NPS Fire Management Creates Unique Partnership

NPS Fire and Aviation at the National Interagency Fire Center collects, compiles, posts online (http://www.nps.gov/fire), and publishes a booklet, *People, Parks and Fire...Better Together* on success stories of the National Fire Plan. This year the Alaska submission highlighted the uniqueness of Alaska: which resides in its sub-arctic and arctic ecosystems, expansive geography and cultural history. The Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan was born from these unique factors. In the late 1970s, land and fire management professionals realized that not all fires could be put out because of Alaska's immense size as well as the cost. In some cases, the effort to extinguish the fire was more harmful to the environment than the fire itself.

Objectives of the wildland fire plan were to: 1) protect human life and specific resources and 2) allow fire to fulfill its natural ecological role. Along with these objectives, the interagency fire plan demanded constant communication and long-term partnerships between six agencies. The Alaska Bureau of Land Management—Alaska Fire Service, US Forest Service, and State of Alaska Division of Forestry work together as the three "fire suppression" agencies. Personnel from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs and the National Park Service are called upon when needed to assist in fire suppression. The National Park Service also sets fire suppression priorities for the suppression agencies and conducts hazard fuel mitigation, prescribed burns, fire prevention, and education.

Fire at Taylor's Cabin on the Yukon River

In 2001 NPS Eastern Area Fire Management reflected the interagency ideals of partnerships through effective communication and forged a new partnership with NPS Cultural Resources. The partnership was formed to protect Alaska's cultural resources from wildland fire by giving the suppression agencies fire suppression priorities for cultural resources. **Visit http://www.nps.gov/fire/success/2002/akro.htm** to read the complete story and view a map and photos.

Photograph courtesy of Karen Ward

There are an estimated 60 wolves that spend at least some of their time within the boundaries of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve.

Wolves On-Line

The recently published 2002 study titled: *Ecology and Demography of Wolves in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, Alaska* by John Burch is available online. The study provides a synopsis of research and work on the wolves of Yukon-Charley (YUCH) over the last decade.

In 1994 the Fortymile Planning Team was formed and plans for wolf reductions in conjunction with curtailed harvest by humans of Fortymile caribou were made.

During the winters of 1995-96 and 1996-97 a privately funded wolf trapping effort was initiated. This private wolf trapping incentive program paid $400 for the hide of any wolf trapped within a specified area. At the time, local fur buyers were paying an average of about $200 for wolf hides. Most of these trapped wolves were outside of the calving range, but included packs within some of the Fortymile Caribou Herd's (FCH) summer and winter ranges.

From November 1997 through April 2001, 15 packs were reduced to sterilized pairs by Alaska Department of Fish and Game and maintained that way for five years. In the five year period, 41 wolves were sterilized and 120 were relocated; however, no wolves living primarily within the preserve boundaries were sterilized or relocated. The wolf reduction effort effectively reduced the wolf population by 80% throughout much of the calving grounds of the FCH. Five packs of wolves were excluded from the sterilization and relocation program because the Planning Team decided that they lived primarily within the preserve. Ten to 12 packs of wolves have some or most of their home range within Yukon-Charley, but only the five packs inhabiting the Charley River drainage had the potential to have been sterilized and relocated. Members of those five packs were not sterilized or relocated no matter where or how far they ranged outside the preserve boundary.

The FCH has long been a subject of interest to biologists. In 1920 biologist Olaus Murie estimated the herd to number 568,000 caribou, ranging from Whitehorse, Yukon Territory to the White Mountains north of Fairbanks. In the 1930s, the population dropped to an estimated 10,000 to 20,000 caribou. The cause of that dramatic decline is unknown, but suspicions include overharvest and food limitations due to range depletion and fires.

During the 1940s and 1950s the herd increased again to perhaps as many as 60,000. From an estimated 50,000 animals in 1963, the herd size dropped dramatically to 6500 animals in 1973 and stopped crossing the Steese Highway. The cause of this decline was attributed to a combination of overharvest by people, bad weather conditions and heavy predation by wolves and bears. Starting in 1976 the herd began to increase slowly to over 22,000 by 1990 and were roughly stable at 22,000-23,000 through 1995. Following the Fortymile Planning Team's 1994 plan of reduced wolf population and harvest by humans, from 1995 through 2001 the herd grew to nearly 40,000 animals.

The study can be found at the following **site: http://www.nps.gov/yuch/Expanded/key_resources/2002_wolf_report/2002wolfreport.htm .**

Photograph courtesy of Kenman Ward

Although rarely seen, these beautiful animals range throughout Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve and are a part of a large, continuous wolf population that range throughout most of Alaska and Canada.

Alaska connection to New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park in Massachusetts

Herman Melville enthusiasts dropped anchor in New Bedford, Massachusetts on January, 2003 to recite the novel *Moby Dick* in the 7th Annual *Moby Dick* Marathon. The marathon has been held annually since its creation in 1997, commemorating New Bedford's most famous former resident, Herman Melville, who wrote the classic in 1851. People of all walks of life, professions, and languages participated in the 25 hour event. Not everyone is merely an enthusiast, or classics fan — Melville's great grandson has attended every reading since its onset. The marathon reading is the brainchild of Irwin Marks, a volunteer octogenarian of New Bedford.

The 2003 reading was in English, Iñupiaq, Portuguese, German, Japanese, and Danish. The novel has been translated and printed into all the languages represented at the reading this year with the exception of Iñupiaq. After a partnership was formed in 1999 between the Alaska Regional Office and the New Bedford park, Herbert Anungazuk, a cultural anthropologist for the Alaska Regional Office, was tasked with translating sections of the novel into Iñupiaq, in order to have an Alaska Native language represented at future marathons. The translation was hampered by the fact that Melville's English and the English of today are so dissimilar. Translating into Iñupiaq became even more difficult. Finally, after realizing that *Moby Dick* is about whaling and that Iñupiaq whaling is whaling in truth form, Anungazuk was able to paste Iñupiaq ways over the ways of Melville. At this year's marathon, Anungazuk read from the final pages of chapter 48, The First Lowering, since the launching of a boat in chase of a whale is always a period of high expectation for the Iñupiaq people.

National Park Service photograph

Herbert Anungazuk reading his Iñupiaq translation.

Whaling is an activity that interests man, woman, and child alike, especially in northern latitudes because of the continuance of indigenous whaling. It is an activity that is indelibly etched into a whole community. When the time to whale comes, those who are masters of the hunt do so with quietude and respect. They honor the mammal that is seen as the ultimate of species, which provides for their community's sustenance. *Whale, whale; an amulet or an icon, not of worship, but of respect. Whale, whale; ancient stories, ancient beliefs.* To sight a whale is a stunning experience, and it must have been just as much so for Captain Roys whose expressed purpose in his whaling endeavors was monetary gain.

In July 1848, Captain Thomas Roys of the whaling bark Superior, located a new whaling field for New Bedford ships in the Bering Strait, Chukchi Sea, and Arctic Ocean. Numerous ships sailed from New Bedford to these new areas, often hiring local men as guides, general help, or for other positions aboard the whaling ships. At the completion of the whaling season in the fall, the weather did not allow some men to return home. Many men, including Anungazuk's namesake, told stories of far away places — San Francisco, Honolulu, or other ports-of-call.

Anungazuk was interested in learning about ancestors who may have been aboard whaling vessels during the time that whaling was actively pursued in northern seas. The logs of whaling ships may contain information formerly unknown to the descendants of men who accompanied the whaling vessels. The book, *Whales, Ice, and Men,* by John R. Bockstoce contributed to this effort since it describes the history of the ships that plied northern waters in quest of whales. The Kendall Institute Library in New Bedford has immense volumes of information about whaling history. It even has sailing logs of ships that may have dropped anchor in Wales, Anungazuk's community.

"So", "So"! The excitement arose quickly as one of the crewmen announces a whale sighting. "So"! Again, yet almost a whisper. All of the crewmen moved quickly and quietly near their assigned locations so that an orderly launching of the omiak can be done. They are not tense, but they anticipate a successful harvest because they have gone through the proper rituals, the proper ceremony until what must be done is

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Photograph courtesy of University of Alaska Fairbanks, Samuel Call Collection, #A66-10

Two commercial whalers at Barrow, Alaska, late 19th century.

National Park Service photographs

ingrained in them. What must be done and followed is orderly because the way it must be done has been shown, generation for generation. The thought has always remained that from the ancient generation to the new, the youngest crew member may one day lead the hunt.

Portraits of a Port

The Portraits of Ports interactive website is a distance learning endeavor developed by the New Bedford Whaling Museum and the Artfx Group (a website design company in Ottawa, Canada). It is designed to provide a rich environment in which to explore the stories, voices, and objects pertaining to American whaling. The site represents the stories of whaling worldwide: it places the historical sites of whaling in a current context through artifacts, museums, objects and places. The Affiliated Areas of the National Park Service's Alaska Region worked on this project in conjunction with the Iñupiat Heritage Center in Barrow, Alaska. The site includes three sections: conservation and collections data describing the museum's archival, book, and object collections; interpretive and on-line resources about whaling; and interpretive products specific to the collections — oral histories and education program materials. Visit the site at: **http://www.artfxgroup.com/nbwm/flashmain.html .**

Photograph courtesy of John Robson © 2002

Iñupiaq whalers on the pack ice with their umiak (skin boat).

Very few people will ever be able to visit all 39 of America's volcano-related parks and monuments, but this book is an excellent source of ideas and inspiration for exploring more of them.

New Book On Volcanoes Available

After distinguished academic and government careers, Bob and Barbara Decker have established productive second careers as authors of popular guide books to America's national parks. They have managed to travel extensively for research on books yet to be published. The Deckers have identified 39 volcano-related national parks and national monuments in the United States, and offer *Volcanoes in America's National Parks* to introduce readers to most of them.

This attractive, soft-cover book (ISBN 9622176771) begins with a concise 48-page introduction to modern volcanology, with lucid explanations of eruptive processes,

National Park Service photograph

An aerial view of Aniakchak Caldera, Alaska Peninsula.

volcanic features, and why volcanoes form where they do. The descriptions of individual parks that follow are brief, but they give essential information about the geologic and human history of each park, with explanations of how individual volcanic features of scenic interest formed. The park descriptions are organized into three sections: parks with active volcanoes, parks with dormant volcanoes, and parks built on or around extinct volcanoes or their roots. The parks and monuments described include not only those that are well-known, such as Mount St. Helens, Hawaii Volcanoes, and Yellowstone, but also lesser-visited parks in Oregon and New Mexico, as well as four remote but beautiful parks in Alaska: Aniakchak, Katmai, Lake Clark, and Wrangell-St. Elias.

Geologists will enjoy the "Volcano Facts" summaries for each park, which provide typical rock types and dates for the latest eruptive activity. An up-to-date reading about each park is given, as well as valuable government web sites at which visitor information is available for most parks. Very few people will ever be able to visit all 39 of America's volcano-related parks and monuments, but this book is an excellent source of ideas and inspiration for exploring more of them. Reviewer: John P. Lockwood, Geohazards Consultants International.

National Park Service photograph

Katmai National Park

National Park Service photograph

Major volcanic eruptions at Katmai National Park have deposited ash throughout the area.

Robert Winfree

"Sandy (his wife) and I are very excited about the move to Anchorage. We've lived throughout the Lower 48 states and have worked and traveled internationally. Our visit to Alaska last year made it clear to us that Alaska would be in our future, and this is exactly the opportunity that we were hoping for."

New Science Advisor for the National Park Service in Alaska

Robert Winfree is the new Alaska Region Science Advisor for the National Park Service. Bob has a Ph.D. in Wildlife and Fisheries Science and managed research laboratories for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Biological Survey before joining the National Park Service in 1995. At Grand Canyon National Park, he provided leadership and oversight for a multi-disciplinary research program of nearly 100 research studies a year. Bob also recently completed the federal Executive Potential Program through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Graduate School. Regional Director Rob Arnberger said, "His experience, broad operational knowledge of the NPS programs and mission, and extensive network of contacts, will be significant assets in the position."

Winfree noted that "Sandy (his wife) and I are very excited about the move to Anchorage. We've lived throughout the Lower 48 states and have worked and traveled internationally. Our visit to Alaska last year made it clear to us that Alaska would be in our future, and this is exactly the opportunity that we were hoping for. There will be a lot to see, discuss, and absorb in the coming months. We look forward to many great experiences here."

Ecoregions Map Available

A great gift idea for anyone intrigued with Alaska's vast landscapes: a new map has been published that for the first time brings together a wide variety of up-to-date environmental data about Alaska and neighboring portions of Canada and Russia. The "Ecoregions of Alaska" map shows major ecosystems based on climate and terrain, with details about vegetation, rivers, glaciers and natural wildfires.

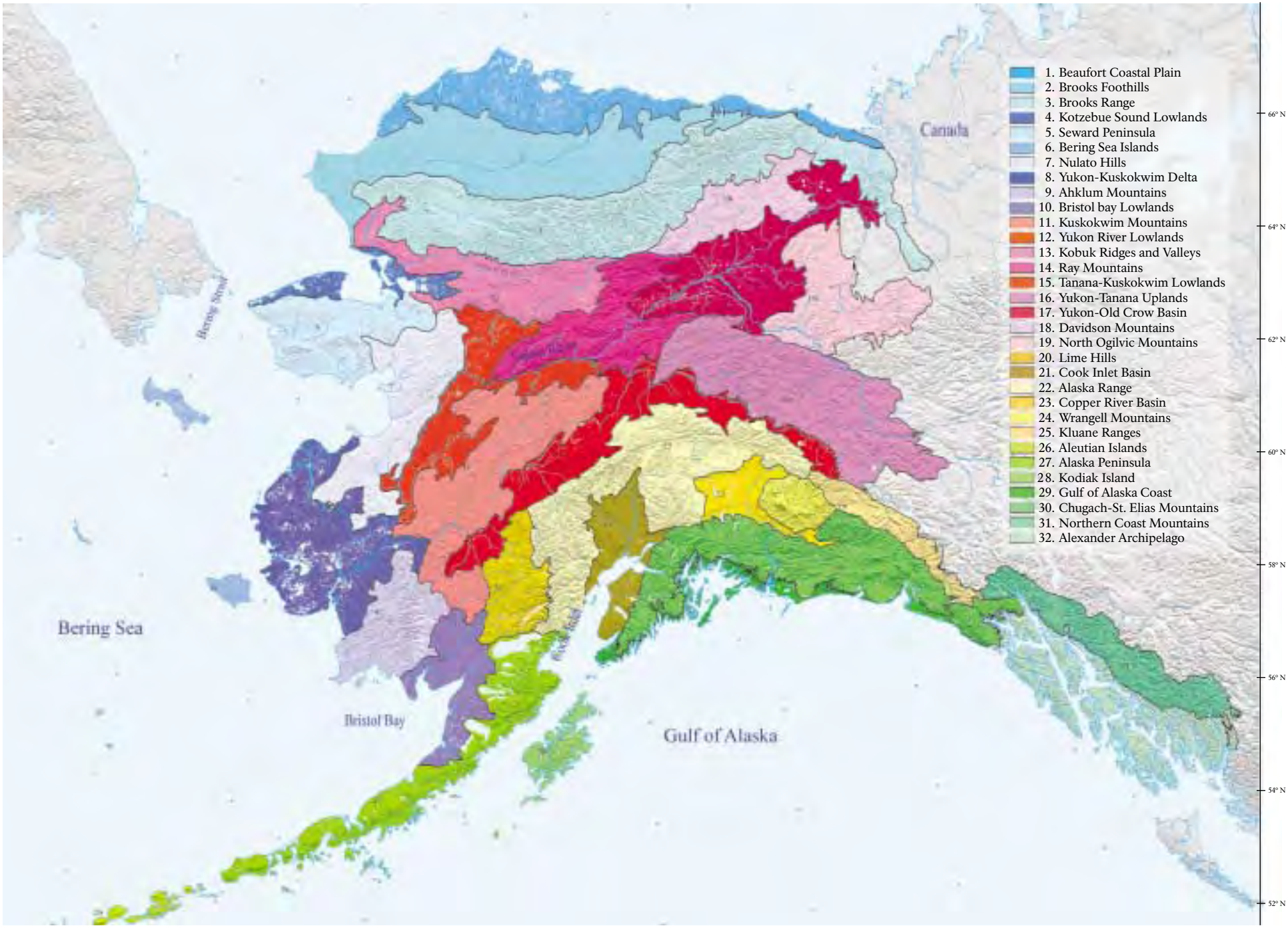
The mapping effort, led by National Park Service ecologist Page Spencer and U.S. Forest Service ecologist Gregory Nowacki, brought together scientists and existing data from several land managing and science agencies. Earlier maps tended to use data gathered by one or two agencies and have become outdated as more detailed information became available from satellites and computer mapping. The latest result is a 36-by-54 inch, full-color map showing 32 ecoregions, descriptive text and photographs for each of the ecoregions on the front, and comprehensive tables and charts of vegetation, geology and climate on the back.

"It shows the incredible variety in Alaska and what makes these areas unique," Spencer said. "When you look at Alaska on this map, you see that we really have the ecological spread of a whole continent. For people who like to explore, you can also map the places you've been to, and the places you want to visit next...It also provides a common language and spatial framework across agencies and political boundaries," she said.

The map will be useful in scientific and management applications, as well. "When we're designing inventory and monitoring projects, or looking at where phenomena such as the spread of spruce bark beetle, or the habitat for a goose population, this synthesis of information is very valuable," Spencer explained.

The map is available for $7.00 from the U.S. Geological Survey's Earth Science Information Center in Anchorage. Visit their website at **http://mapping.usgs.gov/esic/esic_index.html for ordering information.**

The "Ecoregions of Alaska" map is available for $7.00 from the U.S. Geological Survey's Earth Science Information Center. Part of the map is shown here. Earlier maps tended to use data gathered by one or two agencies and have become outdated as more detailed information became available from satellites and computer mapping.


1. Beaufort Coastal Plain
2. Brooks Foothills
3. Brooks Range
4. Kotzebue Sound Lowlands
5. Seward Peninsula
6. Bering Sea Islands
7. Nulato Hills
8. Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta
9. Ahklum Mountains
10. Bristol bay Lowlands
11. Kuskokwim Mountains
12. Yukon River Lowlands
13. Kobuk Ridges and Valleys
14. Ray Mountains
15. Tanana-Kuskokwim Lowlands
16. Yukon-Tanana Uplands
17. Yukon-Old Crow Basin
18. Davidson Mountains
19. North Ogilvic Mountains
20. Lime Hills
21. Cook Inlet Basin
22. Alaska Range
23. Copper River Basin
24. Wrangell Mountains
25. Kluane Ranges
26. Aleutian Islands
27. Alaska Peninsula
28. Kodiak Island
29. Gulf of Alaska Coast
30. Chugach-St. Elias Mountains
31. Northern Coast Mountains
32. Alexander Archipelago
Canada
Bering Sea
Bristol Bay
Gulf of Alaska
66° N
64° N
62° N
60° N
58° N
56° N
54° N
52° N

Alaska Park Science

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Photograph courtesy of U.S. Geological Survey

National Park Service photograph

Kristy Balluta and Janell Kukaruk, USGS Fisheries Interns, select a sockeye salmon to radiotag.

Top-Right: Dan Young, a biologist with the National Park Service, holds up a beach spawning fish from Kijik Lake in the Lake Clark watershed. Beach spawning fish tend to be older, longer, and deeper bodied compared to fish spawning in nearby shallow streams.