



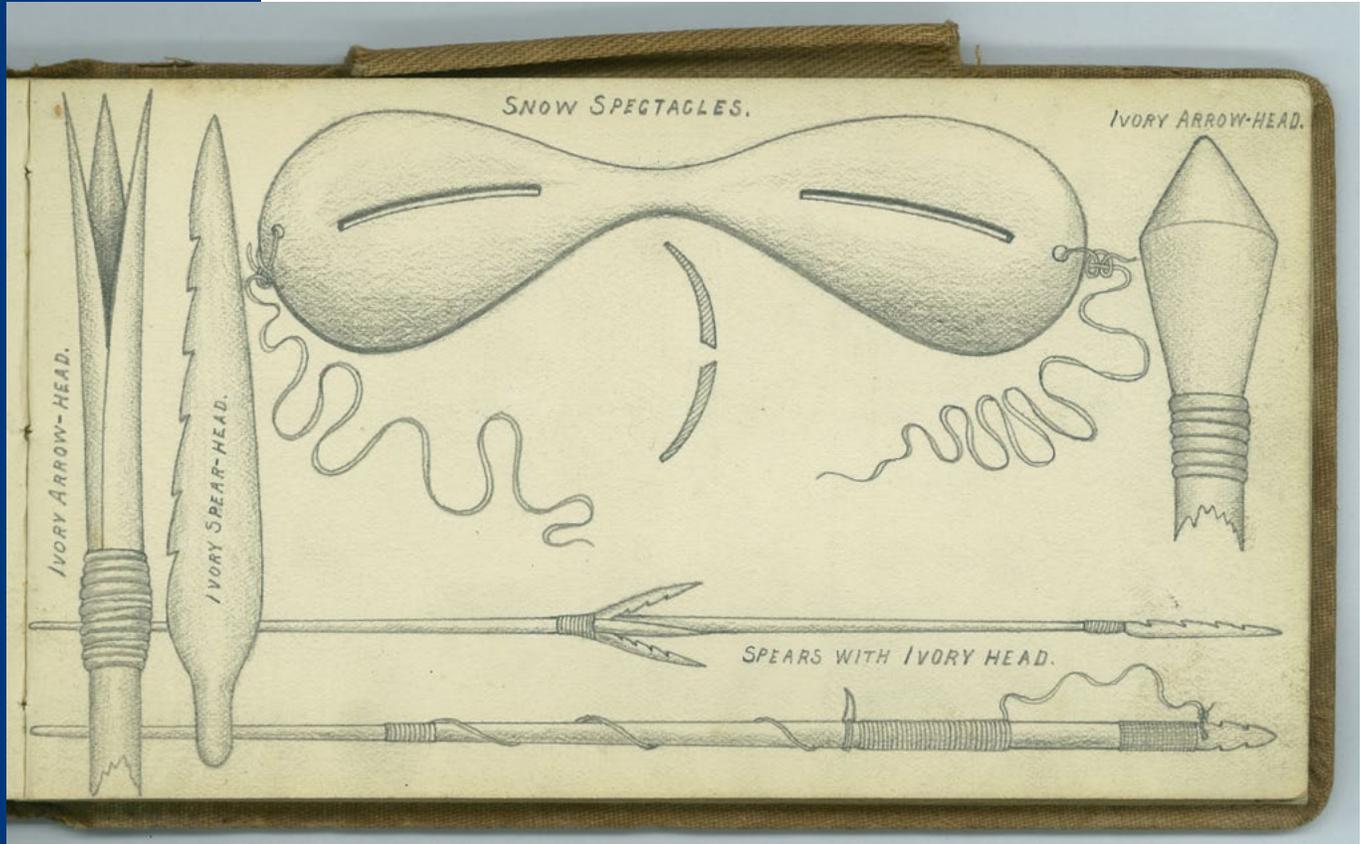
National Park Service
Department of the Interior

*Gates of the Arctic
National Park and Preserve*



Annual Report

2012



In 1898, William S. Blood of Grand Rapids, Minnesota, joined over one thousand gold-seekers in a stampede up the Kobuk River. He found no gold (the rush was sparked by wild rumors), but he did use his skill as a commercial artist to fill a notebook with elegant sketches documenting the daily lives of Kobuk River Eskimo people. This example shows the “snow spectacles” used to prevent snow-blindness and an assortment of spear and arrow points. Blood’s sketchbook, diary, and photographs are all housed in the archives of the National Park Service’s Alaska Regional Office. Read more about the Kobuk Stampede on page 7 of this Annual Report.

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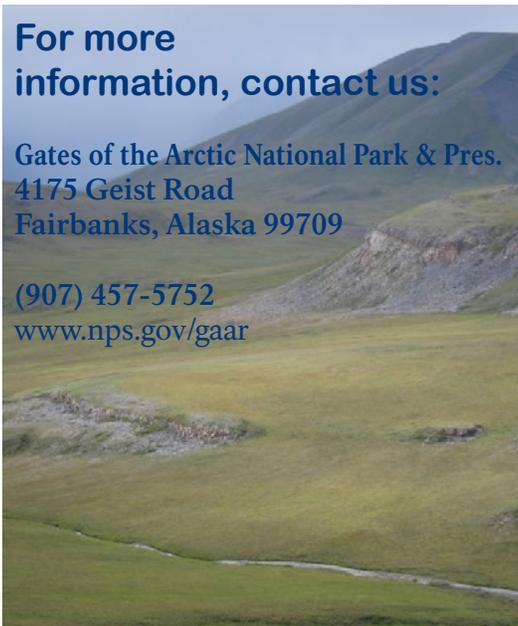
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For more information, contact us:

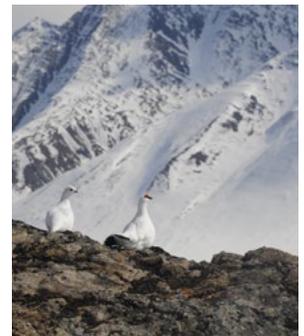
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A pair of willow ptarmigan takes in the scenery from a mountain ledge in the Itkillik Preserve where countless Dall's sheep also have spent some time, as evidenced by the amount of sheep fecal material on the ledge.

Special Contributor

Jake Adams, Climate Change Intern

Editing and Layout

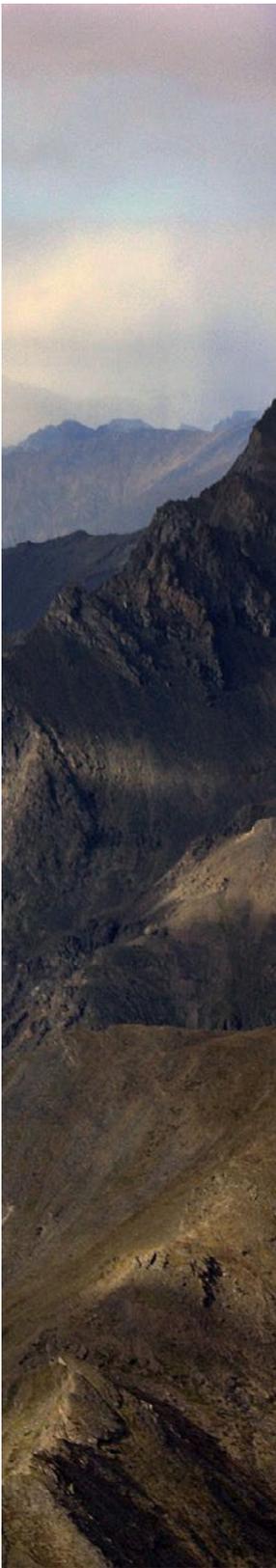
Donna DiFolco, Cartographic Technician

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Purpose and Significance

By establishing Gates of the Arctic National Park & Preserve in Alaska's Brooks Range, Congress reserved a vast and essentially untouched area of superlative natural beauty and exceptional scientific value – a maze of glaciated valleys and gaunt, rugged mountains covered with boreal forest and arctic tundra, cut by wild rivers and inhabited by far-ranging populations of caribou, Dall sheep, wolves, grizzly and black bears. Congress recognized that a special value of Gates of the Arctic is its wild, undeveloped character and the opportunities it affords for solitude, wilderness travel, and adventure. Gates of the Arctic encompasses several congressionally recognized elements including the national park, national preserve, wilderness, six wild rivers, and two national natural landmarks. The National Park Service is entrusted to manage this area to protect its physical resources and to maintain the intangible qualities of the wilderness and the opportunity it provides for people to learn and renew its values.



Purpose of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve

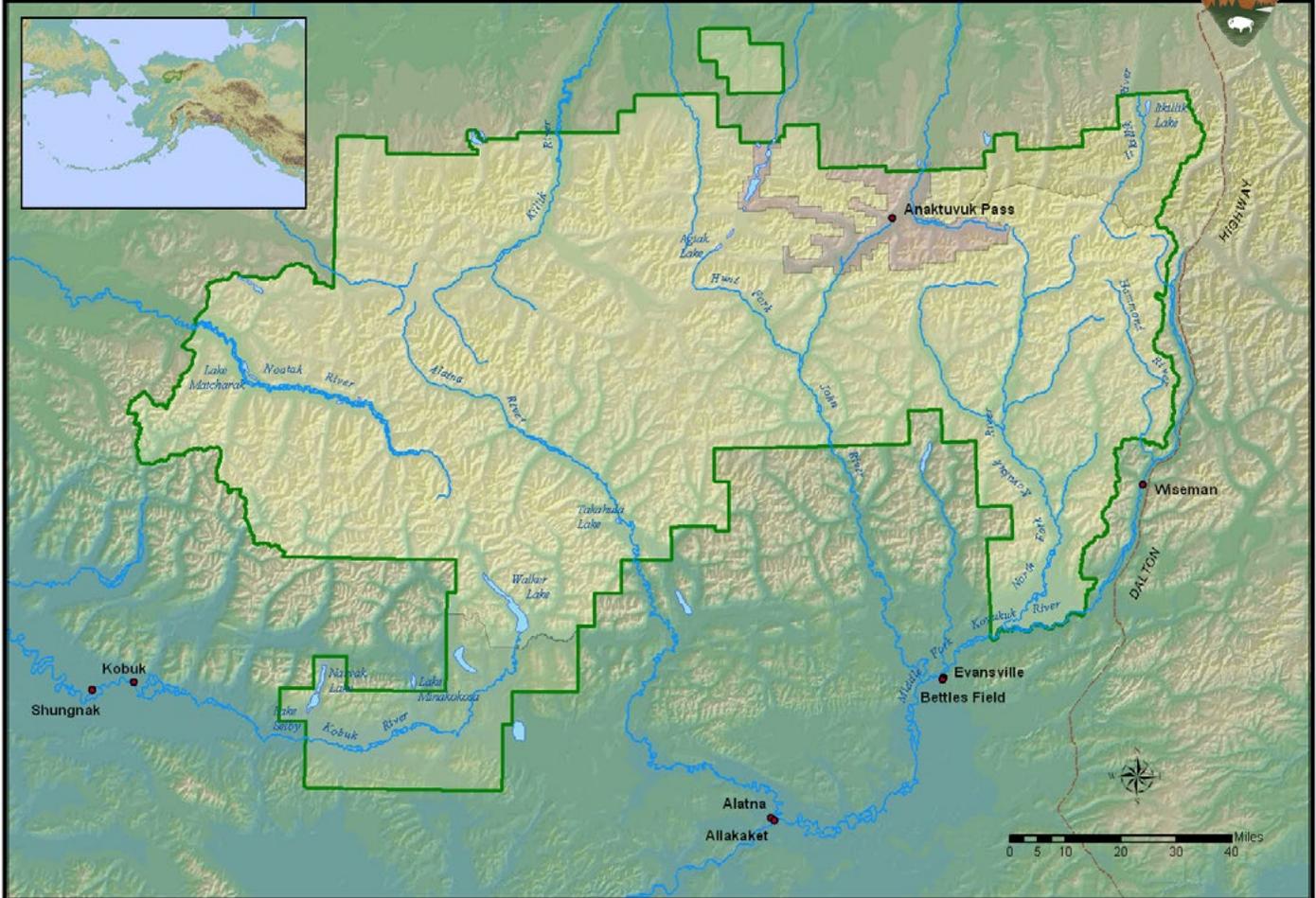
- ❖ Preserve the wild and undeveloped character and natural environmental integrity—including natural processes, habitat, and biodiversity—of the central Brooks Range;
- ❖ Provide opportunities for appropriate wilderness recreational activities and solitude; and
- ❖ Allow rural residents engaged in a subsistence way of life to continue to do so.

Significance of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve

- ❖ Gates of the Arctic is the central component of a 40-million-acre contiguous, undeveloped protected area, one of the largest protected areas in an increasingly developed world.
- ❖ Due to its vastness and undeveloped character, Gates of the Arctic provides outstanding recreational wilderness opportunities.
- ❖ Gates of the Arctic protects the core of the traditional homelands of the Nunamiut peoples.
- ❖ The area inspired Bob Marshall, who coined the term “Gates of the Arctic,” and was one of the earliest proponents of arctic preservation and one of the founders of the American wilderness system.
- ❖ Gates of the Arctic exemplifies an intact, high latitude arctic ecosystem with its corresponding natural processes, flora, and fauna.

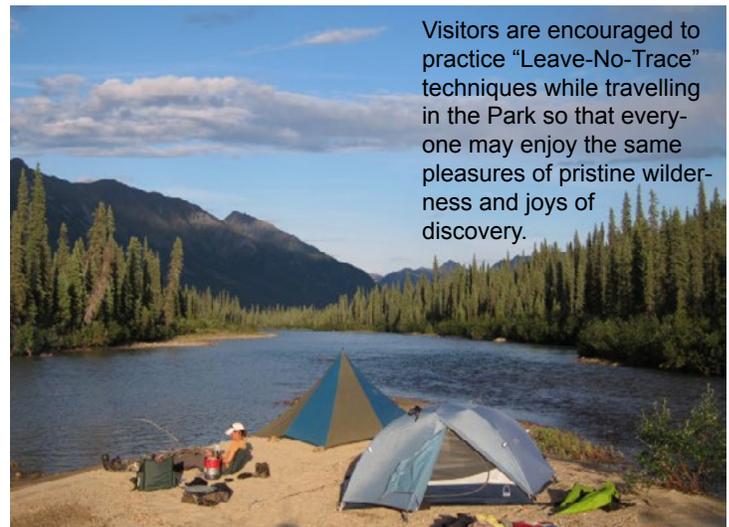
Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve

National Park Service
Department of the Interior



Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve lies north of the Arctic Circle in the central Brooks Range of Alaska. Visitors to the park typically access the area via the Dalton Highway and hike in, or they fly in. Commercial air carriers serve Bettles and Anaktuvuk Pass, where the park maintains field offices. Air charter operators based in Bettles fly visitors into the park using float planes that land on many of the larger lakes and rivers.

Visitors to Gates of the Arctic are encouraged to check in at one of the Park's field offices in Bettles or Anaktuvuk Pass, or at the Visitors Center in Coldfoot, prior to their trip. Park Rangers and park volunteers offer orientations which brief visitors in safety issues and Leave-No-Trace camping techniques.



Visitors are encouraged to practice "Leave-No-Trace" techniques while travelling in the Park so that everyone may enjoy the same pleasures of pristine wilderness and joys of discovery.



Good management stems from a good understanding of what is being managed, and as land managers of one of our nation's most pristine pieces of real estate, it is the duty of the National Park Service to understand the resources it is entrusted to preserve for the American public. Here, archeologist Chris Ciancibelli records the location of a stone meat cache during a 2012 survey of the Okokmilaga River valley. In this report, you can read about this survey and the many other resource projects, educational programs, and "support activities" that staff at Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve accomplished in 2012 in our continuing effort to preserve and protect our nation's heritage and to pass along what we are learning to the public.

Preserve Resources

Natural and cultural resources and associated values at Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve are protected, restored and maintained in good condition, and managed within their broader ecosystem and cultural context.

No Gold, but Plenty of Danger during Kobuk Stampede

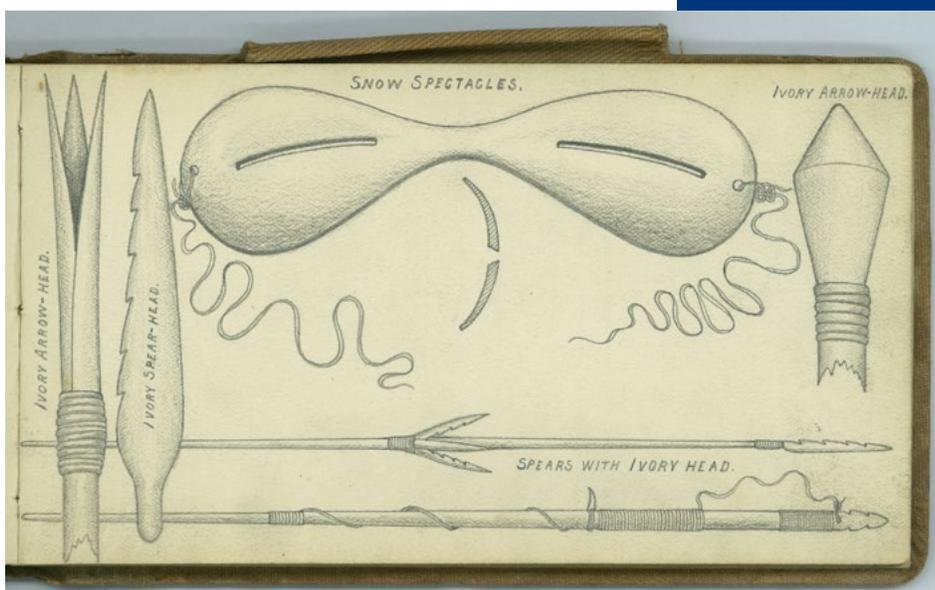
By Chris Allan

Studying the Klondike Gold Rush as a regional phenomenon has led Historian Chris Allan to the little known Kobuk River stampede, a uniquely ill-fated rush triggered by fraudulent reports and promoted by steamboat companies looking to profit from gold fever. During the gold rush era, there were many false stampedes inspired by rumors of rich ground or deliberate lies, but none involved as many people and as much hardship as the Kobuk River stampede.

Roughly 2,000 would-be prospectors sailed to Kotzebue Sound in spring 1898, and many of them made their way up the Kobuk River, despite having learned that they had been hoodwinked: placer gold was nowhere to be found. The determined prospectors built tiny cabins and settled in for a difficult winter. Many faced scurvy, starvation, and death by freezing or drowning.

William Blood, a commercial artist from Grand Rapids, Minnesota, fared better than most. He passed the winter in good health and managed to produce a detailed diary, photographs, and a series of beautiful pencil drawings of Eskimo life and material culture. The whole collection was donated to

the NPS Regional Office archives by his daughter-in-law, Anne Blood, in 2011. This donation reveals a great deal



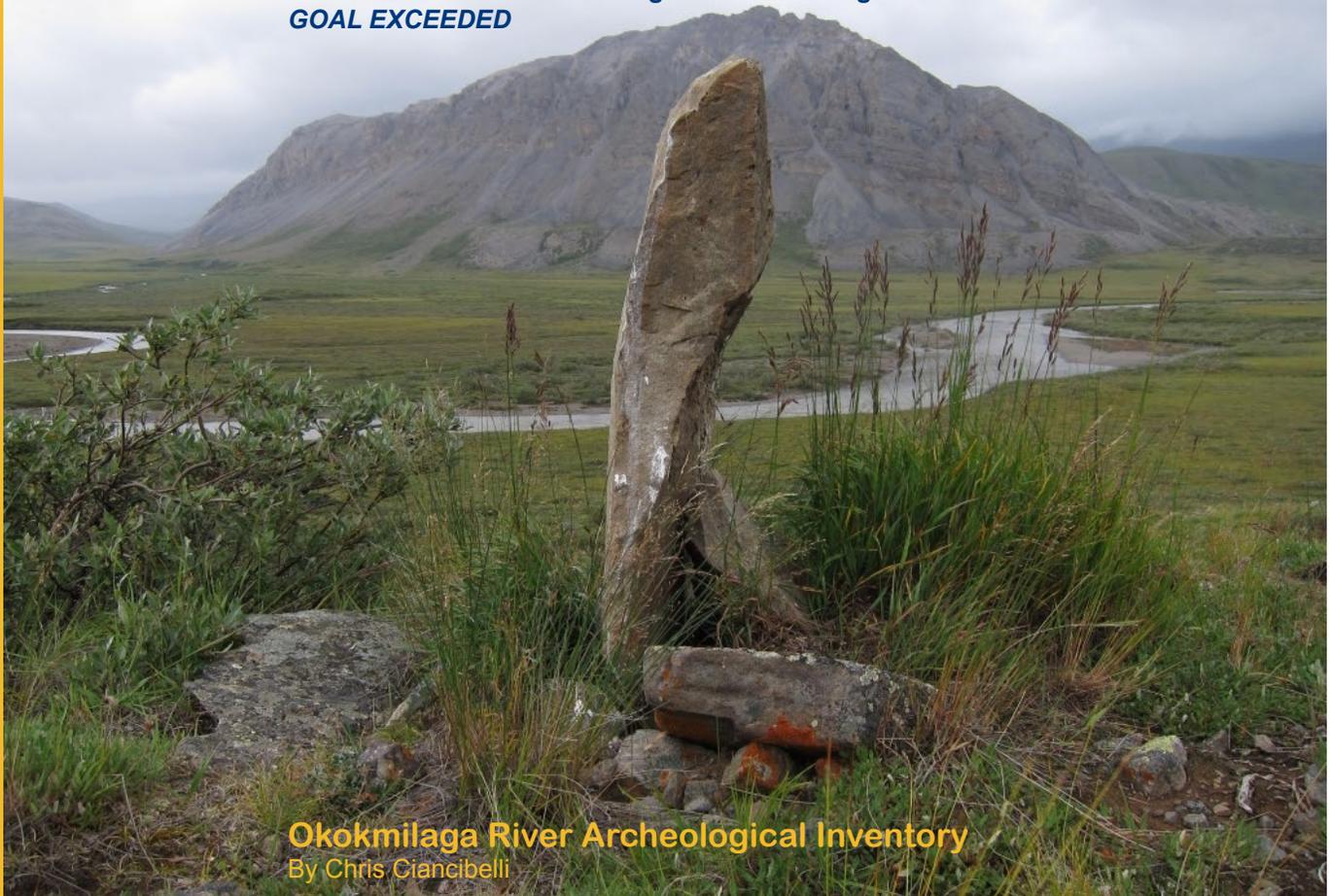
about the history of both Kobuk Valley National Park and Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve.

In photo above, a drawing in William Blood's notebook depicting "snow spectacles" and some hunting tools of the natives of the Kobuk River where he spent the winter of 1898-99.

At right, Mr. Blood (right) and A.H. Towle, taken before leaving for Alaska's Kobuk River, Spring 1898 (Blood Collection, NPS AKSO).



Goal Ia8: By September 30, 2012, 1,045 (66% of 1,592) of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve's archeological sites are in good condition.
GOAL EXCEEDED



Okokmilaga River Archeological Inventory
By Chris Ciancibelli

A meter-high stone slab stands highly visible at an archeological site overlooking the Okokmilaga River. This inuksuk was likely erected by the valley's Nunamiut occupants to mark a location or route.

The Okokmilaga River valley, located on the north side of the Brooks Range between the Killik River and Chandler Lake, was the focus of archeological fieldwork during the 2012 field season. This was the beginning of a project aimed at identifying and assessing impacts caused by the effects of climate change on cultural resources within GAAR. The Okokmilaga River was selected based on information gathered by a volunteer crew in 2008 that identified over 30 previously undocumented archeological sites, some of which appearing to have suffered impacts from potential climate change related processes.

Two NPS archeologists were joined on a 2-week field trip by volunteer Jake Adams, a PhD student at Washington State University and NPS climate change intern. The goal of the trip was to revisit the archeological sites reported in 2008 to further document and assess their condition, to perform further survey to identify new sites, and to determine what effects a changing landscape may be having on these resources.

The Okokmilaga River valley was found to be similar, on a smaller scale, to the Killik River valley 25 miles to the west, which is characterized by numerous Nunamiut camps. The Nunamiut are known to have occupied the valleys

of the north-central Brooks Range for centuries and this is evident within the study area. The sites display prehistoric through historic period characteristics and consist of features and artifacts including inuksuit, hunting blinds, meat caches, pit features, tent rings, stone tools and historic items such as cans, metal buckets and wooden implements. The most extensive site was found to contain at least 40 such features and indicators of long term occupation.

Seventeen new archeological sites were discovered and 15 known sites were revisited, combining for a total of 32 site visits within the 6,700 acres that were surveyed. The landscape within the valley appears to be undergoing rapid change and two recently drained lakes were found to contain well-preserved organic artifacts. It is important to identify these archeological remains before their context is disturbed or they are lost to decay, emphasizing the increasing importance of monitoring for impacts to resources.

In combination with future research and analysis, these studies add to our understanding of the region's cultural resources, inform us to the potential environmental risks they face and guide us on how to appropriately and effectively manage them. The work performed inventorying the cultural resources within GAAR, and continuous efforts to monitor their condition, helps save valuable information about our past and is a crucial part of preserving and protecting our heritage.



Report from the Field

By Jake Adams

I spent this summer working as a climate change intern in Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve examining how archeological sites were being impacted by current climatic conditions. It was clear that in certain contexts there is a degree of negative impacts on archeological sites due to climate, specifically the impacts associated with global warming, which causes permafrost to melt and accelerated coastal erosion. I participated in an archeological inventory on the Okokmilaga River, examining how climate is impacting archeological sites. In many contexts, with current warming trends, permafrost is melting, leaving fragile organic artifacts exposed on the surface. My experiences this summer made me realize the vast beauty that is Alaska, and led me to appreciate the adverse conditions that people survived to leave a rich cultural heritage behind.

Archeologists survey the recently exposed bed of a large drained lake along the Okokmilaga River. Rare organic artifacts were encountered in a nearby drained lake in 2009.



The importance of managing the collections is exemplified in the fact that they continue to be used for scientific research. Andy Tremayne, a PhD student at UC Davis, has expanded his research into early Paleoeskimo occupation of Alaska through the analysis of three different GAAR collections. Jesse Clark, an MA student at Washington State University, has expanded his own GAAR collections based research into the subsistence behaviors and practices utilized by the past occupants of the Hungry Fox site on the Killik River. Sara Ficarrota, an MA student at UA Fairbanks, meticulously analyzed over 40 side-notched projectile points collected over the years throughout the park and housed in the museum collections. Without active and careful management of the collections, facilitating these sorts of research requests would be far more complicated.

Museum intern Rachel Lindley helps excavate a prehistoric site near Delta Junction during the 2012 ASRA Archaeology module. (Photo courtesy of Rachel Moyer.)

Goal Ia6: By September 30, 2012, 65 (89% of 73) applicable preservation and protection standards for Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve's museum collections are met.

GOAL ACHIEVED

Research, Rehousing, and Follow-through: 2012 Curation Efforts

By Chris Houlette

Museum activities over the past year focused on continuity and follow through. Many of the efforts begun last year were completed and some efforts wrapped up loose ends from years long past. Thirty-seven previously un-cataloged herbarium specimens from the early 1990s were fully processed and added to the collection. One portion of these samples preserves the first documented occurrence of *Aster yukonensis* in the Gates of the Arctic region. Twenty-seven objects from the final stages of a three year archaeological survey of the Kobuk River were cataloged and stored. A follow-up archaeological investigation at a number of sites near Lake Matcharak produced the largest new collection. At one site—a 4,200-year-old cultural feature—over 400 stone and bone artifacts were recovered. At another, a 5,400-year-old faunal assemblage was discovered—the oldest known from the Central Brooks Range. Collections such as these offer insight into past populations and subsistence practices. All are now safely stored for future research in the Museum Curation facility.

The greatest effort by far however was adeptly concluded by museum intern Rachel Lindley. Choosing to spend much of her post high school graduation summer in the lab, she single handedly processed the recently returned Kurupa Lake collections. These collections, comprised of nearly 4,000 individual objects, were originally housed using bulky and outdated materials and occupied

approximately 26 cubic feet of space in the curation facility. Rachel's efforts, using the latest archival materials and techniques, resulted in the re-housed and re-organized collection now occupying a mere 5.3 cubic feet. Additionally, all of the outdated materials were recycled or reused. Conservation at work! Finally, when she was not busy in the lab, she shouldered the role of intern/assistant to the GAAR curator during the 2012 Alaska Summer Research Academy (ASRA) Archaeology module which conducted a test excavation of a prehistoric site near Delta Junction.



The National Park Service contributes to knowledge about natural and cultural resources and associated values; management decisions about resources and visitors are based on adequate scholarly and scientific information.



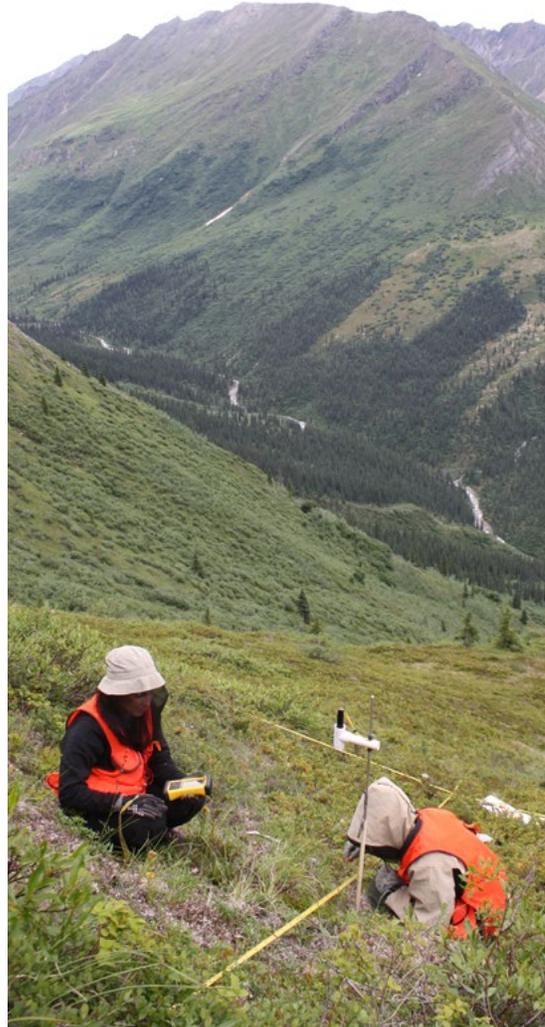
Goal Ia2B: By September 30, 2012, 5 populations (56% of 9) of Gates of the Arctic's species of management concern have improved information for management. Desired condition not currently known, but under development.
GOAL ACHIEVED

Monitoring Vegetation, Identifying Lichen Diversity

By Dave Swanson

In 2012 Arctic Network sent two vegetation crews to work in Gates of the Arctic. One NPS crew established 96 new vegetation monitoring plots for both vascular and non-vascular plants around 5 different base-camp locations throughout the park, bringing the total number of plots in Gates of the Arctic to 133. These monitoring plots now cover most of the major ecosystems in the park. In the future, we anticipate establishing just one more sample locality with about 20 more plots.

The second vegetation field crew that worked in GAAR was from Oregon State University, funded by NPS under a cooperative agreement. The OSU crew's mission in Gates of the Arctic was to complete a study of lichen species composition and diversity that has already been completed in the other four ARCN parks (the 4 NPS units in Western Arctic Parklands). They sampled 79 plots from 9 base camp locations, identifying and collecting literally thousands of lichens. As their identification work progresses this winter we can expect to hear about many species new to the park and some perhaps more exotic than that.



“(Vegetation) monitoring plots now cover most of the major ecosystems in the park.”

NPS botanists Fleur Nicklen and Alyssum Cohen sample vegetation with a laser point device on a plot near Walker Lake in southern Gates of the Arctic National Park.



Moose and Caribou Tracking Projects Continue

By Kyle Joly

Caribou

Twelve additional GPS-satellite radiocollars were deployed on Western Arctic Herd (WAH) caribou. The collars provide biologists with the locations of these caribou every 8 hours, 365 days a year – more than 140,000 locations so far. These data will be used to track the migrations and distribution of caribou throughout the year. The results of winter range studies, survivorship modeling studies and advancements in GPS data management were presented at numerous meetings. A number of new caribou-related projects, including an analysis of potential impacts of the proposed Ambler Road, will be launched this fall.

Check out the WAH Working Group's webpage at www.westernarctic-caribou.org.

Moose

A radiocollar project involving the NPS, USFWS, BLM and ADFG is continuing. About 70 collars are deployed on both bull and cow moose from the southern end of Kanuti NWR to Sukakpak Mountain. The moose are located by aircraft monthly, while about 25 moose have GPS collars that record their position every 8 hours. The goals of the project are to learn more about the distribution, movements, habitat usage, and survival and twinning rates of this population. We intend to complete the project during April 2013 by removing many of the remaining collars.

GPS collars record the animal's position every 8 hours, which helps us learn about their distribution and movements.

Monitoring Sheep Populations and Diets in Gates of the Arctic

Kumi Rattenbury and Josh Schmidt

In April 2012, the NPS collected Dall's sheep fecal pellets in the upper Itkillik River valley in northeastern Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve to initiate monitoring of diet composition and quality. The pellets were sent to the Wildlife Habitat Lab at Washington State University where they will be analyzed to determine forage species consumed and for nitrogen content, a measure of diet quality. Photos and video footage were taken during the expedition for production of a public outreach podcast. We also conducted an aerial distance sampling survey in the same area in July. This was the fourth year in a row to survey this area, which is important for subsistence and sport hunting and has the highest density of sheep in the park and preserve.

The NPS Arctic and Central Alaska Inventory and Monitoring Networks submitted for publication the results from the 2011 aerial distance sampling surveys for Dall's sheep in the Itkillik preserve subarea, the Western Arctic National Parklands (WEAR, including Noatak National Preserve, Kobuk Valley National Park and Cape Krusenstern National Monument), Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST), and Denali National Park and Preserve (DENA). We incorporated information from previous surveys into our analytical models so that abundance estimates could be generated for small survey areas where there were fewer groups of sheep (i.e., Itkillik, DENA), and we also developed a means to estimate sex and age composition. These new methods expand the utility of the distance sampling and Bayesian methods for Dall's sheep monitoring and can be applied to other management units in Alaska.

We estimated that approximately 1,700 sheep occurred in the Itkillik, about 2,800 were in WEAR, 12,400 in WRST, and 2,200 in DENA in 2011. Although historical data are lacking for most areas, the 2011 estimates were similar to sheep numbers counted in the 1980s for the same park units, except for the northern portion of WEAR (DeLong Mountains) where the 2011 estimate was higher. The 2011 estimate for the Itkillik was not significantly different from the 2009 and 2010 estimates of approximately 1,800-1,900 sheep. The full-curl ram to ewe-like ratios were lower in the Itkillik and WEAR populations than for the DENA population, but lamb to ewe-like ratios were consistent among survey areas.

The pellets ... will be analyzed to determine forage species consumed and for nitrogen content, a measure of diet quality.



Biologist Stacia Backensto collects fresh fecal pellets for a Dall's sheep diet study in Gates of the Arctic. This southeast facing slope was relatively snow-free, making it a favorable location

Long “Low” Continues, Project Prepares for Changes

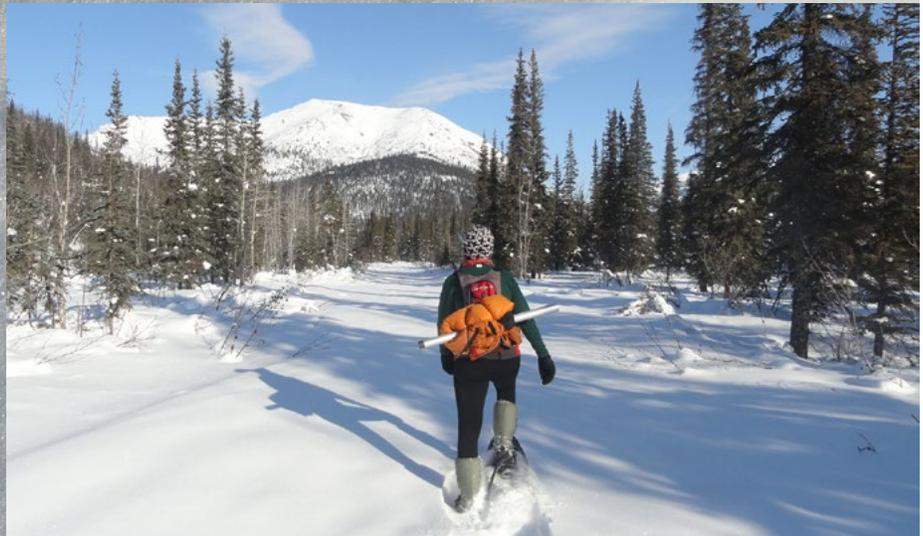
By Donna DiFolco

The 16th annual snowshoe hare track count in eastern Gates of the Arctic again recorded zero hare tracks in March 2012. This time, not even old tracks were seen. However, we did see signs of hares at the other sites, and our observations in March correlated with results from the June 2012 pellet counts. Rosie Creek again had the highest pellet density of all six sites (but lower than previous years) at 2.45 pellets per plot. At the 5 other sites, we recorded roughly 1 or fewer pellets/plot on average.

One site that experienced severe browsing by hares during the last major population peak (1998 – 2001) is Jennie Creek. This mineral site is bordered by a large river bluff, which hares visited during peak years to consume the mineral soils that remain exposed during the winter months. This site lies on a mining claim that in recent years has seen increased mining activity.

While the miner is currently focusing his efforts on the river bar where we do not have any pellet plots, he said he intends to eventually mine the entire claim area, including areas where our plots lie. This may not occur for another few years or more, but it's likely that the area may be destroyed before the next peak in the local hare population. Thus, in 2012, we selected an alternate study site adjacent to the mining claim and began establishing a new pellet plot grid. This new site is farther from the large mineral bluff, but is near smaller banks that remain snow-free and where hares may access soil. Soil analyses revealed that this low bank contains a high concentration of calcium and a moderate amount of magnesium relative to other study area soils. This type of soil may be important in maintaining hare health during peak years.

Lynx tracks on the Hammond River show where this hare predator travelled through the area. While a few hares are still present in the area, the population there is still very low.



Volunteer Davya Flaharty snowshoes through the area that will be the site of a new pellet plot grid along the Hammond River road. It eventually will replace the Jennie Creek site, which lies on an active mining claim.



Four New Climate Stations Installed in Gates of the Arctic

by Ken Hill

In August 2012, stations were installed at four locations in Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve: one Near Chimney Lake in the eastern area of the park, one near Pamichtuk Lake in the central region of the park, one near Ram Creek, a tributary of the Alatna drainage, and one in the northwest area of the park in Killik Pass. These new sites will complement existing National Weather Service stations along the Koyukuk and Kobuk Rivers to the south and new stations planned north of the park boundary by agency and university cooperators. The new Gates of the Arctic stations will provide critical data on high elevation sites in the arctic and will help characterize the climate gradi-

ents and patterns of the central Brooks Range.

The stations record air temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and direction, solar radiation, snow depth, rainfall, and soil temperatures at 10, 20, and 50 cm depths. The sites are fully automated and are powered through a battery and solar panel system. Real-time and archived data will be publicly available through the Western Regional Climate Center at <http://www.raws.drill.edu/wraws/akF.html> and Mesowest Real-time Observation Monitor and Analysis Network (ROMAN) at http://raws.wrh.noaa.gov/cgi-bin/roman/raws_ca_monitor.cgi?state=AKCC&rawsflag=2.

The new stations will provide critical data on high elevation sites in the arctic and will help characterize the climate gradients and patterns of the central Brooks Range.



The Kokumpat Fire was ignited by a lightning strike on July 8 and burned 650 acres before dying out.

Three Fires: a Below Normal Year for Gates of the Arctic

By James Sullivan

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve experienced a below normal fire year with only three fires. The first fire, Lockwood Hills 2, ignited on June 8th and grew to 60 acres. The Kokumpat Fire ignited on July 8th, spreading to 650 acres. The third fire, the Pahl River Fire, ignited on State land. While this fire burned a total of 3,887 acres, only 40 acres of parkland were burned.

All three fires were natural starts caused by lightning strikes; no suppression action was taken. They were monitored by Alaska Eastern Area Fire Management NPS and Alaska Fire Service BLM. All fires were extinguished also by natural causes.

Digital Repatriation and Gates Portal Project Concludes

By Marcy Okada

The long-term project to develop a web-based portal to make archival records, photographs, books and manuscripts relating to resident-zone communities more accessible to these communities and the public came to a close in 2012. In its final year, the project focused on the community of Wiseman. University of Alaska Fairbanks oral history staff presented historic photos, films, and documents to both current and former residents of Wiseman. As Wiseman affiliates surveyed the UAF collections, they determined which materials were of highest interest and importance. And in turn these materials were digitized and are available to the public on the Gates of the Arctic research portal, which is now online at <http://jukebox.uaf.edu/gatesportal>. Information about the other Gates of the Arctic resident zone communities can also be found at this portal site. Addi-



tionally, a new Gates of the Arctic jukebox website was created and is located at <http://jukebox.uaf.edu/site7/project/59>. This website offers the public the opportunity to listen to oral history information about peoples' experiences in the area that is now called Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve.

Current and past residents of Wiseman meet in Fairbanks for the Digital Repatriation Project.

SRC Meeting Held in Anaktuvuk Pass

By Marcy Okada

The Gates of the Arctic National Park Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) met in Anaktuvuk Pass at the Simon Paneak Memorial Museum on April 18 and 19, 2012. There was no quorum for this meeting, but both SRC members and NPS staff felt that a meeting should be held in order to share pertinent information. Park staff members gave updates on natural and cultural resources, fire management, and the subsistence program. Additionally, there was discussion on the 1996 Anaktuvuk Pass Land Exchange and the Horns and Antlers Environmental Assessment.

Presentations were given by Jean Gamache, the NPS Native Affairs Liaison concerning Federal Indian Law and an update on consultation with Indian tribes. There was also a presentation by Melissa Rioridan (Army Corps of Engineers) who provided updated information on the Foothills West Transportation Access Project, otherwise known as the Road to Umiat. A follow-up teleconference SRC meeting was held with quorum on June 19, 2012, mainly to discuss Hunting Plan Recommendation 10-01.



Aerial view of Anaktuvuk Pass, where the April 2012 meeting of Gates of the Arctic's Subsistence Resource Commission took place.

Provide for Public Enjoyment and Visitor Experience

Visitors safely enjoy and are satisfied with the availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of park facilities, services, and appropriate recreational opportunities.

Goal IIa1A: By September 30, 2012, 96% of visitors to Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.

GOAL EXCEEDED

Rangers Assist Visitors, Protect Resources

By Scott Sample

Winter Work

Gates of the Arctic's Division of Visitor and Resource Protection had a busy and successful year in 2012. We removed eight abandoned 55-gallon drums from the Publituk Creek drainage off the John River that had been there for decades. We accessed the area from Anaktuvuk Pass using snowmobiles in late winter. Gates of the Arctic rangers also assisted Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve rangers with the removal of an abandoned vehicle on a remote river in the preserve.

Personnel Improvements

Seasonal positions were replaced with two subject-to-furlough Law Enforcement Rangers to bring experience and longevity to the park and the surrounding communities. We acquired a Ranger/Pilot who was promoted upon completion of the Department of the Interior pilot requirements. This enhances search and rescue operations and resource protection.

Ranger Patrols

With the assistance of volunteers, we patrolled every major waterway in the park, as well as several popular overland routes. The purpose of patrols is to pro-

vide a quality experience for visitors by removing signs of human use, thereby retaining the wilderness character of the park, to monitor park uses for management purposes, and to ensure compliance with laws, rules and regulations. We conducted hunting patrols, contacting hunting parties in the two preserve areas of the park, and ensured legal take and complete salvage of edible meat. Rangers (who hold a Limited Special Officer commission with the Alaska Department of Public Safety) assisted Alaska State Troopers with investigating illegally taken animals occurring on lands surrounding the park.

Rescue Operations

Rangers responded to several personal locator beacon activations in the park with the assistance of the Alaska State Troopers and North Slope Borough Rescue Squad. Each incident was successfully mitigated. We rescued five occupants of an overturned airplane on the Noatak River, and later assisted the National Transportation Safety Board with its investigation of the event.

Outreach

Rangers visited several communities surrounding the park. During one



The cabin at Walker Lake in Gates of the Arctic National Park in autumn.

visit, we had the privilege of talking with school children about the park, its resources, and job opportunities with the National Park Service. Our Anaktuvuk Pass Ranger conducted a patrol that followed much of the Long Walk, the historic event of the Nunamiut people who settled in Anaktuvuk Pass.

Thank you, all!

We would like to thank our volunteers in Bettles, Coldfoot and Anaktuvuk Pass for making the season successful. We would like to thank the

numerous hunters and commercial use operators for conducting themselves professionally and ethically, a tribute to their stewardship of the resource. We would like to thank visitors for following Leave-No-Trace practices and for using bear-resistant food containers, both of which contribute to safe wilderness experience for all. Finally, we would like to thank the members of the surrounding communities who teach us about their subsistence way of life and work with us to ensure protection and sustainability of the resources they rely on to survive.

Gates of the Arctic rangers haul fuel drums from Publituk Creek to Anaktuvuk Pass along the John River via snowmobile. The drums had been abandoned at an old cache site for decades. Some of them still contained liquids, and these were placed inside yellow containment barrels to prevent leakage. A total of eight drums were removed from the park.



Park visitors and the general public understand and appreciate the preservation of parks and their resources for this and future generations.

Goal IIb1: By September 30, 2012, 92% of visitors to Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve understand the significance of the park.

GOAL EXCEEDED

Arctic Interagency Visitor Center in Coldfoot still highlights the Dalton Highway & eastern Park border

By Heidi Schoppenhorst

Despite record rainfall, mosquitos, mud, and multiple road construction sites, and despite no Princess or Holland America busses traveling the Dalton Highway, 8,187 visitors from all over the world still found their way to the Arctic Interagency Visitor Center (AIVC) in Coldfoot during summer 2012. This represents a decline of only 15% from 2011. Backcountry travelers did not let the poor weather or flying conditions hinder their outings either. Visitation increased on all public lands adjacent to the Dalton, and travelers to Gates of the Arctic increased by almost 17%.

AIVC also sported a few new improvements during 2012. New audio/visual equipment was installed in the theater last fall, which really enhanced staff led programs and films throughout the summer. The new 15-minute interagency film, *Arctic Visions & Voices*, produced over the last few years premiered on summer solstice to a full house and was well-received by all. The film is offered on demand to any interested visitors and rounds out the interpretive experience of the Center. A half-hour retail version is being developed now, which we hope will be available during the 2013 season.

Other improvements to the Center included new (amazingly lifelike) arctic vegetation replicas in the exhibit loop,

interpretive panels in the outdoor geologic display, and the first recycle bins offered for the public along the Dalton. A new digital photo frame accents the front desk with changing area photos and interpretation, and new desks provide much needed work space for staff.

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We were happy to secure many returning staff from prior years, including Whitney Root (seasonal), and Caylon Likely (SCA) – both are awesome and add much to operations! Also having LE Ranger Seth McMillan stationed at Marion Creek this summer was a huge plus. We really appreciated his presence and advice.

Overall, 2012 was a good season with good a staff, and visitor satisfaction surveys reveal very positive experience response at 99% approval!



Forget-me-nots on the eastern border of Gates of the Arctic National Park near Nolan.

Ensure Organizational Effectiveness

The National Park Service uses current management practices, systems, and technologies to accomplish its mission.

On the Sustainability Front

By Julia Youngblood

On the YUGA recycling front, all the programs have shown an increase in volume through better weighing and reporting. Overall totals for recycling in the 3 park units (Yukon-Charley Rivers, Gates of the Arctic and the Fairbanks Administrative Center) was 3,557 pounds of mixed paper, cardboard, plastic, aluminum and tin. Also as a part of our recycling and solid waste management program we began working on Integrated Solid Waste Management Plans (ISWAPs) for all 3 park sites. Each individual plan defines the current solid waste process present in the unit and then looks at activities that might enhance that program.

We were involved in more than trash this year. As part of our effort to get the word out on all the good things that are going on in the park units, DaleLynn Gardner, Jeremiah LaFleur (JR) and Julia are working on a script and production for a 2013 submission to the Green Parks Film contest sponsored by the Sustainable Operations and Climate Change Branch of NPS. The films are 2-3 minutes in length and highlight sustainability projects in National Parks. Red carpet, here we come!

In July, all park units participated in an environmental audit. The auditors spent several days in the field looking at compliance issues, training, and our environmental management plan. While we have areas to work on it, appears

that our Environmental Management Plan would be issued its “certification of compliance by a 3rd party.” This mandatory compliance certification for all NPS park units is due by December 31, 2012. Corrected findings are reported to a WASO based Audit website and can become the basis for some of our 2013 Goals and Targets in our Environmental Management Planning document that serves our 3 park units.



National Park Service employees from all divisions chipped in to help clean up our one-mile stretch of the Parks Highway near the Fairbanks Administrative Center. Plastic, glass and aluminum were sorted out from amongst the other trash for recycling.

“With GAAR down a full-time maintenance mechanic, 2012 was a finger-in-the-dike kind of year.”

— Arch Thompson, Facilities Mgr.

Maintenance Steadily Plows through To-Do List

By Arch Thompson

Our focus in 2012 was on building the maintenance program and eliminating the back-log of work orders in park housing. After a long, deliberate process, in September we selected a highly qualified veteran for the Maintenance Mechanic position in Bettles. New hire Ozie West joined us from the US Coast Guard from Kodiak where he was employed as a civilian. We also worked with contractors to develop spill prevention plans addressing our fuel storage systems in Bettles and Dahl Creek. In housing, we completed dozens of work orders, from patching and painting to replacing cracked windows, a boiler, and floor insulation. At this point, we have completed perhaps 40% of what is on

the books. The following summarizes some of the work accomplished in 2012:

- Completed a number of punch list items for housing maintenance. Most outstanding work orders were completed for Qtrs 107 and all were completed for Qtrs 106.
- Replaced 1 refrigerator and 2 washers in housing.
- A contractor replaced the failing boiler in Unit 105.
- Recruited a replacement for the vacant WG-9 Maintenance Mechanic position, vacant since 5/11.
- A contractor inspected all of the fire sprinkler systems in GAAR.
- Replaced failed insulation in C-2, related to a water line break in the spring.
- Assisted U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in building and erecting an information kiosk in Bettles.
- Improved our recycling operation and diversion rate.
- Purchased and brought over the ice road insulated pipe that will be used in 2013 to tie in quarters to the new well, thereby eliminating water quality concerns for Qtrs 104,105 and the Kanuti shared bunkhouse.

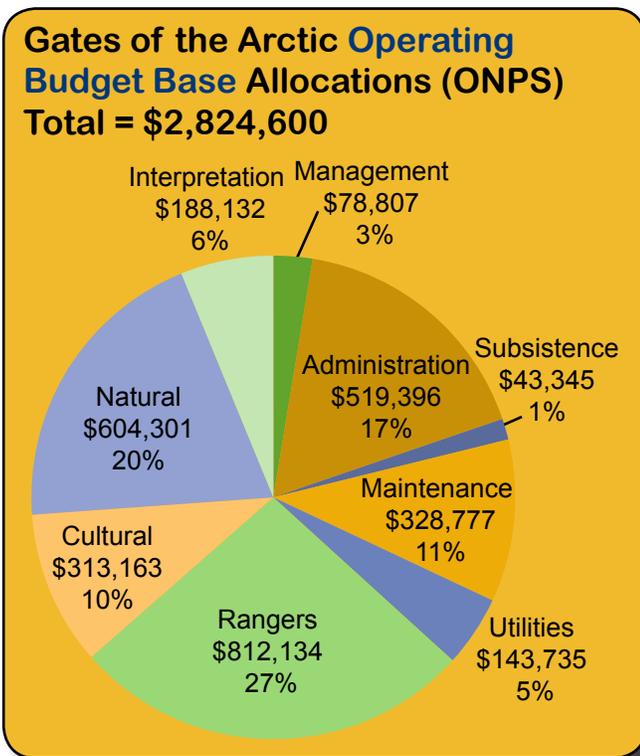


Repairing the sewage drain line between the Bettles Visitor Center and the septic tank. A frost heave had caused the line to separate.

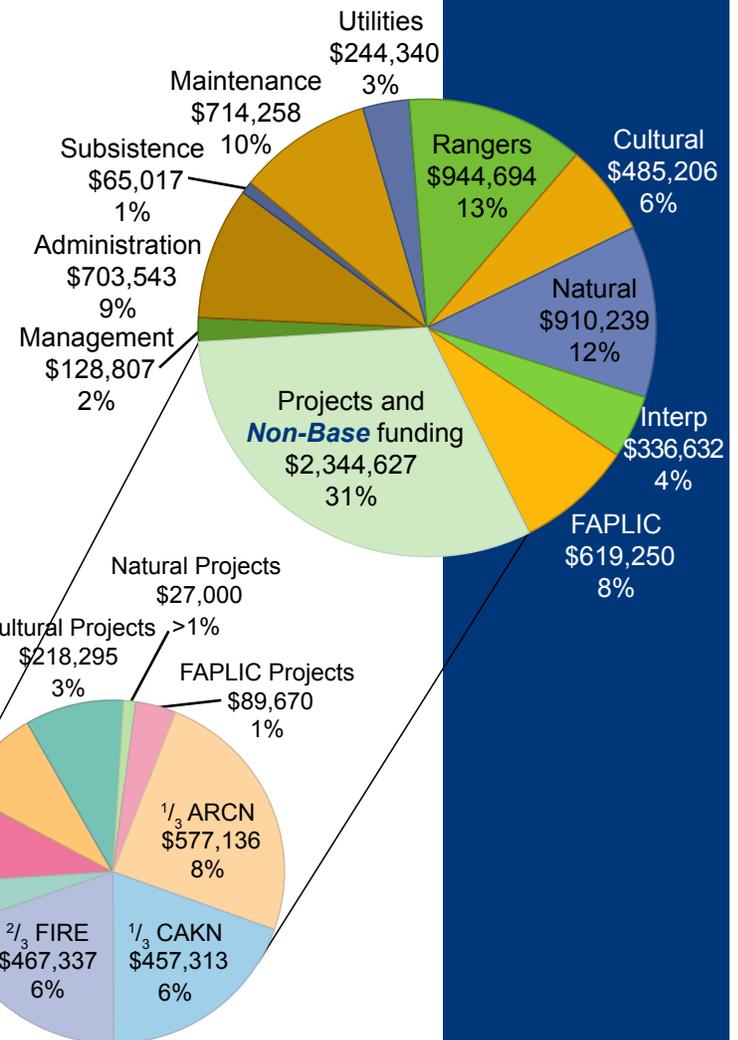
Financial Summary

Operating Budget Base Allocations (ONPS) by Division:

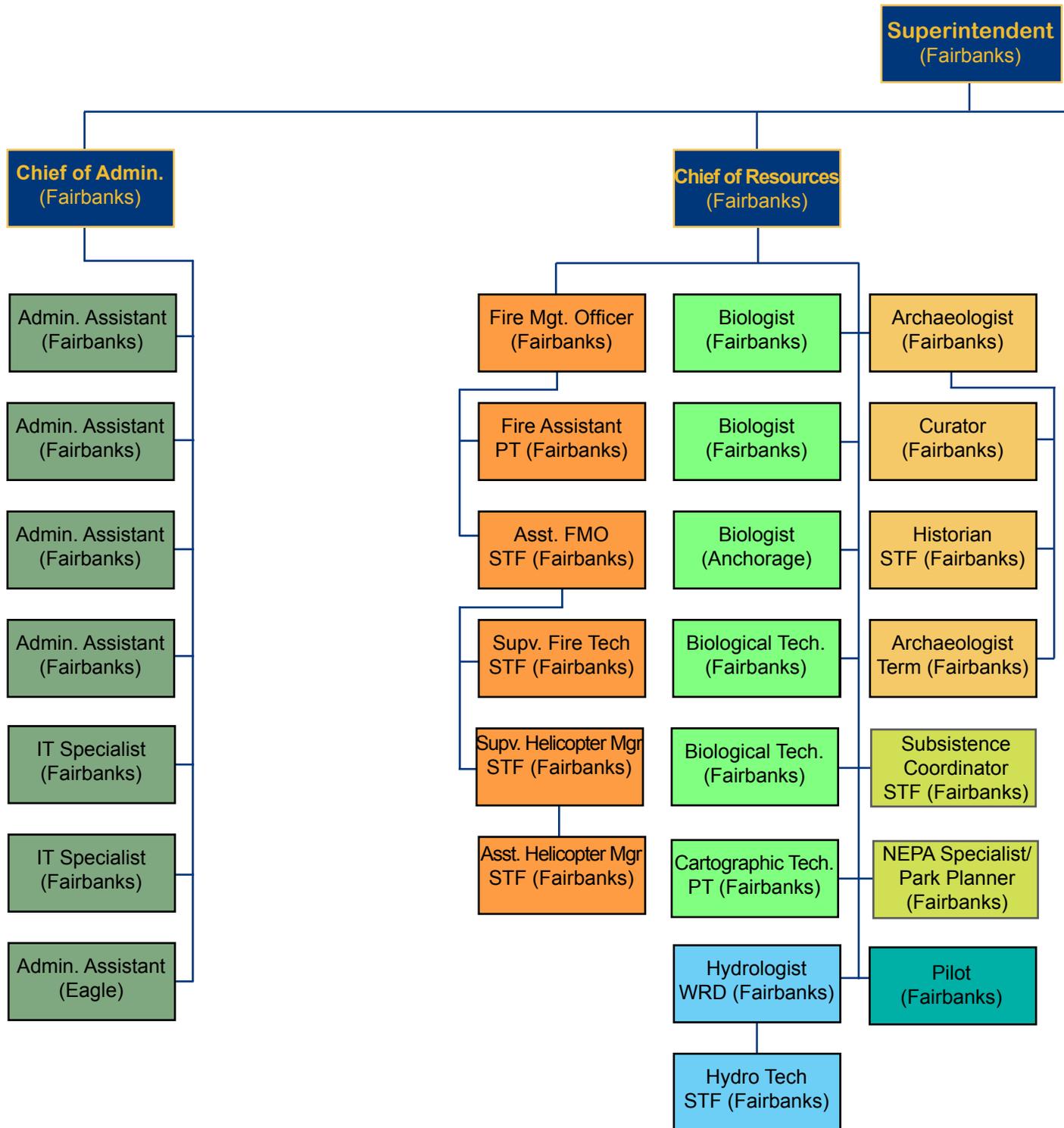
- ❖ Resource Protection & Visitor Services: \$1,000,266
- ❖ Research & Studies: \$960,809
- ❖ Facilities Operation & Maintenance: \$472,512
- ❖ Management & Administration: \$598,203

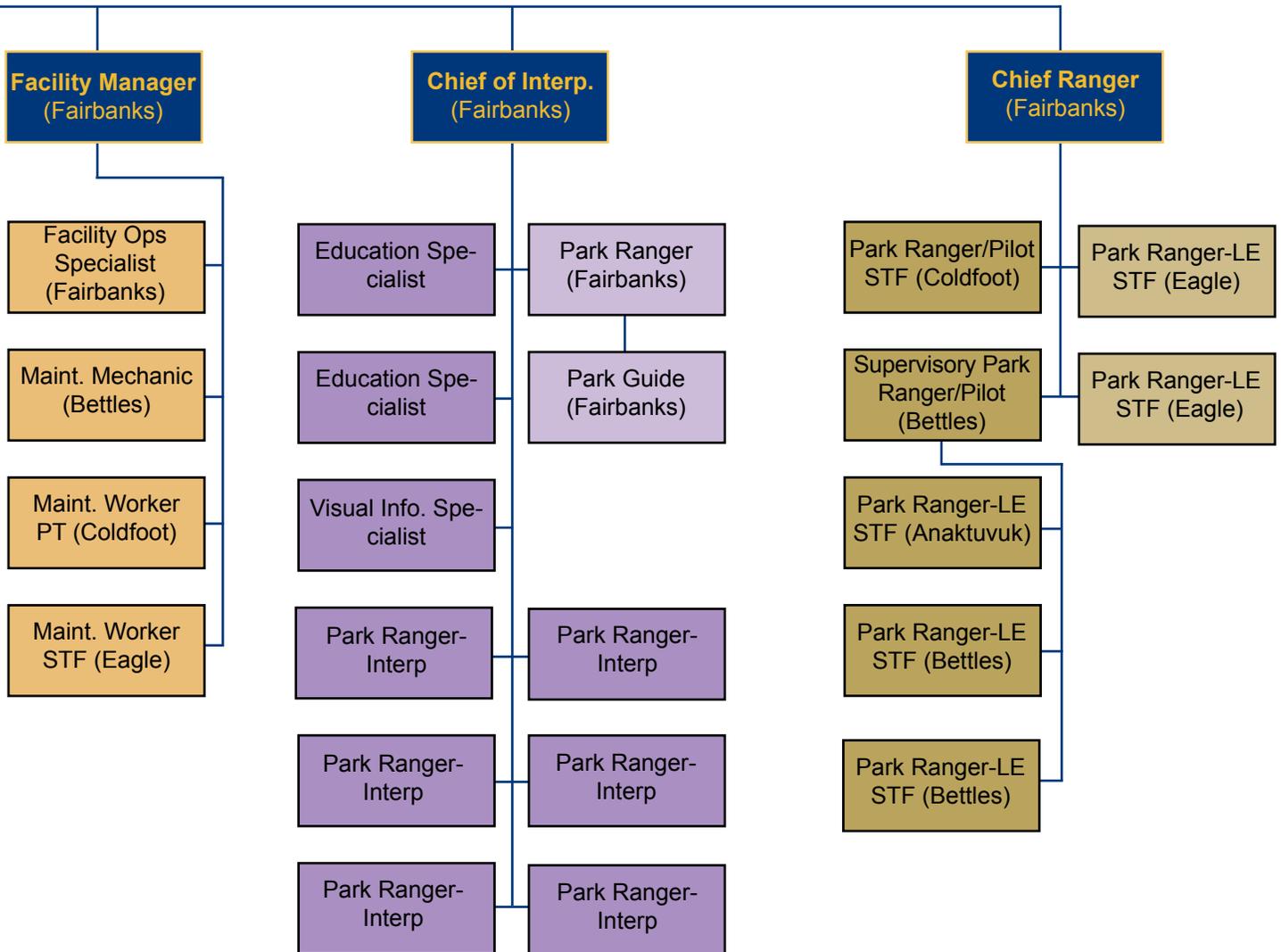


YUGA All Funding Sources Total = \$7,397,064



Gates of the Arctic, Yukon-Charley Rivers, Alaska Public Lands Information Center Organization







Archaeologists pause a moment to view some caribou during their survey of the Okokmilaga drainage.

*The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people
so that all may experience our heritage.*



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