



BLM ALASKA

FRONTIERS

Issue 106 • Spring 2009

News about BLM's National System of Public Lands in Alaska

BLM

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Don't miss the outdoor recreation shows!

Credits

Fighting Fires from the Sky *50 years of smokejumping in Alaska*



Keith Wolferman/FS

Forest Service smokejumpers trained on the ram-air parachute at AFS in 2008.

Smokejumping to fight wildland fires is a relatively young 69-year discipline. Although the parachute has been around in one form or another for about 500 years, it took more than 400 years before technology evolved enough to make the parachute a practical and useful invention for firefighting.

The U.S. Forest Service started experimenting with parachutes in 1934 to drop firefighters and cargo from aircraft, but decided the parachute drop technique was too risky to adopt. In 1935, Regional Forester Evan Kelley wrote to his superiors in Washington, D.C., expressing the prevailing attitude of the time: "...all parachute jumpers are more or less crazy – just a little bit unbalanced, otherwise they wouldn't be engaged in such a hazardous undertaking..."

Fortunately, attitudes changed. Visionaries in the Forest Service were convinced that delivering firefighters by air to remote areas could be a fast and efficient way to fight wildland fires – and it could be done safely if those involved were properly trained and outfitted.

In 1939, the Forest Service contracted with a parachute company to provide them with parachutes, experienced jumpers and aircraft to further test this concept. After a number of successful test jumps in Washington State with the jumpers outfitted in protective clothing, helmets, and boots, the Forest Service jumped their first wildland fire in 1940. The Forest Service smokejumpers used round parachutes, usually military surplus.

When the BLM was created in 1946, the new agency was responsible for protecting millions of mostly remote acres across Alaska. However, it was understaffed and underfunded. Although the Forest Service demonstrated the value of smokejumpers six years before the BLM's creation, politics and other funding priorities caused the BLM to wait until 1959

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Forest Service smokejumper Mike Fritsen after a successful ram-air landing.

Alaska



Keith Wolferman/FS

Parachute— continued from page 1

before its Alaska smokejumper program became an operational reality.

The BLM Alaska Fire Service was first located near the International Airport in Fairbanks before moving to their present location at Ladd Air Field (now Fort Wainwright). While training, housing, and operational facilities were being constructed for smokejumpers, the first Alaska smokejumpers were trained by the Forest Service in Missoula, Montana. In June 1959, just five months after Alaska Statehood, BLM smokejumpers made their first jump on a wildland fire in Alaska.

Early BLM smokejumpers used the same equipment and techniques as the Forest Service, including round parachutes. In the late 1970s, the BLM started to test the practical use of the highly maneuverable ram-air parachutes used by sport jumpers. The ram-air system seemed to be superior to round parachutes in the windy conditions found in Alaska. In 1979, BLM smokejumpers made the first official experimental jump using a ram-air parachute. The BLM also evaluated the drogue Russian parachute system originally obtained by the Forest Service. The BLM tested whether the drogue system used with round parachutes



(left) Forest Service round parachute in action. (right) Forest Service smokejumper Mike Goicoechea landing in a ram-air parachute.

would work with ram-air parachutes. With some modification, the BLM adopted the drogue system.

Testing and evaluation of different ram-air parachutes and gear continued for a number of years. The BLM made their first ram-air parachute jump on a fire near Selawick Lake, Alaska, in June 1982. By August, the Alaska Fire Service was training its smokejumpers on both ram-air parachutes and traditional round parachutes. In 1991, the BLM transitioned completely to the ram-air parachute and stopped training on round parachutes.

The Forest Service also experimented with the ram-air parachute, but chose to work on improving the round parachute while continuing interest in the ram-air parachute. Over the years, a number of Forest Service smokejumpers have trained on the ram-air system.

In May 2008, nearly 50 years after the Alaska smokejumpers first received training from the Forest Service, the Alaska Fire Service hosted a three-week training session on using ram-air parachutes for 12 Forest Service smokejumpers from bases in Montana, Washington, Idaho and California. Ten of the 12 Forest Service jumpers successfully completed the training and are now certified. The Forest Service smokejumpers will continue to use their

standard round parachutes when they are on a Forest Service mission.

This winter, two additional Forest Service smokejumpers spent time in the Alaska Fire Service parachute loft learning to make ram-air parachute gear. With the exception of the ram-air parachute, which is an off-the-shelf commercial product, smokejumpers fabricate their own gear, including parachute harnesses, parachute bags, gear bags, and jumpsuits.

Today, some 69 years after the first wildland fire jump, smokejumpers from the Forest Service and the BLM continue to be valuable firefighting assets that help protect the nation's natural resources from wildland fire. Eighty-eight BLM smokejumpers are stationed at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho and 88 more BLM Smokejumpers are stationed at the Alaska Fire Service in Fairbanks. Using high-performance aircraft and parachutes, the jumpers' mission is to be first on the scene when fires occur in remote areas. Smokejumpers can operate out of virtually any airport with adequate runway length and fueling capabilities, providing a long-range, large-payload, rapid response to an emerging or ongoing fire.

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For more information about smokejumping, visit:

- <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/people/smokejumpers/>
- <http://www.ncsbsmokejumpers.com>
- <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/people/smokejumpers/missoula/history.html>
- <http://fire.ak.blm.gov/afs/fireops/jumpers/jumpers.php>

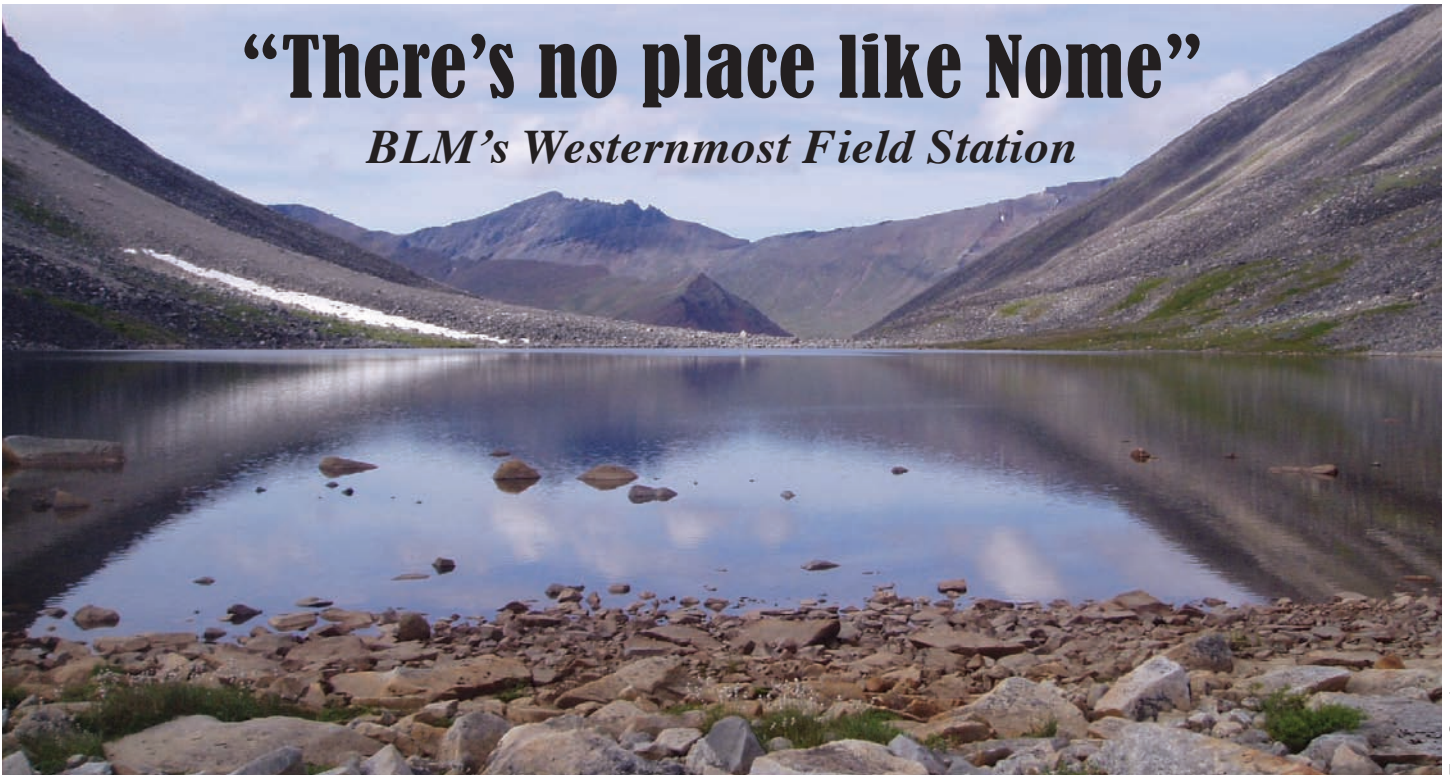
To view photos (these photos are not public domain):

- <http://www.alaskasmokejumpers.com/photogallery.html>
- <http://www.spotfireimages.com>

2009 marks the 50th anniversary of wildland fire smokejumping in Alaska. A 50-year Smokejumper Reunion and Celebration is taking place in Fairbanks June 5-6. For more information visit: <http://www.alaskasmokejumpers.com/alaska-50-reunion.html>

“There’s no place like Nome”

BLM’s Westernmost Field Station



Tom Sparks

Glacial lake in the Kigluaik Mountains near Nome.

Snuggled in southwest Alaska in the Norton Sound coastal community of Nome is BLM’s westernmost field station. Maintained through the Anchorage Field Office, the two-person Nome field station handles a significant amount of work in the Bering Strait region involving the BLM’s land transfer program. Its staff conducts on-the-ground field exams and works with local villages to complete final land

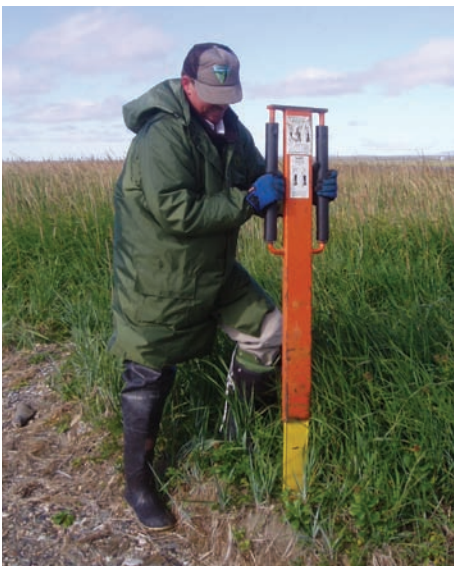
transfers under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). Many ANCSA villages are at or near their full entitlement, which allows village corporations to focus on long-term development plans for their communities.

The Nome Field Office also administers reindeer grazing permits in cooperation with the State of Alaska and the National Park Service. Reindeer were introduced

to the Bering Strait region from Siberia in 1891 as a more stable food supply when local caribou populations declined. By the 1930s, the reindeer herds were thriving and Congress passed the Reindeer Act of 1937 to restrict herd ownership to Alaska Natives. In December 2008, the BLM completed a programmatic environmental assessment to guide management of reindeer grazing on BLM-managed public lands in western Alaska over the next decade. The environmental assessment blends Alaska Native traditions with modern science in the decision-making process and seeks to maintain range health and a sustainable reindeer industry.

The Nome Field Office helps manage the sensitive Kigluaik Arctic char species through monitoring to track population trends. Kigluaik char live in six isolated, glacially formed lakes in the treeless Kigluaik Mountains. The fish appear to be genetically distinct from other Arctic char populations, leading fishery biologists to think the Kigluaik char are relic populations that survived the last glaciations in Berengia. Kigluaik char typically grow only one inch per year, taking 20 to 30 years for males to reach their

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Tom Sparks

Nome Field Station employee Tom Sparks putting in a 17(b) easement marker.



Tom Sparks

Native veteran, Daniel Omedelena participating in a field exam conducted by Nome Field Station employee Tom Sparks.



Brian Bourdon joins BLM-Alaska in Nome

The BLM Nome Field Station is now a staff of two. In January, Brian Bourdon joined BLM Nome representative Tom Sparks. Born and raised in Nome, Bourdon knows the Bering Straits region well. He came to the BLM after serving as Resource Conservation and Development Coordinator, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, in Nome. Bourdon worked with Sparks in the past, so when he learned the BLM was looking for a second Nome representative, he applied and was selected for the position.

Bourdon said he now looks forward to helping the BLM “manage and protect the public lands within the Bering Straits region of Alaska.”

As a BLM realty specialist, Bourdon will assist with realty and recreation work in Nome and western Alaska. Bourdon graduated from Nome Beltz High School in 1985 and is a U.S. Navy Veteran. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in rural development from the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

— Teresa McPherson
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Nome— continued from page 3

maximum of 25 inches, and spawn at three-to-four year intervals with a low annual production rate. This makes them extremely susceptible to overfishing.

Nome is the end point of America’s “Last Great Gold Rush Trail.” The majority of the Iditarod National Historic Trail crosses public lands and easements managed by federal agencies and the State of Alaska. The BLM coordinates management of this trail system with other agencies and landowners.

The Nome Field Station maintains Salmon Lake Campground, 40 miles north of Nome on the Nome-Kougarok Road. Open summers and into the fall when the road is snow-free, the campground has six campsites with fire pits and picnic tables, an outhouse, and a natural boat launch for Salmon Lake. Water, available from nearby Salmon Lake and the Pilgrim River, must be boiled or treated. The Salmon Lake area contains the spawning grounds for the northernmost run of sockeye salmon in the United States. The area offers outstanding year-round recreational opportunities.

The BLM Nome staff have a full workload. They also administer Special Recreation Permits (mostly for big game guiding), work active mining cases, and conduct other permit work (such as land use authorizations and rights-of-way, gravel sales and communication sites). They distribute hunting permits for qualified users under Federal Subsistence Management Regulations.

Find out more at: <http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/fo/ado/nome.html>

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Delta National Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River Plan is Underway

The BLM Glennallen Field Office is proceeding with implementation-level planning under the East Alaska Resource Management Plan — the guide for managing BLM public lands and resources within the boundaries of the field office.

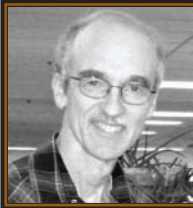
Planning for the Delta National Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River corridor started last summer with a “scoping period” to bring stakeholders and interested parties together to help the BLM identify initial issues in the management area. The scoping period ended on Sept. 15, 2008 identifying the following issues for the Delta River to address in the planning process: access, travel management, wilderness characteristics, climate change, subsistence, commercial activities, property acquisition, scenic qualities and soundscape. The field office published its scoping report in December.

The field office will develop management alternatives for the Delta corridor and analyze them in the Delta’s Draft Environmental Assessment for public review expected out this summer.

Glennallen Field Manager Will Runnoe said, “This is an opportunity for people who visit and use the Delta National Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River corridor to become involved in how the BLM will manage the public lands and resources bordering the river. I urge everyone to participate in this planning process.”

The staff will consider comments received during the formal review periods when preparing the final planning document. To learn more, including the maps and timelines for the plan, visit: http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/sa/delta_nwsr/Delta_River_Planning.html

— Marnie Graham
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Journey into Alaska's Past

with BLM-Alaska Archaeologist Robert King

FIFTY YEARS BEFORE ALASKA STATEHOOD: *Remembering the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition of 1909*

As we proudly look back 50 years ago to 1959 when Alaska became a state, that year also celebrated its own special 50th anniversary involving Alaska: The great 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition held in Seattle. Though not the first world fair to include Alaska exhibits, the "AYPE" focused more on Alaska and the Yukon than any other exposition before or since.

Why? The Seattle Bureau of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce organized the event to showcase the investment potential in Alaska, which would translate into helping Seattle's own economy. Since the late 19th century, so much of Alaska commerce and development was connected to Seattle merchants and financiers that annexation of Alaska to Washington State was even proposed.

Consequently, many of the attractive Alaska exhibits at the AYPE educated and entertained visitors (includ-

ing my own grandfather), about Alaska's vast resources and inspired further economic development. At this time, Alaska was changing from its pioneer gold rush days where die-hard prospectors personally scratched out riches to a place of capital investment.

An example of this change was happening in 1909 when the AYPE was operating. The Guggenheim-J.P. Morgan Alaska Syndicate was busy building the Copper River and Northwestern Railroad to tap the rich Kennecott copper fields, with most profits ending up in the hands of non-Alaskan investors.

Sound familiar? It's called capitalism. Moreover, by 1959 the economic developments that resulted from the capitalist system promoted at the AYPE helped make Alaska ready for statehood.

— Robert King
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Courtesy of Robert King



Courtesy of Robert King

(far left) AYPE 1909 postcard of exposition location, now the University of Washington campus. (left) AYPE 1909 Hello Bill! postcard. (below) AYPE 1909 admission ticket.



Courtesy of Robert King

Floating the Gulkana National Wild River: Is Your Group Size the Right Fit?

Heath Emmons



Large group on a float trip on the Gulkana National Wild River.

Recreating in groups can provide a safe, fun way for people to experience the outdoors and enjoy the camaraderie. Groups can provide a sense of security as each member brings different skills and abilities to the adventure. Some groups can even offer skill-building opportunities for youth and adults with experienced mentors as guides and teachers. While recreating in groups can have great benefits, large groups can get a bad rap. Why?

“Sometimes the group’s size is just not a good fit with their chosen destination,” explains BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner Heath Emmons. “Consider this—you expect to see large groups in developed areas such as community parks, playgrounds, sheltered picnic areas, and closer to cities. When you travel into remote areas like the Gulkana National Wild River corridor to enjoy the

great outdoors, your tolerance for encountering large groups may dwindle. When you are trying to escape crowds, large groups are out of place and are not consistent with maintaining the wild and undeveloped character of the river.”

In Alaska, federal and state agencies designate some recreational areas to protect a certain experience or characteristic of the land. In planning efforts, people are saying they want group sizes limited to maintain a certain experience or to avoid resource damage. At the BLM’s Gulkana National Wild River, the BLM has seen a recent influx of larger groups of 20 to 40 people using the river. These large groups, even if sensitive to minimum impact camping techniques, can negatively

— continued on page 7

Heath Emmons



Large group at an undeveloped riverside camping area. Groups larger than 12 must get a group “letter of agreement” from the BLM Glennallen Field Office.

Learn before You Go

- Who manages the land?
- Where can you get information about special rules for group travel?
- Are group size limitations in effect or suggested for this area?
- Is there adequate camping space for your group size?
- Could your group create competition for campsites with other users?
- Could you schedule your trip at a time when it might be less crowded?
- Can you split your group into smaller groups?
- Have you organized your supplies so your group can break easily into smaller groups?
- Are you prepared to pack out all human waste and use Leave No Trace principles?

Do your part by leaving the area better than you found it — properly dispose of waste, minimize the use of fire, and restore degraded areas.

More helpful hints and information are available at:

BLM Glennallen Field Office
(907) 822-3217

BLM-Alaska Gulkana National Wild River at: http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/fo/gdo/gulkana_national_wild.html

Leave No Trace at: <http://www.lnt.org/>

Tread Lightly at: <http://www.treadlightly.org/>

Groups— continued from page 6

impact campsites and the natural character of the river. Most Gulkana campsites are not large enough to accommodate these large groups.

The BLM has imposed a group size limitation of 12 to protect the “wild” and natural character of this very popular and scenic river. Groups larger than 12 must get a group “letter of agreement” from the BLM Glennallen Field Office. The

letter requires large groups to use a portable toilet and to carry out all solid human wastes and toilet paper. It also suggests ways large groups can help reduce the impacts on campsites and recreational experiences of other users. Large groups can damage vegetation in and around campsites, and continue to expand the site over time if group size limits aren’t imposed. Large groups can also create competition

for campsites during a limited camping and fishing season.

Fortunately, Alaska is big. There are many places to go that are still appropriate for larger groups. If you are planning to recreate in a group, take steps to create a positive experience for yourself and those around you.

— Marnie Graham
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President Signs Public Lands Act Enhancing Protection of Alaska’s Federal Public Lands

President Barack Obama’s signed the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009 on March 30. The legislation codifies the BLM’s administratively created National Landscape Conservation System, which consists of 850 federally recognized areas covering 27 million acres of BLM-managed land.

In Alaska, BLM-managed lands within the National Landscape Conservation System include:

- ▶ **Steese National Conservation Area** is 1.2 million acres about 100 miles northeast of Fairbanks. The area is managed for scenic, scientific and cultural resources.
- ▶ **Central Arctic Management Area (CAMA)** is comprised of 480,000 acres of various parcels located about 400 miles northwest of Fairbanks abutting the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. The CAMA includes a portion of the arctic coastal plain which provides yearlong range for caribou and moose.
- ▶ **Iditarod National Historic Trail** is an approximately 2,300-mile historic and contemporary winter trail system that crosses BLM, National Parks, National Forests, National Wildlife Refuges, State and private lands.
- ▶ **Beaver Creek National Wild River** flows 110 miles through the White Mountains, then north and east to the Yukon Flats and Yukon River. Its Class I waters and unparalleled scenery make a relaxing float trip of 7-10 days. The river provides great fishing for grayling, northern pike, burbot and whitefish.
- ▶ From its headwaters just north of the Steese Conservation Area, the **Birch Creek National Wild River** flows swiftly on its 344-mile journey to the Yukon River. One hundred twenty six miles are designated as wild and scenic river. River travelers can see moose, caribou, birds and grayling in clear tributaries.
- ▶ **Delta National Wild, Scenic and Recreational River** is 175 miles south of Fairbanks and 22 miles west of Paxson on the Denali Highway and flows through the Alaska Range. Outstanding year-round recreational opportunities abound throughout the river’s watershed (150,000 acres — 160 miles of streams and 21 lakes). The BLM maintains the Tangle Lakes campground and Delta River wayside.
- ▶ **Fortymile National Wild, Scenic and Recreational River** and its forks create a 392-mile network of creeks and rivers in east-central Alaska. The BLM manages two campgrounds on the Fortymile, and this river has an



Chuck Kennedy/White House

President Obama shakes the hand Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar after signing the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009

unusual number of access points for an Alaska river. Boaters have many choices for recreational trips through deep winding canyons filled with birch, spruce and aspen.

- ▶ **Gulkana National Wild River** is famous for its abundant fish and wildlife and recreational opportunities. One of the five most used rivers in Alaska because of its easy access, the main stem begins at Paxson Lake and ends at Sourdough Campground at milepost 147.5 on the Richardson Highway. The Gulkana falls 1,250 feet in the 81 river miles between Paxson Lake and the Copper River, and has Class I to Class III white water.
- ▶ **Unalakleet National Wild River’s** clear, smooth waters start with swift channels through the Nulato Hills and meander across miles of arctic tundra to Unalakleet on Norton Sound. The Unalakleet is 400 miles from Anchorage and accessible only by plane. The Unalakleet flows 105 miles and offers a great diversity of river characteristics, requires boating skills, and rewards with world-class fishing. The Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race parallels the river en route to Nome

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar hailed the bill as a “milestone for the stewardship of America’s natural wonders. This legislation is the product of years of work in hundreds of communities across America, where citizens, elected officials, stakeholders and land managers have forged wise protections for our treasured landscapes that will boost local economies while protecting traditional ways of life.”



Ramona Chinn

Alaska Land Transfer Manager Receives National Award

Transferring federal land to the State and to Alaska Natives has been a way of life for Ramona Chinn, Division of Alaska Lands Deputy State Director (shown above) for the last 20 years. It's her job. On Jan. 15, at a reception in Washington, D.C., she was recognized for doing her job exceptionally well by the Public Lands Foundation, which presented her with its 2008 Professional Manager Award. Both BLM and Chinn are thrilled with the recognition.

Public Lands Foundation President George Lea described the national award, now in its 21st year, as recognition for actions by land managers that "constitute special professional achievement and courage, and not simply good performance."

For more than 30 years, BLM-Alaska has been tasked with the largest transfer of federal public land in the United States. When Alaska became the 49th state in 1959, nearly all of its 365 million acres were under federal ownership. Since then, Alaskans have witnessed dramatic changes. As directed by the Alaska Statehood Act, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, the Native Allotment Act of 1906 and the Alaska Native Veteran's Act of 1998, BLM-Alaska is transferring title to more than 150 million acres (approximately 42 percent of the land in Alaska) of federal public land to the State, Alaska Native regional and village corporations, and individual Natives.

Chinn has been instrumental in making that happen. "Ramona deserves this recognition. The huge number of acres being transferred is a testament to her leadership

and more than 20 years of dedication to this program," said BLM-Alaska State Director Tom Lonnie.

In early 2003, Chinn was promoted to co-Director of the Division of Alaska Lands and productivity almost doubled. The speed of land transfer efforts was still hampered by complex rules and procedures, so that year the Secretary of the Interior and Congress called for improvements to the transfer program.

Two important events in 2004 led to the success seen in the land transfer program today: Chinn was named Deputy State Director for the Division of Conveyance Management and Congress passed the Alaska Land Transfer Acceleration Act, which gave the BLM new tools to speed up the complicated conveyance process. It also established deadlines for land selections by the state and the Native corporations, which allowed Chinn's staff to begin to finalize land ownership patterns via agreements and temporary conveyance of title to unsurveyed lands.

In 2007, Chinn was given responsibility for the entire Alaska Lands Program, including Alaska's broad realty functions. Since that time, she has also been named as the BLM's point of contact for gas pipeline applications.

Changing the course of business in the government requires both courage and risk-taking, and Chinn's leadership resulted in an extraordinary surge of title transfers in 2008 and 2009, bringing the program close to the established goals.

Alaska Native corporations, entitled to receive title to 45.4 million acres under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, have received title to 39.6 million acres, or 87.3 percent of their entitlement. The State of Alaska, entitled to receive title to 104.5 million acres of federal land under the Alaska Statehood Act, has received title to 97.8 million acres, or 94 percent of its entitlement.

When Chinn became co-director in 2003, there were 3,500 Native Allotment parcels awaiting adjudication. Today, fewer than 700 native allotments remain.

Ramona Chinn and her staff's 20-year effort to ensure the successful transfer of more than 150 million acres of federal land have been appreciated by every village and regional Native corporation around the state, and the BLM is proud to have her recognized nationally as the Public Lands Foundation's top Professional Manager for 2008.

The Public Lands Foundation is dedicated solely to the protection and perpetuation of the National System of Public Lands under the administration of the BLM. The national nonprofit conservation organization members are mostly retired and active BLM employees. Find out more at: www.publicland.org.



Ramona Chinn signing the final patent to complete entitlements for the village of Wainwright, Alaska.

Doug Stockdale

BLM Plugging Atigaru Well in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska



Wayne Sveinoha

The Atigaru legacy well on a peninsula in Harrison Bay.

The BLM has launched efforts to plug and remediate the Atigaru well, the third BLM legacy well on the North Slope threatened by erosion. The Atigaru Point Well #1 site has become an island on its peninsula in Harrison Bay, due to sea erosion and melting permafrost that have caused portions of this peninsula near the Beaufort Sea to sink or subside. The BLM contracted with Marsh Creek LLC, a Native-owned company from Anchorage and Kaktovik with a successful track record in legacy well remediation, to plug the Atigaru well.

The BLM manages 136 wells and core holes termed "legacy wells" that were drilled by the U.S. Navy (1944-1953) and the U.S. Geological Survey (1975-1982) during an early exploration program in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. The BLM's assessment of these wells determined that 41 wells could pose a potential risk to the environment. Since 2002, 13 of these 41 wells have been plugged by the BLM. With continued support and funding over the next five to six years, an additional 13 wells will be remediated. Recent remediation efforts by the BLM include plugging, excavation, and disposal of the reserve pit contents of the J.W. Dalton legacy well in 2005 and the East Teshekpuk legacy well in 2008.



Craig McCaa

BLM-Alaska Resource Advisory Council Welcomes New Chair: Suzanne McCarthy

Meet Suzanne McCarthy, the newest Chair for the BLM-Alaska Resource Advisory Council, elected at their meeting in Anchorage on Feb. 19, 2009. Suzanne leads the 15-member advisory panel that helps guide the BLM on resource and land management issues for approximately 80 million acres of federal public land in Alaska.



Pam Eldridge

BLM-Alaska Resource Advisory Council Chair Suzanne McCarthy.

Suzanne is an education coordinator for the Copper Basin campus of Prince William Sound Community College in Glennallen. For more than 13 years, she operated River Wrangellers, a wilderness rafting company based in Glennallen. She has also worked as a geologist with Ahtna Minerals Corporation.

A member of the BLM-Alaska Resource Advisory Council since 1993, Suzanne continues to play an active role in several organizations. She is currently a member of the Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association, Alaska Geological Association, and Copper Valley Economic Development Council. Suzanne was a founding member and serves on the board of the Wrangell Institute for Science & the Environment (WISE) and is Vice-Chair of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission (member since 1996).

Suzanne holds a Bachelor of Science degree in geology from Western Connecticut State University. She currently resides in Glennallen.

Bonanza of Snow

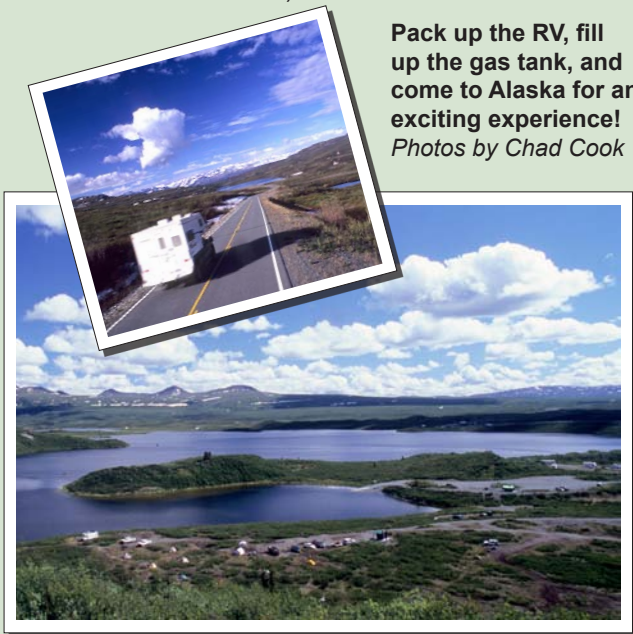
Several late-winter storms dumped nearly three times the normal March snowfall on the Fairbanks area, leaving a lot of work for trail groomers and excitement for winter recreationalists in the White Mountains National Recreation Area. The storms brought strong winds that piled high snowdrifts on the trails and dropped temperatures to dangerous lows. Typically, March's warmer temperatures and longer daylight, coupled with school spring break schedules, make it the most popular month for exploring the recreation area's 240 miles of winter trails.

(left) Outdoor recreation planner Collin Cogley grooms the Trail Creek trail in the White Mountains National Recreation Area in March.

Campground Hosts needed!

- Want to spend a summer you'll always remember? With the 2009 summer season only months away, several BLM campground host positions remain unfilled. While duties vary with the different campgrounds, most campground hosts check campers for fees, help campers and provide area information, explain the campground and surrounding recreational policies, do light maintenance duties (such as painting picnic tables or picking up excess litter), maintain records of campground use, and report any problems or incidents to the Outdoor Recreation Planner. Campground hosts do not collect fee envelopes or process the fees.
- The work week is generally 10 workdays on and 4 days off (every other Monday-Thursday). Although a volunteer, most hosts receive a daily meal cost reimbursement and mileage payment for use of personal vehicle, as well as reimbursement for some other costs. Check it out, it's only a mouse click away!
- www.volunteer.gov (select Alaska and type in 'campground hosts' in the search window)

Pack up the RV, fill up the gas tank, and come to Alaska for an exciting experience!
Photos by Chad Cook



Pam Eldridge

Meet Ron Dunton, Gas Pipeline Project Manager

Ron Dunton is BLM-Alaska's new gas pipeline project manager in the Alaska Lands Division, BLM-Alaska State Office, in Anchorage. Dunton will oversee the development and processing of gas pipeline applications submitted to the BLM for activities on federal public lands.

Dunton has a tremendous depth and scope of experience and capability across all aspects of fire management and renewable, cultural and non-renewable resource management. His federal career began in 1969 working for the Alaska Fire Service, Fairbanks District. He served as the BLM New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma fire management officer, before entering line management at the Carlsbad and Socorro field offices in New Mexico. He became the Division Chief for fire operations, fire planning and fuels management at the National Interagency Fire Center in Idaho. He worked six years as BLM-New Mexico's Deputy State Director for Lands and Minerals. He also recently served on a six-month detail as the Dept. of the Interior's Director of the Office of Wildland Fire Coordination.

Dunton's background and skills will be invaluable as the BLM becomes involved in developing environmental analyses and granting rights-of-way for proposed gas pipelines on federal lands.

2009 Archaeology Month Poster

This year's Alaska Archaeology Month 2009 poster commemorates the state's 50th anniversary of statehood (shown right). Each year, Alaska's poster is entered in the national Society of American Archaeology competition. Last year's poster, featuring a 1918 mail dog-team on the early Iditarod Trail, won first place. This year's meeting will be in Atlanta, Georgia, from April 22-26. Best of luck to Alaska State Archaeologist Robert King, Visual Information Specialist Carol Belenski, and all others involved in this annual multi-agency poster series. Shown right is the front of this year's poster and below is the back.

The free posters are available by contacting the BLM-Alaska Public Room at 907-271-5960 or e-mail ak_akso_public_room@blm.gov.



Carol Belenski

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**Mingling with the Musher
at BLM's Campbell Tract**

More than 2,000 Iditarod fans, about 1,024 sled dogs, 67 mushers and some Ididariders descended on the BLM Campbell Tract in Anchorage on March 7 to watch the kickoff of the 37th running of the Iditarod Sled Dog Race. Many visitors also came into the BLM Campbell Creek Science Center to warm up and check out Iditarod National Historic Trail exhibits. This was the first year the BLM Anchorage Field Office has opened the Science Center to the public during the ceremonial start of the race.



Doug Ballou



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**BLM-ALASKA FRONTIERS...
 Look for it in our next issue!**

Don't Miss the Outdoor Recreation Shows!

April is bringing opportunities for people to prepare for summer. BLM-Alaska will host exhibit booths at the recreation shows to provide information for recreational activities on BLM-Alaska lands, and about our many multi-use programs. We'll also be celebrating the 50th Year of Alaska's Statehood. Don't miss the Great Alaska Sportsman Show in Anchorage from April 2-5, and the Fairbanks Outdoor Show from April 17-19. Both will feature a variety of vendors, exhibitors, and experts who seek to equip and prepare people for the Alaska summer season afield.



Robert King

May is when BLM hosts approximately 2,375 sixth graders at Outdoor Week in Anchorage and Outdoor Days in Fairbanks. Look for photos in upcoming BLM-Alaska Frontiers.

Our archaeologist has been working on the North Slope, and plans to write the Arctic Dinosaur story in a future issue—Ah! The anticipation!

— Karen Laubenstein
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BLM-Alaska Frontiers

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BLM-Alaska Frontiers is published quarterly in March, June, September and December. Deadline for articles is the third Friday of the month before publication. The deadlines will be May 22 (Summer 2009), Aug. 22 (Fall 2009), Nov. 20 (Winter 2009) and Feb. 20 (Spring 2010).

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