are still pending. Our love and prayers go out to the entire Neeley family.

A big THANK YOU is in order:

McCarthy area residents cannot thank Lynn Ellis and George Cebula enough for the extra efforts they went to on November 1 in seeing that we got our mail; also, for the safe delivery of the town's outgoing mail to the post office in Glennallen. You both are appreciated!

Local man survives grizzly attack

BY DON WELTY

It was September 23 on Alaska's southeast coast. A long stretch of warm, dry, sunny days had ended, and we were back to our usual rainy weather. A good frost had caused the color change of the deciduous trees and shrubs, the flocks of migrating birds and the clacking of moose antlers all reminding us the short summer was over.

Flying for a moose hunting camp can be frustrating during the cycles of fall and winter storms. This was the end of one of those cycles. The weather was improving with small breaks of sunshine between the scattered rain showers.

After a day and a half of waiting for a break, our packer Steve and I headed out to check our camps. If any of the hunters had been successful, I would drop Steve off to help pack out the 600 lbs. of meat, cape and antlers that would have to be carried to the nearest landing spot. Steve, fresh from Arizona and having packed out a half-dozen moose already, was relishing the adventure and feeling strong. His strength was certainly needed, as this is not airplane-friendly country and landing sites are infrequent where the moose hang out. Only the slow-flying speed and maneuverability of a Super Cub makes it possible to operate on any of the makeshift landing sites.

We headed east and after 20 minutes of sporadic rain showers came to a camp and saw from the air that they had been successful and really needed Steve's help. As I circled the strip, however, it was apparent that the heavy rain earlier had flooded the area and an estimated foot of water lay on the strip, making a safe landing and take-off impossible.

We talked to the camp using a VHF radio and told them we would

have to try in the morning. The hunters weren't too happy about that, but since we had no option we headed back for the lodge.

Looking south along the beach the sun was shining, beckoning us to take a more southern route back to the base camp. We enjoyed the occasional rainbow and a beautifully lit up surf line, still wild from the last storm.

As we passed down the shoreline praising the Creator of all this beauty, I thought of a pair of winter-shed moose antlers I had seen the previous season. They would make a unique decoration at the lodge, and for me, a hike would be a nice break. We didn't have enough daylight to check any other camps until morning.

"The ground shook and I felt the jaws of the bear slip over my head. As he bit down I heard a sickening, crunching sound and was amazed I was still alive!"

We set down on a small but flat sandbar about a mile from the sheds, excited about a break from the unending chores at the lodge. Steve was enthusiastic as always. If all went well we would be back in the air in 30 minutes with plenty of daylight to make base camp. Steve had borrowed a .45-70 lever action gun for his packing trip, so we instinctively took it along. This was prime bear country as well as moose.

As we headed across a wide, sandy area, we could see we would be traveling into or across the light north wind and as we approached the low brush, we began to talk out loud and shouted an occasional "Hey bear" to allow any bears in the vicinity to leave ahead of us. As the brush got higher, we were pleased to see a moose trail leading in the direction we wanted to go. This made for easy walking.

Moose prints were abundant with an occasional old bear scat, but no fresh bear tracks. Expecting to see or hear a moose, I stopped when Steve said, "What's that?" I then heard a woofing alarm of a bear. I hollered, "Bear! Give me the rifle." Steve handed me the rifle and I put a shell in the chamber and let the hammer down slowly, still saying, "Hey, bear, get out of here."

Thirty to 40 yards ahead a bear stood up. As we continued to talk, we waved our arms so it could see that we were people — not small bears! It was, I estimated, about an 8' boar. It was square-headed and dark brown over its entire body — a medium-size boar and larger than most sows in this area. No teats were visible or sign of cubs.

Since no sign of a kill was apparent, such as carrion birds, I expected the bear to turn and run off. Instead, after standing up for maybe 5 seconds, the bear charged. No sound, no angry, irritated look, just a full-speed charge. As Steve continued to yell, "Get out of here," I leveled the quick-handling .45-70 lever gun and cocked the hammer. I was still hoping this was just a bluff charge, but at less than 10 yards, I had to shoot.

It was coming straight on, its head a bit lower than mine. The rifle's sights were steady between the bear's eyes, which were locked into mine. For a split second I thought of the trouble killing this bear in self-defense would cause. No matter, the boundary was crossed and I pulled the trigger.

The hammer fell, but all I heard was a click!

Thinking I had a dud shell, I quickly worked the action and at 2 feet tried again, only to hear another click. What a sick feeling, knowing that only God could save me now. Some confusion after the contact left me lying in the brush pulling myself into a fetal position still trying to work the gun.

The ground shook and and I felt the jaws of the bear slip over my head. As he bit down I heard a sickening, crunching sound and was amazed I was still alive!

Panic struck as I heard Steve's voice, thinking he should be playing dead. I got up, knowing I had no way to defend him except to distract the bear back to me. As I looked through a cascade of blood coming down my face I realized that Steve was okay. Then his words broke through my mental fog — "Help us, Jesus." He was saying it over and over. I joined in. He was 10 feet away and had thought the bear had killed me. Instead, after the one bite the bear ran off into the bush.

Both of us were pretty shook up. We endeavored to stop the bleeding and to get the gun in working order. Upon examination we found that a safety, unlike any lever gun I had ever used, was blocking the hammer just short of the firing pin and needed to be pushed sideways to fire. We reloaded with the only two shells we could find and made a plan on how to get back to the plane.

The bear had run away the same direction we had to go, so we waited and watched for 15 minutes or more, when I spotted three bears in the opposite direction, looking curiously our way. They looked like second year cubs and I was wondering why they would still be around so close.

This caused some confusion in my mind as to whether the bear that attacked me was a sow or a boar. If it was a sow, and these were her cubs, why did she run the other way and why hadn't she taken them off now? As soon as they moved off, we headed back for the airplane. We walked downwind now, alert for any sign of movement. When we arrived at the beach, we knelt down and praised God for bringing us out of the attack alive and asked that I would be able to safely fly us back to the lodge before nightfall.

As we neared the plane, I gave Steve a quick rundown on how to operate the radio and what to do if I passed out.

I felt alert and had no serious pain yet, and in spite of a heavy rain and hail squall in the vicinity of the lodge, the Lord answered our prayer and we made a safe landing just before dark.

We told the crew at the lodge what had happened and began treating the wounds to prevent infection. It was decided that a rescue helicopter should be called, since it was impossible to get to help in an airplane until morning.

Pain started to set in and then shock. Along with it came severe headache, nausea, chills and shivering to the point I didn't think I would make it through the night. I asked my daughter Rene, who was there in camp, to call a friend and start a prayer chain, which she did. I held on the few hours until the Coast Guard helicopter arrived.

I had developed a swelling in my neck, with increasing pressure and pain, which the doctors later said they couldn't understand. Prayer was working on me already. By the time I made it to Anchorage on a

Medivac flight from Cordova, the neck swelling was gone and the pain stabilized.

Doctors did a Cat scan, and determined I had one skull fracture but no damage to the brain. Now the concern would be to make sure meningitis would not set in, so they started me on a strong antibiotic. I was able to leave the hospital on September 26.

Along with many friends and neighbors' prayers, visits and calls, a quick recovery followed.

Later I talked to a friend of mine who is a biologist. I described how, by all indications, the bear appeared to be a boar, running off in the opposite direction from where the cubs were. That, and the appearance of the sow and cubs 20 minutes later, caused us to come to the conclusion that we had perhaps run into a boar/sow confrontation. Were the bears distracted from hearing us? Did the boar think we were cubs? I guess we will never know for sure.

I thank God for His gracious protection and for the loving gracious people He has put in my life. I want to thank the brave, selfless Coast Guard crew that came to get me in the dark, stormy weather, and I thank all my friends and family for their faithful prayers.

I am reminded of these scriptures.

"The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."
James 5:16

"What is man that you make so much of him, that you give him so much attention?" Job 7:17

"Government is instituted for the common good...the people alone have an incontestable, unalienable, and indefeasible right to institute government; and to reform, alter, or totally change the same, when their protection, safety, prosperity, and happiness require it."—John Adams

"I don't make jokes. I just watch the government and report the facts." —Will Rogers

Alaska's best-kept national park secret

WSEN STAFF

Last July, Alaska's National Park Service (NPS) Regional Director Marcia Blaszak was asked a question by *Anchorage Daily News* reporter Lance Lekander. "What is Alaska's best-kept national park secret, in your opinion?"

"We haven't tried to keep them secret," said Director Blaszak, "but many people don't know that there are about 20 public-use cabins in Alaska's parks."

Since 2000, the NPS has built or refurbished thirteen cabins under a \$420,000 grant from the Recreational Fee Demonstration program.

That doesn't mean, however, that there are actually 13 public-use cabins. In fact, nobody seems to know just how many there are.

A brochure, available from the park service, or online at <http://www.nps.gov/wrst/cabins/cabins.htm>, says there are eleven.

"Currently, there are 11 public-use cabins located within Wrangell-St. Elias," reads the brochure. "Most of these cabins were old mining, trapping, or hunting cabins that are located on public land and have been restored by the National Park Service. All of these public use cabins are available to everyone on a first-come, first-served basis, (sic) and with the exception of the Esker Stream Cabin near Yakutat, presently do NOT require reservations and are not reserve-able. These are remote locations and require hikers/campers to make appropriate plans. Many of these cabins are accessible only by aircraft."

The 2002 NPS Handbook states that 26 cabins have been identified in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve (WRST) which could be improved for public use with funds from the Fee Demonstration Program and Historic Struc-

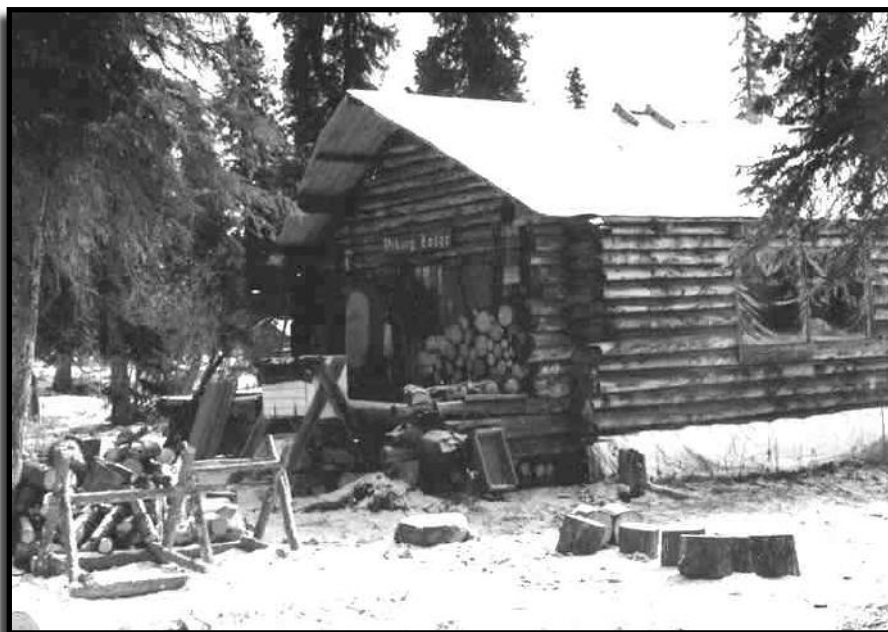


Photo courtesy Viggo Thor Brandt-Erichsen

The Viking Lodge in the "old days." The NPS threw Mr. Brandt-Erichsen's belongings outside, put in cement footings, replaced the floor, the roof, the log chinking, handcrafted a new door and replaced the stove pipe.

Then, someone said, "Oops, we may not own the cabin!"

tures Stabilization Program. It, however, goes on to list only ten as actually being available for public-use. And the 2004 Compendium for WRST lists only eight!

If the confusing information about the cabins discourages their use, the fact that they are located in remote locations doesn't help either. Many require an airplane for access, such as the Orange Hill cabin: "Access: Air via nearby 700' gravel airstrip. CAUTION: Airstrip is being heavily eroded and shortened each summer by a bend of the Nabesna River! Snowmachine access in winter."

The nearest one to the road system is the Nugget Creek Cabin. It can be reached using a 13-mile trail suitable for ATV, foot, horse, or mountain bike or by small airplane at a 900' gravel airstrip approximately 200 yards from the cabin.

The remoteness has been an attraction for some, but has kept the cabins out of reach of others. After several requests from visitors with families, we started doing some research to see which cabin was most accessible. We had heard rumors of a cabin in the Nabesna area that was not listed in the NPS brochure. It took some digging, but in the end we learned that there was, indeed, a public-use cabin that is easily accessible from the road system but was not listed in the NPS brochure, or any other literature that we can find. Sort of a "mystery" cabin!

Four years ago the NPS refurbished what is known as the Viking Lodge cabin near Nabesna.

We asked Acting Superintendent Hunter Sharp why the cabin was not mentioned in any NPS literature. His reply? "Perhaps we could do a better job of listing Viking

Lodge as a public-use cabin.” Do a better job? It is not listed at all!

It would seem a simple remedy to include the Viking Lodge on the park website where other cabins are listed, particularly after Director Blaszak said she would like to see more use of them.

Although Sharp did not answer the question as to why the NPS does not advertise this cabin with the other public-use cabins, he did give a clue that somehow the Viking Lodge cabin may be different than the others. “This cabin requires reservations as the original owner has agreed to the use as a public-use cabin but reserves certain dates at the start of the season,” said Sharp. “To avoid conflicts the public should contact the Slana Ranger Station for a reservation at Viking Lodge.”

Since the fact that the cabin requires reservations is not unique, (the Esker Stream cabin near Yakutat also requires reservations) we wondered if Sharp’s statement about the former owner might hold a clue.

In 1965, Viggo Thor Brandt-Erichsen filed on a homestead near Nabesna and built a log cabin. Being of Danish descent, he dubbed it the Viking Lodge. After some time, Thor, like many others who were “back-to-the-landers,” realized that finances would not allow him to fulfill the required residency requirements. He gave up the homestead and instead filed on 80 acres of the original 160 as a Trade and Manufacturing (T&M) site. He planned to operate a sawmill.

In August of 1968, Thor filed a Notice of Location of Settlement or Occupancy Claim with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). With the notice, Brandt-Erichsen paid the required recording fees and obtained a receipt.

In August 1973, Brandt-Erichsen filed an application to purchase the 80 acres as a T&M site and petitioned for a survey of the land with



Photo courtesy Viggo Thor Brandt-Erichsen

The old homestead.

the Bureau of Land Management. He paid the required application fee for the patent and survey and obtained a receipt. The Bureau of Land Management now had two years to survey the land, at which time Brandt-Erichsen would pay the \$2.50 per acre fee and receive his patent.

Although he didn’t know it yet, Brandt-Erichsen’s problems started in 1978, when then President Jimmy Carter declared the area to be part of a huge, new, National Monument—the Wrangell-St. Elias. Massive amounts of land were withdrawn, and Thor’s hopes of operating a sawmill evaporated. And, more importantly, the Brandt-Erichsen property encroached into what would soon be the largest national park in America.

Rather than complete the survey and issue a patent, as they were required by statute to do, in January 1979, the Bureau of Land Management filed an administrative complaint contesting Brandt-Erichsen’s request for a patent on the property. They said that Brandt-Erichsen “was not engaged in business operations from which he would derive a

profit.” On December 12, 1979, an administrative law judge agreed with the BLM and cancelled Brandt-Erichsen’s entry. The administrative law judge’s determination was affirmed by the Interior Board of Land Appeals.

Since the regulations did not spell out the requirements for “deriving a profit” from the site, Brandt-Erichsen felt the court was in error, and tried again. In May 1989, he filed a complaint in district court. This time the court said that he had not paid for the land within the two year period after filing. Thor appealed to the Ninth Circuit Court in San Francisco. Two judges sided with the government, but one judge dissented. Judge Hug said this, “When it enacted the 1891 Act, Congress intended that an eligible claimant would pay the purchase price of such land only after a survey had been conducted and approved by the Commissioner of the General Land Office. Furthermore, Congress granted such a claimant an additional six months after notification of the Commissioner’s approval of a survey in



Photo courtesy Doug Frederick

Trail leading to the Viking Lodge public-use cabin.

which to tender the purchase price of the land.”

Not one to give up easily, and confident of the rightness of his cause, Thor appealed his case to the U.S. Supreme Court. They refused to hear the case. The land reverted to the Federal Government, which by now was managed by the National Park Service rather than the BLM.

While the case had been working its way through the courts, Brandt-Erichsen, wanting to at least use the cabin he had built, applied for a cabin-use permit under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, or ANILCA. The superintendent of WRST denied the request. On March 22 of 1989 Brandt-Erichsen sought administrative reconsideration of that denial.

On May 16, 1989, an administrative hearing was conducted by the NPS Deputy Regional Administrator with regard to Mr. Brandt-Erichsen's cabin permit application. At the hearing, Mr. Brandt-Erichsen requested that the consideration of the permit appeal be

postponed until the final decision on the land was settled. In June, 1989, the NPS agreed.

In March 1995, the NPS wrote Mr. Brandt-Erichsen and invited him to submit any additional written

information he considered relevant to his appeal. In May of the same year he did so, including an argument challenging the validity of the cabin-use permit regulations.

The NPS never issued a final decision on Mr. Brandt-Erichsen's cabin-use permit appeal. But, in the fall of 1999, NPS maintenance personnel began remodeling work on Viking Lodge. A friend notified Thor, who went to Copper Center and asked the Park Service what they were doing. They said you better go to Anchorage and talk to our Lands people. The people at Lands said no, you need to go to records. The people at records said Viking Lodge? Never heard of it. Thor was getting a bit frustrated and must have said the magic words, because in just a few minutes they had the records in hand.

Park Service maintenance personnel told us that Thor's belongings were thrown out of the cabin. “I was shocked to see dishes, bedding and other personal property outside, on the ground, where it stayed until the next spring,” said one person who we will call “Jane.”



Photo courtesy Doug Frederick

This is the only sign that greets users of the NPS public-use cabin. Sign reads “Recreational use of off-road vehicles prohibited beyond this point.”

According to Jane, one day a park service supervisor came to the job site and told the workers to stop the project. "The Park Service may not own the cabin," said the supervisor.

Nearly two years of negotiations ensued. Ultimately, in June of 2002, a settlement was reached in which Mr. and Mrs. Viggo Thor Brandt-Erichsen retained limited use of the cabin during their lifetime, after which time the ownership of the cabin would be solely that of the federal government.

"During our negotiating discussion," says Thor, "the Park Service personnel implied they would be renting the cabin to the general public for \$25 per day, but myself, or my wife, or members of my family would not be obligated to pay any rental fees during our preferential

use of the cabin. That was the last I heard on the subject, and I have not found it listed on the web site, as yet."

We asked Thor if part of the settlement included not advertising the cabin. "No," said Thor, "they told me they would be advertising it."

Since the cabin is easily accessed from the Nabesna Road, it is well-suited to travelers who may be elderly or do not have the resources to fly in to the more remote locations. Viking Lodge is located at Mile 22 of the Nabesna Road near Rock Lake. There is a pullout, toilet and room to park two cars.

Surprisingly, there is no sign indicating the presence of the cabin. The driveway that Thor used for years now has been blocked, and a

POSTED sign says no ATV use of the driveway is allowed. The cabin is less than a half-mile from the highway.

"Incidentally," says Thor, "when the Park Service personnel were doing their remodeling, they did more damage to the access using 4-wheelers in a straight line over the swampy ground, than I did in all the time I drove in and out over the years."

If you would like to enjoy an overnight stay at one of the park service's best kept secrets, you do need to make reservations. Stop by the Slana Ranger Station or at the Copper Center Visitor's Center. When you do, tell them you read about it in the *Wrangell St. Elias News*!

Another tram at McCarthy?

BY RICK KENYON

A proposal to build a cable tram across McCarthy Creek has been drawing fire from area residents. A Letter of Objection to the McCarthy Creek Tramway Grant signed by a number of area residents was presented to the McCarthy Area Council (MAC) at their fall meeting.

Although the tram project has been working its way through the system for a number of years, little has been known about it locally. The Letter of Objection charges that, "[the tram project] was conceived and pursued without adequate input from the real residents in this area."

According to Dave Sanches at Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF), the project was nominated for congressional earmark by Fred Dure. Dure has property near the end of the McCarthy-May Creek Road. Sanches says there was no ADOT&PF involvement in the nomination process.

Apparently ADOT&PF was not too keen on the idea of a tram, and the project was transferred to the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) Western Federal Lands Office in Vancouver, Washington.

Mike Traffalis is the engineer at FHWA who was assigned the project. Mike said that he is trying to turn the project over to the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR), since trams are not something that FHWA normally deal with.

Mike Seidl at DNR said they would be happy to work on the project, but that funds would first need to be funneled from FHWA to ADOT&PF then to DNR before work could begin. He said if there would then be a public process, but stressed that although there may be public meetings, "the public process is not a popular vote."

Some area residents have proposed that the money be used instead for a vehicle or ATV bridge, since bridges are the historic structures and the crossing would con-

nect to about 9 miles of state road on the south side of McCarthy Creek. But Seidl said that in order to do that, the proposal would have to go back to congress for re-writing as in its current form there would only be two options: Build a tram, or build nothing.

According to the project application, the tram would be built within the historic right-of-way of the McCarthy-May Creek Road as it crosses McCarthy Creek. Access has been by fording the river or using crude log bridges ever since the most recent vehicle bridge washed out during one of McCarthy Creek's periodic floods.

The application goes on to say, "The purpose of the project is to provide safe access to Federal Lands located across McCarthy Creek from the community of McCarthy," and says that "the project will be coordinated with the National Parks [sic] Service..."

One of the obstacles to be overcome in order for the tram to become reality is finding someone to

accept liability and maintenance responsibilities. When the Kennicott River Tram was built years ago, local residents formed the "Kennicott River Cross Purposes" group. The group built the tram using grant money, then quickly disbanded to avoid vulnerability to legal action. Seidl says this will not happen again—some state or federal agency must step forward and put their name on the line.

Vicki Snitzler, Park Planner at WRST, says the NPS has been approached about assuming responsibility for the tram project but has declined. "The NPS position has been that we supported the land-owners need for the tram, have said that it would be used by park visitors, but is not a priority for NPS visitors," says Snitzler. "As to maintenance, NPS has declined for a

number of reasons," she says. "It is located on State right-of-way, is not a priority for park visitation, NPS does not have expertise for such a responsibility, and does not have money to acquire such expertise."

The tram proponents asked MAC to write a letter of support for the project, but the group declined. "We really don't know the opinions of all those affected, on both sides of the creek," said Meg Hunt, the group's secretary.

Neil Darish and Doug Miller, owners of the McCarthy Lodge, feel the tram project has been an attempt to subvert the public process. "This is just one more example of a small number of people deciding what kind of access we will all have to live with in the future," says Miller. "There was little effort

to involve the whole community in the process."

Miller says it would create an even greater public parking problem in McCarthy, and that it is not about providing access, but preventing it.

"It is our tax dollars being used to fund this project," says Miller, "and frankly, if our senators and congressman had understood how this project was to be used to limit access to state citizens and residents alike, I believe they would have been reluctant to appropriate these monies without greater involvement from the residents of the area."

WSEN has asked Fred Dure to comment on the proposal, but he has not responded to our requests for information.

Jed Davis named new superintendent

BY WSEN STAFF

Jed Davis has been selected as new superintendent of Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve, according to a NPS press release dated September 28. He will begin his position in November and a welcoming reception will be announced and held soon at the NPS Copper Center park headquarters.

NPS Alaska Regional Director Marcia Blaszk called meetings in Kennicott and Slana during July to ask park residents what traits they would like to see in their new superintendent. Many applications were received by NPS for the position. After the interviewing process, Blaszk selected Davis, who then received final approval of the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

Jed Davis began his NPS career in 1971 at Grand Canyon National Park as a seasonal employee. Over the next thirty years, he held facility management positions at Mount Rainier, Capitol Reef, Glen Canyon,

Bryce Canyon, Ozark National Scenic Riverways, Isle Royale, and Death Valley National Parks. Davis has also served in many management assignments including assistant superintendent at Denali National Park and Preserve. For the last four years, he has been the deputy superintendent at Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve.

Davis comments, "I expect to continue the work of developing a park that demonstrates the overwhelming beauty and wildness of Alaska; a park that demonstrates vast wilderness, rich history, and a subsistence lifestyle that goes to the core of how man has and can continue to live in accord with the environment."

According to Blaszk, Davis understands contemporary concerns regarding access and bush living in Alaska, and "...he's a clear match for what I heard from local residents as I looked for a person who would meet their expectations, as well as those of the Service."

Davis is a hunter and avid fisherman who currently holds a subsistence permit for the Gustavus area. He and his wife, Nancy, have three grown children, Ben, Abe, and Bethan, who all live in Alaska.

Residents of the park, above all, asked for a superintendent who was honorable and honest, a long-term Alaskan resident with a clear understanding of ANILCA law and the rights afforded to inholders and subsistence users of the park. The Residents of the Wrangells (ROW) organization hopes that Davis will express a desire to work out some of the differences which have arisen during the past administration. "We look forward to establishing a meaningful and continual dialogue with him to begin a new era of cooperation and responsiveness in working to relieve current problems, making life easier for all residents and users of our park," said Susan Smith, chairperson of ROW.

Long Lake to become park lands?

WSEN STAFF

In a surprise announcement the last week of October, The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) voted to let the diesel-dependent community of Gustavus build a hydroelectric project in designated wilderness in Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve.

The announcement caught both environmentalists, who have opposed the project, and Dick Levitt, owner of the Gustavus Electric Co., off guard.

"This is a total surprise," said Levitt, who nevertheless was relieved and happy about the decision.

"Everybody was kept in the dark," said Sierra Club representative Jack Hession. Hession criticized the timing of FERC's decision to grant the company a 50-year license on Wednesday.

What does a hydroelectric project in Glacier Bay have to do with Wrangell-St. Elias National Park (WRST)?

The project cannot begin until Glacier Bay National Park trades to Alaska from 300 to 1,000 acres of designated wilderness along Falls Creek, the proposed site of the project. And the National Park Service has its eye on Long Lake, which runs from mile 45 to mile 47 on the McCarthy Road.

According to the Boundary Act of 1998, negotiated by Sen. Ted Ste-

vens, Glacier Bay National Park must trade its acreage along Falls Creek, to the State of Alaska. The potential loss to the park is 1,050 acres. In turn, Alaska would trade to the National Park Service either state lands at Long Lake, or state lands adjacent to the Chilkoot Trail near Skagway.

The Park Service's first choice for an exchange is to acquire state land within Klondike Gold Rush NP at Skagway. Since Klondike currently comprises only 13,191 acres but hosts 754,607 visitors per year, it seems a likely candidate for additional land acquisition.

Contrast that to WRST which at nearly 13 million acres has an annual visitation of less than 40,000.

Apparently, though, the residents of Skagway think their park is big enough, and there has been community opposition to the exchange. So, if Klondike doesn't work out, NPS has identified WRST as second choice. They would like to obtain the state land surrounding the east end of Long Lake, and add it to the park.

"If current state-owned lands around Long Lake are exchanged for land removed from Glacier Bay NP, it would be done on an 'equal value' basis; that is, lands traded between the State and the NPS would have approximately the same monetary value, which would be established by real estate appraisals,"

said Chuck Gilbert, who is the Chief of the Land Resources Program Center for NPS in Anchorage.

According to Bob Loeffler, head of Alaska's Department of Natural Resources, there would be public notice if the project is approved. If the Long Lake lands are included, most likely a public meeting in McCarthy would be held.

Although WRST is the largest national park in America, it has been slowly growing since its formation in 1980. "The NPS has already acquired 21,735 acres of our park and preserve inholdings," said Susan Smith, chairperson of the Residents of the Wrangells. "NPS is currently negotiating with Ahtna for conservation easements on 7,000 acres of inholdings which would give the agency control and jurisdiction over those lands," Smith said. "Why can't land be exchanged in an uninhabited area which will have no effect on the local settlements?"

Actually, the 21,735 figure is conservative, as it does not include land added to the park as a result of litigation. The recent takeover of a native allotment claim at mile 27 of the McCarthy Road and the 80 acre Viking Lodge property near Nabesna are both examples of land being added to the park where no purchase or donation was involved.

"Our society depends upon the actions of local elected officials and state elected officials and federal officials obeying the law as it is widely understood and not abandoning the law when their personal view of how it ought to be is not how it is." — Hugh Hewitt

"From the equality of rights springs identity of our highest interests; you cannot subvert your neighbor's rights without striking a dangerous blow at your own." — Carl Schurz

"Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly and applying the wrong remedies." — Groucho Marx

NPS administrative review

BY SUSAN SMITH

NPS Special Agents Andee Hansen and Scott Taylor met with me, Residents of the Wrangells (ROW) Chairman, and ROW advisory panel members Rick and Bonnie Kenyon on October 12 in Kenny Lake to discuss allegations of NPS misconduct in the Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST). For four and one half hours, we talked with these investigators who will look into charges that the park staff has harassed inholders, behaved unethically, closed trails without due process or public comment, misused funds, and a variety of other issues.

ROW mailed out their testimonial packets with charges of wrongdoing in March of 2004 to our legislative representatives, the governor, Department of the Interior (DOI) officials, and members of key Congressional committees. ROW received a letter in April from the office of the DOI Inspector General stating "...a complete review of your complaint and supporting documents failed to specifically identify or provide substantive information or circumstances which would necessitate an investigation by this office." The information was then forwarded to the NPS Internal Affairs office which looks into allegations of misconduct by commissioned law enforcement personnel. Internal Affairs also declined to investigate for the same reason.

NPS Regional Director Marcia Blaszak announced at two July meetings in Kennicott and Slana that she had asked for an internal NPS Administrative Review of ROW's charges. Hansen and Taylor were assigned by Blaszak to contact ROW to get specific information which would allow them to investigate our allegations. We compiled a specific list of provable charges which had been relayed to ROW by residents of the park during our in-

formation-gathering process over the last year and a half. Rick, Bonnie and I were impressed by the professional, candid, and courteous manner of the two agents. They listened politely and attentively to all of our concerns, asking many detailed questions which would allow them to track down each incident.

Andee Hansen has a law degree, and impressed us with her knowledge of the ANILCA legislation and NPS regulations. She came to the meeting with a copy of the Code of Federal Regulations, and she referenced it often to clarify or document our discussions. Andee is currently active in an ongoing process to update NPS regulations with proposed rule changes.

While discussing subsistence regulations, we talked about the 1989 NPS Green Log Policy which allows residents to apply for a permit to cut up to 120 green logs for the purpose of shelter. One McCarthy resident was recently denied a request to cut 12 standing dead trees for an addition to his home. Andee explained that although ANILCA law authorizes the use of timber for shelter purposes, no NPS regulation actually exists to allow dead wood to be used for anything but firewood.

When ANILCA was written, Congress was unable to discern all possible situations and some rules need to be changed to better meet residents' needs. Andee encouraged us, or any member of the general public, to write to her with proposed changes to NPS regulations when we find situations which seem to contradict the intent of ANILCA. She commented that each request will be seriously considered and, since she is a direct link to the NPS rulemaking process, she can be a valuable resource to initiate change. ROW plans on writing to her with proposed regulation changes to their subsistence timber policy, ac-

cess fee requirements, and other concerns.

Permanent trail closures in the Nabesna and McCarthy areas were discussed since they were made without public comment in the affected areas. Incidents of inholder harassment and intimidation, unannounced ranger visits onto private property, and low-level airplane flyovers were reported. Many examples of unethical conduct were presented, along with misuse of funds, public use cabin improprieties, NPS destruction of resources, access fee requirements, and failure to give adequate and feasible access.

Scott Taylor asked each of us to voice our highest priority concerns at the end of the meeting, considering the volume of information we had presented. He remarked that problems of this nature are uncommon in other parks, and some of the issues we presented "disturbed" him. Any disciplinary action taken against NPS personnel is protected by their privacy policy and we will not be informed of actions taken as a result of our allegations.

ROW is encouraged by the opportunity to finally meet with investigators who will take a serious look at our charges, as requested by ROW and Governor Murkowski months ago. We are grateful to Regional Director Blaszak for giving us a chance to thoroughly discuss our issues. Hansen and Taylor investigate allegations of NPS unethical conduct and failure to abide by NPS regulations on a regular basis, and although they were unable to tell us which infractions bothered them the most, they were concerned and will be researching our information. This meeting was an important step toward finally acknowledging past wrongs, clearing the air, and establishing an honest dialogue for the future.

Kennecott National Historic Landmark - another plan, another meeting

BY WSEN STAFF

Kennecott: — September 8 — The Kennecott Recreation Hall was the setting for a meeting between Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST) personnel and area residents. Approximately 40 people signed in to participate in the Kennecott Support Facilities Plan Scoping Workshop, in spite of the fact that the meeting had been poorly announced. According to Acting Superintendent Hunter Sharp, posters announcing the meeting were distributed at 6 locations in the McCarthy area; however, only one of those sites was found to have an announcement, and owners of the businesses involved said no such posters were ever put up. The meeting seemed to be poorly planned and hastily put together.

National Park Service (NPS) representatives manned tables and covered subjects such as Visitor Services, Natural and Cultural Resources, Transportation and Emergency Services and Kennecott Support Facilities (utilities). The two-hour workshop was yet another planning phase in the management plan for the Kennecott National Historic Landmark (NHL) and its surrounding area. According to the NPS, this area generally includes the road corridor and associated facilities beginning approximately 1 mile west of the Kennecott River, through and including the NHL.

Attendees of the workshop discussed their ideas, asked questions, and left written comments at the various stations. A wide range of comments were submitted.

At the Support Facilities table, suggestions included a need for a transfer station and a desire for NPS to work with the existing land own-

ers to address as much NPS employee housing as possible.

The Transportation table comments included the desire for brushing and widening the road between McCarthy and the NHL to improve driving visibility and safety. Someone said NPS should encourage their employees to use the NPS shuttle. Another, the free market should govern shuttle vans. One person said local bus operators need to give accurate information to the visitors.

Some of the comments on Visitor Services stated that the NPS kiosk should be staffed full-time, a better distribution of the Kennecott Mill Town map and signage and a desire to see a trail along the glacier edge from McCarthy to Kennecott that contains interpretive signs, if motorized vehicles can be efficiently limited.

Thoughts on Natural and Cultural Resources comprised questions on alternative sources of energy instead of fossil fuels and the possible rebuilding or replacement of the culvert at Sweet Creek and a need for handouts for backcountry users containing information about bear safety, trash, camping and toilet facilities.

According to the Park Service, the next step will be to use the collected comments in developing the alternatives for the plan. These will address the number, type and location of facilities for the Kennecott Mines NHL, strategies for managing and protecting cultural and natural resources adjacent to the NHL, identify design themes for areas adjacent to the NHL, the number, type and location of visitor facilities for areas adjacent to the NHL and which, if any, facilities that should be jointly constructed, operated or

used by the community of McCarthy or partner organizations.

Past-planning documents, such as the 2000 Kennecott NHL Interim Operation Plan and the 2001 Cultural Landscape Report for the Kennecott Mill Town (CLR), did not provide specific guidance in addressing the locations and types or support facilities needed. Other issues, such as solid waste removal and fuel storage, have not yet been addressed.

The Operation Plan calls for stabilization, preservation and adaptive reuse of the 16 historic buildings in the NHL. Projects currently underway include the renovation of the Kennecott Company Store and School. Rehabilitation of the National Creek bridge is slated to begin in FY05/06. Future phases will include further stabilization and preservation, utility infrastructure development, hazardous materials mitigation, construction of a maintenance facility, transportation and pathway rehabilitation and improvements and interpretive exhibits.

The Kennecott Support Facilities Plan is necessary, says NPS, to provide them the infrastructure needed to continue the program as outlined in the Operation Plan and, eventually, to manage the NHL. Recent cost estimates put the project at \$15 million.

Although the Cultural Landscape Report of 2001 extensively documented and outlined management policies for the Kennecott Mill Town, the resources in the adjacent area have not received the same attention. Comments derived from the Facilities Plan will compliment the previous Landscape Report. According to the NPS, "Many of these adjacent resources would be contributing elements to the NHL and

their preservation and interpretation should be addressed." Recent NPS research has documented frequent encounters between bears, visitors and area residents. Certain recommendations are in the process of being implemented. Other recommendations need participation of state and community organizations, says NPS.

Another resource example concerns two streams within the NHL – Bonanza and National Creeks. The former was identified as a potential hydroelectric source and the latter for drinking water and fire suppression. These recommendations need to be analyzed further.

According to the Park Service, the spread of invasive plant species is also a natural resource concern on NHL's adjacent lands. "Strategies are needed for managing the increasing spread of dandelions and other invasive plant species along travel corridors," according to a handout titled *Background Information for Kennecott Support Facilities Plan Scoping Workshop*.

Visitor services are certainly minimal in comparison to the size of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. Currently, parking information services, interpretive programs, camping and lodging opportunities, hiking opportunities are provided by NPS, state, non-

profit and private entities, but, according to NPS, "bringing these organizations together to address these issues is desirable, especially in the light of the postponement of certain NPS and state projects."

Additional comments and suggestions will be taken until mid-November. Call or mail Vicki Snitzler or Steve Hunt to submit comments or to be included on the mailing list for notification of future events and for receiving information on the Plan progress. The telephone number at Park headquarters is (907) 822-5234 or write WRST, PO Box 429, Copper Center, AK. 99573.

Community Memory Important to River Study

MCCARTHY, AK

USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), came to McCarthy in 2000 to help stabilize the banks of McCarthy Creek which were quickly eroding. The situation was an emergency, with several historic buildings threatened by the erosion. NRCS designed and installed the rock structures that minimized the streambank erosion.

Today NRCS's State Conservation Engineer Rob Sampson still makes regular visits to McCarthy to work with residents to understand the creek's behavior and, hopefully, find sustainable solutions to ongoing erosion and flooding issues.

The McCarthy Area Council has asked NRCS to help conduct a floodplain management study of McCarthy Creek. The goal of the study is to understand why the creek is filling up with gravel and eroding its banks. The study will outline possible measures that can

be taken to abate creek erosion, and evaluate long-term impacts of any structural measures that might be used. One of the council's goals in the study is to explore options for protecting historic structures like the Powerhouse.

Community participation is an important component of the research. Sampson and his colleagues will review all the historic documentation such as reports and photos available about McCarthy Creek. Local residents will be interviewed about the changes they've witnessed in the creek's behavior over the years to help engineers gain a broad historical perspective.

Next, NRCS engineers create computer models to analyze the hydrology and hydraulic actions in the creek. These together then provide information about how gravel moves through the stream channel.

In August, NRCS hired Aeromap from Anchorage to fly over McCarthy Creek and map the channel

and floodplain with lasers. The resulting topographic map will be used to understand areas that may flood next, or spots where erosion may take place.

NRCS also hired Interfluvé, a consulting firm from Hood River, OR, to assist in a 'geomorphic baseline' study of McCarthy Creek. This baseline will describe the changes that have occurred in McCarthy Creek over time, will predict the changes that might occur in the future. NRCS and Interfluvé engineers and geomorphologists recently spent a week mapping erosion areas in the stream channel and collecting rock samples for analysis.

NRCS plans to present the floodplain management study final report to the McCarthy Area Council by fall 2005.

"When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost."—Rev. Billy Graham

"More tears are shed over answered prayers than unanswered ones."—Mother Teresa

BLM and State team up to clarify ownership of land under navigable waters

BY DANIELLE ALLEN

If the Bureau of Land Management hadn't issued its first recordable disclaimer on the Black River in October 2003, the newly-designated navigable waterbody would probably be like many of the other rivers that traverse the alluvial plains in northwest Alaska. Instead, the Black River earns the distinction of being the first river of what the State of Alaska hopes will be many Alaskan waterbodies to receive recordable disclaimers from the BLM.

But this comes as no surprise to the BLM. When the disclaimer of interest regulations were amended in January 2003, the BLM was assured the State of Alaska would use this process as a means to confirm its ownership of lands underlying navigable rivers and lakes in Alaska.

Although title to unreserved beds of navigable waterways automatically passed to the State of Alaska at the time of statehood (Jan. 3, 1959), the State has long wanted a legal document to affirm its title to submerged lands. This was typically done through real property quiet title actions in federal courts. But the large numbers of

potentially navigable waters and the high costs of litigation made it unattractive. Since statehood, courts have quiet titled about a dozen waterways in a state where there are hundreds if not thousands of navigable waterways.

Before BLM could accept the state's recordable disclaimer application on the Black River, the State had to present enough evidence supporting the State's claim that the Black River was navigable. A summary report was drafted with navigability findings. And most importantly it had to meet the federal government's criteria for navigability. The disclaimer for the BLM and State team up to clarify ownership of land under navigable waters. Black River was issued to the State on Oct. 24, 2003, for 375 miles of riverbed underlying the navigable waters of the Black River and its tributaries. However, 109 miles of the State's application was suspended because there was not enough information on the upper reaches of the river for BLM to make a determination.

The Alaska BLM is currently the only bureau office applying the recordable disclaimer process to navi-

gable water bodies. Three BLM staffers are processing applications and continue working with other land managers from the Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service and Forest Service to improve the disclaimer process. An infusion of \$1 million to the program by Sen. Ted Stevens has been helpful. "This funding will facilitate an assistance agreement between the BLM and the State which stipulates the State does the research and prepares navigability reports and the BLM concentrates on application reviews and evaluates evidence supporting navigability of waterbodies," explained BLM State Director Henri Bisson.

Since the issuing of the first recordable disclaimer in 2003, BLM is presently processing 12 more applications from the State of Alaska on 25 waterbodies. For more information about recordable disclaimer applications and the process, go to the BLM website at www.ak.blm.gov.

The recordable disclaimers process will take some time but once they are issued, federal land managers will be able to make more sound management decisions.

Trapping school

BY DAVID AND KALEB ROWLAND

On October 16 and 17 Keith, Kaleb and David Rowland and about 30 others went to a Trapping School sponsored by the Alaska Trappers Association at the Twin Bears Camp on Chena Hot Springs Road about 30 miles out of Fairbanks. We learned how to trap beaver, lynx,

fox, coyote, wolf, marten and wolverine.

Years ago, a few men caught wolves for bounty. One old-timer at the school told a story of catching over a hundred wolves in one season. He told of going into a wolf den to get the pups. He thought the adult wolves were gone, but he was wrong. The female came snapping

at him, so he hurried out of the den to where his buddy was. His buddy handed him a 30-30, and he went back into the cave and shot the female wolf. "I forgot that a big gun in a small spot makes a loud noise. I was making sign-language for about a week," said the wolf-trapper.

Trapping is a fun sport, if done right.

THE CHITINA LEADER

November 1912 December

CHITINA NEWS

Sixty head of the finest horses ever seen this far north arrived on Monday's train. They are for the Orr Stage line and will be used on the trail between here and Fairbanks this winter. The company disposes of a part of their stock every year and replaces them with new stock from the outside. Gregory Rockefeller the assistant manager will inspect each bunch as it leaves here for the trail.

Wm. Mahoney located a homestead on the Fairbanks Road two miles north of town some time ago. He will cut wood there this winter and raise a garden next summer.

There are seventy residents on Chitina Heights.

Dr. Payzant, who has been at Katalla for about nine years, arrived on Monday's train and will locate permanently in Chitina. The people of Chitina will warmly welcome him.

Nov. 5

The Orr Stage Company is doing a much heavier business than at this time last year. As yet there is scarcely any snow on this end of the trail. Six of the horses brought in by the Stage company have died of pneumonia.

Nov. 12

NEWS OF NEIGHBORHOOD

Harry Warren left for Fairbanks this week with two tons of fresh meat. He has

been waiting for the snow in order that he might leave with sleds. The trail froze very rough this fall and up-to-date there is barely enough snow for twenty or more miles of sledding.

Mrs. Rose Johnson and Theresa Johnson of McCarthy were visiting friends in Chitina this week.

Dan McDonald of McCarthy was in Chitina this week.

Nov. 19

A bigger per cent of the people of Chitina will eat turkey on Thanksgiving than most cities in the United States.

The road house men are beginning to come in for supplies. The Chitina Cash Store reports a record business for the past month.

C. A. Simons & Co. are apt to have just what you want in their big second-hand line.

F. H. Foster and family of Valdez arrived Monday and will locate on Chitina Heights.

W. E. Brown of Copper Mountain who was for some time operator at Chitina depot came down Monday on his way to Cordova for a few days.

Nov. 26

KATALLA, Nov. 30 - The recent death and burial here of Martin Barrett, recalls many episodes to the life of one of the most noted characters in this northland.

Martin Barrett was born in Waterford, Ireland in 1846. At the age of eight he

came to America and lived with an aunt in New Orleans for two years. He then went to an uncle in Chicago and a year later commenced life for himself as a cabin boy on a Mississippi River steamboat. At the age of thirteen he started across the plains for California and was a member of the party that buried the skeletons of the victims of the Mountain Meadows Massacre in Utah.

The succeeding twenty years of his life were spent in the southwest and northwest, he taking part in all of the mining excitements of those times. In both sections he was engaged in active service as a scout in the Indian wars.

In 1883 Mr. Barrett married Florence Klinik in Berlin, Wis., and several months later opened a hotel in Spokane. Returning to Wisconsin in 1885, he spent the next three years in business with his wife's brother. In 1893 he settled with his family in Snohomish, Wn. In 1896 he in company with Thos. Lane, now of Katalla, Steve Roe and the late Capt. Lyons, of Nome, fitted out the schooner Leslie and started on a prospecting trip of the Alaska coast which extended to Cook's Inlet. His family accompanied him on this trip. In the early fall the party returned south as far as Katalla and Mr. Barrett with his family and Capt. Lyons, had Geo. Barrett, of this place, put them ashore on Middleton Island. They

remained on the island until the following summer, when one of Mr. Storey's cannery tenders took them off.

August 1907 saw Mr. Barrett and his family taking part in the stampede of Dawson. Like thousands of others they floated down the Yukon River that fall in a sourdough boat. In 1901, they returned to Snohomish and in the spring of 1903 came to Katalla. He is survived by his wife, daughter Mrs. O. D. Willoughby, and two sons, Lawrence and Fred, now in Spokane.

J. E. Barrett and wife, of McCarthy, were passengers on the Northwestern for a trip outside. Mr. Barrett was a candidate for the Legislature at the recent elections.

Tom Cloninger has bought out John Palmer in the Chitina Hotel which gives him entire possession of that well known and popular house. Mr. Palmer will go to California but will still hold the interests here in other properties.

Tom Cloninger who is one of the best liked and most wide awake businessmen in Chitina will continue to make that the leading hotel in town. It is the most up-to-date and comfortable house in this part of the country and is regarded by everyone as the place to look for friends or business acquaintances.

COPPER CENTER FOX FARM A SUCCESS

A business usually succeeds better if it grows grad-

ually from a modest start as this gives an opportunity to meet the obstacles. This has been forcibly demonstrated by the attempts at raising foxes, particularly black ones at Copper Center.

Several years ago a stock company of Seattle undertook to start a fox farm near Copper Center. After spending several thousand dollars the attempt was given up. Those who were conducting it had no practical knowledge of the work.

The people of Chitina had a rare treat this week in the way of a fox exhibition. John McCrary of Copper Center brought in seven live foxes which he shipped to the states, where they will be put on fox farms for breeding purposes. They included red cross and black foxes, the last of which are very valuable.

Fox farming presents many interesting as well as some vexing problems. They are as timid in captivity as they are cunning and wise at liberty. They will not breed unless the conditions of captivity are favorable and only long experience in handling them will give this information.

Mr. McCrary and sons have a blue fox coming in from their pens which they will cross with the ordinary red fox and get a rucising cross much more valuable than the red. Black fox, such as those in this shipment, are the most valuable by far and are the most difficult to raise.

Twelve trains a week in and out make the railroad look like business.

The Railroad company has put a boarding and bunk car with a crew of men on the Chitina branch to take the place of the section

gangs between here and McCarthy.

Dec. 3

TO OUR PATRONS

Mr. Frank H. Foster has with this issue assumed the local management of the *Chitina Leader*. Mr. Foster has had some newspaper experience and assures the patrons of the *Leader* that the home paper will continue to be conducted for the best interest of Chitina and the Copper River Valley.

McCarthy, or Blackburn as it should hereafter be called, thought it had a United States Commissioner with the duties of a Justice of the Peace and Coroner. But it now develops that the recent appointee, M. V. Latin, declined the honor and no successor has been selected. A deputy United States Marshal is drawing down salary and presumably preserving law and order.

McCARTHY NOW TOWN OF BLACKBURN

The town of Blackburn has been established by the residents of the settlement heretofore known as McCarthy or Mile 192. On December 3 last a mass meeting was held, rules and regulations adopted for governing the community, and a committee of five appointed as a governing body. A preliminary survey was submitted, to be followed shortly by a final survey of the townsite.

An addition to the Blackburn townsite has been staked on the bench above the railroad, consisting of a fraction between Barrett's and Bloomquist's homesteads. It is intended for the residential section. One of the provisions is that one block shall be set aside for a period of three years, after which time the lots are to be given to women with one or

more children who have no one to support them.

The special committee has all the powers of a town council to enforce rules and regulations for the good of the community relating to lot adjustments, sanitation, etc. However, any person feeling himself injured by any decision made by the committee can upon securing the signatures of a majority of residents to a petition, stating the purpose of the call, assemble a mass meeting and put his grievances to a vote. Should he be upheld by a majority, the action nullifies the ruling of the committee. In the same manner a call can be made at any time to pass rules and regulations for the special committee to carry out.

The town residents purpose to reserve in themselves all franchise for telephones, electric lights and water works. All moneys for lots must be accounted for and are to be spent on town improvements. Streets have already been laid out and the differences arising over the fact that the running of street lines cut into previous lot owners have been adjusted and several new business buildings are now in progress.

Every claimant and every property owner within sixty days after becoming the owner of a lot must begin the erection of a substantial building to be used for business purposes in the portion of the Town of Blackburn indicated "Business Section." In case of his failure to do so, his ground or lot will revert to the Townsite. One block is being set aside in a portion of the townsite to be selected by the committee for the sole use and benefit of pros-

pectors and miners and other campers, the title to invest itself in the townsite. Inside lots have been placed at \$50 and corner lots at \$75. Application for business lots have been placed on file by the following:

Hans Paulsen, Tom McKinney, George Rust, Frank Iverson, John Etemo, G. B. Johnson and Frank Lindmark, Otto Strom, Gus Gapon, Dan McDonald, Edward Devlin, A. B. Frick, Teddy Kilford, Dr. Shorock. Oscar Backman wants a resident lot and Fagenberg Bros. wish the ground upon which their present improvements stand and a lot on the lake for stock watering purposes.

Dec. 10

A NOTED CHIEF HOLDS POTLATCH

Chief Goodlatoh held a potlatch at Taral commencing Friday and lasting three days. Indians from Tonsina, Long Lake, Lakina and Chitina attended and partook of the Chief's bounty in the old time way. Eskildata, the trapper, who lives at Mile 126 will give a potlatch next week.

The town of Blackburn is being started somewhat on Socialistic ideas. It might be well to try out the plan there, before the grasping tendencies of modern times gets a foot hold.

Dec. 17

Creepy Critters in the Snow

BY NED ROZELL

While skiing on the cushion of snow that recently covered Fairbanks, I saw a spider on top of the snowpack. Snow seems a poor choice for the stroll of a cold-blooded creature, so I called Steve MacLean, an expert on small, creepy things.

"My guess is that the spider came down from the trees, where it might have been hanging out waiting for spring," said MacLean, a professor emeritus with UAF's Institute of Arctic Biology. "But if they're going to overwinter up there, they have to have some cold protection."

As Alaska enters winter, countless millions of insects are wedged into crevasses in trees and mixed with leaves on the forest floor. These insects use different strategies to survive the long wait until spring. MacLean said the spider on the snow was using either freeze tolerance or supercooling to survive.

Freeze tolerance is just as it sounds—insects turn into little bits of ice, then thaw in spring to fly or crawl away. To pull off this trick, insects or their larvae must remove much of the water from within their cells and keep ice organized to remain outside cell membranes. They also add sugars and alcohols to their bodies to

counter the effects of freeze-drying. If ice forms inside cells or if cells become too dry, the insects die. Insects aren't the only organisms to use this strategy to survive; trees and wood frogs survive after being mostly frozen much of the year.

Supercooling is a trick used by many insects to wait out the deep cold. Yellowjackets and stinkbugs are among the many insects that get rid of any impurities in their bodies that might trigger the formation of ice when their body liquids are below 32 degrees Fahrenheit. By purging anything in their guts and sometimes ridding their bodies of bacteria, insects can withstand temperatures well below freezing. Keith Miller, a former UAF biologist, found that larvae of the gall wasps, which spend winter in fuzzy little balls on the surface of willow leaves, can avoid freezing down to minus 60 by adding glycerol to their body fluids.

Yellowjackets and stinkbugs are supercoolers, but they aren't as hardy as gall wasp larvae. Like many insects, yellowjackets and stinkbugs choose to spend winter beneath the snow. With a good snow cover, the temperature at ground level can remain just below freezing for much of the winter, no matter how cold the air above the snow pack. In experi-

ments he and his students performed, UAF professor Brian Barnes found that yellowjackets and stinkbugs can cool to about 7 degrees F (-12 degrees C) before they freeze and die.

If wintering under the snowpack keeps an insect warmer, why do some, like the spider on the ski trail, choose to spend the cold months above the snow? MacLean said the warmth under the snowpack might prevent an insect from becoming dormant, forcing it to use resources it needs to make it to spring. A climb out into the cold air might trigger the shutdown an insect needs to survive. A chilly winter home in trees or stumps might also help an insect avoid predators beneath the snow, such as shrews that feed all winter. Another possible reason to tough it out above the snowpack is to get a jump on other insects in spring. Insects not under an insulating blanket will be the first to feel the warm air, and the first to shake off the effects of a long winter.

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 on e-mail at nrozell@dino.gi.alaska.edu

"I am for doing good to the poor, but I differ in opinion of the means. I think the best way of doing good to the poor, is not making them easy in poverty, but leading or driving them out of it."—Benjamin Franklin

"The great enemy of clear language is insincerity. When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns, as it were, instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms, like a cuttlefish squirting out ink."—George Orwell

"The truth that many people never understand, until it is too late, is that the more you try to avoid suffering the more you suffer."—Thomas Merton

Did BLM's prescribed burn in the Alphabet Hills get a Bum Rap?

Much of Interior had been blanketed with thick smoke for weeks from major fires along the Taylor, Steese and Dalton highways and fire crews were stretched thin.

In the midst of Alaska's biggest season ever for wildfires, BLM intentionally set fire to the Alphabet Hills.

Then smoke from dozens of fires blew into Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley.

"What are they thinking?" said some, complaining to news media, congressional offices, and city government.

It's a story 25 years in the making and so far the results are promising.

Tucked between the Denali and Glenn highways, the Alphabet Hills is one of the most isolated areas in south central Alaska. There are no roads, few trails and even fewer cabins. Located approximately 50 miles northeast of Glennallen and 20 miles north of Lake Louise, the area is a mixture of trees and wetlands underlain by permafrost.

All in all, it's a prime candidate to use prescribed fire to enhance the ecosystem. "Since it's so wet there most of the time, natural fire has been excluded from the landscape and the forest has turned into a decadent homogeneous stand of inaccessible black and white spruce. Commercial harvest of the stand is not feasible and mechanical treatments over such a vast area is too expensive," said Kato Howard, state fuels management specialist for the Alaska Fire Service.

BLM, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources and

local Native corporations had been talking about implementing a prescribed fire in the Alphabet Hills for almost 25 years. Such a burn, done properly, would begin reducing the hazardous fuels, unlocking the nutrients stored in the wood and making them available as natural fertilizer for new vegetation. The additional sunshine and openings in the forest canopy will also allow natural reseeding by birch, a favorite food for moose.

BLM identified a 320,000-acre area in the Alphabet Hills as suitable for a prescribed fire. The area is divided into four smaller units based on natural topography that can serve as fire breaks to minimize the amount of fire line that would otherwise have to be constructed.

Prescribed fires are implemented only under precisely calculated environmental conditions such as moisture content, temperature, humidity, wind, and the weather forecast. This and other information is specified in a burn plan prepared by the BLM in consultation with a variety of state and federal agencies, Native corporations, the University of Alaska, and the public to meet management/resource goals and objectives.

"Last summer it finally seemed to come together," said Gary Mullen, Fire Management Officer for Copper River Forestry "but rain put out the fire quickly and we only managed to burn about 5,000 acres." On two other occasions BLM efforts to implement the prescribed fire had to be abandoned (in 1982 and 1994) because conditions were not right.

This summer brought hot, dry temperatures and below average rainfall. Finally there were just the right conditions to get the job done. BLM set the fire Aug. 10 and it slow-

ly burned away under calm conditions. By Aug. 20 only a few smoldering hot spots remained. In all, an estimated 41,000 acres of the 56,000 acres targeted were burned. "If we get suitable conditions again in the future, we want to burn the two units remaining. But not this year," says Howard.

"We really needed a dry year to pull this off," said Ramone McCoy, BLM's Glennallen Field Manager. "It is in an area that usually is too wet to burn. If we waited for another 25 years, we'd have a catastrophic fire. We don't want another Yellowstone," referring to the park that accumulated millions of acres of overmature or dead trees that erupted into unstoppable wildfires in 1988.

"The same environmental conditions for wildfires were needed for the Alphabet Hills to burn. It had to be dry," said Howard. Now cabin owners around Lake Louise can breathe a bit easier knowing a lot of nearby hazardous fuel is no longer threatening them.

Prevention also reduces the costs of suppression. In some cases BLM may elect to thin vegetation by hand or with machinery, such as when it constructs fire breaks around villages. This can cost about \$3,000 an acre which is too expensive for large projects. "But a controlled burn might cost only \$2 an acre. And that includes the planning and monitoring costs that go along with this. Now compare that to the millions of dollars it costs to fight a wildfire," said Howard. Fire suppression costs in Alaska this year will top \$55 million for state and federal agencies. "Then there are all the property damage and disrupted lives. Wildfires in California take out whole subdivisions costing tens

of millions of dollars to replace," Howard said.

In 2004, BLM launched 18 other prescribed burns attracting little public attention, reducing fuels on 35,000 acres of military lands near Anchorage, 35,000 acres near Delta and 3,000 acres near Fairbanks. "There are lots of other projects being planned and BLM is not the only agency using prescribed fire to reduce risk. All federal land management agencies and the state have agreed to the National Fire Plan and are working to improve public safety and reducing fire suppression risk and costs through fuel reduction projects," said Howard. "We have some control if we go on offense. The fire is in control when we just play defense."

Howard said, "We have to keep this year in perspective about two things, smoke and wildfires. Although it is a record-setting year for wildfires, Alaska has approximately 365 million acres of land. Of that acreage about 220 million are susceptible to wildfire. State and federal agencies account for about 75,000 acres a year average in fuels projects but wildfires consume an average 900,000 acres a year. At this rate it would take more than 200 years to consume all the burnable acreage in Alaska.

"Black spruce, our most volatile fuel type, becomes decadent and most volatile in about 120-year-old stands. If we suppressed all wild fires and stopped all prescribed fire, we as a state would set ourselves up for uncontrollable wildfires. Break-

ing up the homogeneity and age classes of vast stands of black spruce reduces the chances for large catastrophic fires.

"What lessons can be learned from this? First, you may not have a choice on limiting your smoke. Secondly, not all smoke is bad; some of it may be coming from your local area suppression staff to reduce your risk to wildfires. Lastly, look outside your door or window: black spruce is a fire dependent plant species, it requires fire to open its cones. Fires are going to happen; whether you prepare for it now or later makes a very appreciable difference."

Book review – Moose Views

BY BONNIE KENYON

Besides working side-by-side with my husband Rick in publishing the *Wrangell St. Elias News*, we operate a bed and breakfast. Earlier this summer, a family from the lower 48 was visiting our area and staying in one of our cabins.

Shortly after arriving, they mentioned how wonderful it would be if they could see a moose. I kindly explained that the McCarthy/Kennicott area was not well-known for wildlife – especially moose. (I was tempted to refer them to a B&B in Anchorage, recalling the numerous times that Rick and I have met up with a moose wandering the streets or even shopping malls of this popular Alaskan town.) I'm glad I didn't!

Late one afternoon, to my amazement and our guests' utter delight, a mama moose and her calf ambled into the yard, inspected my garden and nearby willow bushes before settling on the latter (thank goodness!) for their dinner's entree. For nearly 20 minutes the hungry pair nibbled on the local fare and seemed totally oblivious to their onlookers. Cameras were busy catching the moment to take back to their family and friends. Our guests said this special event "made" their trip.

According to the Alaska's Department of Fish & Game, wildlife watching is one of the main reasons people visit Alaska and moose are on Alaska's "ten most wanted" species on everyone's want-to-see list.

In the new book, *Moose Views*, published by Alaska Northwest

Books, some of Alaska's top wildlife photographers present a tongue-in-cheek look at the state's lumbering "Official Land Mammal." The 17 photos include moose in children's inflatable swimming pools, peeking through living room windows, and even at McDonald's drive-ups. I couldn't help but laugh and appreciate the specialness of each image.

Entertaining captions from a sourdough (long-time Alaskan) point-of-view share the moose's perspectives about how things used to be and how they are now.

Moose Views is going to make a terrific gift for my grandsons who have never seen a moose as well as a great book to help entertain my B&B guests. You can purchase your own copy for \$8.95 at your favorite bookstore.

"Courage is a character trait most oft attributable to men. In fact, it is the universal virtue of all those who choose to do the right thing over the expedient thing. It is the common currency of all those who do what they are supposed to do in a time of conflict, crisis, and confusion."—Florence Nightengale



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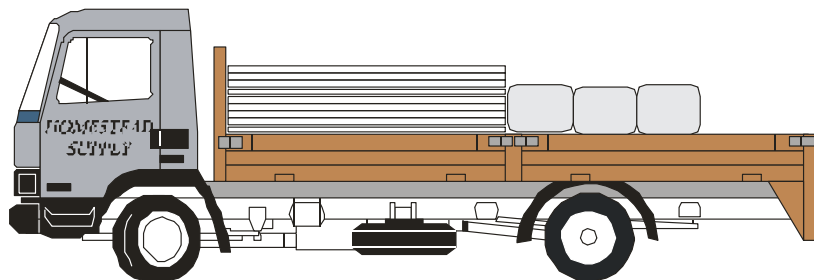
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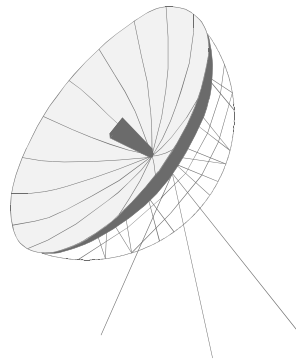


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DOT&PF surveys slide, Lakina

A Location Survey crew from the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) spent several weeks in the McCarthy area during October.

Ardelle Gervais, the Party Chief, was accompanied by Instrument Man Jack Smith, and two Chainmen—Mike and Carl Bensen.

The purpose of the survey was to generate mapping data for a design level study of the slide area be-

tween McCarthy and the Kennicott Mine and to generate a design level mapping study of the Lakina River Bridge Site.

Jack Smith lives on the McCarthy Road, which was convenient from a logistics point of view. His being familiar with the area allowed the

crew to time their visit for low water on the Lakina River.

The Lakina Bridge has been in danger of washing out for several years now. Water has been seeping under the long, gravel approach on the east side of the river.

The slide area between McCarthy and



WSEN staff photo

Instrument Man Jack Smith takes readings at slide area on the McCarthy-Kennicott Road.



WSEN staff photo

Party Chief Ardelle Gervais records survey data.

Kennicott is another project that has been on the back burner at DOT&PF. Local contractors did the initial road opening work in the fall of 2000 when a large section of Porphyry Mountain slid for over a mile, taking out the road. DOT&PF came out the next summer and did minimal work to stabilize the road, but officials believe it needs further work to prevent future problems.

Recipe for Successful One-House Schoolroom

BY TONIA ALEXANDER, HOMESCHOOLING MOM

3 cups Inquisitive, dangling-from-treetops munchkins (Treetop fresh varieties are best; pinch for freshness)

1 cup Loving, ever-patient, nearly omniscient Mom

1 cup Brave, daring and courageous Dad

¼ cup each: Nosey neighbors
Relentless relatives
Forlorn, this-is-for-your-own-good, well-meaning friends

(Friends with no children add an interesting flavor)

Mix together until lively discussions ensue. Then add:

3 cups Curriculum of choice

½ cup Necessity, the mother of invention

½ cup Roll with the punches

½ cup Supermom vitamins (buy 5, get the cape free)

½ cup Modify, adjust and move on...where did I put those lesson plans?

Whip in shape until sleep deprived. Sprinkle liberally with squeals of laughter and tears of joy. Serve fresh with hot cocoa, mini-marshmallows and real whipped cream.

Best made ahead with adoring, panting canine at feet and bored, I-could-care-less feline sunbathing in the window seat.

Refrigerate throughout the summer if desired!

CLASSIFIED

WANTED: Five to sixty acres in McCarthy area. Contact Ron at (303)940-6539

1912—Snow avalanche kills nine

From the Chitina Leader December 10, 1912

Early Sunday morning a disastrous snow slide occurred at Copper Mountain, about fifteen miles from Strelna and on the property of the Great Northern Development Company. It came with such force and suddenness that the men who were in the buildings belonging to the Company were unable to make their escape and as a consequence it now seems probable that nine lives were sacrificed, with two badly injured. Details of the sad occurrence have not been received. The force at the property had been cut down to about thirty men, most of whom were in the tunnels when the avalanche of snow thundered down the mountain side. The buildings were all completely buried, and they included the cook house, bunk house, engine house, blacksmith shop, cache, and several tents. The eleven men who were in the buildings found it impossible to make an escape and it is altogether probable that nine of them have been killed. The office and several tents, occupied by foreman Arnold, assayer Crary and others were located across the creek and likely escaped.

As soon as possible after the slide the force of men who had been employed on other parts of the property started in to dig out their unfortunate fellow workers. Before very long they had secured the dead bodies of John Barto, James McGavock and Frank Wahl. Two others were uncovered and they continue to live, although they were nearly exhausted. John McCarthy was

injured, but it is not supposed that they will result seriously. A Jap cook named Key had both legs broken. Of the six men who are still buried under the snow the names of two have not been determined. The other four are Axel Fast, Leo Muth, Hugh Arnold and Tony, a Jap. Efforts are making to find these men, but little hope is entertained that they will be alive.

As soon as news could be sent out the people of Strelna and Chitina were informed of the sad catastrophe, and many went to the rescue, carrying needed provisions and tents for the men who were suddenly deprived of food and shelter.

Reports today from Copper Mountain do not bring any encouraging news with reference to the recovery alive of any of the men who are entombed by the great avalanche of snow that swept down the mountain slide about ten o'clock Saturday morning. Yesterday the fourth body was recovered, that of Budd Gallagher.

Of the two recovered alive, Koy Oda had both legs broken above the knee and was brought this afternoon by Dr. Council to the Cordova hospital. It is expected that he will recover. The other, W. W. McCarthy, a miner, was only slightly bruised. He is now at Strelna and is able to walk about.

A force of about thirty men are now working heroically in the effort to recover the five bodies. There is but little possibility that any may still be alive. So soon as

the catastrophe was known on Sunday the men who had been working at Ole Berg's and A. B. Iles' camp went to the rescue.

The eleven men who were caught by the avalanche of snow were all either in or about the bunk house, boarding house, blacksmith shop or engine room. They heard a thundering noise and some started to run. Key Oda and Mr. McCarthy being caught only by a flying part of the compact snow. The others were not so fortunate. The slide came from the western side of the mountain. During the years that work had been pursued at the mine there had never been any indication of such a possibility.

The slide on Dec. 12, 1911, came from the east side and did not reach the buildings that have just been completely swept away. It was the office, assay office and the bunk house on the other side of the creek that was then affected, but they were only partially caught. This year coming from the other side the office and other buildings were enshrouded by a dense mass of flying snow, but not injured in any way. Foreman J. M. Nagle and electrician W. E. Brown were indoors at the time. Chas. N. Crary and several of the men were three miles distant at the saw mill, when the disaster happened.

The buildings caught by the slide were completely obliterated. Part of the bunk house was carried 150 yards distant. In searching for the missing bodies the rescuers

have no idea of where they may be found. Of the four recovered they were located at extreme parts of the slide. W. E. Brown brought Key Oda to Chitina last evening and continued on to Cordova on the train today.

The property of the Great Northern Development Company at Copper Mountain has been worked for eight years past and is the most extensively developed copper mine in Alaska. Over one million dollars has been expended and nearly 5,000 feet of tunnels have been driven in order to follow various veins and open up the property in readiness for extensive shipping. While most of the ore is of a medium grade, it is there in great quantities. Negotiations for the building of a spur of fifteen miles to connect with the Copper River & Northwestern Railroad at Strelna, have been going on for the past year and it is expected that construction will be done next spring.

Recovered Alive: Key Oda, Jap Cook; W. W. McCarthy, Miner.

Dead Bodies Recovered: John McGavock, Engineer; Fred Wahl, Cook; John Barko, Miner; Budd Gallagher, Miner.

Bodies Still in Slide: Toney Suzumoto, Waiter; Axel Fast, Engineer; Leo Muth, Blacksmith; Gus Anderson, Blacksmith helper; Hugh Arnold, Miner.

"Boneyard" Clean-up

BY ARLENE ROSENKRANS

Hundreds of pounds of tires, refrigerators, car batteries and other garbage were cleaned out of the "boneyard" area between the east footbridge and McCarthy on Tuesday afternoon, September 7th. A dozen local residents and landowners from around the area joined with Wrangell-St. Elias Park and Preserve staff to help clean up the area and prepare abandoned vehicles for removal from where they have been accumulating over the years.

This effort was part of a regional abandoned car removal project being conducted by the Copper Valley Development Association's RC&D program. RC&D Coordinator Arlene Rosenkrans, with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service is coordinating the project. The vehicles will next be transported out next summer and prepared for shipment to a recycler. A similar effort last year transported out some 120 batteries from this area for recycling. It is hoped that this area will not accumulate any garbage and cars in the future.

After the garbage was bagged and the truck was loaded, Elizabeth Mosen and Cynthia Shidner, along with other volunteers brought fresh pesto salad, garden carrots and zucchini, salmon dip, fresh bread and



cookies for the volunteers to share on the hood of one of the trucks.

Funding for disposal fees was provided through the *Take Pride in America, 2004 NPS Park Steward Event Program*. As the "boneyard" lies on Park land, the trucking was paid through NPS funds. Keith Rowland's trucking firm donated the transport over their privately-owned access bridge. A special thanks goes to Keith for providing this donation and helping with the loading and unloading of the garbage. The Rowlands are also donating free transport of the abandoned vehicles over their bridge for this project.

Thanks also to the following people who participated. Volunteers: Mike Monroe, Tessa and Natalie Bay, Meg Hunt, Ed LaChapelle, Lilly Goodman, Michael Allwright, Denise Lopez, Michael Murphy, and Mark Vail. NPS Employees: Glenn Hart, Devi and Hunter Sharp, Marshall Neeck, Vicki Snitzler, and Stephens Harper.

For more information about how you can be involved in the abandoned car project, contact Arlene at 822-5111.

"What can be added to the happiness of a man who is in health, out of debt, and has a clear conscience?"—Adam Smith

"[S]o long as the people do not care to exercise their freedom, those who wish to tyrannize will do so; for tyrants are active and ardent, and will devote themselves in the name of any number of gods, religious and otherwise, to put shackles upon sleeping men."—Voltaire

"The end of the human race will be that it will eventually die of civilization."—Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Nothing is easier than self-deceit. For what each man wishes, that he also believes to be true."—Demosthenes

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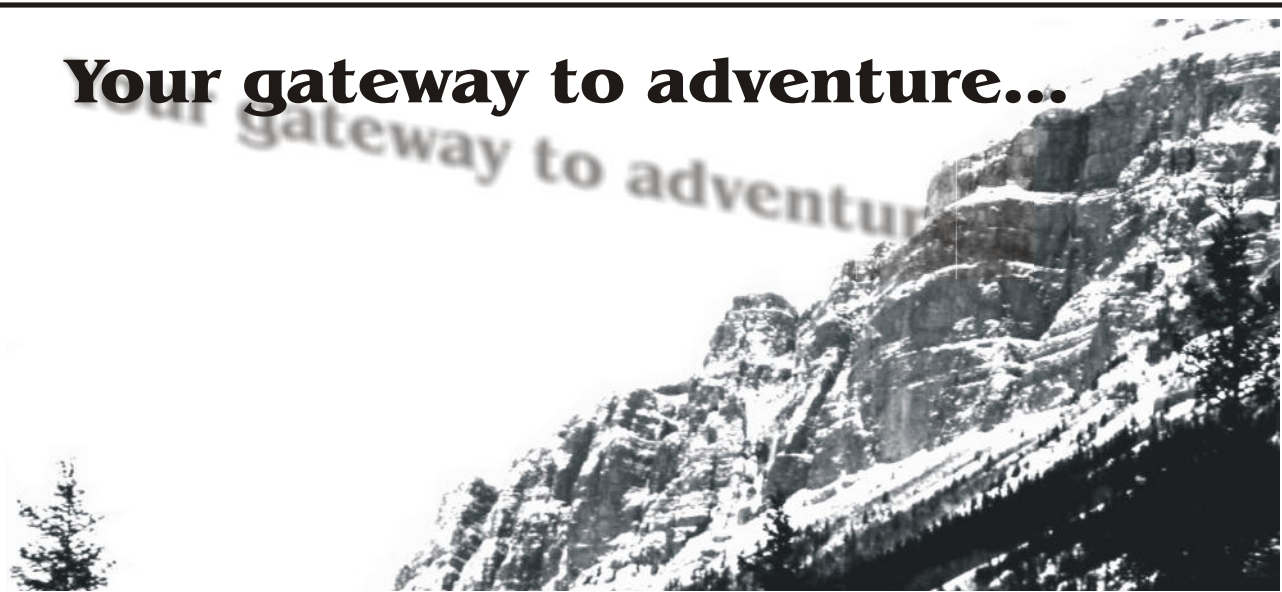
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Cooking with Peggy

BY PEGGY GUNTIS

Hi everyone. I just finished reading the *WSEN* Sept./Oct. issue and found out about our six local but internationally-famous cooks! Wow! What on earth am I doing writing this page? Maybe it's just because I'm having so much fun!

Anyhow, this month I want to share a recipe that I'm going to serve to my family at one of our holiday gatherings this year. It's meant to be done in a slow cooker but it can also be adapted to your oven or simmered on top of the stove.

(TIP: If a recipe calls for baking or simmering 15-30 minutes, it will take 4-8 hours on low or 1 ½ - 2 ½ on High; 35 - 45 min. translates to 6 to 10 hrs. on low or 3 to 4 hrs. on high. Most vegetable and meat combinations will take at least 8 hrs. on low.)

Cheeseburger Sandwiches

(from a 2004 Betty Crocker Slow Cooker recipe book.)

- 1 ½ lbs. lean ground beef (I also used turkey)
- ½ teaspoon garlic pepper
- 1-8 oz. package pasteurized prepared cheese product loaf (I used Velveeta) diced (2 cups)
- 2 Tablespoons milk
- 1 medium green bell pepper, chopped (1 cup)
- 1 small onion chopped (¼ cup)
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 12 sandwich buns, split

1. Cook the beef and garlic pepper over medium heat 8-10 minutes until beef is brown. Drain.

2. Spray 3-4 quart slow cooker with cooking spray. Mix beef and

remaining ingredients except buns in cooker.

3. Cover and cook on low heat setting 6-7 hours or probably about 30 minutes in the oven.

To serve fill buns with beef mixture. The "book says" it makes 12 sandwiches.

Since we're heading into the holiday season, I thought a pumpkin recipe was in order.

Pumpkin Pie Bars

- 1 - 18 ½ oz. box yellow cake mix
- ½ cup margarine or butter, melted
- 4 eggs
- 1-30 oz. can solid pack pumpkin (3 cups)
- 1 cup sugar, divided
- ½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 2/3 cup (small can) evaporated milk
- 1 ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon (or I've also used pumpkin pie spice)
- ½ cup chopped walnuts or pecans
- ¼ cup soft margarine or butter

Remove 1 cup cake mix and set aside. Lightly beat 1 egg, add remaining cake mix and melted margarine. Stir together and press into greased and floured 13 x 9 x 2-inch pan.

In large bowl, beat remaining 3 eggs. Stir in pumpkin, ½ cup sugar, brown sugar, milk and cinnamon. Pour over cake mixture. To reserved cake mix add ½ cup sugar, walnuts and softened margarine. Mix until crumbly. Sprinkle over pumpkin mixture.

Bake at 350 for 50 - 60 minutes (until set in center). Serve warm or cold. Refrigerate any leftovers.

How about some more pumpkin?

Sour Cream Pumpkin Coffee Cake

(Taken from an old Virginia cookbook.)

- ½ cup butter or margarine, softened
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 3 eggs
- 2 cups All-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 (16 oz.) can pumpkin
- 1 beaten egg
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon. pumpkin pie spice
- STREUSEL:
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1/3 cup butter or margarine
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 cup chopped nuts

Cream butter, ¾ cup sugar and vanilla; add 3 eggs, beating well. Sift together flour, baking powder, and soda. Add dry ingredients to butter mixture, alternating with sour cream. Set aside.

Combine pumpkin, egg, 1/3 cup sugar, and spice. Set aside. For streusel, cut butter into brown sugar and cinnamon; when well blended, add nuts. Spoon half of sour cream batter into 13 x 9 x 2-inch greased baking pan; spread to corners. Sprinkle half of streusel over batter. Spread pumpkin mixture next. Carefully spread remaining sour cream batter. Sprinkle remaining streusel on top. Bake in a preheated 325 degree oven for 50 - 60 minutes or until done.

Enjoy eating and cooking! See you next month.

"Never suppose that in any possible situation, or under any circumstances, it is best for you to do a dishonorable thing..." —Thomas Jefferson

A LOOK AT THE WEATHER

BY GEORGE CEBULA

August 2004 will be remembered for its hot and sunny days. The high temperature for the month was 85 on the 17th (80 on Aug. 8, '03 and 81 on Aug. 4, '02). There were 27 days when the high was 70 or higher and 8 days when the high was 80 or higher. The first freeze was on the 3rd as the temperature fell to 30; this was only for a short time and most of the garden plants were spared. The temperature fell to 27 on the morning of the 30th and most of the plants were killed. There were only 6 days when the low was 32 or below and the low temperature for the month was 27 on the 30th (27 on Aug. 23, '03 and 27 on Aug. 26, '02). The average monthly temperature at McCarthy was 56.2 compared to 51.5 in Aug. '03, 51.7 in Aug. '02, 55.0 in Aug. '01 and 51.5 in Aug. '00. *Silver Lake had a high temperature of 85 on the 7th and 18th (80 on Aug. 11, '03 and 81 on Aug. 4, '02). There were 23 days with highs of 70 or higher and 7 days with a high of 80 or higher. The low temperature at Silver Lake was 31 on the 30th (30 on Aug. 23, '03 and 29 on Aug. 15, '02). Silver Lake had only 2 days with a low of 32 or lower. The Silver Lake average temperature was 57.8 (51.9 in Aug. '03, 53.2 in Aug. '02, 55.0 in Aug. '01 and 52.5 in Aug. '00).*

The August precipitation at McCarthy was 0.74 inches compared with 2.30 inches in Aug. '03 and 4.86 inches in Aug. '02. There were only 7 days with a trace or more of rainfall recorded. *The precipitation at Silver Lake was lighter with 0.37 inches recorded (1.64 in Aug. '03 and 3.08 in Aug. '02). There were only 4 days at Silver Lake with a trace or more recorded.*

September 2004 will be remembered for the clouds and precipitation that we should have had in August. The high temperature at McCarthy was 65 on the 9th (66 on Sept. 11, '03 and 67 on Sept. 3, '02). The low temperature was 15 on the 18th (12 on Sept. 17, '03 and 20 on Sept. 22, '02). There were 6 days with the high 60 or above and 6 days with the low of 20 or lower. The average monthly temperature at McCarthy was 40.5 (42.1 in Sept. '03, 44.6 in Sept. '02 and 43.9 in Sept. '01). This was about 6 degrees warmer than the record 34.3 of September 1992. *Silver Lake had a high of 69 on the 1st (66 on Sept. 12, '03 and 65 on Sept. 5, '02) and a low of 17 on the 18th and 19th (14 on Sept. 17, '03 and 24 on Sept. 22, '02). The Silver Lake average temperature was 40.0 (40.7 in Sept. '03, 44.8 in Sept. '02 and 43.6 in Sept. '01).*

There was 8.2 inches of snow recorded at McCarthy in September (1.1 in Sept. '03, 00 in Sept. '02 and '01, and 29.5 in Sept. '00) and

the total precipitation was 4.95 inches. The average for September (1968-2001) is 2.56 inches and compares with 0.98 inches in Sept. '03, 1.47 inches in Sept. '02, 2.07 inches in Sept. '01, 10.82 inches in Sept. '00 and 2.77 inches in Sept. '99. There were 15 days with measurable rainfall, compared with 12 days in Sept. '03. *Silver Lake's total precipitation was 2.13 inches (0.94 inches in Sept. '03, 1.51 inches in Sept. '02, 1.49 inches in Sept. '01 and 6.12 inches in Sept. '00). Silver Lake had 12 days with a trace or more of rainfall. Snowfall at Silver Lake was only a trace.*

The first 18 days of October have been cloudy and wet, with about average temperatures. The total precipitation has been more than 2 inches with 3 inches of snow. The highs have been mostly in the 40's and low 50's. The low temperature was 7 on the morning of the 18th. Winter should be here to stay any day now.

Here are a few interesting weather facts for the summer of 2004. The high temperatures May thru August reached 70 or higher on 83 days and 80 or higher (June thru August) on 31 days. Total precipitation May thru August was only 4.06 inches. Have a great winter.

"Antisthenes says that in a certain faraway land the cold is so intense that words freeze as soon as they are uttered, and after some time then thaw and become audible, so that words spoken in winter go unheard until the next summer." —Plutarch, Moralia

"The notion that the church, the press, and the universities should serve the state is essentially a Communist notion. In a free society these institutions must be wholly free — which is to say that their function is to serve as checks upon the state." — Alan Barth

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

On September 8, 2000, the 175th anniversary of the establishment of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the agency did an amazing thing: They apologized to the American Indian.

"We must first reconcile ourselves to the fact that the works of this agency have at various times profoundly harmed the communities it was meant to serve," said Kevin Gover, Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs. "From the very beginning, the Office of Indian Affairs was an instrument by which the United States enforced its ambition against the Indian nations and Indian people who stood in its path."

Gover went on to mention the infamous Trail of Tears, saying it was "by threat, deceit, and force" that the BIA handled the tribal nations. "Poverty, ignorance, and disease have been the product of this agency's work," Gover said, and then said this: "These wrongs must be acknowledged if the healing is to begin."

Then Gover apologized. "On behalf of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, I extend this formal apology to Indian people for the historical conduct of this agency."

Residents and inholders of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park (WRST) have seen some positive signs that the National Park Service (NPS) wants better relations with the communities it was meant to serve. The new Regional Director, Marcia Blaszak, has reached out with public meetings. She said in an *Anchorage Daily News* interview, "We also need to do a better job of communicating with our park neighbors, especially those who are property owners within park boundaries." She called for an in-house investigation of alleged misdeeds by the agency. People are hopeful that

the new park superintendent, Jed Davis, will help bring about more peaceful relations between government and citizen.

From our point of view, one thing is still needful. As Kevin Gover said, "There are wrongs that must be acknowledged if the healing is to begin."

While the recent misdeeds of the NPS do not rise to the level of the BIA treatment of Native Americans, they have been very real, and very hurtful to the citizens involved.

Often, as in the shameful case of Cades Cove in the Great Smokies, NPS has resorted to history revisionism rather than admit wrongdoings. In the case of Cades Cove, NPS lied to the residents before bulldozing their community to the ground. (Several years later the NPS rebuilt the town and hired college students to pose as residents, churning butter and splitting firewood.)

Recently, Residents of the Wrangells' Chairperson Susan Smith spent nearly five hours with two NPS Special Investigators. The list of grievances that Ms Smith presented ran to five pages. One of the investigators said some of the charges were "disturbing." Smith said the investigators were "pleasant, polite and very respectful of what we had to say." However, the investigators stressed that even if action *were* taken against park employees it would be kept secret due to "privacy laws."

WRST has a sorry history of the NPS being an "instrument by which the United States enforced its ambition" against the miners, hunters and residents who stood in its path. Extremist interpretation of regulations, cutting off ancient access routes and harassment by park rangers have caused many miners,

hunters and residents to just give up their rights and go elsewhere.

Most recently, the disgraceful treatment of Doug Frederick and the Pilgrim family with frivolous federal charges, sting operations and SWAT-type operations involving women and children will continue to fester if just swept under the rug. It is not possible to justify the scandalous "open letter" about the Pilgrims written by the park superintendent and handed out to tourists. Just this summer an employee at the Copper Center Visitor Center was caught telling a tourist that Doug Frederick serves mooseburgers at his lodge — something that if true would be a clear violation of state law, but was just another slander towards an inholder.

Marcia Blaszak may want to simply forget the past—to pretend it never happened. Unfortunately, that is not the road to good relations.

An apology says, "This should not have happened; it will never happen again."

It doesn't say, "Just let bygones be bygones, but we won't judge whether the actions were right or wrong."

It says instead, "I want my peers and descendants to know I am aware of these wrongs and am doing something to redress, in part, some of them."

There are signs that Director Blaszak is aware of the wrongs, and is doing something about them. What a wonderful step forward it would be for the Park Service to apologize to the WRST property owners.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WSEN,

When we first subscribed to your newspaper we enjoyed it as a folksy-down home kind of publication.

In the last year or so you have turned it into a bash the Park Service and praise the Pilgrims rag.

I have seen a few folks like the Pilgrims over the years (40+ years in Alaska) and they and their type are nothing but parasites on society that leave a mess wherever they set down.

They contribute very little but ask and even demand a lot. I don't wish our money go for more Pilgrim praising.

As for the Park Service I wish Wrangell-St. Elias Park would go away, but they are a fact of life now and should be given a bit of credit now and then. When they are wrong our society has ways of appealing through the "system," as frustrating as that can be.

I did notice that at least some of the good folks in McCarthy are starting to get wise about the Pilgrims. I am sure that most folks will eventually rue the day the Pilgrims showed up.

Lynn Chrystal

Valdez, AK

Editor's note — It always saddens us when people attack their fellow citizens who are of a different nationality, color or social status than themselves, but give the government a pass to lie, cheat and steal. The fact that the park is not going away is the very reason why the press must be diligent to hold the Park Service accountable — something the mainstream press has failed to do. If the Pilgrims hold out their hand and "demand" your money, you have a choice. If you don't like what they do, don't give it to them. Unfortunately you don't have

that option with the federal government. Whether you or I like the Pilgrims or not is immaterial as far as the way they were mistreated by the Park Service.

As President Ronald Reagan once said, "It is not my intention to do away with government. It is rather to make it work — work with us, not over us; stand by our side, not ride on our back."

Editor,

Truth Twisted By Knaves

The initiative process is a vital part of the Alaskan Political process, and I have watched it used and abused over the last two decades. The good side can be when an initiative forces the policy makers to do what they lack courage for.

The misuse comes when signature gatherers are duplicators and exploit the process for one of more of the following:

- § To build a mailing list for fund raising or get out the vote efforts.

- § To put a popular but misguided issue on the ballot to motivate voters of a particular bent to flock to the polls to elect policy makers of a specific party.

- § To embarrass candidates who do not favor a popular, but bad, piece of legislation by making them take a stand on it during a campaign.

The recent flap over the filling of a vacancy in the US Senate is an illustrative example. Several years ago, the Republican led legislature clarified the law to keep Tony Knowles from appointing a replacement for Frank Murkowski in the very brief time before the new governor assumed office, as he insinuated he might.

The resentful Democrats, called "trust the people", started an initiative drive to force a special election

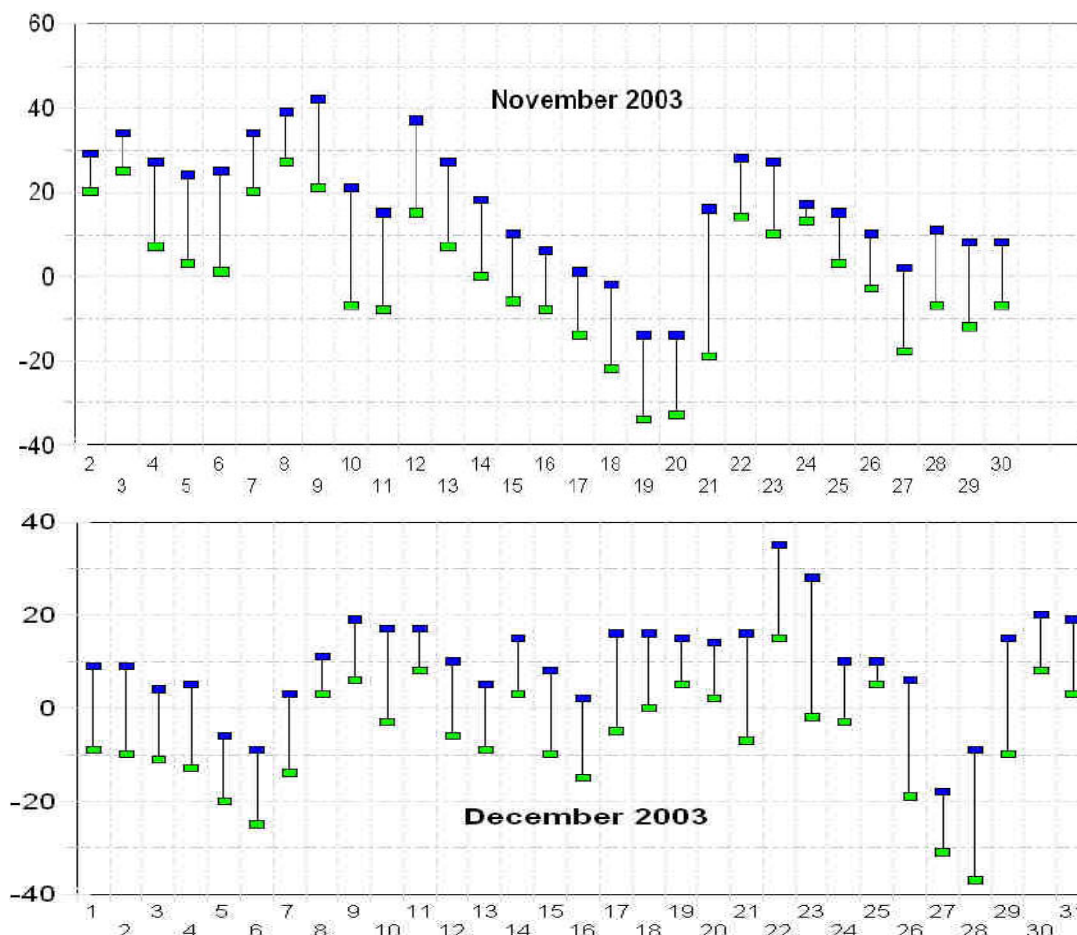
of a person to fill the vacancy. The Legislature, not wanting to have to run on the same ballot with that issue, and like me, probably thinking that a special election was a good idea, changed the law to provide for the special election with an interim appointment to give Alaska a voice in the Senate during the 3-5 months before the election. The Democrat sponsors of this initiative all voted for the law change.

Because this interim appointment was the only real difference between existing law and the initiative, the Lt Governor put language on the ballot to make this clear and posted it on the web site for all to see. The "trust the people" cabal waited until after the ballots had been printed to complain to the court about the language clarifying the change. The only reason I can see for their timing is to provide the maximum amount of embarrassment to the Administration. I have to admire their political skill at manipulating the process for political gain, but it appears to me to be outside of the rules of ethical conduct and a gross misuse of public funds and process.

I have known Loren Leman since he was in Junior High School, and he is a man of impeccable integrity. To insinuate that he bent the process is a cheap shot and unwarranted. Alaskan politics are robust and certainly a full contact game. Being clipped and blind-sided by people who know better doesn't make it any easier to get honorable people to serve or to elevate the civility of the process.

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