



The Alaskan Wildlifer

Newsletter of the Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society

February 2005

Message from the President:

Please review this issue of the newsletter which provides updates and recommendations on the draft bear position statement; the decision by BLM on the Northeast section of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska; agenda for the 2005 SAF-TWS annual meeting; approved criteria for submitting position statements; and a second request for involvement in committee work.

Draft Bear Position Statement Update

The draft statement published in our September 2004 newsletter (see <http://mercury.bio.uaf.edu/ak-tws/>) generated 68 responses from Alaska Chapter TWS members (> 25% of Chapter membership). Review comments ranged from disagreement on one or more issues (baiting, population reductions, sale of bear parts) to support. Not surprising, the greatest controversy centered on the draft recommendation to oppose baiting of black bears in Alaska. The Chapter will move forward to address all comments provided by Chapter members and develop three specific position statements or technical reviews. **Please see the article on pages 7-8 in this Newsletter for additional details.**

Proposed Oil and Gas Leasing in NE NPR-A

The Bureau of Land Management announced 28 January 2005 that oil and gas leasing will be allowed on approximately 4.6 million acres of the Northeast section of the National Petroleum Reserve, eliminating the former protection status defined as the Teshekpuk Lake Surface Protection Area. The change in protection status of this area of critical fish and wildlife resources is the first since 1983 when the Bureau of Land Management was given management responsibility for both the surface and subsurface resources.

The Wildlife Society submitted comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (19 August 2004; see <http://mercury.bio.uaf.edu/ak-tws/>) recommending that BLM adopt the No Action alternative to ensure protection of large lakes used by molting geese; habitats used by the Teshekpuk Lake Caribou Herd during calving, migration and insect relief periods; and wetlands critical to migratory birds during breeding, brood-rearing and staging. In addition to TWS, the No Action Alternative was supported by the National Audubon Society, Pacific Flyway Council, Wildlife Management Institute, Ducks Unlimited, and the California Waterfowl Association. The Environmental Protection Agency recommended the BLM maintain lands closed or under No Surface Activity restrictions as specified in the No Action Alternative. The North Slope Borough stated: "We are not aware of significant new wildlife or subsistence data, or industry technology that has been reported, discussed, and validated since 1998 that would justify opening areas that are now closed to leasing or surface facilities." The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined that avoiding surface disturbance in the most biologically sensitive areas, as presented in the No Action Alternative, would provide the greatest level of protection (and least risk) to wildlife, and was the preferred management approach. **Please review the article on page 9 for additional information.**

Alaska Society of American Foresters and Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society 2nd Joint Annual Meeting
The agenda for the SAF-TWS meeting to be held 21-23 April 2005 at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks is published in this newsletter. The meeting will merge forestry and wildlife professionals from across Alaska for two panel discussions--*Hazardous fuels and habitat needs in mainland forests* and *Dense regeneration and*

habitat issues in coastal forests--and a one-day technical session for oral and poster presentations on any wildlife or forestry topic. **A registration form is provided on page 12.**

Criteria Questionnaire for Position Statements

Based upon reviews provided by Chapter membership, the Executive Board approved the *Questionnaire for Alaska TWS Positions Statements*. It is published in this Newsletter and listed on the Chapter's website. The Executive Board adopted this questionnaire in January to standardize the process to consider and develop a position statement.

Chapter Committees

In my first column, I stated the Alaska Chapter can become more effective in influencing wildlife policy and management in Alaska through greater participation by members via committee work. Please re-consider your current level of involvement and determine how the Chapter may benefit from your time and expertise. Please review the September 2004 newsletter for a list of committees and needs. I extend my thanks to the following Chapter members who have volunteered to assist the Executive Board:

Dave Yokel volunteered to co-chair the *Conservation Review Committee* which will report on legislative proposals and bills; status of environmental assessment or impact statements; and other issues of interest to the Alaska Chapter (e.g., proposed oil and gas, mining, hydroelectric projects; boat harbors; land exchanges). The variety of issues and often short time frame for comments mandate a need for additional members to serve on this committee. An Alaska Chapter TWS member residing in Juneau would be especially helpful to work with Dave in reporting on legislative activities. Please contact Dave at dave_yokel@blm.gov or 907-474-2314.

Amy Kearns will co-chair the *Conservation Review Committee* with Dave Yokel and will co-chair the *Resolutions and Positions Committee* with Tom Paragi.

Mark Udevitz has agreed to chair the Audit Committee and will work with Tara Wertz, Secretary-Treasurer, to review financial records of the Alaska Chapter on an annual basis.

Dick Shideler volunteered to work on the *Bear Baiting Position Statement/Technical Review Committee* either as Chairman, Co-Chairman or member. Please contact Dick at dick_shideler@fishgame.state.ak.us or 907-459-7283 if you are interested in working on this committee.

Nancy Tankersley and Michelle Kissling have agreed to work on the *2006 TWS National Meeting Special Project Committee*, with Ellen Campbell and Co-Chairs Chairs Gino Del Frate and Howard Golden. Michelle is working with the TWS International Wildlife Management Working Group, to submit a topic for a plenary session. Please contact Gino Del Frate (gino_delfrate@fishgame.state.ak.us) or Howard Golden (howard_golden@fishgame.state.ak.us) if you are interested in working on this *Special Project Committee*.

Finally, I have agreed to chair the *Membership Committee* to help address the recent national membership decline in TWS, assess reasons why wildlife professionals in Alaska do not renew their membership, and work with students and beginning professionals. If you're interested in these issues, or have ideas on how the Chapter can recruit new members and maintain current members, please write eric_taylor@fws.gov or call 907-786-3846.

TWS National Meeting September 2006, Anchorage, Alaska

The Alaska Chapter has the unique and enviable opportunity to recommend subject areas for special sessions at the 2006 TWS National meeting. Howard Golden and Gino Del Frate spoke with Sandra Staples-Bortner, National TWS Meeting Planner, who suggested the Chapter prepare a list of topics and issues specific to Alaska that will be of interest to the national and international audience of wildlife professionals. **Please submit topics or issues that you would like to see addressed at the TWS National meeting to me (eric_taylor@fws.gov; 786-3846) by 1 March 2005.** I will compile the list and draft a letter to Dr. Robert Brown, who will be TWS president in 2006.

Wildlife Needs in Forest Management--Alaska Input needed

At its March 2004 meeting, TWS Council appointed a subcommittee to update and consolidate two existing TWS position statements, *Management and Conservation of Old-Growth Forests* and *Recognition of Wildlife Needs in Forest Management*, into one comprehensive statement. Matt Kirchhoff, who has been involved with Tongass wildlife issues for many years, has volunteered to coordinate the Chapter's review of the draft position statement. Please refer to the Nov-Dec *Wildlifer* for the text of the draft statement, or request a copy in

MSWord format from Matt. [Submit comments directly to Matt \(matt_kirchhoff@fishgame.state.ak.us\)](mailto:matt_kirchhoff@fishgame.state.ak.us). Matt's draft will be reviewed by the Executive Committee before being forwarded to National. Thanks in advance for your comments on this important position statement.

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[Editor's Note: Please make note of upcoming events, personnel changes, issues and projects, or anything of interest to other AK-TWS members, and pass them on to your section representative. Thanks.]

News from the North:

By Lisa Saperstein, Northern Representative

John Wright retired at the end of January 2005 after nearly 24 years with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG). John served with ADFG in Dillingham and Fairbanks, and also worked with LGL Limited for 3 years during his early days in Fairbanks. In retirement, John plans to build a boat, spend more time on salt water, travel the world, and fight a few conservation battles.

Dr. David A. Yokel of the Bureau of Land Management's Northern Field Office (NFO) in Fairbanks has been named the outstanding professional technician of the year by the Public Lands Foundation. The national nonprofit group recognized Dave's leadership as the principal wildlife biologist for NFO's Arctic Team, which is responsible for the surface management of the 23 million-acre National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. Dave played a key role in the development and implementation of a series of controversial management plans intended to expand oil and gas leasing while protecting the area's sensitive wildlife resources.

Refuge Manager **Bob Schulz**, of the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), retired in early August 2004. Bob began his career with the Fish and Wildlife Service in North Dakota in 1985, after serving in the Navy, National Resource Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service), and the Bureau of Reclamation. He and his family moved to Tok in 1991 where Bob served as deputy refuge manager of the Tetlin NWR for 10 years; he joined the staff of Kanuti in January 2001.

Mike Spindler will report in March as the new refuge manager/pilot of the Kanuti NWR. Mike has been in Galena at the Koyukuk/Nowitna National Wildlife Refuge Complex for the past 15 years, initially as supervisory wildlife biologist, currently as refuge manager. Mike earlier served on the Arctic and Selawik NWRs and conducted field work for his University of Alaska Fairbanks master's degree at Tetlin NWR. Mike is well known to the rural residents of the middle Yukon and Koyukuk river basins through his public radio show Raven Stories, in which he interviewed Athabascan elders to learn their traditional environmental knowledge and share it with the public.

Nathan Olson is a new wildlife biologist on the Selawik NWR, based in Kotzebue. Nathan graduated from the University of Montana School of Forestry and was a participant in the Fish and Wildlife Service Student Career Experience Program prior to joining the Selawik staff.

Ken Taylor is the new Executive Director of the North Slope Science Initiative (NSSI) at the Bureau of Land Management's Alaska State Office. Ken has worked for almost 25 years in many natural resource and energy positions for the state, most recently as the acting gasoline coordinator for the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. Ken will oversee the development of the NSSI, which is an instrument to integrate inventory, monitoring, and research activities across the North Slope of Alaska. The newly created interagency position is supported by the State of Alaska, Minerals Management Service, U.S. Geological Survey, NOAA Fisheries, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the North Slope Borough. Ken will work with executive members of federal, state and local governments having North Slope land trust or scientific responsibilities to ensure sound decisions are made to protect and sustain natural systems as the North Slope is developed.

Yukon Flats Land Exchange

Doyon, Limited, an Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) Corporation, currently owns 1.25 million acres within the exterior boundary of Yukon Flats NWR. Negotiators for Doyon and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Region, have agreed in principle to provide Doyon title to some refuge lands that may hold developable oil and gas resources. In exchange, the Service will receive habitat currently owned by Doyon within the refuge boundary. The refuge staff has completed an environmental evaluation of the proposed exchange. Public meetings on the proposed exchange will be held in Fairbanks, Anchorage, and six villages within the Yukon Flats in late January to mid February. For more information check out: alaska.fws.gov/media/doyon/index.htm

News from South-central:

By Anne Morkill, South-Central Representative

In March 2004, Dr. **John Trent** retired with 29 years of service as a management biologist and human dimensions specialist from the Division of Wildlife Conservation, ADFG. John is now working as a supervisory wildlife biologist in the marine mammals management walrus program for USFWS in Anchorage.

G. Vernon Byrd, Supervisory Wildlife Biologist, Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, received the Meritorious Service Award from the Deputy Secretary of the Interior. Vern received the second highest award granted by the Department of Interior for his 30+ years of research and management studies on the Aleutian Islands and Hawaii. Vern's accomplishments include serving on the recovery team for the Aleutian Canada goose, helping develop a monitoring program for seabirds and the marine ecosystem in the North Pacific, and for helping develop national policy for the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Aleutian Oil Spill

Chapter member Anne Morkill reports that staff of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have been working as part of the Incident Command Center in Dutch Harbor on wildlife response activities associated with the grounding and subsequent oil spill from the M/V Selendang Ayu freighter off Unalaska Island in December. The site of the grounding is located offshore of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, and resources at risk include the hundreds or thousands of wintering migratory birds such as seabirds, seaducks, and waterfowl as well as marine mammals such as sea otters, harbor seal, Steller sea lions, and orca whales. The Alaska Maritime NWR has also deployed its research vessel, the M/V Tiglax, to conduct pre-assessment surveys to design projects for Natural Resource Damage Assessment. For current information, visit the Unified Command's website at http://www.state.ak.us/dec/spar/perp/response/sum_fy05/041207201/041207201_index.htm

News from Southeast:

By Kevin White, Southeast Representative

Marten Research

ADFG furbearer researchers, Tom Schumacher and Rod Flynn, have recently completed a project focused on assessing the Tongass Land Management Plan strategy for ensuring marten population viability in old growth reserves. They estimated marten population density in old-growth reserves on islands of differing prey assemblages and abundance, while controlling for the effects of trapping pressure. Overall, marten densities were estimated to be lower than expected across the region. These findings are expected to have implications for future management and design of old-growth reserves on the Tongass national forest.

Tongass Land Management Plan (TLMP) 5-Year Review Process

Tongass National Forest staff have recently compiled a prioritized list of issues and concerns, received as informal comments, related to the implementation of TLMP as part of a 5-year review process. In future months, these topics will be addressed in greater detail by interagency working groups. It is anticipated that working group recommendations will ultimately be integrated into a revised TLMP. One somewhat independent aspect of this process involves a review of existing management indicator species (MIS). Specifically, comments have been submitted and a draft review of this program has been released focused on evaluating the efficacy of using certain species in this context.

Prince of Wales Deer Working Group

Beginning in January 2004, a working group involving representatives from federal, state, native and community organizations was convened to address issues related to subsistence management of deer on Prince of Wales Island. A key issue in need of resolution relates to inconsistencies in state and federal mandates relating to allocation of deer hunting opportunity. The overall goal of the working group is to develop a subsistence-based management approach that ensures long-term conservation of deer populations, enables subsistence users to meet their needs, accounts for habitat-based ecological changes that affect deer over the long-term, and minimizes adverse effects on non-subsistence users.

Beach Buffer Study

Dave Sperry (M.S. candidate, Humboldt State University), in association with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, conducted research on Prince of Wales Island to evaluate differences in reproductive success of breeding birds within narrow and wide coastal buffers. He worked in seven study sites within the Staney Creek and Polk Inlet areas. Preliminary analyses of reproductive measures have produced some interesting trends. Five of seven species he monitored were more likely to successfully produce young in wider buffers. Although he has not determined yet if nest concealment differed between narrow and wide buffers, previous studies have shown that reproductive success was positively correlated to the amount of vegetative cover around nests.

Outside Coast/Icy Bay Kittlitz's Murrelet Study

US Fish and Wildlife Service biologist, Michelle Kissling, recently began research focused on learning more about the spatial distribution and ecology of Kittlitz's murrelets on the outside coast of southeast Alaska. Surveys were conducted from LaPerouse Glacier to Ocean Cape during the 2004 field season. Beginning in July 2005, she will begin working in Icy Bay and will specifically focus on documenting the spatial and temporal distribution and abundance of adult and juvenile murrelets using radio-telemetry techniques.

General Announcements:

Comments Due on National TWS Position Statements

The deadline for comments on two draft position statements (Wildlife Needs in Forest Management, Global Climate Change and Variability) is March 1st. Both topics have implications for Alaska (see *Wildlife Needs*, page 2). The draft positions are printed in the November-December 2004 issue of *The Wildlifer*.

Release of Arctic Climate Impacts Assessment

The Arctic Council recently released the Arctic Climate Impacts Assessment (<http://www.acia.uaf.edu>) that involved collaboration of more than 300 scientists worldwide over four years. Several scientists from Alaska were authors or reviewers, including Dr. David Klein and Patrick Valkenburg. Key findings addressed potential effects of climate change on renewable resources, wildlife populations, and subsistence hunting.

International Polar Year

The International Council for Science is the lead in organizing an International Polar Year (www.ipy.org) in 2007-08. The IPY concept is an intensive burst of internationally coordinated and interdisciplinary scientific research and observations focused on the Earth's polar regions. A planning group is currently developing a science plan and strategy that includes educational components.

Global Climate Change and Wildlife in North America

The Wildlife Society publication by this name is the first comprehensive assessment of the potential effects of global warming for North American Wildlife. The report states "...there is sufficient evidence to indicate that many species are already responding to warming, and that animals and plants are already exhibiting discernable range changes consistent with changing temperatures." The two year review by 8 technical experts appointed by The Wildlife Society relates climate change to several topics: habitats and wildlife, primary productivity, plant chemical and nutrient composition, seasonality, sea level rise, invasive species, and pathogens. Case studies on amphibians, waterfowl, neotropical migrants and caribou are presented. Dr. Brad Griffith served on the Technical Review. *Global Climate Change and Wildlife in North America* (Technical Review 04-2; December 2004) can be ordered at www.wildlife.org.

Meetings of Interest:

41st North American Moose Conference

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks in partnership with Montana Chapter TWS is hosting the 41st North American Moose Conference to be held at the Grouse Mountain Lodge in Whitefish, Montana during May 22-26, 2005. fwp.state.mt.us/hunting/namc/default.html

2005 TWS Montana Chapter and NW Section Annual Meeting

This year's meeting will be held in Helena at the Red Lion Colonial Hotel, during the week beginning February 28, 2005. The theme for 2005 is "The Influence of Politics on Wildlife Management". The meeting is begun by a workshop titled "Wildlife Conservation on Private Lands". For more information, see the NW Section newsletter at www.wildlife.org/sections/nw/january05_newsletter.pdf. Although the deadline for application for student travel grants has passed, anyone still interested in student travel grants should contact Lowell Suring (208-272-4351, lsuring@fs.fed) to see if any grants are still available.

Evolution 2005 is a jointly sponsored conference of the Society for the Study of Evolution, the Society of Systematic Biologists, and the American Society of Naturalists. The conference will be held June 10-14, 2005 at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and is hosted by the Institute of Arctic Biology and the University of Alaska Museum of the North. See www.evolution05.uaf.edu

American Fisheries Society National and Western Division Meetings will be hosted by the Alaska Chapter in Anchorage, 11-15 September 2005. Meeting details can be found at <http://www.wdafs.org>

The Big Picture: A Forum on National Forest Watershed, Landscapes, and Ecosystems in Alaska 1-3 March, 2005, Anchorage Sheraton.

The 2-day forum will be followed by a day of resource specific meetings with USFS personnel and their partners and collaborators. The desired outcomes include improved understanding of large-scale patterns and processes as a context for resources planning and management; strengthened cooperation; and take-home knowledge and skills that participants can apply in their jobs.

The four sessions for days 1-2 include:

- *What makes our landscapes the way they are?* This is an introduction to dynamic processes that shape landscapes and ecological patterns in southeast and south-central Alaska, including: post-Pleistocene uplift, seismic events, climate, erosion, vegetation dynamics, and other ecological processes.
- *How do landscape processes shape the human environment?* This session will examine how landscapes have shaped patterns of human movement, settlement, and resource use in southeast and south-central Alaska, both prehistorically and today. Contemporary influences on urban and rural geography, transportation, and resource distribution and use are discussed.
- *Evaluating management results for watersheds and landscapes.* What do we measure, at what scales, and how does it add up to big-picture understanding? This includes discussion of functioning watersheds and performance measures for tracking watershed condition and trend (inclusive of physical, biological, and social components).
- *Practical examples from the field* (combined with an Evening Poster Session). A variety of projects in Alaska and elsewhere will illustrate the development and application of a big picture understanding to conservation and management of natural resources.

For more information contact: Michael I. Goldstein at mgoldstein@fs.fed.us or (907)586-7905

Draft Bear Position Statement: History, Status and Recommendations

Eric J. Taylor

History. The recommendation that the Chapter draft a position statement on bear management originated during the May 2004 Alaska Chapter/NW Section TWS meeting in Girdwood. The Chapter's attempts to involve biologists with research and management experience in black and brown bear ecology was initially hampered due to professional and personal scheduling conflicts during the summer. However, Larry Van Daele and Tom Paragi co-chaired the committee and pulled together input from individuals across agencies and regions from June-September to address three issues: baiting of black bears, population reductions, and the sale of bear parts. The original position statement developed last summer was 4 pages; the statement was also supported by a technical review of approximately 20 pages. Compared to previous position statements drafted by the Alaska Chapter and TWS Headquarters, the draft position paper needed significant revision to fit a 2-page format. To avoid the painful process of edits by e-mail and teleconference, I asked seven individuals to meet in Fairbanks to discuss and revise the position paper for membership review. The individuals I asked to finalize the draft position paper represented research and management backgrounds in brown and black bears; ungulate ecology; quantitative wildlife biology; and habitat management:

Larry Van Daele, (Co-Chair) Area Biologist, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Tom Paragi, (Co-Chair); Wildlife Biologist, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Dr. Frederick Dean, Professor Emeritus, University of Alaska, Fairbanks

Dr. David Klein, Professor Emeritus, University of Alaska, Fairbanks
Dr. Eric Rexstad, Associate Professor, University of Alaska, Fairbanks
Harry Reynolds, Research Wildlife Biologist, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Dr. John Schoen, Senior Scientist, Audubon Alaska

Tom Paragi and John Schoen were unable to attend but subsequently provided comments. I attended the meeting to establish objectives and act as meeting facilitator. Lisa Saperstein, Wildlife Biologist, Kanuti NWR, graciously agreed to record meeting notes. The meeting resulted in producing the draft position statement "Baiting, Population Reductions & Sale of Parts of Brown and Black Bears in Alaska" (6 September 2004).

As Chapter President, I want to assure all members that this committee was chosen for their experience and professionalism. Please note that this will also be the case for future endeavors. I thank the committee for their time and effort to produce the draft position paper, especially Larry Van Daele and Tom Paragi.

The draft position statement published in our September 2004 newsletter generated 68 responses from Alaska Chapter TWS members. Over 25% of Chapter members provided comments voicing enthusiastic support, significant opposition, and/or suggesting minor to major edits and rewrites. I forwarded each of the 68 reviews directly to the Bear Position Statement Committee. I then pulled out and categorized each comment from each review into one of the five classes: general; baiting of black bears; population reductions; sale of bear parts; limited. Identification of chapter members and references to their employer and their geographic work location were omitted and the five summaries (20 + pages) were forwarded to the committee and the Chapter's Executive Board.

Status. Review comments addressed the importance of baiting, population reductions, and sale of bear parts to hunting and outdoor recreation; subsistence; conservation of bears, ungulates and other wildlife resources; public perception of hunting and wildlife management; and hunting ethics. Clearly, the unprecedented response rate on this draft position statement indicates professional interest in these issues. However, the number of critical comments implies the Chapter either missed the mark in representing the views of members or failed to provide the necessary support and justification for positions.

Some reviewers also stated that the position statement was biased, contained unsubstantiated statements portrayed as facts, or reflected the personal views, emotional opinions, or values of the committee in lieu of integrating published science and existing data. Some reviewers provided specific references and data sets that should be examined and cited; however, most did not. Other concerns, criticisms, and suggestions for improving the position statement surfaced as trends while I read and compiled reviewer comments.

Many reviewers and several committee members recommended that three issue-specific position statements be drafted due to the complexity of the subject matter. I agree. The Chapter may also elect to develop technical reviews in lieu of the abbreviated format of a position statement. Technical reviews allow referencing published literature, agency reports, and unpublished data sets to clarify objectives, justification, and recommendations.

Recommendations. The Chapter will move forward to develop separate position statements or technical reviews on baiting of black bears; population reductions of black and/or brown bears to stimulate ungulate populations; and the sale of bear parts. This process will require three committees to address all comments provided by Chapter members; review published and unpublished literature, including unpublished data sets; and develop draft documents for review by the Chapter membership. **Please take this opportunity to support the Chapter by helping with committee work to ensure the revised statements or technical reviews are based on the best scientific data and represent the views of the Alaska Chapter.** Active participation, especially by individuals with professional and diverse experience in these areas, will result in an accurate and effective analysis to serve wildlife professionals, governments, and the public.

Committees will be assembled by 21 February with a goal to develop draft documents for Chapter review by 15 April to allow discussion at the statewide Chapter meeting in Fairbanks, 21-23 April. **If you would like to serve on one of the three committees, please submit a note of interest to me via email (eric_taylor@fws.gov) or phone (786-3846).**

Proposed Oil and Gas Leasing in NE NPR-A

Eric J. Taylor

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recently announced it will allow oil and gas leasing on hundreds of thousands of acres of previously protected land located in the northeast section of the National Petroleum Reserve Alaska (NPR-A). The decision by BLM will be the first to allow major development in critical fish and wildlife habitats within the Teshekpuk Lake Special Area, which was designated by the Secretary of the Interior in 1977. Although Teshekpuk Lake itself will be deferred from leasing for 10 years, seven tracts ranging from 46,000 to 59,000 acres each and encompassing the entire region north of the lake, will be available for leasing. This area was protected as a no-lease zone under a previous planning process that culminated in the 1998 Record of Decision. Development of this sensitive area would fragment critical calving and insect-relief habitat for the Teshekpuk Lake Caribou Herd and the most important goose molting area in the circumpolar Arctic.

Wetlands north and east of Teshekpuk Lake support tens of thousands of Pacific brant, greater white-fronted geese, Canada geese, and lesser snow geese during the flightless molt period. The area is unique and of international significance for North American and Russian populations of geese that are important to the nations of the United States, Canada, Mexico and Russia. Given what is known about the response of molting geese to disturbance, there is ample reason for concern about the effects of aircraft overflights and increases in predators likely to accompany development. However, the response of geese to industry-related activities cannot be fully assessed until after infrastructure is in place and in full operation, because there is no prior experience with oil fields in a major molting area.

The BLM will offer for lease all of the insect relief and calving areas of the Teshekpuk Lake Caribou Herd in NE NPR-A. Within each of the seven proposed lease tracts north of Teshekpuk lake, up to 300 acres of permanent surface disturbance (i.e., gravel fill) is allowed. In addition, linear features such as pipelines and public roads are permitted. The resulting network of roads, pads, airstrips and pipelines could interfere with the ability of the Teshekpuk Lake Caribou Herd to migrate to and from insect relief areas. The resulting change in land protection status could also significantly reduce calving success and productivity of the herd. Experience with the Central Arctic Herd has clearly shown that parturient cows are displaced by industrial activity and structures; it is not possible to reduce or mitigate disturbance of caribou during calving; and, no evidence suggests the Teshekpuk Lake Caribou Herd can simply move to another calving area.

BLM's proposed performance-based stipulations and required operating procedures are intended to protect important goose molting and caribou calving habitats while providing greater flexibility for oil exploration and development. However, the effectiveness of proposed stipulations and procedures remain unknown, as does the degree to which compliance will be achieved. Consequently, the ability to mitigate potential impacts will be hampered by: (1) difficulties in measuring wildlife response and (2) the scarcity of practical options for major alterations in oil field design and operation once production is underway. In this context, the intent to open essentially the entire goose molting and caribou calving areas to leasing and development, while relying on unproven stipulations and required operating procedures, poses an unacceptable risk.

The BLM released the Final Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Amended Integrated Activity Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for public review on 28 January 2005. The document is available at BLM offices in Alaska and at www.ak.blm.gov. BLM will sign a Record of Decision after the 30-day comment period. TWS will review and provide comments on the final NE NPR-A Amended IAP and EIS.

Questionnaire for Alaska TWS Positions Statements (Adopted January, 2005)

Article VII, Section 5 of the bylaws of the Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society (Chapter) addresses protocol for Resolutions and Public Statements (<http://mercury.bio.uaf.edu/ak-tws/bylaws.htm>). Two or more Chapter members must request a position be considered before the Executive Board will begin the process. The Board adopted this questionnaire in January 2005 to standardize the request process and determine if it is appropriate for the Chapter to form a committee and draft a position statement. Please review the mission and goals of the Chapter (<http://mercury.bio.uaf.edu/ak-tws>) before completing this questionnaire. Please limit questionnaire responses to one page for question 1 and one page for the remaining questions.

- 1) Identify the specific wildlife population or habitat concern in 500 words or less. Please include a history of the issue (including previous TWS action) and describe why it is inadequately addressed with current laws, policies, or management. If the issue is the result of a proposed action (e.g., legislation, change in land status), please indicate why the proposed change is of concern.
- 2) Have you or others attempted to resolve this concern with the appropriate agency or institution? If so, please indicate the organization(s) or person(s) involved, their position(s), date(s) and communication method(s) (e.g., correspondence, phone call, meeting), and the outcome.
- 3) Please list the intended audience for which this position is being written.
- 4) Please describe the intended outcome or result of the position statement (note: a committee may decide the issue or concern is more complex than first envisioned or that an alternative recommendation is more appropriate).
- 5) What are the positions of state and federal agencies, borough governments, Native communities, and other organizations (e.g., National Audubon Society) on this issue?
- 6) Please provide a date when the position must reach the intended audience and a reason for this deadline (e.g., prior to end of comment period).
- 7) Please provide contact information (address, phone, fax, email) for the two members requesting this review, describe their relationship to the issue, and note their willingness to serve on a review or position committee.

Joint Meeting of the Alaska Society of American Foresters and the Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society

“Challenges of managing densely-stocked Alaskan forests”

21-23 April 2005, Wood Center ballroom, University of Alaska, Fairbanks

The meeting theme describes the need for innovative thinking by forestry and wildlife professions to resolve interrelated issues of hazardous fuels, wildlife habitat, fiber supply, and sustainable development of communities in both mainland and coastal forests of Alaska. The organizers of this meeting have invited speakers from several organizations and different regions of Alaska and the western U.S. for panel discussions on 21 April to help us define opportunities for implementing potential solutions. **We are also soliciting abstracts for oral presentations and posters on any wildlife or forestry topic for technical sessions on Friday 22 April. Abstracts for oral presentations or posters are due by 1 April 2005.**

See <http://mercury.bio.uaf.edu/ak-tws> for more information, including the latest agenda and instructions for presenters.

Tentative Agenda: Alaska Society of American Foresters and Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society

Thursday 21 April 2005

7:30- 8:00 Registration and poster hanging

8:00-11:30 Welcome and panel presentations: *Hazardous fuels and habitat needs in mainland forests*

Forest ecologist Bob Ott, ADNR, Fairbanks (how forest health is related to stand type and age distribution in Interior)

Fire specialist Robert Schmoll, ADNR, Fairbanks (overview of fire risk and suppression challenges in Fairbanks North Star Borough)

Wildlife biologist Tom Paragi, ADF&G, Fairbanks (wildlife habitat values among forest types and age classes and ideas on how to provide them)

Community government coordinator Michael Fastabend, Kenai Peninsula Borough, Soldotna (incorporating risk of wildland fire while meeting societal needs for community development)

Products researcher Alan Brackley, USFS, Forest Products Laboratory, Sitka (overview of forest development sectors in Alaska, including small market options)

Energy consultant Tad Mason, TSS Consultants, Rancho Cordova, CA (options in biomass utilization for energy)

11:30-12:00 Panel discussion with audience

12:00-13:15 Lunch on your own and poster hanging

13:15-16:30 Panel presentations: *Dense regeneration and habitat issues in coastal forests*

Forester Mike McClellan, USFS, Juneau (alternatives to clearcutting in Southeast) and (second growth adaptive management on the Tongass National Forest)

Biologist Tom Hanley, USFS, Juneau (effects of coastal forest management on deer habitat)

Subsistence specialist Mike Turek, ADF&G, Juneau (how habitat changes caused by logging have influenced subsistence harvest on private and public lands)

Forest economist Forrest Cole, Tongass NF, Ketchikan (economics of second growth management and marketing)

Chemist Tom Clausen, University of Alaska-Fairbanks (commercial potential of phytochemicals other than energy)

16:30-17:00 Panel discussion with audience

17:00-18:00 Social mixer and joint poster session during banquet setup

18:00-19:00 Banquet dinner and awards ceremony

19:00-20:00 Keynote speaker: Dr. Paul Alaback, University of Montana

Friday 22 April 2005

8:00-11:30 Oral presentations in two concurrent sessions

11:30-13:30 Lunch on your own and TWS business meeting

13:30-16:50 Oral presentations in two concurrent sessions

18:00-

Alaska SAF Quiz Bowl for forestry students (tentative)

Alaska Chapter TWS business meeting continuation (if needed)

Saturday 23 April 2005 (tentative field trips):

- 2004 Boundary fire and visit to Poker Flats atmospheric research facility (<http://www.pfrr.alaska.edu/>) on the Steese Highway (fire management, wildlife habitat responses, historic gold mining, on-your-own lunch at Chatanika Lodge) - all day
- Chena Lakes Flood Control Project near Fairbanks (vegetation and habitat management) - half day

REGISTRATION FORM FOR JOINT MEETING:

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

“Challenges of managing densely-stocked Alaskan forests”
21-23 April 2005, Wood Center, University of Alaska, Fairbanks

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

E-mail Address _____

Phone #: _____ Fax #: _____

Name of accompanying person at banquet _____

Please check the appropriate spaces. Oral papers or posters on any forestry or wildlife topic are welcome. **Presenters and invited speakers should submit an abstract by 1 April 2005** to Todd Brinkman at ftjb2@uaf.edu. Instructions to presenters (call for papers) and the meeting agenda can be found at <http://mercury.bio.uaf.edu/ak-tws/> or <http://nrm.salrm.uaf.edu/~jfox/saf.html>. **Full-time students will be admitted free for technical sessions** but are responsible for the banquet fee.

I wish to attend and belong to: SAF ___ / TWS ___ / both ___ / neither ___
I wish to present a poster: yes___ / no ___
I wish to give an oral presentation: yes___ / no ___
I am a student: yes___ / no ___

Banquet options on Thursday 21 April--I would like to reserve the following number of entrees:
Salt Crusted Prime Rib ___ / Sesame Chicken ___ / Pasta Primavera ___

I wish to attend the field trip Saturday 23rd (details of field trips are found in the call for papers; transportation will be provided). The number of people attending a field trip will be:

___ ½ day-Chena Lakes Flood Project ___ full day-Boundary fire / Poker Flats Rocket Range

Registration fee (\$85.00; **\$95 after 1 April**) + Banquet fee (\$20.00 per person) = **Total** \$_____*

Lodging arrangements should be made directly through the Wedgewood Resort, 212 Wedgewood Drive, Fairbanks, AK 99701; 1-800-528-4916 or 907-452-1442. Single/double occupancy rooms are \$70/nt with additional persons \$10/nt (plus 8% bed tax). When calling please indicate group code DFG4205 to receive the meeting rates. **The meeting rates for 20-24 April are guaranteed for those registering by 28 February 2005, after that date by space available.** Wedgewood has free airport shuttle, and both Wedgewood and UAF are on the city bus route.

***Send registration form and a check made out to “Alaska Chapter TWS”** to: Tara Wertz, SAF-TWS meeting, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, 101 12th Avenue, Box 20, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

2005 Membership Renewal

Members interested in renewing their membership to the Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society should send their membership dues to Tara Wertz at Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, 101 12th Ave., Box 20, Fairbanks, AK 99701. Please consider sending your national and chapter dues directly to TWS National. 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 future issues of the *Alaskan Wildlifer* in the future.

Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society 2005 Membership Form

If you are not a member of the National TWS and want to maintain your Chapter membership, please fill out the form below and return it to Tara Wertz at the address below (note that Chapter dues are \$5.00 and can be paid with a personal check made out to TWS, Alaska Chapter). If you are a member of National, please continue to pay your state dues when you renew, using the form and procedure provided by National.

Name: _____

Affiliation: _____

Mailing Address: _____

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

E-mail: _____

Tara Wertz
Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
101 12th Avenue, Box 20
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701