



The Alaskan Wildlifer

Newsletter of the Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society

April 2002

Message from the President

By: Gino Del Frate

This is my last message as president of the Alaska Chapter. I would like to say that I have enjoyed being president and offer my best to Doug Larsen in his term. During the last 2 years I believe that the Chapter has grown professionally and continues to be an important influence in wildlife management decisions throughout the state. My thanks go out to all members that have stepped forward from their busy jobs and lives to help with chapter business.

I hope everyone is planning a trip to sunny Fairbanks next month. The Alaska Chapter is co-hosting our annual meeting with the Alaska Society for American Foresters. The meeting will be held 2-4 May at the Wood Center on campus at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. Our theme will be "Coordinating Forestry and Wildlife Management at the Landscape Level". See the announcement in this newsletter or on our website.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game is in the process of drafting a strategic plan. This plan will direct the Division in prioritizing projects and programs for the foreseeable future. See the enclosed letter from Doug Larsen who is coordinating this effort.

Finally, in this issue you will find ballots for President Elect and Secretary Treasurer. Both candidates are running unopposed but not for a lack of trying. The elections committee (Thanks Tom Paragi!) turned over many rocks searching for willing officers and heard many excuses. Most importantly, we did get a couple of excellent volunteers. Please extend your support to Eric Taylor and Jackie Kephart by returning your ballots before the annual meeting.

Remember that the success of our organization depends on the active participation of all members.

News from the North

Submitted by Tom Paragi

In 1998, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) completed a plan for the northeast portion (4.6 million acres) of the National Petroleum Reserve - Alaska (NPR-A). Exploratory drilling has occurred in that area during the winters of 1999-2000, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002. In 2001, Phillips Alaska, Inc. (formerly ARCO Alaska, Inc.) announced discoveries in the areas of Fish and Judy creeks. Development proposals may be submitted to the BLM later this year. This area lies between the core calving grounds of the Teshekpuk Caribou Herd and the Colville River, known for concentrations of cliff-nesting raptors. The BLM has recently begun a plan for the northwestern and central portions (9.5 million acres) of the NPR-A, with the intention of holding an oil/gas lease sale in 2004. The draft EIS/plan is scheduled for release in December 2002, and comments on the draft will be accepted for 45 days from the date of availability.

The National Park Service (NPS) and Alaska Department of Fish and Game are proposing interagency efforts to better understand brown bear demographics in northwest Alaska as the scientific basis for establishing a bear management plan. After several state Board of Game (BOG) proposals in autumn 2001 to increase brown bear harvest in Game Management Units 22 and 23, NPS was petitioned by the Sierra Club to inform the BOG that increased brown/grizzly bear hunting in northwest Alaska is not applicable on NPS units. The NPS review of the harvest data and proposed changes in hunting regulations found a lack of need for emergency closure of bear hunting on NPS units in northwest Alaska at the present time. However, the review recommended increased consultation between state and federal agencies and further study of changes in bear demographics resulting from harvest in the region. There are currently proposals before the Federal Subsistence Board to liberalize brown bear hunting opportunities in portions of these same units.

The NPS has begun an internal review of policies and regulations concerning the use of ATVs. Efforts will include mapping areas where ATV use is known to occur and devising more intensive education efforts on land-use ethics, particularly hunting from ATVs.

Innoko National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), ADF&G, BLM, and the villages of Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk, and Holy Cross are having open house meetings this spring to discuss sustainability of subsistence use of moose, pike and salmon in the lower Yukon region.

Personnel changes: **Thomas J. Liebscher** became chief of resources for the National Park Service at Gates of the Arctic and Yukon Charley Rivers last fall. He previously worked four years for the Department of Defense and 24 years for the U.S. Forest Service. NPS wildlife biologist **Shelli Swanson** from the same office is leaving Alaska (again!), this time heading to Oregon. BLM recently created and filled an additional wildlife biologist position to address NPR-A issues. **Philip Mankin** of the University of Illinois has accepted that position and will start work in Fairbanks in May. **Merry Maxwell**, formerly the biological technician for Kanuti NWR, was recently promoted to assistant manager.

Jack Connelly, past President TWS, NW Section, Idaho Game and Fish Dept., will speak on sage grouse management in the western US on the UAF campus on Wednesday, May 1, 3:30-4:30 PM, Butrovich Building, Room 109. Individuals can contact Terry Bowyer at ffrtb@uaf.edu for more information.

News from Southeast

Submitted by Tom Schumacher

Southeast Regional Subsistence Advisory Council:

A meeting of the Southeast Alaska Regional Advisory Council to the Federal Subsistence Board was held in Juneau instead of Hoonah, as originally planned, because of bad weather. The board addressed several contentious issues. They passed a proposal to designate brown and black bears as furbearers instead of big game animals so their body parts can be sold. The board also addressed a proposal to restrict deer hunting in GMU 2 (Prince of Wales Island) to federally qualified subsistence users. This action would exclude a large contingent of hunters from urban Ketchikan who usually hunt on Prince of Wales. The impetus for this proposal was a feeling by some GMU 2 residents that they were having more difficulty successfully hunting deer in recent years. The RAC passed a modified version of the proposal restricting deer hunting in GMU 2 during August to rural residents only despite data from ADF&G's deer hunter surveys indicating that hunter success has remained constant over the last decade. Another issue that came before the RAC was shooting deer from a boat, which is not currently legal in Southeast Alaska. The RAC tabled a proposal to allow this practice because it would occur on State tidelands and waters. However, the Federal Subsistence Board may initiate a process to gain regulatory authority in those areas for subsistence management.

Alaska Bird Conference:

A large contingent of wildlifers from Southeast attended the Alaska Bird Conference in Fairbanks during the first week of March. Attendees included Kim Titus and Steve Lewis from ADF&G, Deb Rudis, Phil Schempf, Bruce Conant, Mike Jacobson, and Michelle Kissling from FWS, Ellen Campbell and Gwen Baluss from USFS, and Mary Kralovec from NPS.

Tongass Plan Evaluation:

Tom Schumacher from ADF&G completed a draft framework for evaluating the conservation measures for terrestrial wildlife in the Tongass Forest Plan. This framework was developed under a contract with the FWS, and a final report should be delivered by late March. Tom Schumacher and Kim Hastings from FWS began a focal species analysis for Southeast Alaska. The goal of this effort is to make use of the developing body of literature on focal species to identify lists of species that would be useful in evaluating various aspects of the conservation strategy in the Tongass Forest Plan. A final report should be ready by late August.

Coming and Going:

Long time Forest Service wildlife biologist in Ketchikan, **Cole Crocker-Bedford**, has accepted a new position with Grand Canyon National Park. Cole was a strong advocate for many of the conservation measures that were eventually incorporated into the Tongass Forest Plan with a particular interest in conservation of goshawks. A going away party was held in late March in Ketchikan.

Glen Ith was hired as the new USFS Petersburg District biologist.

News from Southcentral

No news from southcentral this time.

Organization of Wildlife Planners Conference Coming to Alaska

The Alaska Department of Fish & Game is hosting the 24th Annual Conference and Meeting of the Organization of Wildlife Planners (OWP), May 18-22, 2002, in Seward. The conference theme is **"Fostering Partnerships and Public Involvement,"** and the program will explore all aspects of collaborative approaches to public involvement in fish and wildlife management, from partnerships to resolution of specific conflicts about how wildlife should be managed. Also being offered is a 2-day pre-conference training workshop entitled "Building Agreement on Natural Resources and Public Policy" on May 16-17. Both the conference and the training workshop are open to natural resource professionals, and constitute a unique learning opportunity. For more information, contact Bill Romberg, ADF&G Sport Fish Division in Anchorage (267-2366) or go to www.owpweb.org and click on the "2002 Meeting" button.

Southeast Alaska Killer Whale Study—Sightings Needed!

The University of Alaska Southeast Sitka campus is currently doing a killer whale study. The study focuses on documenting and monitoring relationships between killer whales and Steller sea lions throughout southeast Alaska. **If you see killer whales in this region please call 1-800-478-6653 ext. 779, or 1-907-738-MOBY, as soon as possible.** Please report the number of whales seen, their location, the direction they were heading, the time they were seen, as well as, your name and phone number. For more information about this project contact Jan Straley, UAS-Sitka, at tfjms@uas.alaska.edu

Job Announcements

(send future job announcements to Kevin White at kevin_white@fishgame.state.ak.us)

Sorry, no job announcements this time.

ALASKA SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS (SAF)
ALASKA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY (TWS)

"Coordinating Forestry and Wildlife Management at the Landscape Level"

2-4 May 2002, Wood Center, University of Alaska, Fairbanks

The meeting theme describes the need for the forestry and wildlife professions to work together in resource planning and management beyond the stand scale. We have invited speakers from several organizations and regions of Alaska to help define challenges and opportunities so managers can discuss practical issues for implementing projects at the

landscape level. Statewide perspectives are being sought, although discussion will likely focus on how this topic applies specifically to the Tanana Valley in the Interior.

Wednesday May 1, 2002

1:00—5:00 SAF Executive Committee meeting in the large conference room at the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, 3700 Airport Way (northwest corner with University Avenue), Fairbanks--open to SAF members

Thursday May 2, 2002 (start of joint meeting at UAF)

7:45 —8:15 Registration (poster set-up can continue during breaks throughout the day)
8:15—8:30 Introductory Remarks (SAF Yukon River Chapter & TWS Alaska Chapter)
8:30—9:15 How to integrate day-to-day management with natural landscape conditions: Examples from the Kenai Peninsula. (Ed Berg, USFWS)
9:15 Questions
9:30 Panel discussion with respect to first presentation
10:20 Break
10:45 General Discussion
12 Noon Lunch (TWS business meeting 12:00-2:00)
1:00—5:00 SAF Business Meeting
2:00—5:00 Wildlife technical session for TWS members (open topic)
6:00—7:00 Icebreaker/Mixer (SAF and TWS); attendance at poster presentations
7:00—9:00 Joint Banquet (SAF and TWS) with Keynote Speaker
7:45—8:00 SAF Awards Presentation
8:00—8:45 Banquet Address: “Coordinating Forestry and Wildlife Management at the Landscape Level” (John Schoen, Alaska Audubon)

Friday May 3, 2002 (20-30 minute presentations)

8:00—9:45 Session: Road access issues in landscape management:
9:45—10:00 Break
10:00—12:00 Session: Riparian Zone Management
12 Noon Lunch
1:00—2:15 Session: Climate change and landscape management
2:15—2:30 Break
2:30—3:45 Session: Resource Inventory and Information Transfer
3:45—5:00 General discussion by participants: “What steps can we take, working together, to achieve effective landscape management?” (Alison Arians, ADNR-moderator)

Saturday May 4, 2002

8:00—6:00 Field Trip (Creamer’s Field, Twin Bears Camp, Granite Tors Trail, Chena Hot Springs)
6:00—7:00 No host dinner/snack at the resort
7:00—8:30 Travel back to UAF campus

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

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February 29, 2002

Dear Interested Alaskan:

We need your help! The Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, is involved in an effort to plan the future of wildlife management in Alaska. This strategic planning process began almost two years ago when Division staff met to develop and clarify our vision, mission, and guiding philosophy. Following this, staff work groups identified and made recommendations on issues associated with wildlife education, public service, nongame management and research, game management and research, and wildlife viewing.

Recognizing the importance of public involvement in the planning process, we met with a diverse group of Alaskans last June to further identify and refine wildlife issues and possible solutions. Information about this public session, along with information about our staff work group efforts, can be viewed on our web site, located at **<http://www.state.ak.us/adfg/wildlife/geninfo/planning/strap.htm>**. Also, on the back of this letter we've provided a list of the issues identified at the public session.

We were pleased to find a lot of overlap between issues we identified in our staff working groups and those identified by the public participants. While we hope this overlap means we have already identified many of the issues and concerns associated with wildlife management and use in Alaska, we recognize there may still be issues and concerns that we've missed. That's why we want your input.

The strategic planning process is an opportunity to influence the future of wildlife management in Alaska, and to ensure that the Division of Wildlife Conservation focuses its resources on issues and needs of greatest importance. We value your input and sincerely hope you will take time to share with us your wildlife-related issues, concerns, or ideas, along with possible solutions you may have considered. You can provide input either through e-mail (wscsp@fishgame.state.ak.us) or by postal mail using the enclosed pre-addressed form.

We will be asking for public input through April 30 and will use it to develop goals and strategies for dealing with wildlife management issues. These will become part of a draft plan that we expect to finish by late June. You will be able to review and comment on the draft plan through October. The final plan will then be used to help guide our wildlife management efforts into the foreseeable future, although, as a "living document," the plan can be modified whenever additional information becomes available and new needs are identified.

We welcome and appreciate your involvement in this effort. Only with your help can we most effectively manage and conserve Alaska's valued wildlife resources and provide for a wide range of public uses and benefits.

Sincerely,

Doug Larsen
Assistant Director

Issues Identified by Members of the Public

- June 2001 -

- Need balance between consumptive & nonconsumptive uses
- Need to rebuild, maintain, & protect wildlife populations
- Need better research and science
- Need more enforcement (to address issues like wanton waste)
- Need to increase public access & hunting opportunities
- Need for cooperative public participation/initiatives with land owners
- Need to develop conflict resolution processes
- Need to ensure a balance of viewpoints on the Board of Game
- Divided management between state and feds
- Predator control (predator-prey balance)
- Need to recognize the impact on wildlife and habitat from high-volume tourism
- Need subsistence priority use of resources
- Need co-management or equal wildlife management with Native entities
- High costs of tourism/wildlife viewing excludes all but the wealthy from participating
- Need to incorporate traditional/Native knowledge in wildlife management
- Need accessible viewing areas and opportunities
- Need tourism education materials
- Need to address tourism user group conflicts
- Wildlife marketing (unrealistically high expectations of tourists)
- Hunting/nonhunting user conflicts (displacement of hunting by wildlife viewing)
- Need broader public involvement in wildlife management decisions (stakeholder groups)
- Cooperation between agencies and nonprofits
- Ensure enough wildlife for all uses
- Balance needed between urban and rural needs and perspectives
- Need to develop partnerships for habitat conservation
- Need to identify and deal with human use impacts
- Need to provide hunter education program
- Need to provide wildlife viewing education
- Need to provide ecological education (improve public understanding of healthy ecosystems)
- Need to integrate ecosystem planning into wildlife conservation

2002 Membership Renewal

Current membership status is noted on the address label for this newsletter. Members interested in renewing their membership to the Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society should send their membership dues to Jackie Kephart in Fairbanks. If you renew through headquarters with your national and sectional dues continue to do so. This is the easiest way for us to keep our membership files straight. Our membership list is usually updated before each newsletter is sent, so hurry to renew your membership and you will continue to receive the Alaskan Wildlifer in the future.

Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society 2002 Membership Form

If you are not a member of National chapter and want to maintain your membership please fill out the form below and return it to Jackie Kephart at the address on the front of this newsletter. If you are a member of National please continue to pay your state dues when you renew.

Name: _____

Affiliation: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Numbers-Work: _____ Home: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

BALLOT

Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society, 2002 Elections

Return ballot to: Tom Paragi, AK Dept. of Fish & Game, 1300 College Road, Fairbanks, AK 99701

President-Elect:

_____ Eric Taylor (*For the past five years he's worked at USFWS, Northern Ecological Services, in Fairbanks. His responsibilities include assessing the potential environmental impacts of proposed projects in subarctic and arctic wetlands and recommending measures to avoid, minimize or compensate for effects upon fish, wildlife, and habitat resources. Prior to working with the Service, he served as a Wildlife Biologist with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. working on coastal wetland restoration. He received a B.S. degree in Wildlife Biology from the University of Missouri and graduate degrees from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and Texas A & M University. Personal interests include sheep hunting as an excuse for extended forays into the Brooks Range, creating innovative excuses for missed shots on the skeet field, and defending how he ended up with two cats (and not a black Lab) to his fellow waterfowl colleagues. He's married to Frances Mann, Regulatory Field Office Supervisor, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fairbanks.*)

_____ write-in candidate: _____

Secretary/Treasurer:

_____ Jackie Kephart (*She is currently the chapter's interim Secretary/Treasurer, having accepted the position last year when the previous officer moved out of state. She is familiar with the accounting and record keeping responsibilities of the position and would like to continue working with the new President in this capacity. Jackie works at ADFG as a wildlife biologist supervising the wildlife information center in Fairbanks.*)

_____ write-in candidate: _____

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c/o Jackie Kephart

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