

Wrangell St. Elias News

"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"

Volume Thirteen Issue Three

May & June 2004

Two Dollars

Construction begins on Kennicott River Bridge

BY LAURIE ROWLAND

MCCARTHY, AK— Construction of the Kennicott River Service Bridge began on April 19, just moments after general contractor Keith Rowland got the official go-ahead from the State of Alaska DNR. This marks an exciting and historic moment for McCarthy area residents.



Photo courtesy Keith Rowland

Ken Rowland working on east pier.

The bridge is being constructed from one 40-ft. span and two 90-ft. spans supported by two, four-foot diameter steel piers excavated to a depth of at least 12 feet. The bridge is located approximately ¼ mile downstream from the foot bridge, and is entirely on Rowland's privately owned property, including approaches. Because the bridge is not located on a public easement and is entirely privately funded, it will be a gated, fee-for-use facility not open to the public.

The project actually began over a year ago, when Mr. Rowland, owner of ROWCON Services, submitted his permit application to several government offices, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DEC, DF&G, and DNR. Initially, Mr. Rowland's application was met with a sense of incredulity by the regulating offices. During a meeting in the DNR office, one caseworker reportedly dismissed the whole idea as impossible. "She just looked at me in disbelief and said, 'You can't build a bridge across the Kennicott River. That's DOT's job!' So I asked for a different caseworker," Rowland said. Eventually, however, the permit applications were processed by



WSEN staff photo

Keith and father Ken Rowland.

the different permitting agencies involved with the project.

Public interest is high, as was shown by the flood of public comments. Amazingly, in a town where access issues are normally highly controversial, the comments were overwhelmingly supportive. Most residents consider the gated bridge concept to be a positive solution to McCarthy's access and freighting needs.

To date, both supporting piers have been set, and Mr. Rowland is preparing to set the first section of decking in place. WSEN will keep you informed of developments as they unfold.

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A note from the publisher

BY BONNIE KENYON

Spring “break-up” in McCarthy is always challenging. This year, however, we are seeing much less hardships than expected – considering all the snow that needed breaking up! As I look out my office window on May 4th, I am pleased to report that the signs of winter have nearly disappeared from our yard and garden plot. The grass may not be green yet but at least we can see and walk on it. I’m assured that in another day or two I should be able to put my mud boots back in the closet. The arrival of the robins, juncos and the white-crowned sparrows are further signs of the change in seasons.

The last week of March Rick and I traveled to Daytona Beach, Florida, to spend time with Rick’s mom, Virginia, who was in the final stages of colon cancer. She went home to be with her Lord on April 14. While it is difficult to realize someone you love is moving and you won’t see them for sometime, as Christians, Rick and I know we will be reunited with Mom Kenyon. She is absent from earth but very much present in her heavenly Home. We were honored to be by her side during the transition and be a support to Dad Kenyon.

Rick’s two aunts, Hazel Winglemire and Mary Swartz, and Rick’s cousin, Penny Raupp, all of Holly, Michigan, flew down for the funeral. We had not seen them in many years. Rick Jr. and our daughter-in-law, Maria, drove down from Donaldsonville, GA. My mom, Neta Schafer, and my brother and his family are now living in the nearby town of New Smyrna Beach, FL, so they were a great comfort to us, as well. Although we deeply missed Mom Kenyon’s presence, we found comfort in just being together.

Rick and I arrived back at our cabin in McCarthy on May 1st. The

first project on our “to-do” list was putting together the May/June issue of WSEN. Thanks to our wonderful neighbors and friends, this issue came together quickly. My neighbor, Laurie Rowland, so graciously (and expertly) wrote *Items of Interest* for me and wrote the text for our cover page. Because she has to wear a variety of hats depending on what assignment she is on at the time, I do wonder which cap she had to take off while donning her journalism hat! Thank you, Laurie!

If you called the office/house while we were gone, you would have talked to another neighbor – Mark or Emily Bass – who offered to answer our phone calls (thanks for Copper Valley Telephone’s call forwarding feature). They even took reservations for our B & B!

Our neighbor on the north side is George Cebula who also dons a journalism hat for WSEN every issue when he writes *A Look at the Weather*. He took over the weather observation job for Rick and I and provided power to our freezer. We had been gone for about a week when George received word that his mother, Helen Cebula, had passed away. He, too, traveled to the Lower 48 to attend his mom’s funeral and be with his immediate family. While George was gone, Emily and Mark made daily trips to his cabin so they could run his generator which was supplying power to both George’s freezer and ours. Thank you, Mark and Emily, for going the extra mile for us!

Before we left home, another neighbor, Audrey Edwards, called. She offered to start tomato and cucumber plants for me. What a warm reception that tray of beautiful, green plants gave me when I entered our cabin and found them waiting. Thank you, Audrey!

WSEN subscriber and friend, Marion Lampman of Anchorage, provided our truck a safe haven the en-

tire time we were gone, and transported us to and from the airport. What a blessing that was to us, Marion. Thank you!

As I write my “thank-you notes,” I recall others that reached out and did something very special for Rick and I during this difficult time. I just realized I am out of space for this column and I am leaving some of you out. Please forgive me but know that this has been a wonderful way to count my blessings!

WSEN welcomes aboard the following subscribers: Norm Bomer, NC; Shirley Perrin, OR; Kevin Rowland, OR; Sarah Roberts, FL; Kelly Smith, AK; Erich Veyhl, MA; Harriet Whittington, WA; Gregory Bachinsky, NY; Bob Harrison, WA; Thomas Marshall, AK.

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Items of Interest

BY LAURIE ROWLAND

Rick and Bonnie Kenyon: As I write this, we are eagerly awaiting the Kenyons' return from Florida, scheduled for this weekend. Bonnie reports that the time spent with family has been good, although the circumstance and reason for this trip was not of the "happy" variety. Rick's mother, Virginia Kenyon, had been suffering from cancer, and was in her final days when Rick and Bonnie arrived there a month ago. They were privileged to be by her bedside along with Rick's dad, Carl, when she went Home. Even though it's comforting to know that Virginia is now out of pain and enjoying God's presence, still it must be the hardest thing in the world to lose a beloved mother. Our deepest sympathies go out to the Kenyon family.

Rick and Tara Petter: Congratulations are in order for Rick and Tara, who were married at Hatcher Pass on March 20! A group of friends and family gathered for the event, and Tara relates that they all had a great weekend of skiing, dog sledding (courtesy of Jeremy & Ally) and playing in the snow. Music was provided by our own McCarthy musicians—Jeremy C., Mike, Rob, Karen, & Shell. As you start your married life together, Rick and Tara, we wish you all the very best!

The Welty Family: I last saw Lynn and René at Carmen Russo's barn, where the two of them were helping to oversee

the birth and care of the Pilgrim family's new little stallion—mare and colt doing well! René confides that they have decided to name the little guy "Gideon," after the famous Israeli leader who went up against a huge enemy army with only 300 men—and won! The Weltys have enjoyed the opportunity to help care for (and ride) the horses through the winter.

It seems the family is a little scattered this month, as Don has gone piloting for a hunting guide near Cordova, and Sarah is still finishing up her school year at Jackson Hole Bible College. René has just returned from a trip south to see her big sis, and was full of enthusiastic stories about her visit. We're eagerly awaiting Sarah's return from college next week. Lynn plans to go to Jackson, Wyoming, for Sarah's graduation, and the two of them will get to spend some time visiting with Lynn's parents, John and Nancy Burtch, before returning home to McCarthy.

The McCarthy Lodge: Excitement is running high at the McCarthy Lodge. Neil reports that guest reservations are by far the highest ever for the end of April, promising a bumper tourist season ahead. This is good news for all Kennicott and McCarthy businesses. Savvy travelers are catching on—the Wrangells are a great place to be!

Meanwhile, Doug and the construction crew have been busy making plans and building

more accommodations for guests. Doug's keen sense of authentic historical detail shows up everywhere in both the Lodge and Ma Johnson's Hotel, transforming even a simple visit into a cultural and historical experience worth having! The face of McCarthy is changing, and... but maybe I ought to let Jason tell you about it.

Jason Lobo/Beth Hammond: "Have you seen the Pizza Parlor lately?" queried the voice on the other end of the line.

"No..." was my hesitant reply.

"That's because my friends and I demolished it!" He was fairly crowing. "In our ruinous wake we left a swath of destruction, rubble, looting, plunder and annihilation, and now there is no more Pizza Parlor!"

Well... OK, so annihilation and plunder may be taking things a bit too far, and Jason isn't really related to Attila the Hun, but it's true about the Pizza Parlor being torn down to make room for new buildings. Since he's on the demolition crew, Jason was pleased to have the opportunity to salvage some of the boards from the wrecked building to use on Beth's camper, which he says the two of them are busy "cabinizing."

I only have one question: With the Pizza Parlor gone, when are we EVER going to get some of Jeannie's mouth-watering pizza again?

The Rowland Family: March and April are Snow Fun months

for the Rowlands. In early April, the entire extended family (except one—Loyce's husband Ron Krogel was unable to break away from work) convened for a 4-day family reunion. The weather was perfect, and snow conditions were just right for a really good time!

The biggest excitement at the Rowland household is the beginning of bridge construction. Keith has been working for over a year on getting the necessary state and federal permits to build a vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River. The government permitting process goes about as slow as frozen molasses, and by the middle of April, it was beginning to look hopeless. The permits still weren't finished, and the spring "window of opportunity" for setting piers before the water levels rose was rapidly slipping away. Finally, on April 19, the last permit was signed, sealed and delivered. By the next afternoon, Keith had already set the first of two huge piers, with help from his two best equipment operators, Kaleb (12) and David (10). Two days later, the second pier was set, which ended the "in the water" phase of construction. And just in time, too—the river is rising more every day! Next step: weld caps on the piers (with help from Keith's dad, first class professional welder Ken Rowland) and set the first section of decking in place. Meanwhile, the Rowlands are living, breathing, eating, sleeping, and dreaming Bridge.

Ed LaChapelle/Meg Hunt: It was good to hear Meg's cheerful voice on the phone again—she was in Olympia, WA, from mid-December until just recently,

teaching at the university there. I must confess that, as a musician, I'm a little envious. It's tempting to wish I could be a student in Meg's class, which she describes as an interdisciplinary look at the performing arts, mainly exploring relationships between music and dance. While Meg was teaching, Ed took the opportunity to get in some good skiing time in various locations all over the northwestern states. Ah, the joys of retirement!

As an active member of the Kennecott-McCarthy Historical Museum Board of Directors, Meg was delighted to report that the museum caretaker cabin is now finished, and only lacks a few household goods to be "home sweet home" to the new caretaker. And, it's looking like that caretaker may really be here soon, to fill the cabin and oversee the museum! Other long-overdue improvements on the museum are scheduled for this spring, too. Next time you visit the museum, look for a new foundation under the floor and a new roof overhead!

It's garden time in McCarthy, and Meg's is calling insistently to her, despite the two feet of snow which still cover the ground. It seems odd to be planting when the landscape still looks like winter, but the reality is that spring really is almost here, and summers in these northern latitudes are woefully brief. A head start on the garden means greens all through the summer!

Michelle Casey and kids: Michelle excitedly relayed to me just a week ago that she had decided to go ahead and buy the 'west side' piece of ground that

she's had her eye on for a long time now. She can't wait to begin building a cabin and get moved in. A hearty "welcome to the neighborhood" to Michelle, Carl and Tracy! And, speaking of land purchases...

Diane Milliard: In chatting with Diane, I learned that she, too, has purchased some land, although not in our "west side" neighborhood. Diane's lot is over on the east side, in the McCarthy Creek Subdivision, and she hopes to build a cabin there soon. She has braved the McCarthy winter this year, house-sitting for various absent homeowners. This has involved splitting wood (the only fuel that warms you twice!), hauling water, generating her own electricity, and—when her feet have felt sore and tired—wondering what life with a car might be like. Diane has really enjoyed McCarthy life, and is looking forward to her regular summer job as interpretive ranger at Kennicott, which will start soon.

The homeschoolers were grateful for Diane's help in February, when she and Bonnie Kenyon offered their services as "test administrators" to the kids in the area. Diane and Bonnie did a wonderful job (so say the eight children who took the state-mandated tests); the kids were glad to have someone to look at besides their mothers for a change; and the mothers all got a much-needed break for a few days. Thanks, ladies!

Lane Moffitt/Betty Adams and Kaylin: There's a new member of the family at the Moffitt house—a perfectly adorable small white kitten, whom Kaylin has named "Scratch." Can you

guess why? Yes, Kaylin is learning about the differences between dogs and cats, and sometimes little Scratch teaches most effectively with her claws. In all fairness, however, she could just as well have been called “Snuggles” (because she loves to be held), or “Hummer” (for her delightful, throaty purr), or even “Cookie Thief”! Now, how did that tiny kitten get that huge chocolate chip cookie out of the box? I have a hunch there won’t be too many dull moments at Kaylin’s house with Scratch around.

Betty’s house is full of greenery—the starts for her new greenhouse business! Fresh vegetables are always scarce here in McCarthy, so Betty’s new business idea is to have fresh local veggies for sale during most of the summer months. I for one can’t wait to sample her goods. Mm!

I’m very grateful to report that Lane has been spending many hours this month putting the newly-fixed road grader to good use. And just in time, too. This being a high snow year, the roads around here were sorely in need of having the winter’s snow pack scraped off before spring breakup made the roads into rutted, muddy soup!

Kevin Smith/Dorothy Adler: “Climb Ev’ry Mountain... ‘Til You Find Your Dream,” must be the theme song at Kevin and Dorothy’s house these days. These two mountaineering marvels have been skiing, hiking, biking, running, climbing, climbing, and *climbing* this winter. Just last month they braved Mount Sanford, starting at Chishtochina and skiing the 35-mile

approach. The two adventurers were on the mountain for eleven days in bitter cold and windy weather. One night, Dorothy commented, the wind blew so hard that neither of them slept all night. No words were spoken between them, but each was ready to bolt at the first sign of the tent shredding. Finally, at around 5:00 a.m., the wind slackened and they were able to sleep a little. On another occasion, they were able to pitch their tent inside a snow igloo, which turned out to be providential. That night the wind blew so hard that, without their snug shelter, they would probably have been blown right off the mountain! Their ascent ended at around 12,000 ft, when the two of them decided that the wind would cause too much of a problem for them to try to continue up. This turned out to be wise judgment, for upon arriving in Glennallen later they learned that another party had spent several days farther up Mt. Sanford at that same time, held hostage by the fierce wind—a very dangerous situation!

Although most climbers might blanch at the thought of making an assault on such a formidable mountain as Sanford, Kevin and Dorothy consider the trip to be “just a training exercise.” Bigger things are in store for Dorothy, for next month she’s planning on ascending 20,320 feet high Denali—“The Great One”—with two other women. The idea originated with Dorothy’s friend, Megan Seifert, who wanted to do something special as a memorial to her friend, Chris Williams, who lost his life in a tragic parasailing

accident last summer. Gradually, the idea took shape, and it is now very close to becoming a reality for Megan and Dorothy.

The plan is for the two ladies, along with another friend from Fairbanks, to fly to Base Camp at 7200 ft. on May 24. From there, the girls will hike no more than 1000 to 2000 ft. per day, so that their bodies can acclimatize gradually as they ascend. They will be carrying packs and pulling sleds, lugging about 120 pounds apiece up the mountain. The ladies plan to prepare their own food, including dehydrating fruit, baking bread, making power bars, cooking, and packaging. Dorothy explained that the group plans to follow the popular “West Buttress” route. However, if conditions are *just perfect*, they may decide to venture out on the more challenging “West Rib” route.

Whatever route you take, girls, we certainly wish you all the best. And we’ll pray for your safety, too!

The Three Bears: Long Lake resident Tyee Lohse has just informed me that he has chased this spring’s first grizzly bear away from his house. Tyee’s neighbor, Mark Vail, has spotted a couple of black bears in the last few days, so I suppose it’s safe to assume that bear season is upon us—whether we like it, or not.

Judge orders token fine for Pilgrim son

Says Park Service should avoid "bully reputation"

Son elected next day by District 6 Republicans as delegate to state convention

SUNDAY MARCH 28—ANCHORAGE—

Joseph Pilgrim of McCarthy, eldest son of Robert Hale "Papa" Pilgrim, was ordered Friday to pay a \$310 fine for trespass and vandalism for attempting last summer to enter his family's Mother Lode mine. But Judge John Roberts commented, "The government needs to consider going the extra mile to resolve the dispute with your neighbor. I think the NPS (National Park Service) should want to avoid getting a reputation as a bully."

The NPS had wanted a \$3,000 fine. Two NPS rangers had been staking out the mine entrance waiting for the Pilgrims to enter their mine via its only access, the Polk 1601 adit (tunnel) which opens on NPS land. [see WSEN Jan-Feb 2004, *Simple misdemeanor charges turn complex*]

NPS prosecutor Chandra Postma portrayed Joseph as a wealthy man—a big land owner and a business man with clients—and that he wasn't confused about his rights but acted "boldly, brazenly, arrogantly" and at substantial risk to the public. "This is a defendant that thinks the rules don't apply to him. The Court needs to send a strong message that they do. A \$3,000 fine is appropriate."

The judge asked questions of the prosecution that indicate key points were apparently troubling him. The first was about the Hale v. Norton case brought by the Pacific Legal Foundation against the NPS over its blockage of the road to the Pilgrim property, "Will the civil action before Judge Beistline likely resolve the title to the adit?"

Answer: She didn't know.

"Why did the NPS issue criminal tickets instead of filing a civil action to determine his right to use the adit?"

Answer: The defendant willfully ignored the NPS no trespassing sign.

Anchorage resident Lee Ann Gerhart attended all of Pilgrim's trial sessions. She said, "At the end, the judge seemed almost apologetic towards Joseph. I think it's beginning to sink in how high-handed the NPS is toward landowners in the Wrangell St. Elias Park."

"Judge Roberts recently presided over Doug Frederick's trial," said Gerhart. "Neighbors, outraged by the injustice Doug suffered at park service hands, stepped up to pay his fine."

[On March 5 Roberts and all the federal judges on the district court were presented with a petition containing over 140 names including former legislator Richard Shultz of Tok and numerous business and public figures from the Interior, Copper Basin and South Central Alaska. The petition protested, "the outrageous criminalizing by the National Park Service and the federal courts of a public spirited man, Doug Frederick, of Slana, who was undertaking a volunteer trail improvement demonstration." Frederick's \$510 fine also levied by Roberts was paid by others as part of the protest.]

In response to prosecutor Postma's attempt to paint Joseph Pilgrim as a wealthy landowner, defense attorney Carl Bauman pointed out that while Joseph is a 1/3 owner of the land, it is not unencumbered. There is considerable debt and whether there is any equity in the

property with such NPS regulatory hostility is now questionable. They purchased the property before the park service shut off the only surface access up the valley on the road and to the underground workings through the adit. And as to their giving a guided mine tour for a fee, the "clients" with Joseph were friends who paid a small amount of money for three days lodging and food. As to risk, not one of the rangers testifying had ever even been into the mine tunnel which was described later by Joseph as safe, basically like a hallway. And as to attitude, Joseph thought he had a right to use the tunnel to enter his own property.

Addressing the judge, Joseph told how excited the family was about owning the mine. He said it was the first time they've ever owned property. Locals told them where their mine entrance was and the family spent three weeks removing accumulations of ice and snow to improve the opening. They placed signs informing the public that the mine was private property. They built an inner door and placed a lock and chain on it to prevent anyone from entering. "It is beautiful inside. It's not dangerous—it's just like walking down a hallway... We took out some rocks to sell at the gift shop. This is not like going to somebody's store and breaking in to take things. We were entering the only way to get to our own underground 240 acres."

The NPS later broke the Pilgrim's lock and installed their own. They also tore down the family's signs and replaced them with their own.

"The bothersome thing is that NPS removed your lock, but they can't be sued for doing that," the judge told Joseph.

Judge Roberts acknowledged that the underlying issue regarding right of access is a complex one. "This is not a usual trespass case. This court was not able to resolve the issue of ownership—NPS has a right of control of the entrance and that avoids the right of self help. Joseph will need to pursue his rights of access through civil means."

"The government did not prevail in showing that this was a commercial venture, nor that the public

was at risk. The defendant is responsible for what he did, but there is no need to send a 'special message'—this proceeding was sufficient," said Roberts. "Trespass \$250, Vandalism is part of the same incident, \$50. Total fine, \$300 plus \$10 special assessment, \$310 total with 6 months to pay. No probation required."

Joseph's attorney has filed an appeal to the district court. Even though the fine is very small, Joseph feels that having a criminal record for an act he considers lawful is not acceptable.

In an interesting twist, Joseph Pilgrim was elected the next day by

the District 6 Republican convention in Delta Junction as a delegate to the state convention in Soldotna, meeting May 20. According to District 6 chairman Spike Jorgensen of Tok, the district also passed a resolution urging the State of Alaska to defend access in conservation system units and stand up for the ANILCA promises made to the people of this state.

Pilgrim update

The Pilgrim family have had some challenges the past two months, not all relating to access. On March 17, little Abraham, age 9, was in the generator shed and fell, catching a finger in the drive belts of the running engine. The accident stripped all of the skin and flesh from the last joint on his middle finger. Abraham's older brother David took quick action to preserve what was left of the finger and rush Abraham down the 14-mile trail to the McCarthy Airport just before dark.

Papa was already in the hospital in Anchorage for some problems with severe joint pain and diabetes. Mama (Country Rose) and Jerusalem were with him. Abraham was flown to Anchorage, where doctors said the finger would need to be amputated. Country Rose said that was not acceptable, and after some time a doctor was located in Portland, Oregon, who was willing to attempt reconstruction of the finger.

Since Papa also needed medical care, he flew to Portland with Abraham. Sister Jerusalem, age 15, caught a later flight as there was no room for her on the medivac flight. There, surgeons operated immedi-

ately and were successful in saving the finger.

Chuck Cushman, head of American Land Rights Association, lives in Battleground WA, just 30 minutes from the hospital where Abraham was. Chuck is a musician and plays harpsichord in a blue-grass band. He visited the family in the hospital and took Papa and Jerusalem to a blue-grass concert where they soon found themselves on stage. They were a hit and played a few more times while there. Someone offered to record them, so Hosanna, David, Joshua, Lamb, and Elishaba gathered up their instruments and drove down there from McCarthy in their old van.

To help with their travel funds, Chuck arranged 2 concerts for them on April 16 and 18. They sold out, so 2 more concerts were scheduled on the 22nd and 25th.

When Abraham can travel, the whole family plan to drive back to Alaska in the van.

As all of this was taking place, the April 15 deadline to use the bulldozer to drive up the McCarthy-Green Butte Road set by the National Park Service (NPS) passed. The

family had earlier done a test and determined that the trip, needed to get building materials to replace the cabin that burned down in 2002, would be impossible under the strict guidelines set forth by the NPS.

"During the past few days we have had opportunity to try a short portion of snow machine trail out with our D-5 Dozer," said Papa Pilgrim. He went on to list the extreme danger, the grave possibility of equipment loss and "the obvious unreasonableness" of the NPS requirements.

The Pilgrims, with the help of the Pacific Legal Foundation (PLF) sued the NPS last fall after being unable to use the road to their property all summer. A federal judge in Anchorage ruled against the family, and PLF took the case to the 9th Circuit Court. According to Russell Brooks, who is handling the case, the court will likely not hear the case until next August. Of the NPS offer of a permit, Brooks said, "It is way too little and far too late in the winter season to do the Pilgrims much good."

Governor Murkowski asks for Investigation into alleged NPS misdeeds

BY SUSAN SMITH

Governor Frank Murkowski has asked Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton to launch an investigation into allegations that the National Park Service (NPS) has shown "...various patterns of misbehavior and abuse, including unreasonable right-of-way closures and restrictions; undue delays in the issuance of permits; and intimidation, harassment, and selective law enforcement..." in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park (WRST).

This comes in response to efforts of Residents Of the Wrangells (ROW) to assemble testimonials from residents of the park who are experiencing problems, telling their own stories in their own words, documenting cases of inappropriate behavior. We soon became aware of many past and present cases of questionable NPS actions in our area. Other grievances involve permit fee requirements for inholders, aggressive land acquisition, denial of access for lakefront properties, intimidation of residents and hunters, airplane harassment, crippling impact study requirements, litigation through entrapment, and other issues.

We received a copy of a letter written on April 15 by Governor Frank Murkowski to Secretary Norton. Members of ROW and land rights advocates across the state and nation are encouraged by its content.

Governor Murkowski opens with the following paragraph:

"I am writing to apprise you of very troubling reports that I have received from literally dozens of Alaskans, many of whom are inholders within the WRST, about their treatment at the hands of the NPS. If these reports of arbitrary and

sometimes abusive behavior are accurate, they raise serious questions about the Park Service's implementation of ANILCA, particularly sections 1110(a) and (b). Accordingly, I respectfully request that you direct an immediate investigation of these claims for the purpose of instituting remedial measures, where necessary." He forwarded a copy of the ROW packet with his letter.

The governor goes on to say that "there are compelling reasons to provide further direction to Park Service personnel to guide their implementation of the access provisions of ANILCA." He calls for additional guidance for Park personnel who administer those provisions with respect to the following areas:

1. Notification of when and what type of access is required.
2. A standardized procedure specifically relating to access to inholdings.
3. Time limits for processing applications.
4. Further guidance for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance, including situations where no environmental assessment or impact study is necessary, including a "de minimus Categorical Exclusion" for access to inholdings.
5. Guidance concerning the definition of reasonable access.
6. A presumption in favor of the applicant's chosen route.
7. A fast and simple appeals process with the establishment of a group in Alaska to hear access-related appeals.
8. Minimal application and processing fees, or complete elimination of all fees with respect to access to inholdings.
9. A requirement that prior notice be given to inholders before visits by

NPS personnel to their private property and before "low level aircraft overflights," making an effort to avoid behavior that could be "interpreted as intimidating or threatening."

Murkowski reiterated an earlier suggestion that NPS personnel be given special training when coming to Alaska to ensure that they understand the special provisions of ANILCA. He called for the establishment of a formal organization, composed of federal and state officials, and private citizens, to hear grievances and review all decisions concerning reasonable and feasible access.

Members of ROW had an opportunity to meet with Alaska congressional officials, DC staffers, and land rights group representatives in November of 2003. After listening to our grievances, congressional staffers asked us to obtain testimonials from those citizens experiencing problems. Of particular interest were tangible cases of harassment, intimidation, or retaliation, access fees, pressure to sell land to NPS, or denial of access altogether.

ROW began its process to gather these testimonials in earnest. Through letters to ROW members, meetings, the internet, and newspaper articles, we reached out to our community in an effort to document some of these stories. We found many people hesitant to come forward for fear of retaliation or loss of concessionaire permits to do business in the park. After three to four months of hard work, and the willingness of many of our neighbors in the WRST to document their cases, a sizeable packet of personal testimonials, NPS correspondence, and news releases was prepared by ROW for widespread distribution.

In early March of 2004, these packets were sent to our state legislators and their aides, our governor, the House Resource Committee, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, land rights groups, and many Department of the Interior officials, including Secretary Norton. Due to our nation's heightened security measures, our packets went through screening processes before they were actually received about one month later, in early April, by Washington, D.C. officials. ROW members anxiously awaited any feedback that they might generate.

During the same time period, a petition with over two hundred signatures was sponsored and distributed to state officials by the Alaska Land Rights Coalition and ROW, demanding that the state intervene to help residents and users of WRST to protect their ANILCA rights in the face of increased NPS pressure to deny or restrict access.

Not in twenty-four years have we seen such a bold step by an Alaskan official to confront the Department of the Interior on our behalf concerning their enforcement of the ANILCA provisions. Finally, our

struggles may not be case by case, where citizens are forced to litigate individually to protect their own access. Finally, our governor is calling for the establishment of an oversight committee to ensure the protection of our rights; make NPS accountable for its actions; give us an appeals process; screen all NPS access decisions for ANILCA compatibility; and standardize and simplify the access process for inholders. Every resident of the WRST should be encouraged by our state's willingness to help us work toward solutions.

I would like to personally thank Paula Easley with the Alaska Land Rights Coalition and Ray Kreig, Lee Ann Gerhart, and Chuck Cushman with the American Land Rights Association for their willingness to share their unparalleled knowledge in the area of land rights and their valuable assistance in our efforts. A special thanks to Rick and Bonnie Kenyon for their help in assembling and copying reams of documentation for our packet submission, and the members of ROW who worked so hard on this project.

A final thanks to those of you in the community who came forward

to tell your stories. Your efforts have not been in vain. ROW formed during the summer of 2003 when concerned residents and users of the WRST wished to address increasing tensions with the NPS and other state and federal agencies. Since that time, through meetings in McCarthy, Glennallen, and Slana, radio talk shows, the Internet, newspaper articles, and word of mouth, the ROW organization has reached out park-wide to establish membership and listen to other grievances.

I would encourage others who have not yet come forward to document and share their stories with ROW, even now, for future testimonial mail-outs. Now is the time to make our problems known because real hope in settling these issues may finally be on the horizon.

(Susan Smith is Chairperson of the Residents of the Wrangells. Mailing address ROW, Box MXY, McCarthy #63, Glennallen, AK 99588.

Email

residentsofwrangells@yahoo.com.

Web address is <http://mccarthy-kennicott.com/ROW/>

Ron Simpson to conduct special historic tour

BY RON SIMPSON

This is to inform you of a special historic tour I am conducting which will begin and end at the Copper Rail Depot (CRD), Copper Center, Alaska.

All persons interested in being a part of this event need only show up at the orientation at the Copper Rail Depot to sign in. The tour itself is free, but the participants must provide their own transportation, food and lodging. Camping at or near the Kennicott River is one option. For those who prefer overnight accommodations, I have worked with Neil Darish to have a block of rooms made available at Ma Johnson's and at the Lancaster's

Hotel. These will be ten percent off for all those who are signed up as part of the tour.

We will begin with the orientation on Thursday, June 3 at the CRD, tentatively at 6PM. The interested parties must sign up there so I can have a realistic idea of the number who will actually be on tour. We will discuss the elements of the tour and go through a check list for the following morning.

The road trip begins at the CRD on Friday morning at 10AM. Approximately one hour later the group will assemble at Chitina for a historic tour of the old downtown and railroad depot area.

Numerous stops will occur along the route to McCarthy, with the Gilahina trestle stop being the most likely stop for the lunch break.

The informal tour group will be spending two overnights in McCarthy. I will feature slide shows both nights at the lodge.

The actual historic tour of the Kennecott mill site will begin late morning Saturday. Nels Konnerup, who lived and worked at Kennecott and on the aerial tram and in the mine system will accompany the group for this part of the tour.

Kennecott—new major tourist destination?

In a speech to the Alaska Legislature in April, Senator Lisa Murkowski said that she is proposing federal funding for a new federal tourism marketing campaign that would promote 2005 as the year for tourists to visit Alaska's 15 national parks. She also expressed support for a visitor facility at the Kennecott Historic Mine site in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park (WRST) as a new major tourist destination for Alaska.

"While tourism brought \$1.8 billion to Alaska last year, it can still grow," said Murkowski. "We know that 94 percent of our visitors come to see Alaska's national parks."

The \$1.73 million marketing campaign would be conducted for the National Park Service by the Alaska Travel Industry Association. Its goal would be to attract more independent travelers throughout the state and involve both marketing and advertising of the state's parks as attractions.

The Kennecott project would involve renovation of the old Kennecott Company Store. Murkowski hopes to move \$932,748 in federal funding from the currently planned 2006/2007 funding years to Fiscal Year 2005. According to NPS Maintenance Director Will Tipton, they will be able to start the project this summer, doing foundation work.

"The store will be the main visitor contact facility at Kennecott," said WRST Superintendent Gary Candelaria. "The building will house a visitor reception area, public restrooms, exhibit and audio visual space, and offices," Candelaria said.

Senator Murkowski also wants to fund four pull-outs along the McCarthy Road which would have toilet facilities. One of the placement sites will likely be at the proposed Crystalline Hills trailhead and parking area. The other three will likely be at spots identified as potential

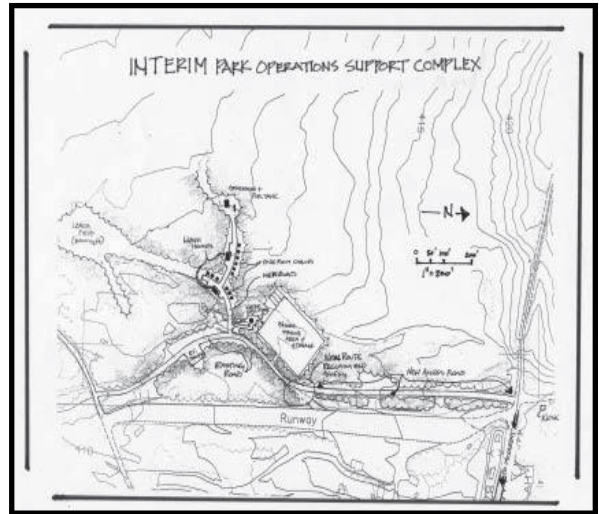
rest stops in the McCarthy Road Scenic Corridor Plan.

"We appreciate the Senator's efforts on behalf of the public in seeking to improve facilities for visitors along the road and once they reach Kennecott," said Candelaria. "We hope for her success in securing these project funds."

The NPS has larger plans for Kennecott in the future. According to Tipton, projects in the Kennecott area for the next 6-8 years amount to an estimated \$15 million. Also planned is a \$2 million dollar facility on the west side of the Kennicott River that would house construction workers and NPS employees. That project is currently underway.

The park service has also asked for \$3.5 - 4.5 million to purchase and refurbish the Hart D Ranch on the Nabesna Road. It could function as employee housing and a campground/visitor center to supplement the visitors center in Copper Center and the Ranger Station at Slana. Senator Murkowski declined to fast-track that money. The park service has been criticized over the past 3 years for expanding beyond their ability to maintain facilities.

In spite of these plans for major infrastructure construction, park spokesman John Quinley downplayed the idea that Kennecott or WRST would become a major tourist destination. "I suspect commercial business decisions throughout the Copper Valley and elsewhere in the world will determine Kennicott's visitor destination future more than the concrete and nails bought by the NPS," said Quinley.



This project is envisioned as a field season support camp for NPS employees temporarily stationed for up to five months at the Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark (NHL) and employees of NPS contractors

Construction has already begun on the two million dollar project which includes:

- 1000 linear feet new gravel road, 20 feet each side of the centerline (0.9 acre)
- Fenced material storage yard (one acre)
- Well site, water line, and water storage tank (0.2 acre)
- Sewage, leach field, and septic tank (0.9 acre)
- Recreational vehicle (RV) parking pad (3 spaces, total 0.6 acre)
- Cabins, twelve units, each 192 square -feet living space
- Shower, kitchen, laundry support building (two units, each 800 SF)
- Building pads for cabins and support buildings (0.14 acre)
- Generator, generator enclosure and 500-gallon capacity fuel tank (0.02 acre)
- Satellite communications station (0.002 acre or 100 square feet)

Audit: Village Safe Water program wasteful

An audit of the Village Safe Water program has found it to be wasteful. According to reporter Joel Gay, writing in the April 18 issue of the ADN Anchorage Daily News, "Lax oversight by state engineers in a \$35 million rural water and sewer construction program has created an atmosphere of wasteful spending, questionable purchasing and sloppy bookkeeping, a new legislative audit says."

McCarthy area residents won't be surprised by the news. Village Safe Water (VSW) came to McCarthy a few years back, but didn't stay long. A \$50,000 grant produced a plan that was so grandiose that residents rejected it with little dispute. Instead, individuals put in their own wells and sewer systems at a cost a fraction of what VSW proposed.

The recent audit found that in one case, engineers allowed an on-site construction manager to pay himself \$206,000 for eight months of work and to hire his wife as project bookkeeper. Other managers signed paychecks and purchased supplies with no review by engineers in the program, which is part of the Department of Environmental Conservation.

The audit suggests that the state's portion of the combined state and federal \$80 million rural sanitation program be moved into the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. The road-

building agency is better suited than DEC to manage multimillion-dollar projects, it says.

"Because it's a hybrid between a state-run construction project and a grant to the community, they've taken a very interesting approach to make Village Safe Water projects successful," said Legislative Audit Director Patricia Davidson. "Our concerns are that the typical financial controls you would find on a state-run project aren't there."

The audit was requested by Sen. Lyda Green, R-Wasilla. After reviewing aspects of 20 of the 35 projects done in 2002, auditors found examples of what they considered wasteful spending, ethical lapses and faulty tax records, often in contradiction of DEC policies.

As an example of wasteful spending, Davidson cited DEC's oversight of projects in the Homer-area communities of Nikolaevsk and Voznesenka, and in Nulato, a village on the Yukon River.

The three communities hired the same person, Ed Maurice of Soldotna, to manage their projects. Over eight months, Maurice claimed \$197,000 in wages, including 10 straight weeks in which his time cards totaled exactly 110 hours a week.

During the same period, Maurice was paid \$3,200 in additional consulting fees, \$5,710 in per diem,

\$3,165 for gasoline, \$6,500 to rent a house for himself and his crew and nearly \$5,000 to furnish it -- a total of \$224,253, according to the audit report.

DEC engineers approved all the expenses.

Maurice hired his wife as bookkeeper, and, for 11 weeks in a row, signed time cards for 90 to 96 hours a week. He also rented a house from the president of the community council that had hired him.

DEC engineers signed off on the checks.

Gay reports that, while acknowledging that the audit illustrated some shortcomings, DEC Commissioner Ernesta Ballard called most of the report's recommendations "groundless" because it focused on one or two unusual situations.

He also reports that, "As a result of the audit, DEC has tightened several policies and procedures, Easton said. Project supervisors and crew members are now limited to working 72 hours a week. Nepotism rules prevent on-site managers from hiring their wives or other close relatives, he said. A new procurement and contracting officer position will be created."

"First, they [Nazis] came for the Jews. I was silent. I was not a Jew. Then they came for the Communists. I was silent. I was not a Communist. Then they came for the trade unionists. I was silent. I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for me. There was no one left to speak for me." (Martin Niemoller, given credit for a quotation in *The Harper Religious and Inspirational Quotation Companion*, ed. Margaret Pepper (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 429 -as cited on page 44, note 17, of *Religious Cleansing in the American Republic*, by Keith A. Fornier, Copyright 1993, by Liberty, Life, and Family Publications.

Truth is the strongest, most stable force in the Universe. TRUTH doesn't bend to the will of tyrants. - Gordon Wayne Watts

"I'm a member of no organized party. I'm a Democrat." —Will Rogers

Feds eye Long Lake property

Proposal could result in over 1,000 acres being added to park

Three miles from the scenic Glacier Bay National Park lies the small community of Gustavus. This community of about 450 residents get their power from Gustavus Electric Company, which is owned by Dick Levitt. Dick has been trying to switch from Diesel power to hydro for 20 years.

The problem is, the fast-flowing stream that would be used for the project lies just within the boundaries of Glacier Bay. Supplying cheap, eco-friendly power to nearby communities does not fall within the purposes of National Parks. So, in order to proceed with the project there would need to be a land exchange between the State of Alaska, who would permit the project, and the National Park Service.

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 Wrangell-St. Elias National Park (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.

Levitt said his hydro project needs only 300 acres. However, in 1998 Congress passed a special law authorizing a small land exchange to allow the state to trade 1,145 acres of its lands and gain access to the site.

"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.

Whether the hydro project is ever approved remains to be seen.

Since the hydro project would replace diesel generation with earth-friendly hydro power, people expected the environmental groups as well as the Park Service to support the project. Not so.

Jack Hession, the Sierra Club's senior representative in Alaska, said damming rivers in national parks is where his organization draws the line, even though the proposed Falls Creek dam is small.

Hession went on to say the Sierra Club also opposes minor boundary changes and small land exchanges on principle. One small

boundary change usually leads to others to the point where parks are nibbled away in increments, he said.

There's also been a lot of work on environmental issues, including an Environmental Assessment and a formal Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Another issue that has hindered the project are 700 Dolly Varden trout. Levitt said that until recently state fish and game biologists refused to consider off-site mitigation to compensate for any loss of trout. Off-site mitigation, which typically involves improvement of fish habitat elsewhere, is routinely done by federal agencies.

With a new state administration in Juneau, fish and game officials are now willing to discuss mitigation for the trout, he said. The NPS has been steadily adding lands to WRST ever since its inception in 1980—some 21,000 acres to date. Some have been large tracts purchased from or donated by mining concerns who felt they could no longer operate under park regulations. Recently the trend has been towards purchasing very small inholdings—sometimes less than one-fifth acre—from private landowners.

So, although National Parks cannot shrink, even by 300 acres for a worthwhile earth-friendly energy project, apparently they can grow to any size—limited only by the taxpayers' willingness to finance the growth.

"To live content with small means; to seek elegance rather than luxury, and refinement rather than fashion; to be worthy, not respectable, and wealthy, not, rich; to listen to stars and birds, babes and sages, with open heart; to study hard; to think quietly, act frankly, talk gently, await occasions, hurry never; in a word, to let the spiritual, unbidden and unconscious, grow up through the common — this is my symphony." — William Henry Channing

McCarthy airport gets emergency lighting



Photo courtesy Carl Siebe

Lighting trailer can be pulled by an ATV or snowmachine.

The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) brought a nifty set of emergency airport lights to McCarthy this past March. Although they are not permanently installed, local residents have volunteered to set the lights out along the McCarthy Airport runway if the need arises.

According to Carl Siebe, who brought the lights to McCarthy and trained several “locals,” DOT&PF tries to light all of the state runways that meet the minimum criteria of at least 2,500 feet long, no obstructions or hazards to night flight, and

where the community has power. McCarthy is not lighted because there is no commercial power.

Senator Stevens expressed a desire for every community in Alaska to have some type of aircraft night landing capability after hearing from a constituent about not being able to transport an elderly cardiac patient from a community. The Senator backed up this up with appropriations in the FY02, FY03, and FY04 Federal budgets. The McCarthy portable lights were funded from the FY03 budget.

The lights are called Cold Cathode, and are a military light, adapted for civilian use. Each light has its own rechargeable 12 volt lead-acid gel battery that will provide about 8 hours of light when fully charged. The bulbs should last for 50,000 hours. The batteries have a life expectancy of about 5 years. Replacement batteries currently cost about \$35 and can be shipped by US Mail.

Seven communities, including McCarthy, meet the safety criteria for runway lighting, but do not have power for conventional runway lights. The decision was made to deploy enough portable lights to light 3,000 feet of runway. The system is contained in an ATV trailer and includes the lights, a charging system (that still needs external power) and laser lights to assist in laying out the lights in a straight line.

In McCarthy, the lights will be stored in the DOT snow removal equipment building at the airport, and will be charged periodically when the small DOT generator is run. The local emergency response volunteers will know where a key to the building is located. Deployment of the lights in an emergency takes about 30 minutes.

A volunteer program is being discussed to insure that someone will have access to the lights at all times.

*“The less government we have, the better — the fewer laws, and the less confided power.”—
Ralph Waldo Emerson*

“[O]nly impeachment will teach the rogue judiciary that its place is below, not above, state and Federal constitutions.” —Joseph Sobran

“Liberty has never come from the government. Liberty has always come from the subjects of the government. The history of government is a history of resistance. The history of liberty is the history of the limitation of government, not the increase of it.” —Woodrow Wilson

“[T]he secret of my success is that at an early age I discovered I was not God.” —Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr

Dog Days are here again!

BY BONNIE KENYON

McCarthy: – For the third year in a row, McCarthy area neighbors turned out in record numbers, filling downtown McCarthy, and bearing their favorite dogs for another exciting “McCarthy Sprint!” Participant Kurt Smith estimates 60 people with half that many in dog power showed up for this year’s event.

On March 13th at 11:35 a.m. Natalie Bay, co-ordinator and time-keeper, assigned Mark Vail the job of drawing names for positions in the Three Dog (or less) Dog Sled race. Five local mushers – Jeremy Keller, Julie Miller, Ally Keller, Tessa Bay, Kelsey Smith – each departed from the starting point in front of the McCarthy Lodge one minute apart. The race course was 2 miles round trip. The winner this year was Jeremy with 12 minutes, beating his last year first place time by 30 seconds. Ally and Tessa tied for second place. All participants completed the course, beating the finishing times of last year. It was



WSEN staff photo

Race time-keeper Natalie Bay clocks winner Jeremy Keller at the finish line.

apparent our local mushers have been taking advantage of the good snow conditions this year.

The second event was the One Dog Weight Pull. Entrants were: Jeremy Keller, Ally Keller, Kurt Smith, Julie Miller, Stacie Miller and Kevin Smith. The first round of “weight” was Jubal, Hannah and David Rowland. All entrants made the finish line. The second round added another body for weight – Tessa Bay. All mushers scratched but Ally Keller who won hands down! (It could be the dog bone that volunteer George Cebula gave Ally’s dog Bona at the beginning of the festivities. Please don’t tell anyone I told you.)

The Skijour with one or two dogs produced 6 skiers and 1 snowboarder: Keith Rowland, Kaleb Rowland, Don Welty, Nancy Cook, Tessa Bay, Kevin Smith and David Rowland (snowboard). The course for this

race was ½ the distance of the dog race. David (who is one-focused 10 year old) won in spite of the two-dog team who attempted to pass him, each dog going around him in opposite directions. He stayed upright with his eye on the finish line. Congratulations, David, for winning this year’s Skijour! Don Welty and Nancy Cook tied for second place.

As Nancy was waiting her turn, she informed me how hard she worked just to make the McCarthy Sprint in time to join in on this race. Delayed a night in a blizzard at Paxson and stuck in a glacier at Mile 33 of the McCarthy Road the day of the race didn’t deter her one iota. Come to find out, Nancy and her dog Saami participated in a 3.6 mile Skijour race in Fairbanks three days earlier, breaking the record with her 14.08 minute finish time! Nancy, you get the prize for traveling the farthest and experiencing the most challenges on the way.

A community potluck followed the races. Everyone wholeheartedly participated in this event!



WSEN staff photo

Skijour contestant Keith Rowland was beat by son David, age 10.

(FOR COPPER BASIN RESIDENTS ONLY)
STATE OF ALASKA – DIVISION OF FORESTRY
VALDEZ / COPPER RIVER AREA
Burn Permit Instructions

The burn permit shown can be validated by following these steps:

1. Fill in the location of the property where burning will occur.
2. Sign in space provided for permittee signature.

3. Call the Division of Forestry at **822-5536** to obtain permit number, name of issuing officer, and any current burning stipulations that may be in effect.

You must call Forestry Dispatch at 822-5536 each day before burning!

CLASS A BURNING PERMIT NO. _____

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

Burning is authorized subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Construct a firebreak 15 feet wide to mineral soil around pile. For lawns / fields, mow, rake, and wet down a 10 foot perimeter. DO NOT burn within 25 feet of woods, structures, or other flammable materials.
2. Have a minimum of one adult in attendance at all times while burning.
3. Have a shovel / rake for each person, and have a charged water hose capable of reaching the entire burn area. In lieu of a hose, a wet gunny sack and a minimum of one 5-gallon container of water for each person can be used.
4. Burn with winds less than 5 mph only!
5. Fires must be completely extinguished before attendee leaves the immediate premises.
6. The burning of any material which creates black smoke is prohibited.

Call D.E.C. at 835-4698 for further information in reference to D.E.C. regulation 18 AAC 50.030.

This permit is issued under the authority of AS 41.15.050 and 41.15.060 of the Public Resources Statutes governing the establishments of fire seasons and the regulating of burning permits. This permit may be modified, suspended, or revoked at any time.

The permittee shall have this permit in their possession at all times when burning and shall display it upon request from any duly authorized agent of the commissioner.

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

Willful or negligent disregard of the terms of this permit constitutes an illegal act and makes you criminally liable. This permit does not relieve the permittee from responsibility for fire damage.

**THIS PERMIT IS GOOD THROUGH
SEPTEMBER 30, 2004**

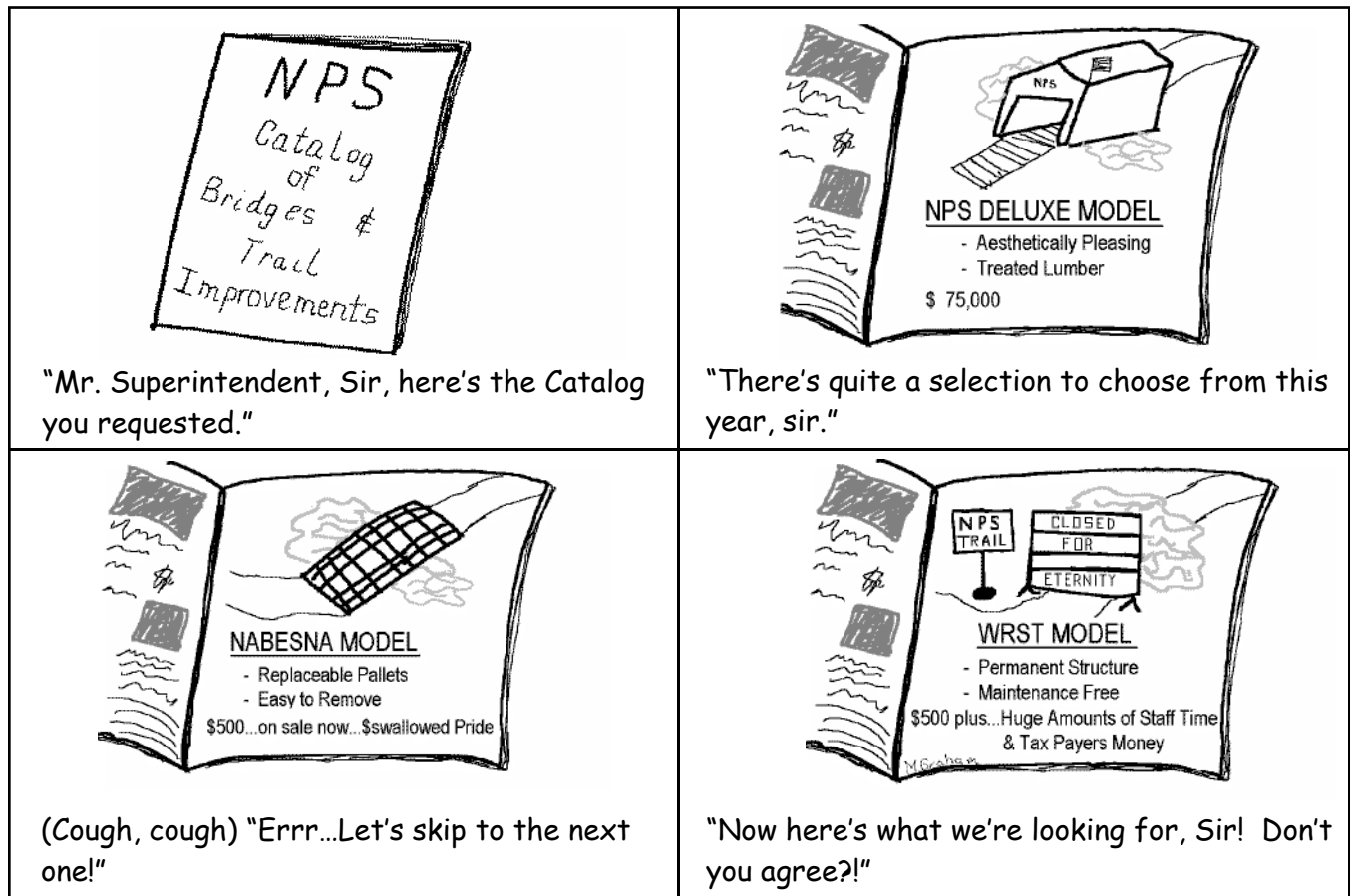
DATE ISSUED _____

PERMITTEE SIGNATURE: _____

ISSUED BY: _____

ISSUING AGENCY: _____

**ALASKA DIVISION OF FORESTRY-VCRA
PHONE: (907) 822-5536
FOREST PROTECTION AREA: VALDEZ /
COPPER RIVER. THIS PERMIT IS NOT
VALID WITHOUT PERMIT NUMBER,
NAME OF ISSUING OFFICER, AND
PERMITTEE SIGNATURE. PERMIT IS
NONTRANSFERABLE AND IS REQUIRED
FROM MAY 1, TO SEPTEMBER 30,
ANNUALLY.**



Cartoon by Marnie Graham—Copper Center, AK

Kenny Lake Volunteer Fire Department loses dedicated Volunteer

The Kenny Lake Volunteer Fire Department lost their most dedicated volunteer to a vehicle crash on Sunday, April 18th.

Assistant Chief Alpine Kameroff, 36, joined the Kenny Lake Volunteer Fire Department in 1987. Assistant Chief Kameroff loved fighting fire and was always happiest when on the fire scene. Alpine was also very active as a wildland firefighter for the Division of Forestry where he assisted Hot Shot crews, helitack operations and many other roles on fires. Every summer dur-

ing many of the big fires in Alaska and throughout the nation, Alpine made his presence known.

His fellow volunteers spoke very highly of Assistant Chief Kameroff. They felt he was the most dedicated and loyal volunteer on the department. He always responded when available, never backing down to a challenge on an emergency scene. Alpine had a physical disability, which impaired him in speech and movement and even with that he would usually outwork most around him. He never used it as an excuse

to shirk work and disliked it when people treated him differently.

Though his family was from the Lower Kalskag area, Assistant Chief Kameroff was born at the Alpine Inn (his namesake) at Mile 61 of the Glenn Highway. He was raised in the Kenny Lake area since birth.

Many will miss Assistant Chief Kameroff. Those that fought fire with him every season whether on wildland fires or structure fires but most especially his family and the members of the Kenny Lake Fire Department.

CLASSIFIED

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

SUBSCRIBE: Copper Valley Bi-Weekly \$15/yr. HC Box 229, Copper Center AK 99573 (907)822-3927

Virginia Lee Kenyon 1922-2004

Virginia Kenyon, 81, was born in Flint, Michigan on November 9, 1922, and died Wednesday, April 14, 2004, at Hospice Care Center of Port Orange, Florida.

In 1965 Virginia, husband Carl, and son Rick Kenyon moved from Waterford, Michigan, to Daytona Beach, Florida. Virginia was a licensed ham radio operator and an artist. For many years she and Carl traveled north during the summer months to their cabin in Upper Peninsula Michigan near the small town of Paradise where Virginia would spend much of her free time walking the shores of Lake Superior hunting and collecting agates.

Her favorite past time when at their home in South Daytona was making the garage sale circuits on Fridays and Saturdays. Carl made sure their destinations were strategically mapped out. Virginia was the co-pilot!

Getting her General class license for ham radio was a challenge for Virginia. Learning Morse code seemed impossible at first, but she was highly motivated. Her only son, Rick Kenyon Sr. and family had moved to McCarthy in 1977 and, at that time, there were no phones – only a weekly mail plane to carry communication between Florida and Alaska. Rick soon convinced “mom and dad” to join him and his family in learning the necessary skills so they could all stay in contact. Virginia took up the challenge and succeeded with flying colors.

Carl and Virginia made 5 road trips to Alaska either in their motorhome or camper. When Rick, Bonnie and Rick Jr. moved to their present location in the McCarthy area summer of ‘78, Carl and Virginia were on hand to be an active part of the log-peeling crew. On one of their trips north while mind-ing the homestead while the rest of

the family attended a ham radio picnic near Anchorage, Carl was faced with a persistently pesky black bear. He felt compelled to dispatch the bear. Virginia knew her son would want the meat so she, for the first time in her life, skinned the bear out and the meat was ready for canning by the time the rest of the family returned home.

Carl and Virginia were married for 62 years – a wonderful testimony to faithfulness. Virginia is survived by son and daughter-in-law, Rick and Bonnie Kenyon, McCarthy, AK; two sisters, Hazel Winglemire and Mary Swartz, both of Holly, MI; grandson and wife, Rick and Maria Kenyon, Jr. Donalsonville, GA and four great-grandchildren, Jonathan, Stephen, Joshua and Caleb.

Funeral services were held in Port Orange, Florida, on April 19th.

Helen C. Cebula 1911-2004

A funeral Mass was celebrated at 10a.m. on Easter Monday at St. John Catholic Church in Campbell, Ohio for Helen C. Cebula, 92, of Campbell, who passed away Sunday evening, April 4, at St. Elizabeth Health Center.

She was born May 28, 1911 in Star Junction, PA., and lived most of her life in Campbell.

Her husband, George G. Cebula, whom she married June 16, 1936, passed away June 10, 1973.

Helen is survived by four sons, George Cebula II of McCarthy, AK., Thomas D. (Lauretta) Cebula of Campbell, Theodore R. (Virginia) Cebula of Milwaukee and Raymond J. (Sondra) Cebula of New Wilmington, PA.; eight grandchildren, Julie (Jack) White, Beth Anne (Ernest)

Purnsley, Jane V., Suzanne M. and Leslie A. Cebula, Sharon (David) Wunschel, and Michael G. and Stephen T. Cebula; and two great grand children.

Besides her husband, she was preceded in death by her parents; a sister; and three brothers.

THE CHITINA LEADER

May 1912 June

HAPPENINGS ABOUT TOWN

Good progress is being made replacing the Chitina bridge. Floating ice and boulders in the river bed add to the difficulty of driving the piles, but if everything goes as well as is expected there will be a train over the bridge Monday.

Chitina hasn't seen rain or snow for two months. Sunshine all the time and just enuf wind to keep down the mosquitoes, which are already numerous in the woods about here.

There were 860 guests registered at the Chitina Hotel since the first of the year. Stop there and you'll meet your friends.

Dr. C. F. Montgomery, who recently left Ruby, is now located in Chitina. He has had a wide experience in various leading hospitals and is strongly endorsed by prominent people. He is capable and conscientious and will give his clients a square deal. It is to be hoped he can remain, for such accidents as the collapse of the Chitina tunnel show the need of a doctor nearer than Cordova or Kennecott.

May 4, 1912

REPORT FROM BLACKBURN

The success of the expedition to Mount Blackburn, which started from Kennecott in the early morning of April 22, is still a grave question. The projector, Miss Dora Keen, is not disheartened and still remains hopeful of ultimate success. Three of her men returned to Kennecott this morning, and they claim that when they left a fierce storm was raging and that it was altogether improbable for the party to reach the summit. These men bring the first message that has been received since the expedition left. That Miss Keen was not discouraged when part of her expedition turned back is evident from a message which she sent by them, for publication, and which was telephoned in from Kennecott this morning. It is as follows: "From Crevice Gap, eight thousand seven hundred feet on Mount Blackburn. Reached twelve thousand seven hundred feet April thirtieth. All difficulties overcome. Am preparing for summit. Was but one day distant when snowbound for four days. Driven down to present camp for food. Waiting for better weather. Success sure if weather improves. All well and safe. DORA KEEN."

LOCAL JOTTINGS

Fishing is good in Lake Chitina now and some record catches are being made. Ask Johnnie Nelson.

KENNECOTT NOTES

Kennecott, May 8, 1912. The crusher plant and concentrator mills being built by the Kennecott Mines Company are about completed. The machines installed are the most up-to-date in America. Heretofore the ore has been sacked and shipped just as it came from the mine. These mills will be in operation day and night. Kennecott is certainly a prosperous and busy center.

E. F. Gray, the big mine operator, passed through our town this morning with a large pack train of horses taking supplies over Kennecott Glacier to his mining properties, where active work is to begin at once.

Mrs. Archie Hancock came in on today's train to join her husband, who is master mechanic for the Kennecott Mines Company.

May 11, 1912

INTERIOR MINING NEWS

Nizina River, May 10.

The operators and miners who are working in a prosperous section of the country tributary to the Nizina River have an added convenience in a recent roadhouse, store and ferry that has been established by the Chititu Trading Company. It is located at the safest

ford on the Nizina River between May Creek and Chititu Creek, on the direct road to George Max Esterly's hydraulic placer works. They are six and a half miles up the creek and the Nizina post office is eight miles up the Chititu Creek. About nine and a half miles up Chititu and Rex Creek are located the Rex Alaska Mining Company's plant under the management of Everett Brooks. There are a number of other smaller operators among them being Frank Hoffman, the former marshal of Valdez.

Five miles up the Nizina we find the mouth of Dan Creek, and a mile and a half up Dan Creek is the Dan Creek Mining Company's outfit under the able management of Howard Birch, who will have a force of about 10 men (Esterly 50 or 55 men, and Brooks 18 or 20 men) when sluicing begins.

About a mile and three quarters up Dan and Boulder Creek is Howard Foster, superintendent of the Westover Copper Properties, which will be heard of in the near future. The samples which he and his wife displayed were very fine. He has six men now employed, who have been working all winter.

Returning now to the mouth of Dan Creek, we go up the Nizina about two miles and find the Chititone. This is the best route over to the head of the White

River country and we are in the direct survey of the contemplated extension of the railroad up over Scolai Pass.

The mail carrier visits us twice a month on his way to the Nizina post office. We are about 13 miles east, across the river from McCarthy station.

Up the Chitistone is a good sheep country, also over to the head of the Chitina 18 or 20 miles from here. Hunting parties can be furnished with a camp outfit, on reasonable time notice, and a pack train and guides who will guarantee to show them the sheep at reasonable rates. There are plenty of mountain goat as well. The streams emptying into the Nizina River abound in trout and grayling.

May 18, 1912

AMERICAN FLAG ON BLACKBURN

Miss Dora Keen, of Philadelphia, has succeeded in an accomplishment that she twice crossed the continent to achieve. She ascended Mount Blackburn and planted the American flag upon its summit of over 16,000 feet. She made the first attempt last August, without success. On her second expedition she set forth from Kennecott on April 22, and just four weeks later on May 19, the residents of Kennecott witnessed her triumph as they saw the stars and stripes floating from the icy peak beyond. It was a daring achievement that bespeaks an intrepid spirit in a courageous undertaking. The party endured many hardships, and at one time they were driven back four thousand feet by a severe storm. But they plodded on, risking life and limb, until finally they were rewarded in a victorious achievement of what

they had set out to do. The party returned to Kennecott today, where most of them reside. Miss Keen will likely return to Cordova on Tuesday's train.

May 25, 1912

HAPPENING ABOUT TOWN

Those registered at the Chitina Hotel this week are F. J. Bingham, C. B. Walking, W. Smith, G. A. Bigelow, C. W. Bigelow, Miss Emma Bigelow, William T. Soule, S. H. Lambert, Mrs. Cora Kingston, O. L. Larson, Jake Nefsted, R. H. Moore, H. W. Arnold, E. J. Kilborn, A. G. Jaffa, W. R. Austin, L. L. Butler.

Miss E. Nickell has finished her term of school here and is visiting with Mrs. Forrester at Strelna. Her work has been a very decided success and pupils and parents are sorry she is not going to teach here next winter. Her many friends hope she will remain in Chitina.

Fred M. Schaupp is smiling broadly these days over the information he has received that he is the father of a fine little daughter. Mrs. Schaupp is at her home in California.

Some of the gardens are doing well. Mr. Gillman seems to have the best success and is getting stuff from it for the table now. Tibbs has the business down to a science.

Jim Wilson, the freighter, brought down a bunch of horses from Copper Center, which Billy Soule will use taking in the Bigelow outfit.

Tools left lying around were badly rusted by the sulphur in the atmosphere from the recent eruption of Mount Katmai.

There is a good prospect for a much-needed road into the Kotsina district.

Business conditions are much better than at this time last year.

A great deal of new work is being done at Kennecott. Manager Seagrave has started a crew of men on the Jumbo and all this season will keep a force of men busy opening up the property. The concentrator is working night and day and the output is increasing every week. At the present rate of production Bonanza will soon be putting out three quarters of a million dollars a month in copper. Manager Seagrave wired to Cordova this morning for thirty laborers to go out on next train.

BIG BODY COPPER ORE LOCATED ON NUGGET CREEK

It is reported on good authority that Ole Berg has struck a big body of rich copper ore on Nugget Creek, in the Kuskulana district. Berg bonded this property last winter to a large company and is now superintending the development for them. This has long been considered one of the most promising prospects in the country and according to reports will now undoubtedly become a big mine.

FORCE OF 150 MEN IS SHORTLY TO BE INCREASED

The Copper River Railway has at present four work trains taking gravel from the Kuskulana pit, which is being used in ballasting on the Chitina branch. The company is now employing 450 men, and Supt. Geiger hopes to increase this force materially during the next few weeks.

FIRST SHIPMENT OF CONCENTRATES LAST WEEK

The first consignment of copper concentrates ever produced in Alaska was shipped from the Kennecott Mines concentrator on last Wednesday. It assays 65 per cent in copper and 18 ounces of silver to the town. Oil is being installed as fuel and the concentrator is running night and day.

This first shipment of concentrates, which will leave here for Tacoma on the first boat, marks a new epoch in the history of copper mining in Alaska. Arrangements are being made so as to work the mill all the year round, and a large force of men will find employment. Bonanza keeps on increasing its output of low grade all the time. It should be noted here that the low grade runs over 25 per cent and this would be counted phenomenal ore in any other part of the world.

It will be only a short time now until the Copper River district takes its place as the greatest copper section in the world.

A lot of work is being delayed at the present time owing to a shortage of labor. This is true of all the Kennecott mines and the Nizina mining district. George Max Esterly took all the surplus labor from Chitina and is still short-handed. There are a number of men going out to the Bonanza on the next train from here, but there are not enough available men to fill all the jobs.

June 29

Bark beetles take Connecticut-size bite out of Alaska

An insect smaller than Ed Berg's thumbnail uprooted he and his wife Sara.

Swarms of spruce bark beetles killed most of the centuries-old spruce trees surrounding the Bergs' former home on East End Road in Homer in the late 1990s. After the beetles denuded their land, the Bergs moved into downtown Homer.

"Ninety-five percent of the trees on our two properties died," Ed Berg said. "After we clearcut the dead trees so they wouldn't fall on the house, we lost the privacy of the place because suddenly the house was visible from the road and we had all the road noise."

Berg is an ecologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service office in Soldotna who recently attended a conference on the spruce bark beetle in Homer, where the bark beetle hit hardest during what many scientists call the worst outbreak in North America's history. A few dozen scientists met on the Homer Spit to share their findings on the tiny creature that has changed the landscape of the Kenai Peninsula and much of southcentral Alaska, including the Anchorage area and the Copper River basin.

Berg presented a study in which he compared beetle outbreaks on the Kenai Peninsula to those in the Yukon Territory near Kluane National Park. He found that spruce bark beetles attacked white and Lutz

spruce (a hybrid between white and Sitka spruce), and to a lesser degree Sitka spruce, an average of every 50 years on the Kenai Peninsula.

Beetles are nothing new; Berg pointed out that in 1899 members of the Harriman Expedition had described large patches of dead trees on the southern end of the Kenai Peninsula, and trees preserved in the soil of a Fairbanks hillside show that the beetles were in the Interior thousands of years ago. Though beetles have long attacked the spruce of Alaska, the latest outbreak was Biblical in scale. Why?

A long run of warmer temperatures, Berg said. Though the Kenai Peninsula has experienced warm summers many times during the past century, the warmth "really shifted into overdrive" from 1987 to 1997. Without cool, wet summers to knock down bark beetle populations, millions of beetles flew from tree to tree each spring, boring into the bark of spruce trees and laying eggs. When the eggs hatched, larvae grubs girdled the trees from within by feeding on the sugary inner bark, known as phloem. The result was an area the size of Connecticut in which spruce trees died en masse, giving the forest ecosystem a makeover from which it won't soon recover. Now, most of the beetles are gone, but not because things have cooled down.

"Conditions are still warm here, but they've eaten themselves out of house and home," Berg said.

Bark beetles have eaten Alaska spruce for centuries, but the recent outbreak was of a magnitude so large that forest managers at the conference agreed they could do little but watch and salvage dead trees for wood chips or firewood.

Though the bark beetles ravaged the Kenai Peninsula and southcentral Alaska, the forests there are not devoid of spruce trees; the beetles chose larger, older trees, and did not kill younger, pole-sized spruce. Those smaller trees are now benefiting from the lack of competition, and mature spruce forests will someday return, Berg said, as will the spruce bark beetle.

A lesson to remember is that after two or more consecutive warm summers, bark beetles on the Kenai Peninsula attacked in large numbers, Berg said. Knowing that, forest managers might be able to anticipate an outbreak and plan tree harvests ahead of the beetles or try preventative measures that might work on small outbreaks, such as tree thinning, pruning, setting out hormone traps for beetles, and getting rid of piles of logs that attract beetles.

This column is provided as a public service by the Geophysical Institute, University of Alaska Fairbanks, in cooperation with the UAF research community. Ned Rozell is a science writer at the institute. He can be reached by e-mail at nrozell@gi.alaska.edu.

"The single most prevalent form of child abuse in this country is the act of sending a child to a government school. We worry incessantly about the separation of church and state. We would do well to devote half as much attention to the separation of government and education." —Neal Boortz

"People hate those who make them feel their own inferiority." —Lord Philip Dormer Stanhope Chesterfield

A Thank You to McCarthyites

BY SHAWN OLSON—BELLINGHAM, WA

Here's a quick note to say thanks to those in McCarthy who helped me out during my February research visit. You were wonderful! From snowmobile transportation, to cups of tea and delicious dinners, to lessons on ecology and geology out in the woods, I received warmth and neighborly offers from many.

Over the last fall and winter, I have been helping to produce an introductory guidebook for seasonal employees of local businesses in the Kennicott Valley. In McCarthy, I met with locals who read and commented on the first draft of the guidebook. Thanks to everyone who took the time to read this long document. I was impressed by the amount of valuable, thorough feedback I received.

Two and a half winter weeks in the Wrangells was an adventure few from my hometown get to experience. In Bellingham, as in most places in the lower 48, life necessities are as accessible as the minuscule effort it takes to buy groceries, turn on the hot water tap, switch on the heater... In McCarthy, I was surprised by the amount of effort I expended each day just to stay warm, communicate, eat, and get around. Between chopping wood, building fires, hauling water from Clear Creek on my little red plastic sled, heating water for washing, and skiing out to meet with locals, there was significantly less time than I had anticipated for studying and working inside.

I spent long hours alone, skiing up and down the glacier edge, the Nizina and McCarthy roads, and the Kennicott River, looking at animal tracks and beetled sections of forest and river channels. I quickly learned some essential winter lessons.

One: DO NOT take skis off while resting for lunch on the snow, or for

ANY reason other than there being something solid to step on.

Two: Not all snow-machine paths qualify as solid ground.

Three: DO NOT fall while skiing—falling, or rather, getting back up, is a very hot, sweaty, and exhausting (though humorous) ordeal.

Four: Puny cross country skis (such as I had) do not make turns well, and on the downhill slope a falling action is necessary if stopping is desirable.

Five: Stopping is not desirable if there is an uphill in the near distance.

Six: Crashing at the bottom of the uphill is even less desirable.

I skied somewhere each day—whether to visit with someone, get water, or explore. Perhaps this is why I learned these...er...“lessons” so well. In fact, my introduction to cross country skiing in McCarthy occurred on the very first day of my visit. I had just hopped out of the mail plane and was organizing myself and my gear in preparation for hauling it all to the Herben cabin, where I was staying in McCarthy. A man came over who introduced himself as Pilgrim and asked me if I wanted a ride, indicating his children who were standing a ways off with a couple of snow-machines.

I looked at them, and looked at my heavy duffel bag and food boxes, and without a second thought said “sure.” At once, the family descended upon my gear pile, whisking everything away effortlessly to the stow racks on the machines. They waited until I had my skis on, then tossed me a rope and we were off to McCarthy, me, splay-footed and hunched over, in tow. We went fast. My lesson? Just don't fall. Period.

I had many more adventures, only some a result of skiing—others involving territorial moose, encountering overflow on river crossings,

and getting startled out of my skin by flapping spruce grouse in the forest. I skijoured with Mark Vail behind two of his dogs, and became enlightened as to the true meaning of “out of control” (my skiing, not his dogs). With Dave, Marie, and Leath, I skied from May Creek to the abandoned Chititu camp and back in one day—a 12 hour trip—and never wanted to see skis again. I broke trail through deep snow to a beaver pond off the Nizina Road, and realized that it really can take more than an hour to go less than a mile. Well, I guess most of my stories actually do involve skiing...

It's fairly easy to tell stories of my adventures and tribulations to folks back home. They are easy stories to understand, and they are funny. Much harder is describing what I experienced, socially, in McCarthy. Constant invitations for tea and dinner. Abundant offers for water, wood, snow-machine transportation, and “if you need anything...” No one passed by me without stopping to chat. It could be that I was new, and was only visiting for a short period of time, but I was left with the impression that, somehow or another, people in McCarthy were looking out for each other. That felt good.

Thanks to everyone. My experience in McCarthy was enriched by your help and by your company.

Special thanks to Neil Darish, Doug Miller, Mark Vail, Rick and Bonnie Kenyon, Kelly and Natalie Bay, Rick Jurick, Ed LaChapelle, Jim and Audrey Edwards, Dianne Milliard, Jason Lobo and Beth, Stephens and Tamara Harper, Gary Green, Ralph and Linda Lohse, Marie and Dave, Pilgrim family, Jeremy Cohen and George Cebula.

Wrangell Mountains Center Prepares for its 25th Season

BY ROB TERWILLIGER

(EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WRANGELL MOUNTAINS CENTER)

The Wrangell Mountains Center is a private non-profit institute dedicated to environmental education, research and the arts in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. Although formally incorporated in 1980, our history of running educational programs in McCarthy's Old Hardware Store actually goes back even further, to the early 1970s, when we began inviting college students from universities across the U.S.A. to spend time in the Wrangells backcountry and learn firsthand about the flora, fauna, geology and glaciology of this amazing place. Local folks are long accustomed to seeing these enthusiastic students join the McCarthy community for seven weeks every summer, but in recent years we have added a wide variety of other programs.

Two of our longer running programs are the Wrangell Mountains Writer's Workshop and the Kennicott/McCarthy Teacher's Workshop. Over the past 10 years approximately 20 McCarthy/Kennicott locals and an equal number of Copper Basin residents have participated in one or both of these workshops. In addition to these multi-day residential courses, we have more recently developed shorter programs targeted specifically at the local community. Last season, these included the Summer Arts and Lecture Series and the Mountain Arts for Youth Program.

This summer we once again have a full schedule. Program offerings include the WMI Wilderness First Aid Course (May 1-2), the McCarthy/Kennicott Teacher's Workshop (June 7-12) the Alaska Wildlands Studies Program (June 21-August 8), The Mountain Arts for Youth Program (end of July) the

Wrangell Mountains Writer's Workshop (August 11-18) and the Alaska Lifelong Learning Program (September 12-16). For more information on these programs visit our website at <www.wrangells.org> or call us at (907) 554-4464.

Support for visiting scientists and artists is another important component of Wrangell Mountains Center's mission. In the last few years alone, WMC has provided logistical support for scientists studying topics as diverse as the annual Hidden Lake Flood, Willow Beetle population dynamics, Kennicott Glacier flow rates, and backcountry user experiences in the National Park. We have a long history of providing housing for visiting writers and illustrators, as well, offering them the inspiration of our wonderful landscape in exchange for artistic contributions to educational programs and community events. We will continue in these important roles during the summer of 2004. We are providing housing for a graduate student studying the nesting behavior of Golden-Crowned Sparrows and supporting another student from Yale University who is studying campsite conditions in the Park backcountry. We are also excited to be planning a formal Artist in Residence Program that will, in addition to logistical support, provide funding to cover travel expenses, room and board, and incidental expenses for one visiting artist per year.

As a private institute located in a small Alaskan community, our success is dependent upon partnerships with groups of all sorts. Foremost among these is our local community. Our neighbors in the McCarthy/Kennicott area support us in many ways, as program participants, Board Members, student ad-

visors, instructors, friends, and organizational members. We, in turn, feel that it is important that local community members feel welcome at our facility, in our programs, and participating in our long term plans. We have recently established a tradition of end-of-summer Open Houses, to welcome community members into the Old Hardware Store and show them what we have been up to. We also include several neighboring organizations in our list of important partners. We have a long history of working cooperatively with Friends of Kennicott on a variety of projects, and more recently have begun planning for cooperative development of educational programs with the Copper Basin's newly-formed Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment.

Five years ago, we also entered into a formal cooperative agreement with the National Park Service. The primary purpose of this cooperative agreement is to allow for cooperative development of appropriate educational programs. Some examples: NPS has for several years provided financial support of up to \$2,500 for scholarships that allow local Copper Basin residents to attend our Teachers Workshops and Writer's Workshops at minimal cost. We have for the past two summers assisted NPS in distribution of bear proof food containers and electric fences to locals, part of a larger effort to reduce human-bear conflict in the community. And last summer, NPS covered the transportation costs (approximately \$3,000) associated with our college field studies program's re-evaluation of Skolai Pass backcountry conditions.

Currently, our collaborations with NPS include development of a natural history guidebook for local seasonal employees, and co-sponsor-

ship of the Summer Arts and Lecture Series. The National Park Service provided \$8,000 for fiscal year 2004 for the preliminary draft of the guidebook, partially matched by private donations of \$5000. The final product will be completed next winter with an additional \$6,900 from the NPS. Our collaborations are substantially enhancing the ability of both organizations to accomplish our educational missions.

Relative to our total budget, the financial support we receive directly from grants is small. For fiscal year 2003 grants from all sources comprised only 18% of our budget. This income included not only NPS

(\$7100 total) but also support from the Alaska State Council on the Arts (\$2850) and the Alaska Natural History Association (\$700). About 61% of our total annual income comes from participant fees (approx. \$37,000), with an additional 21% (approx. \$12,000) from our loyal and generous membership. Not included in these numbers is the incredible amount of help we receive in the form of in-kind donations and volunteer work. For example, last year we received a new hauling truck (valued at \$2,500), and our accountant has donated \$2050 worth of work annually for the past few years.

Above all, we appreciate the continued support of all our partners, neighbors, and of course our program participants. We couldn't do the work we do without the support we receive from all quarters, and we encourage you to come on down and see what the Wrangell Mountains Center is up to this summer. Stop by the Old Hardware Store, or you can reach me at (907) 554-4464 <info@wrangells.org>.

For more information on the organization and our summer programs visit our website at <www.wrangells.org>.

Fire Season starts May 1

The Alaska Division of Forestry would like to remind everyone that Fire Season begins on May 1st. A burn permit is required in the Copper River Valley from May 1st - September 30th for all open burning, with the exception of approved burn barrels and small warming fires. Valdez residents should check with the local Fire Department for regulations governing open burning.

Burn permits are free of charge and forms may be found in the Copper Valley

Bi-Weekly, the Copper River Realty Advertiser, at your local Post Office, and at the Alaska Division of Forestry office in Tazlina. (Also on page 15 of this issue.) You may also access an online burn permit at www.dnr.state.ak.us/forestry/burn.

Permittees are required to call the Division of Forestry each day that they intend to burn, to activate their permit. This will provide fire managers with a current log of who is burning and where burning is taking place. It also provides an opportunity to inform permittees of predicted fire

weather and any burn restrictions which may be in place.

Failure to obtain required permits or to call in and activate could result in a citation.

All burns larger than 10' x 10' and 4' high, will require an onsite inspection.

To schedule such an inspection, or for free Firewise Home Inspections, contact the State of Alaska, Division of Forestry at 822-5536.

"Power corrupts the few, while weakness corrupts the many." —Eric Hoffer

"There is but one straight course, and that is to seek truth and pursue it steadily." —George Washington

"Nothing appeals to intellectuals more than the feeling that they represent 'the people.'

Nothing, as a rule, is further from the truth." —Paul Johnson

"In selecting men for office, let principle be your guide. Regard not the particular sect or denomination of the candidate — look to his character...." —Noah Webster

"It does not take a majority to prevail ... but rather an irate, tireless minority, keen on setting brushfires of freedom in the minds of men." —Samuel Adams

"You can discover what your enemy fears most by observing the means he uses to frighten you." —Eric Hoffer

"We lay it down as a fundamental, that laws, to be just, must give a reciprocation of right; that, without this, they are mere arbitrary rules of conduct, founded in force, and not in conscience." —Thomas Jefferson

Weather—continued from page 33)

with 32 inches. *Silver Lake had 33 inches on the 1st and ended February with 10 inches.*

March saw the return of warmer temperatures and plenty of sunshine. The high temperature for March was 45 on the 29th (46 on Mar. 28, '03 and 45 on Mar. 25, '02). The low temperature for March was -21 on the 20th (-32 on Mar. 14, '03 and -29 on Mar. 9, '02). The average March temperature at McCarthy was 21.0 compared to 16.5 in Mar. '03 and 10.1 in Mar. '02. The high reached 40 or higher on 8 days and the low was -20 or below on only 2 days. *Silver Lake had a high 41 on March 24th (44 on Mar. 4, '03 and 39 on Mar. 1, '02), a low of -17 on March 21st (-26 Mar. 14, '03 and -30 on Mar 11, '02). The March average temperature at Silver Lake was 16.6 (14.9 in Mar. '03 and 6.9 in Mar. '02).*

March liquid precipitation was 0.67 inches (1.02 in Mar. '03 and 0.68 in Mar. '02) and snowfall was 10.1 inches (11.3 in Mar. '03 and 10.2 in Mar. '02). *Silver Lake had 0.27 inches of liquid (0.59 in Mar.*

'03 and 0.90 in Mar. '02) and snowfall of 5.0 inches (6.0 in Mar. '03 and 12.0 in Mar. '02). By the end of March the snow cover was 34 inches at McCarthy and 11 inches at Silver Lake.

The total snowfall for '03-'04 was 110.6 inches a new record (44.5 in '02-'03, 67.1 in '01-'02 and 84.0 in '00-'01). This total is complete, with data supplied by Ed Lachapelle for Nov 22 to Dec. 8, as the station was closed. The greatest snow depth was 42 inches on April 2nd, also a new record. This compares with an average ('80-'03) of 64.5 inches and a snow depth of 27 inches. The greatest snow fall was 110.6 inches in '03-'04 (99.9 inches in '90-'91) and the lowest was 27.3 inches in '86-'87. The greatest snow depth was 42 inches '03-'04 (39 inches in '90-'91) and the lowest was 16 inches in '86-'87 and '98-'99. *Silver Lake had a total snowfall of 51.0 inches and the greatest snow depth was 33 inches.*

With the addition of Ed's data I now have updated and complete data for November, 2003. The average temperature for November is

8.6 (27.6 in Nov. '02). The total liquid precipitation for November was 3.38 inches (4.26 in Nov. '02) with 40.7 inches of snow (2.6 in Nov. '02). Thank you, Ed, for making your data available.

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

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

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

Letters to the Editor (continued from page 35)

We certainly agree with your comment that healthy discussions foster good solutions. Let's keep talking.

WSEN,

Stop ragging on the Park Service for closing the Visitor Center at the end of the McCarthy Road. It is the Bush Administration who has cut their funding & made the doors shut. Can't you be honest about it?

(unsigned)

March 9, 2004

WSEN,

Great reporting. Keep up the great work. Sign me up for two more years. I enjoy reading your paper, have been there several times on vacation.

Sincerely,

Lucille Powell

WSEN,

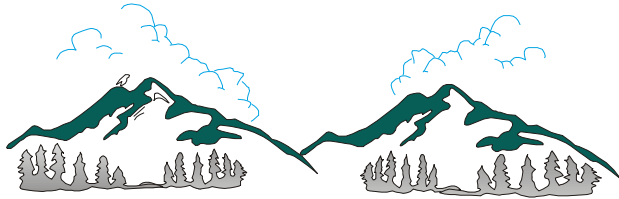
Denali National Park has a road in it. I think the Wrangell Mountains should have one in it. It should go from the end of Nabesna Road, Cooper Pass, around Russell Glacier and into McCarthy. What good are they now – only backpackers and hikers can go in. There is no access for seniors, handicapped and children.

Years ago I went to McCarthy, drove over the road bridge and it washed out the next day I came out. There should be a road bridge only for McCarthy residents. Others don't need to go in there because there is nowhere else to go.

A road originally was planned to go from Cordova to Chitina over the old RR grade. It would be the most beautiful in the State. I have flown over it and also gone in a jet boat.

Sincerely,

Charles Ricci



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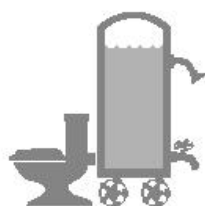
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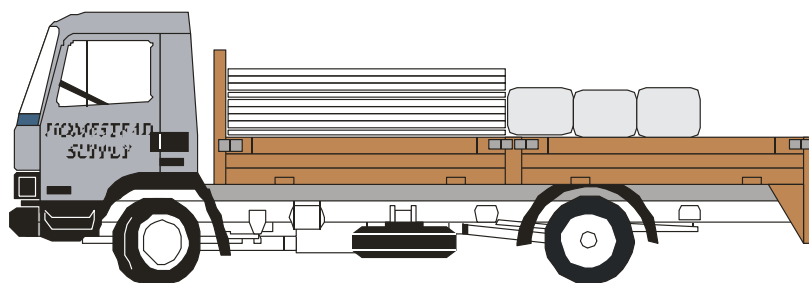
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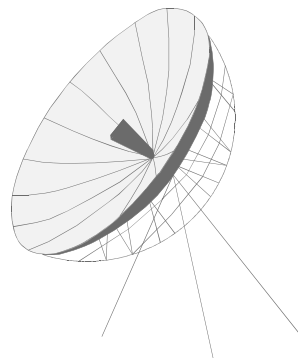


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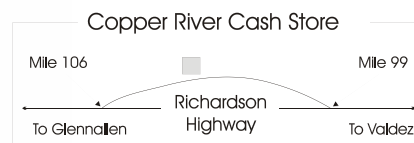
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Cooking with Peggy

BY PEGGY GUNTIS

While in Alaska one summer, I tried making a lot of different breads – all non yeast. I've just always been too afraid to try yeast bread since my one experience years ago. I had waited for awhile for the bread to rise and it didn't so I threw it into the garbage can. Awhile later I happened to look out at the can and the lid had risen right off! I try to limit myself to breads with no yeast. Here are a few I baked that summer.

This Banana Nut Bread is one of the first things I ever learned to cook. I think I was in about the 7th grade.

Banana Nut Bread

2 cups flour
 ½ teaspoon salt
 1 teaspoon baking soda
 2/3 cup shortening
 1 ½ cup sour cream
 2 eggs
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 1 teaspoon lemon juice
 3 very ripe bananas, mashed
 1 cup chopped walnuts

Sift the first three ingredients together. Mix the shortening, sugar, sour cream, eggs, vanilla and lemon juice until creamy. Add the flour mixture, the bananas and walnuts. Put in two loaf pans and bake for 1 hour at 350 degrees. The top should spring up when done. (By the way, I haven't sifted anything since seventh grade!)

Another one we loved that summer was a Strawberry Bread recipe that I found in a Lutheran cookbook that I have worn out (the covers are now gone and with them the name of the book).

Strawberry Bread

½ cup butter
 ¾ cup sugar

½ teaspoon vanilla
 2 eggs
 1 ½ cup flour
 ½ teaspoon salt
 ½ teaspoon cream of tartar
 ¼ teaspoon baking soda
 2/3 cup strawberry preserves
 1/3 cup strawberry yogurt
 ½ cup chopped nuts (optional)

Cream together butter, sugar and vanilla until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well. Mix together flour, salt cream of tartar, and soda. Combine preserves and yogurt. Add yogurt mixture to creamed mixture alternately with dry ingredients. Stir in nuts. Pour into a greased 9x5-inch loaf pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Cool for 20 minutes and remove from pan. It is best if it is refrigerated overnight before slicing.

NOTE: I tried substituting both raspberry and cherry preserves and yogurt and we loved them both.

Apple Bread

3 eggs, beaten
 1 cup oil
 1 ½ cup sugar
 2 cups cubed apples
 3 cups flour
 1 teaspoon baking soda
 ½ teaspoon salt
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 Topping:
 2 tablespoon butter
 2 tablespoon sugar
 2 tablespoon flour
 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Mix all the bread ingredients together except cubed apples. Fold them in last. Put in two (5x 8½) pans or five (3x6) pans. Mix the topping ingredients together and sprinkle on top of the loaves. Bake at 350 degrees for about 50 minutes.

Nottingham Bread

½ cup oleo

¾ cup sugar
 1 egg
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 ½ teaspoon salt
 1 teaspoon soda
 2 cups dates
 1 cup water
 1 cup raisins
 1 cup chopped nuts
 2 cups flour

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Cut dates into pieces and add water. Bring to a boil. Cool. Cream oleo and sugar. Add egg, raisins, nuts, and vanilla. Sift flour, salt and soda. Add alternately with date mixture. Mix thoroughly. Bake for 1 hour. Makes 4 small loaves.

NOTE: I made 2 regular-sized loaves and adjusted the baking time a little and because I was out of a few things that day, I substituted 1 cup of dried cranberries for a cup of the dates and I used ½ cup orange juice and ½ cup water instead of 1 cup of water. It turned out just fine.

Pumpkin Swirl Bread

Filling:

1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened

¼ cup sugar

1 egg, beaten

Batter:

1 ¾ cup flour

1 ½ cup sugar

1 teaspoon baking soda

1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1 teaspoon cinnamon

½ teaspoon salt

1 cup canned pumpkin

½ cup margarine, melted

1 egg, beaten

1/3 cup water

1. Combine cream cheese, sugar, and egg, mixing until well blended; set aside.

2. Combine dry ingredients. Add combined pumpkin, margarine, egg

and water, mixing just until moistened. Reserve 2 cups pumpkin batter; pour remaining batter into a greased and floured 9 x 5-inch loaf pan.

3. Pour cream cheese mixture over pumpkin batter; top with reserved pumpkin batter. Cut through batters with knife several times for swirl effect.

4. Bake at 350 degrees for an hour and 10 minutes or until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool for 5 minutes; remove from pan.

NOTE: Be sure to bake it long enough. I put it in 2 smaller pans and it worked fine. This bread has a very strong pumpkin flavor so we loved it.

A LOOK AT THE WEATHER

BY GEORGE CEBULA

December 2003 had about average temperatures and above average precipitation. I want to thank Ed LaChapelle for recording the data while the station was closed.

The average December temperature was -6.5 (-2.8 in Dec. '02 and -12.7 in Dec. '01). The high was 35 on December 22 (32 on Dec. 23, '02 and 35 on Dec. 22, '01) and the low was -37 on December 28 (-22 on Dec. 21, '02 and -50 on Dec 19, '01). Eleven days had low temperatures of zero or above and four days saw the low temperature dip below a minus twenty. Three days had high temperatures of twenty or above and four days zero or below. *Silver Lake had an average temperature of -1.4 (5.6 in Dec. '02 and -9.7 in Dec. '01). The high temperature was 34 on December 10 and 29 (42 on Dec. 1, '02 and 43 on Dec. 27, '01) and the low was -38 on December 27 (-21 on Dec. 20, '02 and -51 on Dec. 19, '01). Silver Lake had two days with a high of thirty or above and nine days with a low of minus twenty or colder.*

December precipitation was 2.32 inches of liquid precipitation (0.48 in Dec. '02 and 1.70 in Dec. '01). Total snow fall was 27.5 inches (7.6 in Dec. '02 and 23.5 in Dec. '01). The snow depth was 18 inches at the beginning of the month, increasing to 31 inches on December 25. *By comparison Silver Lake had 1.70 inches of liquid precipitation (1.17 in Dec. '02 and 1.19 in Dec.*

'01). All precipitation fell as snow and total snowfall was 18.0 inches (19.0 in Dec. '02 and 15.0 in Dec. '01). The snow depth was 23 inches at the beginning of the month, increasing to 32 inches at the end of the month.

The average January temperature at McCarthy was -15.6 (3.7 in Jan. '03 and -3.1 in Jan. '02). The high was 23 on January 23 (32 on Jan. 6, '03 and 25 on Jan. 29, '02) and the low temperature was -48 on January 29 (-28 on Jan. 23, '03 and -41 on Jan. 26, '02). Three days had high temperatures of 20 or above and five days saw the low temperature reach -40 or lower. *Silver Lake had an average temperature of -18.8 (0.3 in Jan. '03 and 10.4 in Jan. '02). The high was 24 on January 23 (30 on Jan. 5, '03 and 43 on Jan. 10, '02) and the low was -48 on January 27 (-27 on Jan. 27, '03 and -41 on Jan. 27, '02). Silver Lake had two days with a high of 20 or above and seven days with a low of -40 or lower.*

January precipitation was about average with ten days of measurable amounts. The total liquid precipitation was 1.05 inches (1.67 in Jan. '03 and 0.76 inches in Jan. '02). Snowfall was 15.5 inches (12.4 in Jan. '03 and 11.2 in Jan. '02). Snow cover was 29 inches on January 1, and increased to 33 inches on January 31. *Silver Lake had 0.45 inches of liquid (1.64 in Jan. '03 and 0.96 in Jan. '02) and 5.0 inches of snow (19.0 in Jan. '03 and 7.5 in Jan.*

'02). Silver Lake started 2004 with 28 inches of snow on the ground and ended the month with 33 inches.

After eleven weeks on the road including two Alaska Ferry trips, Sophie (my dear dog) and I are back in McCarthy.

February and March saw temperatures warm after a very cold January. The precipitation was just about average for both months.

The high temperature for February was 44 on the 21st (44 on Feb. 5, '03 and 45 on Feb. 28, '02). The lowest temperature recorded at McCarthy in February was -15 on the 3rd and 27th (-12 on Feb. 20, '03 and -28 on Feb. 22, '02). The high was 40 or above on only 1 day and the low was -10 or lower on 4 days. The average February temperature was 14.9 (23.6 in '03 and 8.3 in '02). This is still mild compared to -5.9 in '99. *Silver Lake had a high of 40 on February 22nd (45 on Feb. 5, '03 and 37 on Feb. 12, '02) and a low of -38 on February 1st (-10 on Feb. 18, '03 and -30 on Feb. 23, '02). The average February temperature at Silver Lake was 22.9 (12.6 in '03 and 5.8 in '02).*

The February precipitation was 1.46 inches of liquid (0.70 in '03 and 0.18 in '02). Total snowfall was 4.3 inches (7.3 in '03 and 2.6 in '02). *Silver Lake had 0.27 inches of liquid (0.09 in '03 and trace in '02) and 5.0 inches of snow (1.0 in '03 and trace in '02).* McCarthy began February with 33 inches of snow on the ground and ended the month

(Continued on page 24)

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

Where has all the money gone?

The National Park Service (NPS) has come under close scrutiny by members of Congress who have criticized the agency's plans to cut back visitor services at parks across the nation.

"It seems to me what we're dealing with is a management and priority problem with the Park Service," Rep. Jim Kolbe, R-Ariz told NPS Director Fran Mainella last March.

"All agencies have to face increased costs — we're no different," Mainella told members of Congress who had called her to explain why the agency was spending millions of dollars on travel while at the same time cutting back services and hours at some parks this summer.

Her assurances didn't appease either Republicans or Democrats on a House Appropriations subcommittee over Park Service spending.

"You can't sit here and tell me, across this table, that services aren't eroding in the national parks," Rep. Norman Dicks, D-Wash., the senior Democrat on the subcommittee told Mainella.

Rep. George Nethercutt, R-Wash., was even more blunt:

"Who's minding the store here? Are you all sort of oblivious to what's going on?"

Alaskans have been asking the same question after watching the administration at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST) waste millions of dollars on bogus law enforcement schemes to harass and intimidate local residents, purchase private property that they don't need, and "feather their own nest" with the multi-million dollar complex at Copper Center, well out of the parks boundaries.

Last year, WRST Superintendent Gary Candelaria ordered the only visitor contact point at McCarthy shut down for the season. Sup-

posedly, this saved the agency \$27,000. However, at the same time NPS increased staffing and purchased over \$300,000 of additional property at Kennecott, which has far fewer visitors than McCarthy.

The hand-crafted, dove-tail corner log cabin kiosk at mile 58.5 on the McCarthy Road had been newly constructed in 2002 and was open only one season before the closure. People arriving at the end of the road could get information about the park, and learn what was across the river before making the commitment to cross the footbridge and pay the \$10 round-trip fare to Kennecott.

Fortunately for the visitors, the Pilgrim family teamed up with Steve Syren to build and operate a Visitor Information booth at the footbridge — essentially doing the job that NPS refused to do. Syren, who owns and operates the parking lot at the end of the road, says that without someone to explain the value of crossing the river and making the 4-mile trip to Kennecott, many people just turn around and head back to Chitina without ever seeing either of the old mining towns.

The NPS, embarrassed by the situation, targeted the Pilgrim family with several undercover "sting" operations that cost the taxpayer much more than \$27,000, and resulted in minuscule fines from two federal judges. "I think the NPS should want to avoid getting a reputation as a bully," Judge John Roberts said at a recent sentencing hearing, when he ordered Joseph Pilgrim pay a fine of just over \$300 when the NPS had asked for \$3,000.

Then there was the attempt by NPS to shut off the only ground access to the Pilgrim family's home at the Marvelous Millsite, an effort that has cost the government over a half-million dollars to date. (The

Pilgrims sued the NPS — the case is currently being heard by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.)

When the NPS decided to pay for a survey around the Pilgrim's property, they added insult to injury by demanding the surveyors clear cut nearly two miles of trees and brush on the property boundary — creating an ugly scar that is visible from miles away.

Then there were thousands of dollars spent in the harassment case against Doug Frederick, whose crime was to try to work with Assistant Superintendent Hunter Sharp to solve the ATV trail problem near Nabesna. These deteriorating trails have been the source of the National Parks and Conservation Association's consternation that led it to declare WRST as one of America's 10 Most Endangered Parks. Seems the NPS solution is to close the trails, not repair them — no matter how much the closure costs.

Superintendent Candelaria recently told residents that the NPS plans to spend an additional 8 million dollars over the next few years to build additional facilities in the McCarthy & Kennecott areas — facilities intended for park personnel, not visitors.

We have to concur with CBS News's Bob Schieffer, who recently said, "... it is just the latest chapter in a tale of Park Service mismanagement in which multimillion-dollar projects have been launched without congressional approval and authorization ... So I have another travel tip. Give the Park Service brass their walking papers. They shouldn't be out of work long. They can hire out as clowns."

March 24
WSEN,

Thank you for reprinting the
National Parks Conservation

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Association's press release announcing Wrangell-St. Elias National Park as one of America's Ten Most Endangered National Parks. While it is obvious you don't agree with us, presenting our position in its entirety generates good community discussion—one that is essential to protecting the park and perpetuating the values of ANILCA, including the guarantee of subsistence rights for local residents and access for traditional activities.

We believe that one of the major threats to the appropriate management of this park is RS 2477. I understand that you don't see these claims as a threat and, ultimately, our differences will be worked out at higher levels. But I will point out that the 96 RS 2477 routes listed in the park's 1984 General Management Plan were not identified by the National Park Service but rather by the state of Alaska (the plan's Reagan administration era map clearly identifies the state as the source). I can find no reference in the 1984 plan that the Park Service "promised to determine the validity of them (RS 2477s) on a case-by-case basis," nor any reference to the "mandate" you mention. Determining validity starts with the state of Alaska, not the Park Service. It is the state's responsibility to formally apply and present the evidence it has collected as the first step in determining validity. Until the state submits an application, there is nothing the Park Service can do. And it is not up to the Park Service to determine validity anyway. That is reserved for the courts when a quiet-title action is filed, or the Bureau of Land Management when a Disclaimer Rule application is filed.

However, we don't believe RS 2477s are necessary to secure access for subsistence, access to holdings, or for traditional

activities. ANILCA already provides access for those purposes. Section 1110(b) states that the State or a private land owner "Shall be given by the Secretary such rights as may be necessary to assure adequate and feasible access for economic and other purposes..." And that "Such rights shall be subject to reasonable regulations... to protect the natural and other values of such land." Granted, we'll argue over ANILCA's definition of "adequate and feasible" and what's a reasonable regulation, and we'll argue over what's included in the traditional activity guarantee found in Section 1110 (a). But working within ANILCA, a modern law developed and adopted by people still living, is a far better basis for public discussions about access than RS 2477, a single sentence in the 1866 mining law that lacks any real clues about what Congress intended 148 years ago. Instead of fighting over where trails might have been, let's identify access needs and work out our differences about what's reasonable, feasible, and traditional within the context of ANILCA.

NPCA recognizes that activities like hunting, wood gathering, and berry picking are traditional and necessary for continuing a bush lifestyle. We do not disagree with the use of snowmobiles, motorboats, or airplanes for those purposes where allowed. Where we probably disagree is the use of motorized access for recreation. You accurately represented NPCA's position that motorized recreational use of ATVs, snowmobiles, and Jet Ski@s should not occur in a park. We argue that it was not Congress' intent to permit recreational use of motorized access as a traditional activity. The very fact that a special access provision exists to protect those activities needed by people living in the

bush is an argument that Congress anticipated some limitations. We further argue that plenty of state and federal public lands are open to motorized forms of outdoor recreation. National parks are some of the only public places where a person can experience natural quiet. We will continue to promote these values in discussions and decision-making about the future management of our parks.

The great thing about America is our freedom to disagree and to work out our differences. Many nations do not allow dissent. Disagreements foster healthy discussions and from those discussions come good solutions. Thank you for printing this letter.

Sincerely,

Jim Stratton

National Parks Conservation Association

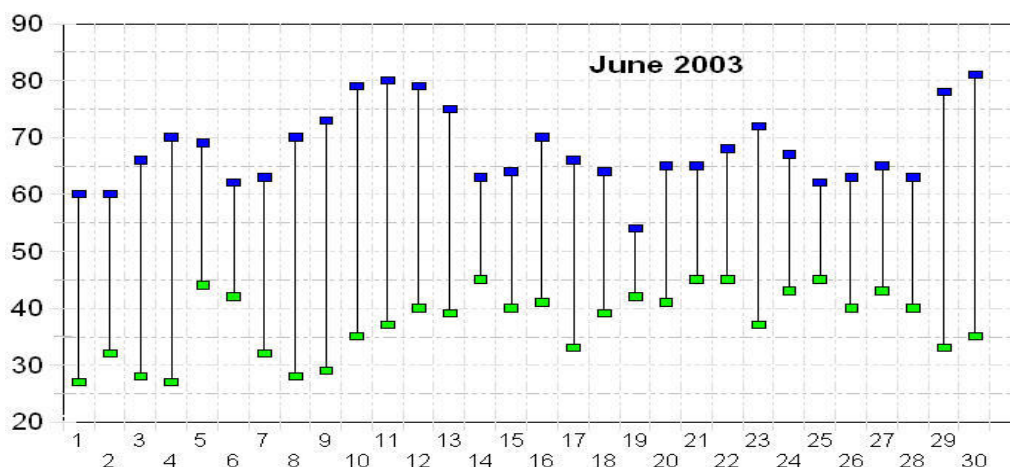
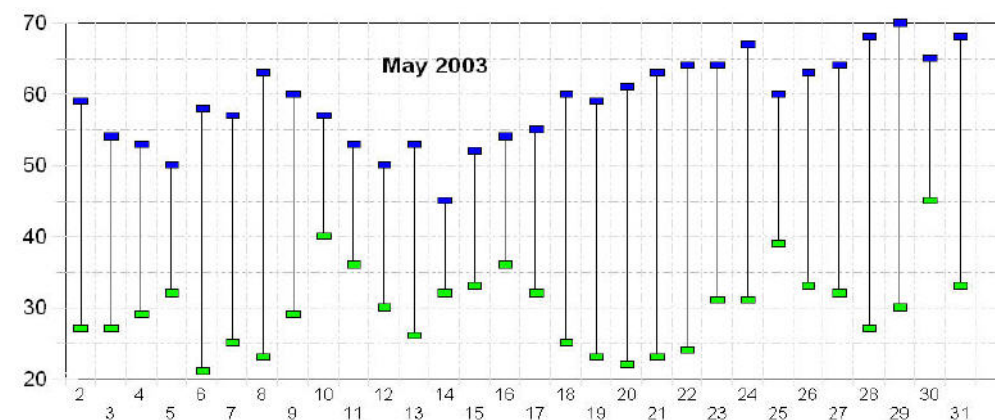
Editor's note: On page 212 of the WRST General Management Plan (Appendix M: Possible RS 2477 rights-of-way) the plan states: "The park/preserve was established subject to valid existing rights, including rights-of-way established under RS 2477. *The validity of these rights-of-way will be determined on a case-by-case basis.*"

Recreational users had a right to use state right-of-way prior to ANILCA. Whether we think it is good conservation or not, the law says those rights are to be preserved.

The State of Alaska has already determined that the McCarthy-Green Butte trail (RS135) is indeed a valid RS 2477 route, and has included it in legislation passed in 1998. NPS need only obey the law and much of the conflict and strife in this park would go away.

(continued on page 24)

Wrangell St. Elias News
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