



WILDERNESS WATCHER

The Quarterly Newsletter of Wilderness Watch

Volume 22 • Number 3 • Winter 2012

Arctic Refuge Plan: Wilderness Stewardship Must Be the Priority

By Fran Mauer



The coastal plain calving grounds of the Porcupine Caribou Herd would be recommended for Wilderness designation in Alternative E of the Draft CCP.

Photo: Fran Mauer/USFWS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) recently released a draft management plan for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska that will profoundly affect the wilderness character of this iconic Wilderness for decades to come. This new planning effort builds on earlier efforts to protect this area.

A half century ago, after years of difficult work by a small band of conservationists, Secretary of Interior Fred Seaton issued a public land order (PLO 2214), establishing the Arctic National Wildlife Range. The idea was to preserve an extraordinary diversity of life and landscapes like no other on the planet. In the

nature and its ecological processes have freely evolved here since the beginning of life on our planet. They envisioned a commitment by our society to keep this special place forever wild and free of human control.

northern half of the Refuge, mountains arch elegantly northward but leave a narrow productive coastal plain filled with coastal lagoons, deltas, and barrier islands. South of the mountains, the boreal forest transitions to taiga and finally to tundra.

The variety of landscapes hosts a corresponding variety of wildlife: all three species of North American bears (including land-denning polar bears), some 180 species of birds migrating from six continents and all 50 states, and two caribou herds that use the many different habitats for calving, insect relief, migration, and winter range. Caribou, moose, Dall sheep, and musk ox support a full spectrum of predators and scavengers such as wolves, grizzly bears, wolverine, arctic and red fox, golden eagles, ravens, gulls, and jaegers.

The Refuge founders realized that wild

In This Issue...

Arctic Refuge Plan	Page 1
In Congress	Page 4
On the Watch	Page 5
Essay: Wilderness— A Place to Unplug	Page 8
In the Courts	Page 10

...and More

Arctic Refuge Plan continued on page 3

insights from the President



Yesterday I paused when I realized how excited I was that I could now check out library books on my Kindle. Not that I am a techno geek. I don't even have a television. But I love books and magazines. I have rooms full of them. But using this new Kindle, I have morphed into someone I didn't use to be.

Wilderness, too, has morphed into something that it didn't use to be. More and more, new additions to our National Wilderness Preservation System allow activities or management tools

that would not have even been considered years ago.

Wilderness Watch continues to be the only national organization that strives to maintain our designated wilderness lands as the Wilderness Act of 1964 intended. This is a lot like fighting wildfires. New hotspots are popping up all the time, in multiple areas, and require time and a variety of actions. Specific incidents all seem related to the general trend to view Wilderness as something less than it should be.

Activities conducted in Wilderness must conform to the Wilderness Act. That's our goal. But we also want to instill the vision, passion and sense of responsibility that the authors of the Act brought to the process. Wilderness areas must provide the refuge and wild qualities that make them unique.

When you cringe at the too frequent news of the latest aberrations occurring in a particular Wilderness, or shudder at the latest proposal that weakens fundamental protections of the Wilderness Act, think about increasing your support for Wilderness Watch. Our small, dedicated staff does a remarkable job preserving the very definition of Wilderness. Our members express their concern and awareness by making donations. We thank you for this support.

Among the many magazines I have available in my home is the November 1, 2011 Atlantic Monthly, where an article by Howard Finch quotes E. O. Wilson: "Our evolutionary background has conditioned us to yearn for such things as unspoiled savannas and wilderness."

Wilderness Watch is working to see that we have that now and for generations to come.

Three Wilderness Watch board members who have worked hard for that vision recently cycled off the board due to term limits: Jon Dettmann, Stewart Brandborg, and Bill Worf. I want to thank them for their service to Wilderness Watch, and we hope all three will continue their involvement and support long into the future. Though all three have earned well-deserved accolades, the board wanted to particularly honor Bill by creating a new title for him: Founder and President Emeritus. 🌿

—Louise Lasley



The Wilderness Watcher is the quarterly newsletter of Wilderness Watch, America's leading conservation organization dedicated solely to protecting the lands and waters in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Board of Directors

Louise Lasley, WY *President*
Gary Macfarlane, ID *Vice-Pres.*
Susan Morgan, WA *Secretary*
Joe Fontaine, CA *Treasurer*
Jeff Kane, CO
Bob Oset, MT
Kevin Proescholdt, MN
Howie Wolke, MT

Founder and Board President Emeritus

Bill Worf, MT

Counselor

Jon Dettmann, MN

Executive Director

George Nickas

Membership & Development

Jeff Smith

Communications & Outreach

Dawn Serra

Advisory Council

Magalen Bryant
Dr. Derek Craighead
Dr. M. Rupert Cutler
Michael Frome
Fran Mauer
Dr. Roderick Nash

Wilderness Watch

P.O. Box 9175
Missoula, MT 59807
Phone: (406) 542-2048
www.wildernesswatch.org
wild@wildernesswatch.org

Arctic Refuge Plan (continued from page 1)

Fifty years ago, these conservationists envisioned the preservation of the whole northeastern wild, remote corner of Alaska. Later, they hoped, Canada would set aside neighboring wilderness across the border.

In 1980 the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) expanded the original Range to 19.3 million acres, designated Wilderness for about eight million acres, and added three Wild Rivers.

ANILCA fell short of designating Wilderness for the 1.5 million-acre coastal plain. But it did prohibit any further oil and gas exploration and development in the Arctic Refuge, unless approved by an act of Congress.

ANILCA also mandated assessments of fish and wildlife resources, potential oil and gas reserves, and the potential impacts of exploration, development, production, and transportation of oil and gas from the coastal plain. Running alongside the assessments for the past 30 years has been a protracted battle in the U.S. Congress, with advocates and lobbyists on both sides arguing either to open the Refuge coastal plain for development or designate it as Wilderness. The Arctic Refuge has been the subject of books, documentaries, and literally thousands of magazine and news articles.

Also during the past 30 years, visitor use and commercial services in the Refuge have significantly increased, in part spurred by publicity associated with the oil development controversy. During the first Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) completed in 1988, the public expressed concern regarding the already degrading wilderness character. Public comments noted more encounters with others, less solitude, an increase in human waste, impacted camp areas, and more aircraft landing sites. The agency promised to address these issues, but didn't.

Now, as we move beyond the Arctic Refuge's 50th anniversary, Wilderness Watch has seized an opportunity to re-affirm our commitment to keeping this iconic landscape wild. The FWS is now halfway through a public process to revise the Arctic Refuge CCP. The period for public comments on the Draft CCP ended on Nov. 15.

Guided by wildlife biologist Fran Mauer and our Alaska chapter, Wilderness Watch submitted extensive comments, and activated a list of nearly 70,000 members and wilderness supporters, many of whom sent in comments.

Wilderness Watch found reasons for hope as well as several issues of concern. We are pleased that the FWS has for the first time in the planning process completed a wilderness review of all potential Wilderness in the Refuge. The draft plan also succeeds in presenting a range of possible wilderness recommendations in the Alternatives. We threw our support behind Alternative E because it would recommend designation of all non-designated lands as Wilderness except for some areas adjacent to villages that are unsuitable for Wilderness. This includes Wilderness protection for the much-threatened coastal plain, and would bestow the most appropriate stewardship, Wilderness, for the entire 19-million-acre Refuge.



Spring migration of the Porcupine Caribou Herd across lands that are recommended for Wilderness designation in Alternative E of the Draft CCP.

Photo: Fran Mauer/USFWS

The draft plan also presents very well-drafted Goals, Special Values, and Management Guidelines that would require protection of ecological processes and wilderness character. These provisions emphasize allowing natural behavior, interactions, habitat, and population dynamics of all species to continue, unaltered and unmanipulated. Further, the guidelines emphasize managing wilderness recreation to maintain opportunities for visitors to experience solitude, adventure, independence, and freedom with minimal interference from management.

Wilderness in Congress

House Bills Take Aim at Wilderness Act

This is an era of extraordinary lunacy and short-sightedness on Capital Hill. Unfortunately, wilderness has not been immune. Two bills currently working their way through the U.S. House of Representatives would eviscerate the Wilderness Act, rendering moot the protections afforded by that visionary law.

H.R. 2834, titled the “Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage and Opportunities Act,” has as its expressed purpose to facilitate access to public lands for hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting. In reality, the bill would gut the Wilderness Act by opening Wilderness to all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, aircraft, and motorboat use for any activity related to hunting, fishing, or recreational shooting. The bill defines recreational shooting so broadly that one could drive any vehicle into Wilderness as long as he or she fired a shot with a rifle, handgun, or bow and arrow somewhere along the way. The bill doesn’t stop there. It also waives the Act’s prohibitions against building structures and installations, manipulating habitats, or using motor vehicles for any activity broadly defined as constituting conservation of fish or wildlife or recreation.

Yet there’s more. H.R. 2834 also instructs federal agencies to implement the Wilderness Act “only insofar as [it] facilitate[s] or enhance[s] the original purpose or purposes for which the Federal public lands or...unit was established.” In the case of national forests and BLM-administered lands, that would include logging, livestock grazing, mining, and other extractive uses. And it exempts all of these activities from analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The bill is so extreme that one wouldn’t expect it to go anywhere, but these are not normal times. The bill has already passed out of the House Resources Committee and is on its way to the House floor.

H.R. 2834 is sponsored by Rep. Dan Benishek (R-MI) and 42 co-sponsors. It is being pushed by the National Rifle Association (NRA) and Safari Club International. These gun lobbyists are attempting to use their gun rights arguments to undo our nation’s bedrock public lands and environmental protection laws.

Another proposed law, H.R. 1505, euphemistically entitled the “National Security and Federal Lands

Protection Act,” is anything but. The law would grant the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) unlimited access to gain “operational control” of all lands within 100 miles of all land and maritime borders of the U.S. It would explicitly allow DHS to construct and maintain roads, set up monitoring equipment, construct a border fence, and use vehicles on patrol. In order to ensure unfettered access and development, H.R. 1505 waives more than two dozen environmental laws, including the Wilderness Act, Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and the Acts establishing the national park system, national wildlife refuges system, and BLM-administered lands.

Millions of acres of Wilderness and national parks lie within the sacrifice zone that would be created by H.R. 1505 including the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, Bob Marshall, Great Bear, Stephen Mather, Pasayten, and Olympic wildernesses, and North Cascades, Glacier, and Voyageurs national parks. Many Wildernesses in the Northeastern states would also be subject to the whims of DHS.

A similar provision tucked into the so-called “Real ID Act” in 2008 has allowed DHS to waive environmental laws along much of the border with Mexico. The US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) recently released a report showing that border patrol activities have created more than 8,000 miles of vehicle routes across the Cabeza-Prieta Wilderness in Arizona. Some of these routes are so heavily used they resemble roads. According to FWS officials, the actual number of routes is probably double that because the data is a couple of years old. And like at Cabeza-Prieta, one can easily imagine DHS building major infrastructure in wild country many miles from the border.

There is no public benefit from this bill. Anti-wilderness and anti-public lands legislators are simply playing on border security fears to gut our nation’s bedrock environmental protection and public lands laws.

Wilderness Watch encourages you to contact your senators and representatives in Washington to express your concerns about these wilderness-destroying bills. 🐾

On the Watch

Upper Chattooga Wild & Scenic River Plan Would Lessen Protections



Photo: Georgia ForestWatch

Wilderness Watch joined Georgia ForestWatch in urging the Forest Service (FS) to protect the Wild & Scenic Upper Chattooga River in Georgia and the Carolinas. The FS is proposing to open 16.5 miles of the river to boating for three months of the year. The area, which includes part of the Ellicott Rock Wilderness, has been closed to all boating—both motorized and nonmotorized—for the last 35 years. This closure has helped protect solitude, natural conditions, and the wilderness character of one of the Southern Appalachians' last quiet places. WW is urging the FS to uphold the compromise struck more than three decades ago, which dedicated the lower half of the river to boaters and reserved the upper half for wildlife and quiet recreation.

Visit our website to learn more and read our comments: <http://www.wildernesswatch.org/issues/index.html#Chattooga>

Forest Service Allows Helicopters to Capture and Collar Elk in South Etoilin Wilderness



Photo: US Forest Service

By David Rak

The Forest Service (FS) has approved the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's (ADF&G) plan to use helicopters to capture and radio-collar non-native elk in the South Etoilin Wilderness in southeast Alaska. When a similar proposal was made in 2008, Wilderness Watch urged the FS to reject the plan, which included 12 helicopter landings to capture elk. That plan was suspended. Earlier this year ADF&G submitted the new proposal for a four-year elk study including 42 helicopter landings.

ADF&G introduced elk to Etoilin Island in 1987 when the area was a Wilderness Study Area. Congress designated the South Etoilin Wilderness in 1990.

The proposed action is not the minimum required to administer the area as Wilderness nor is the use of helicopters the minimum tool to conduct such a study. Landing helicopters in Wilderness to manage a population of non-native wildlife clearly contravenes the letter, spirit and intent of the Wilderness Act by degrading the area's wilderness character. Were it necessary to manage this elk population to protect the area's wilderness character, methods that don't rely on helicopters could be used, including ground capture, land-based darting, and/or observations.

Wilderness Watch has again urged the Forest Service to reject this proposal and withdraw its Minimum Requirement Decision Guide (MRDG). Ordinarily, the agency uses MRDG to identify, analyze, and select management actions that are the minimum necessary for wilderness administration. In this instance, the MRDG format doesn't provide an honest "minimum requirements" analysis for achieving the stated goal of researching elk population dynamics in the South Etoilin Wilderness. The Forest Service has simply rationalized unwarranted intrusion of aircraft into Wilderness. ❧

An End to Grazing in the Golden Trout Wilderness?



Photo: US Forest Service

Forest Service (FS) officials are considering permanently ending livestock grazing in the Golden Trout Wilderness in California as one option to protect its namesake fish. The trout is a candidate for the endangered species list. Genetically pure California golden trout are reportedly found in just 15 miles of streams within the Wilderness.

Much of the 300,000-acre Wilderness has been cattle-free since 2001 when the FS canceled several grazing permits in an effort to heal meadows and streams damaged by livestock. Two allotments, covering about 88,000 acres, were rested for 10 years. Studies have shown the rested areas are now in much better ecological condition than two nearby allotments that are still grazed. With the 10-year rest period expiring, the FS is considering whether to extend the rest period, eliminate grazing on all four allotments, allow grazing on all four, or any combination of the above.

We'll let you know when there's an opportunity to comment on the agency's plan. 🌿

Not an Emergency



Photo: Bob Winfree/National Park Service

Wilderness Watch recently took Forest Service (FS) officials to task for authorizing the use of a helicopter in the Bob Marshall Wilderness in Montana to “search” for a man who went missing more than a year ago. The FS allowed the Montana National Guard to land helicopters in the Bob as part of a search launched when hikers found clothes believed to belong to the missing person. While WW understands the need to search for a missing person, this was clearly not an “emergency.” Helicopters, in this instance, were not being used to save the life or health of a person in the Wilderness.

WW asked the FS on what basis they justified the use of helicopters and why searchers weren't sent in on foot or horseback. We also asked the regional office to review this action so that future non-emergency searches, or a continuation of this search, will not include inappropriate motorized intrusions into the Bob Marshall or any other Wilderness. 🌿

Damming Wilderness



Photo: US Forest Service

By Gary Macfarlane

Wilderness Watch and Friends of the Clearwater recently lost appeals to two decisions on dams inside the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness along the Idaho-Montana border. The Forest Service approved helicopter flights for both projects. One involves minor work on a small, earthen dam, which could be done by non-motorized means as the original dam was built without motorized equipment. The other is merely a small “catwalk” to a headgate near the dam. The old catwalk was constructed with a few poles, apparently from a small lodgepole pine or two. It is absurd to think a new catwalk has to be flown in with a helicopter when one person could easily construct one from material in the area. In the alternative, a new manufactured catwalk could easily be carried in by stock or people to be assembled on-site. Wilderness Watch and Friends of the Clearwater are considering

legal action to protect the Wilderness. Implementation is scheduled for next year. 🌿

WW Joins Suit to Protect Big Cypress National Preserve



Photo: National Park Service

Wilderness Watch joined with the Florida Biodiversity Project, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER), Sierra Club, and South Florida Wildlands Association in filing a lawsuit to keep the Big Cypress National Preserve's "Addition Lands" in Florida free of off-road vehicles (ORVs). The suit charges the National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Department of the Interior with violating the Wilderness Act, Endangered Species Act, the Park Service Organic Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act, among other laws.

The agencies want to open some 146,000 acres, known as the "Addition Lands," to ORVs. Our suit asserts that this ecosystem is home to nearly 100 state threatened/endangered plants and 29 federally protected animals, including the rare Florida panther, the Everglades snail kite, and the eastern crocodile.

As we reported last June in *The Guardian*, PEER began investigating the radical change in NPS's assessment of wilderness-eligible land at Big Cypress. In May 2009, the NPS declared 109,000 acres of land eligible for wilderness designation. Later, the agency revised its estimate down to 71,000 and recommended just 47,000 acres as wilderness. This quick re-assessment would allow ORVs to fragment and degrade this rare, wild landscape in spite of the fact that the overwhelming majority of public comments wanted Big Cypress closed to ORVs. 🌀

Let It Fade Away



Photo: Eddie Berry

Wilderness Watch is concerned that Forest Service (FS) officials have reportedly been talking behind the scenes with Congressman Jeff Denham about amending the legislation that established the Emigrant Wilderness in California, so that the Yellowhammer Camp can continue to be maintained. The camp includes several cabins, an outhouse, a barn, a hitching post, a corral, a pump, and a shower. Although Congress designated the area Wilderness in 1975, the FS has allowed volunteers to unlawfully maintain the camp since its former owner died in 1979. The FS acknowledges that a federal decision (successfully litigated by Wilderness Watch) ending the maintenance

of abandoned dams in this same Wilderness also applies to the camp. The agency was quoted saying, "The judge made the determination that no structures in the wilderness were to be maintained in the wilderness... That leaves Yellowhammer as naturally deteriorating." Rather than try to build support for the idea of Wilderness, though, the FS hopes to circumvent the law's protections. 🌀

Wilderness: A Place to Unplug

By Gary Macfarlane

“The temptation for wilderness users themselves to resort to practices that modify through convenience their own wilderness experiences is indeed one of the great threats to the maintenance of wilderness. When this temptation is used by administrators and other friends of wilderness areas to attract more people into the wilderness the result is a compound threat.” Howard Zahniser, 1949

Howard Zahniser, the author of the 1964 Wilderness Act and the single person most influential in developing the idea of Wilderness, was perhaps prescient. This quote foreshadowed, more than 60 years ago, one of the most insidious threats to Wilderness: technological communication gadgets. Cell phones and GPS units are the most obvious examples with the second generation of tech toys also including satellite and smart phones, notebook computers, eBook readers, digital cameras and video recorders, personal locator beacons, and MP3 players. And if that isn't enough, new devices formerly undreamed of are being developed right now.

By using these devices, the user diminishes Wilderness and the wilderness experience for himself and other visitors. Real time web-posting of trips to sensitive, “undiscovered” places can lead to overuse and a loss of solitude, which the Wilderness Act seeks to protect. Viewing photos and/or video of a wilderness spot online certainly diminishes one's sense of discovery and mystery upon seeing the “real thing.” The GPS-supported sport of geo-caching has led some people to leave illegal caches of junk and litter all over some



Gary is the ecosystem defense director for the Friends of the Clearwater, an advocacy group in central Idaho's Wild Clearwater Country. For nearly 30 years, Gary has been one of the country's most dedicated public lands' activists working

throughout the Intermountain West and Northern Rockies. He serves as vice president on the WW board of directors.

Wildernesses. Evidence suggests that cell phone use is increasing visitor requests for motorized rescues in Wilderness. Gadgets provide a false sense of security and people fail to prepare for the unexpected conditions inherent in wild places, rather than rely on self-sufficiency to keep themselves safe in wild country. And for those of us who value Wilderness as a place to unplug, meeting someone shouting, “Can you hear me now?,” certainly lessens our wilderness experience.

The agencies are also using these devices in Wilderness. They radio-collar wildlife, destroying the *wildness of wildlife* and *Wilderness*. There ought to be a few places where we don't poke, prod, and collar wildlife, where they can live out their lives as wild creatures, and where our science is done the way Aldo Leopold used to do it: with a notebook and field observation. If not in Wilderness, then where? Neither should human visitors be tagged and collared with miniature satellite tracking devices on backpacks, even if agencies believe doing so will improve user management in Wilderness.

A few years ago the idea of radio collars for humans would have been considered absurd. Already, there are chips embedded in drivers licenses and passports. All too soon, visitors may be required to carry tracking beacons, at least in certain areas. Thus we will be, in effect, tracked and collared wherever we wander. This will be sold as a safety device and a way to better provide a “quality” wilderness experience. All it would take would be a location chip embedded into the wilderness permit, something the agencies have begun discussing in the name of “safety.”

As usual, the agencies and most environmental groups are way behind the curve on this major wilderness threat. The outdoor industry's ag-

gressive marketing and promoting of gadgets certainly doesn't help. Indeed, some environmentalists may support and see nothing wrong with the use of these wilderness-destroying technologies.

Aldo Leopold and Howard Zahniser both issued warnings against technology in wilderness. Leopold despised the technology of his day—guidebooks and hunting gadgets. How far we have sunk in the decades since his death! The academic community issued a direct warning, in 1998, about the very kinds of devices that have proliferated (see "Wilderness @ Internet: Wilderness in the 21st Century—Are There Technical Solutions to our Technical Problems?" Wayne Freimund and Bill Borrie, *International Journal of Wilderness* Volume 3 Number 4, pp. 21-23). The few warning voices in the environmental movement have been literal voices crying in the Wilderness. Scott Silver of Wild Wilderness has written passionately about this problem. Wilderness Watch addressed the issue at a conference in the late 90s when the threat was emerging.

You can do something for Wilderness to keep it wild. Don't take tech toys on your next wilderness visit. Instead, learn outdoor survival and route-finding skills and be prepared for the unexpected. Learn how to read a map or better yet, navigate by sight or teach yourself to follow a rough game trail. You will be amazed by how much you may experience if you are not always consulting that small luminous screen. Perhaps you will catch a glimpse of a wolf, hear a hummingbird fly by, smell the decomposing leaves on a wet forest floor. Your wilderness experience will be real and authentic if you shed the gadgets. Not only you, but wilderness itself deserves no less. ❧

Well-Deserved Recognition

Wilderness Watch's executive director, George Nickas, was recently



awarded the Plank Award from Friends of the Clearwater (FOC). George was bestowed with this lifetime achievement award at FOC's annual

meeting on November 5 for his work to protect wild places and native species in the Northern Rockies. Prior to joining Wilderness Watch as policy coordinator in 1996, George served 11 years as a natural resource specialist and assistant coordinator for the Utah Wilderness Association. Thanks, George, for all your incredible work over the decades. ❧

Board Member News

At our fall meeting, Wilderness Watch elected new officers:

- Louise Lasley, President
- Gary Macfarlane, Vice President
- Joe Fontaine, Treasurer
- Susan Morgan, Secretary

Jon Dettmann, our outgoing president, was named Counselor. The Board also bestowed Bill Worf with the title of Founder and President Emeritus. ❧

But, our review of the Draft CCP found a major deficiency in its failure to address the longstanding problem of impacts to wilderness character due to excessive visitor use in some parts of the Refuge. Over the past decades, many have repeatedly urged the FWS to implement management measures that would effectively preserve wilderness character. The Draft CCP recommends no limits on commercial air taxi operators and commercial recreational guides permitted in the Refuge.

The number of permitted commercial operators has increased from 7 in 1980 to nearly 40 in 2008, yet the draft proposes that regulation be determined through “step down” plans. The agency wants to complete wilderness stewardship and visitor use plans over the next 10 years. This is entirely unacceptable, and, given the FWS’s failure to fulfill its commitment during the first planning process some 23 years ago, it’s likely the agency won’t take any meaningful actions to correct the serious degradation of wilderness character occurring in the Arctic Refuge.

Soon after establishment of the Arctic National Wildlife Range, one of the founders, Olaus Murie, reflected upon the intention for this area:

I would like to just add here the impression I received from the many Alaskans we talked with...all agreed that this was not just another economic project, to promote mass recreation ...It should not be placed in bureaus intent on over-development. It was concluded that it would have the least development if we put it in the Fish and Wildlife Service. I hope we were right.

(Olaus J. Murie letter to Darrell Watt, 1963).

Wilderness Watch intends to scrutinize the Final CCP to make sure it includes an effective wilderness stewardship program implemented in a timely manner. We will also evaluate possible legal action if the agency comes up short.

To read Wilderness Watch’s comments go to <http://wildernesswatch.org/issues/index.html#Arctic> 

Wilderness in the Courts

Federal Judge Stops Stream Poisoning in Carson-Iceberg Wilderness

Wilderness Watch and co-plaintiffs (Californians for Alternatives to Toxics, and Friends of Silver King Creek) have successfully challenged the California Department of Fish and Game’s (CDFG) proposal to poison 11 miles of Silver King Creek in the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness. U.S. District Judge Frank Damrell, Jr. ruled in September to permanently stop the project, finding that poisoning an entire ecosystem to benefit one species over all others is incompatible with preserving Wilderness. The CDFG planned to poison the stream to kill non-native fishes that it planted in the stream for several decades so it could then stock the waters with Paiute cutthroat trout (PCT).

In essence, the court adopted the position advocated by Wilderness Watch and our co-plaintiffs. We did not oppose removing the non-native fishes. We argued instead that it must be done in a manner that does not cause greater harm to the aquatic ecosystem. There is a good deal of controversy as to whether the stretch of Silver King Creek slated for poisoning lies within the native range of the PCT, but regardless of the answer, wiping out other native species, some of which may exist nowhere

else, hardly qualifies as restoration. As the court noted, “Despite the benefits gained from restoring a PCT population, accounting for the potential loss of endemic species would create a net, *negative* impact; the loss of primitive species would depreciate the wilderness character of the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness.” (emphasis in original).

It was the third time CDFG had proposed the project, and the third time it was shut down, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service joining CDFG in this latest effort. The Forest Service authorized CDFG to use motorized equipment as part of the poisoning effort, but the court also found that authorization illegal: “At bottom, instead of choosing one competing value (conservation of the PCT) over the other (preservation of the wilderness character), the Agencies left native species, including invertebrates, out of the balance, and thus, improperly concluded that authorization of motorized equipment will comply with the Act by achieving the purpose of preserving wilderness character.”

The government has indicated it might appeal the district court’s ruling. We’ll take up that challenge, too. 

A Look Back at a Successful Year *By Jeff Smith*



Is it any surprise that these short days and long nights of the winter solstice produce self-examination? Most of our outdoor things have been put to bed. We're indoors now, the days tending toward the monochromatic, with darkness greeting most of our comings and goings. So what have we accomplished this year?

Our director George Nickas recently pointed to five prominent successes:

- Federal judge Frank Damrell, Jr. told the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and a state agency they couldn't poison 11 miles of Silver King Creek in the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness in California.
- The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that FWS violated the Wilderness Act when it drove backhoes into the Kofa Wilderness in Arizona to build two 13,000-gallon artificial watering tanks.
- In the million-acre Unimak Wilderness, our comments and those of our members and friends convinced FWS to stop the State of Alaska's plan to shoot adult wolves from the air and gas pups in their dens in an effort to artificially increase caribou numbers.

- In the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Minnesota, after more than a decade of challenges by Wilderness Watch and others, the Forest Service finally ceased efforts to expand motorboat use.
- We alerted 70,000 wilderness advocates to submit comments during the planning process for the 19-million-acre Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, encouraging FWS to expand wilderness protections to all of the Refuge, including the arctic coastal plain, long coveted by Exxon and BP.

Those are just the headlines. The fine print includes literally hundreds of comments sent to oppose rogue projects that would degrade wilderness—or to support projects that advance protections. Also, we've built our educational outreach. Dawn Serra now routinely communicates with tens of thousands of wilderness advocates through online newsletters, action alerts, and postings on social networks. We've published a book on reclaiming the legacy of wilderness, plus many, many letters-to-the-editor, blogs, and news stories about our work.

And I must also mention George's honor, receiving the Plank Award from a colleague grassroots organization, Friends of the Clearwater in Idaho (see page 9).

Your support has made all this possible, and we thank you. 

LOVE THE WILDERNESS? Help Us Keep It Wild!

Yes! I would like to make a contribution and help defend Wilderness!

Here is an extra donation to help protect Wilderness!

\$250 \$100 \$50 \$30 \$ _____

I would like to become a member!

\$30 \$50 \$500 \$15 \$ _____
Regular Contributor Lifetime Living Lightly Other

My check or money order is enclosed.

Please charge my: Visa MasterCard

Card # _____

Exp. Date ___ / ___ / ___

Please send information about the **Wilderness Legacy Donor Program.**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

(to receive our monthly e-mail update)

**Please make checks payable to:
"Wilderness Watch"**

Mail to:
P.O. Box 9175
Missoula, MT 59807



NON-PROFIT
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Missoula, MT
Permit No. 569

Wilderness Watch
P.O. Box 9175
Missoula, MT 59807
p: (406) 542-2048
www.wildernesswatch.org

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Printed on 100% recycled,
unbleached paper

Wilderness Watch's Big Night Out



For the second year in a row Wilderness Watch hosted the Wild & Scenic Film Festival at Missoula's grand old Wilma Theater. An audience of 300 people watched 10 films, including "Disturbance," a local film that looked at the benefits of wildlands fire, and "Spoil," which received rave reviews for presenting British Columbia's threatened Great Bear Rainforest and its spirit bears. Other films told stories about Mount Kilimanjaro and the Yellowstone River and showed the ecstasy of high mountain skiing and white-water kayaking.



Wilderness guide and Wilderness Watch board member Howie Wolke traveled from his home outside Yellowstone National Park to welcome the audience and spoke vividly about the stark contrast between wilderness that's managed for its wild character and ecosystems degraded by overuse and neglect.

We owe a great debt of thanks to 19 businesses that helped us sponsor this year's festival, and kudos to Missoula's outdoor gear store, the Trail Head, which hosted a pre-festival reception for 45 local Wilderness Watch members. 

*Film stills from "The Fishman" and "Witness,"
shown at the Wild & Scenic Film Festival.*