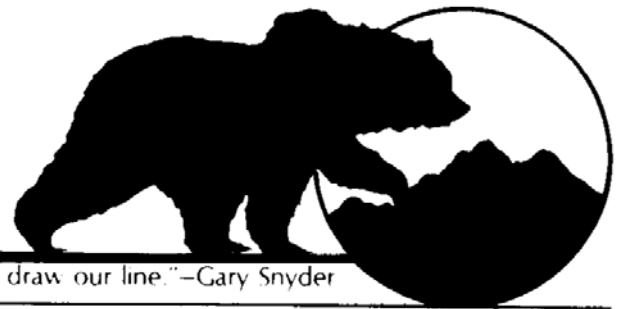


THE NORTHERN LINE

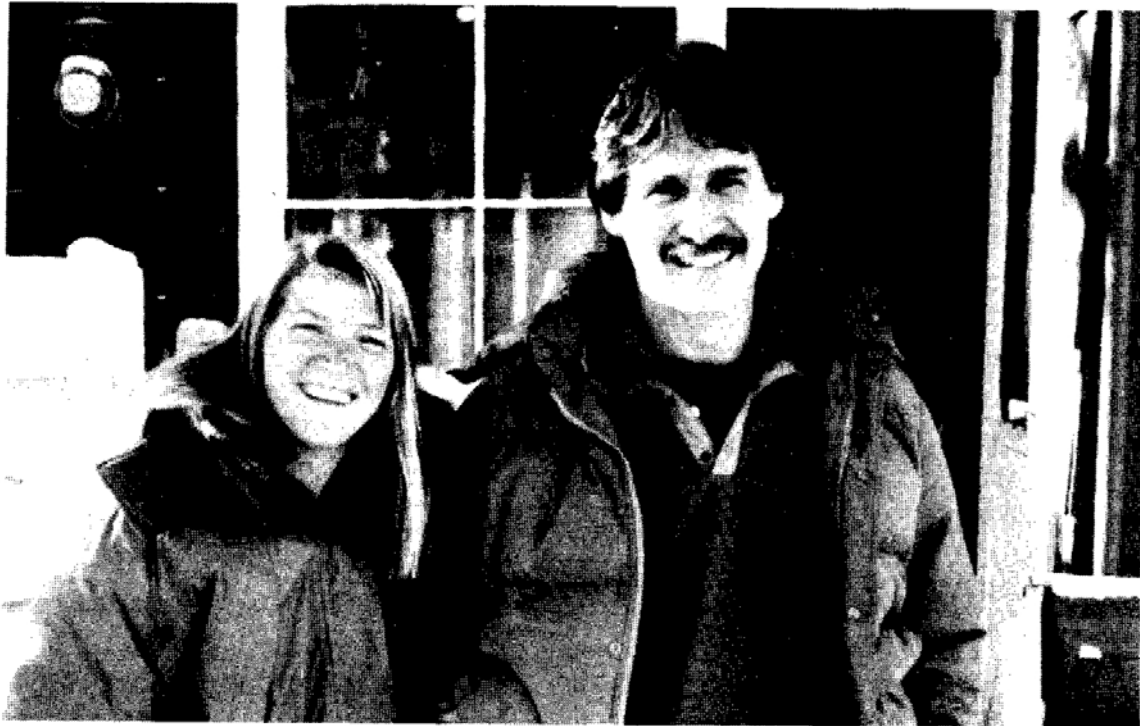
The journal of the Northern Alaska Environmental Center



"Behind is a forest that goes to the Arctic...And here we must draw our line."—Gary Snyder

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Last Great Wilderness Project staff Lou Brown and Glendon Brunk began work at the Northern Center in October, planning and coordinating the 1989-90 road tour. Both received awards for their work throughout the year as volunteers at NAEC's Annual Meeting in November. Glendon was named "Conservationist of the Year" and Lou received the "Volunteer of the Year" award. Photo by Mary Zalar

NAEC Launches 'Last Great Wilderness' Campaign

by Rex Blazer

Five years ago, people told the folks at the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council (SEACC) that there was no use trying to push Tongass reform legislation. They said there was no champion in Congress to lead the charge and that even if the impossible should happen and a bill were to pass both houses of Congress, it would be vetoed by an unfavorable administration. They counselled patience — to wait for a more favorable political climate.

Thankfully, SEACC didn't listen. Instead they took the fight across the nation — tirelessly carrying a message of Alaskans leading the fight for lands that belong to all of us. Now, as many of you know, passage of Tongass reform legislation appears imminent.

In many ways the Northern Center is now where SEACC was five years ago. It is therefore appropriate and imperative that in the brief respite offered by the recent desecration of Prince William Sound we embark on an ambitious new project to take the offensive and carry our message of wilderness for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge coastal plain to people all across this nation.

Throughout its history the Northern Center has been vitally involved with the Refuge. Indeed, the first meeting of what was ultimately to become the Northern

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Advisory Group to Chart Future Use of Arctic Refuge Rivers

by Larry Landry

Recreational use of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge has boomed in the last several years. International publicity and widespread concern over the fate of the 1002 area have brought an ever increasing stream of visitors, a trend which will likely continue. Greater use of the Refuge is beneficial because it expands awareness of the tremendous values at stake in the battle over oil development, but it also has its drawbacks. Most use is concentrated along river corridors, especially the Hulahula, Kongakut, Sheenjek, and Canning. Visitor traffic has already reached the point where the wilderness qualities of the most popular rivers are being affected — too many people, site damage at favored camping spots, and high numbers of aerial overflights.

Commendably, the Arctic Refuge management has halted entrance of new commercial operations on all Refuge rivers except the Porcupine (which is a significant travel artery) and initiated a planning process to manage this growth. Refuge managers have announced plans to appoint a Work Group to address the many difficult questions which will arise. The Work Group is to be composed of persons representing the full range of

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Last Great Wilderness Project

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Alaska Environmental Center was to lay out boundaries for a proposed Arctic Wildlife Range. Lately, the many Alaskans who support Wilderness designation for the 1002 area of the Arctic Refuge coastal plain have felt frustrated as we sat on the sidelines while the fate of the area was deliberated in Congress. The primary impetus behind our decision to hire Larry Landry as Associate Director was our conviction that Alaskans must play a more vital, active role in this issue.

To this end, we are proud to join forces with Glendon Brunk to present *The Last Great Wilderness* campaign, featuring a multimedia presentation on the Arctic Refuge issue.

Two years in the making, *The Last Great Wilderness* is a multimedia slide presentation that combines the work of twelve wilderness photographers with an original soundtrack and personal observations by Glendon.

Producer of *The Last Great Wilderness* and featured speaker, Glendon is a graduate of the University of Alaska in Natural Resources and Wildlife Management. He has lived and worked in Alaska for the past twenty-one years, has participated in caribou

behavioral studies in the Arctic oil fields, and has extensively explored the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. In addition, he is a former world champion sled dog racer.

We intend to travel to communities all across the country, as the defenders of the Tongass have, and educate people about the values at risk in the Arctic Refuge and how those who would develop this priceless area twist the truth to fit their desire for profit.

Our message boils down to one thing — empowerment. Recent polls show that Americans oppose drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and support more controls on pollution. Through the medium of this excellent show, we hope to give people not just the facts of the issue, but a sense of what they can do to get involved and make a difference.

The following article describes some of Glendon's feelings and hopes for the Refuge and the campaign. Glendon raised thousands of dollars to create *The Last Great Wilderness* show and has been on the road with it for one-and-a-half years. Through generous grants from the Alaska Conservation Foundation and others, we have been able to join forces with Glendon. We have also hired Lou Brown to network and to coordinate logistics of the road tour. Lou played a major volunteer role at the Center subsequent to the Valdez oil spill last spring. Welcome Glendon and Lou!

On the Road With *The Last Great Wilderness*

by Glendon Brunk

Traveling around the country with *The Last Great Wilderness* slide show during the past year-and-a-half has been a blur of cities and places for me. Seattle, San Francisco, Bismark, Bozeman, Providence, Portland, Manhattan and Queens, Boston, Ann Arbor, Detroit, South Bend, to name a few. In each place — even before the oil spill — the question was always the same: "How do Alaskans feel about saving the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge? I mean, what we hear most are the petroleum industry's claims and your Senators and Congressman (who sound like they're on Chevron's Board of Directors...)"

The rest of the country watches Alaska grapple with its environmental dilemmas. They want us to do things differently than they've done in New Jersey or California. They look to us to provide some beacon of sanity, some turning point where common sense and caring finally outstep the forces of greed. Many (not just wild-eyed tree huggers, but cautious, station-wagon-in-the-driveway-and-two-kids-in-front-of-the-tv citizens) want us to succeed. They say, "Show us, please, that you can honor the last best place in America."

As I've traveled with the slide show, the "what do Alaskans care about" question has

become my own. What do Alaskans really feel? What *do* we know deep inside, but are unable or unwilling to articulate? Have we really taken the time to inform ourselves about what's actually happening in the arctic, or are most of us passively submitting to the petroleum industry's slick propaganda barrage? Does Don Young, with his new swept-back hairdo, shiny polyester suit, and angry-at-the-earth attitude, truly represent our collective soul?

Two years ago when I decided to put together a slide show that I hoped would vividly demonstrate the contrast between petroleum development and untouched

"It's my firm belief that Alaskans are the key to saving the Arctic Refuge."

arctic wilderness, most Alaskans I talked to seemed resigned to the inevitability of oil development on the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Our state was being carved up and delivered to the oil industry on a platter emblazoned with the state seal. Environmentalists all over the country were on the defensive. Alaskans concerned about the arctic were being overwhelmed by development-at-any-cost forces.

But things change. If I've learned nothing else during the past couple years,

it's this: don't resign yourself to defeat before the game is over, because things can happen that one would never predict. Evidence of the petroleum industry's environmental arrogance can spill out in quantities too large to be contained by a tailored press release or a doctored scientific study. In unpredictable ways, the truth surfaces — and people get educated.

There's no doubt Alaskans have gotten educated. My "what do Alaskans care about" question was answered this fall as we toured Alaska with *The Last Great Wilderness*. Of course, there were the usual expressions of powerlessness, but

dominant among the responses was the same expression of anger that I've heard in the lower 48. Alaskans are angry about what they see happening to their state, and out of this anger many are also beginning to speak out.

It's a fine feeling to be working with the Northern Alaska Environmental Center and making plans to be back on the road again this winter, working with and supported by other Alaskans. It's my firm belief that Alaskans are the key to saving the Arctic Refuge. The strongest message that can be sent around the country and

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Arctic Refuge Rivers

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interests in river management, such as guides, hunters, and conservationists. This approach is an excellent method of public input if the group is properly constituted. Unlike many advisory groups, it will play a major role in developing the overall plan for managing the rivers. Additionally, there will be ample opportunity for public comment.

Needless to say, the Working Group will be faced with some important questions about the future of these rivers and the Refuge overall. Will maintenance of wilderness qualities be the paramount management objective? How will the number of commercial operators and their group sizes be limited? Will private trips have priority over commercial ones? How will inholding problems be addressed? Are additional wilderness designations needed?

The Northern Center has asked to be a member of the Working Group and expects

to be appointed, given our long standing involvement in Refuge issues. Many of the provisions of the Last Great Wilderness proposal submitted by the Northern Center in 1987 as part of the Refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan are also applicable to this river management plan. Important points from that proposal include:

- The superlative wilderness experience opportunities of the Refuge shall not be diminished.
- Management will aim to maintain these rivers in their pristine condition and to enable visitors to enjoy adventure, challenge, solitude, risk, and discovery.
- Commercial activities shall be limited to those that are necessary and appropriate for public use and enjoyment of the Refuge. When use of an area must be limited, those who come to do a wilderness trip of their own shall receive priority over commercial packaged tours.
- Inholdings which threaten wilderness qualities would be purchased on a willing seller basis.
- Helicopters would be prohibited for use

except in emergencies or when they are the minimum essential tool for biological research.

You may have received a mailing from the Refuge on this topic. Those who didn't and want to stay informed can write:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
101 12th Ave., Box 20
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Note: Shortly before going to press, we learned that Refuge management had reversed its earlier decision to close all rivers to new commercial operators. It has deleted all but the three most heavily used — the Hulahula, Kongakut, and Sheenjek — waiting for more use-level data on the others. Although we have been unable to obtain more details because responsible officials are unavailable, we are very concerned. This approach could shunt the increased pressure onto those rivers left open, leading to the same problems of overuse. It seems wiser to close all rivers and develop a comprehensive strategy for their future management.

The Last Great Wilderness Road Show

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ultimately to Washington, D.C. is that many Alaskans do not support development in the Arctic Refuge. Many Alaskans feel the Refuge is a place too special to touch regardless of how much petroleum may be there. It's a message that will be listened to if we speak out.

At the Northern Center, we are doing all we can to develop an effective national grassroots efforts to save the Arctic Refuge. One of the tools for doing so is *The Last Great Wilderness* slide show. In November, presentations are scheduled in the Yukon Territory, Seattle, and Northern California. Susan Grace Stoltz — Alaskan folk singer, songwriter extraordinaire, and the first Northern Center on-the-road volunteer — will join me in December for a series of shows in Montana. Together, Susan and I will tour the midwest during January, February, and March. At this point it looks like we will concentrate on Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, and Wisconsin. In the spring, Susan plans to head back to Alaska. Developments in Congress will determine if I will tour in Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, or New England.

You can help us put *The Last Great Wilderness* on the road. We have an ever-present need for help with fundraising. We are also seeking qualified volunteers (people who may have Refuge experience and would be interested in working full-time with the show at a later date) to travel with the show at key times. We're actively seeking the loan of a travel-worthy van or camper for the winter, ideally one located in the Midwest. We welcome introductory phone calls from those of you who may have promotional contacts, particularly in those states targeted for

presentations this winter, but also in other states which may provide good leads for the future. As the program develops, we will need volunteer help in the office with data entry, artwork, putting together promotional packets, and who knows what else!

Can you help? The Northern Center's new *Last Great Wilderness* hot line is 907 451-6479. Donations for putting the slide show on the road can be sent directly to the Northern Center, earmarked *The Last Great Wilderness*. Come join us and be a part of the Alaska effort to save the Arctic Refuge.

The Northern Line

Environmental News of Arctic and Interior Alaska

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NAEC is a nonprofit, environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the preservation of the environment of the arctic and interior Alaska and the wise use of our natural resources.

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