

Anchorage District Office



Gary Reimer, District Manager

The Anchorage District includes the Anchorage and Glennallen field offices. Anchorage District lands encompass approximately 22 million acres, extending 2,500 linear miles east to west and 800 miles north to south.

RIGHT: Luki Akelkok, Sr., President of Ekwok Limited, receives a certificate of final patent from Anchorage District Manager Gary Reimer at a meeting in Ekwok on July 27, 2010.



The Anchorage District is committed to the hiring, training, and employing of Alaska's youth. This year ADO will employ more than 60 youth and young adults to assist resource specialists in the field and perform administrative tasks at field offices. ADO partners with the Student Conservation Association, Alaska Job Corps, Youth Restoration Corps, Southeast Alaska Guidance Association, and other organizations to promote the training and employment of Alaska's youth.



Anchorage Field Office news

Jim Fincher, Field Manager

ARRA update



This summer BLM began a remedial investigation at **Red Devil Mine**, an abandoned mercury mine on the Kuskokwim River. Prior to field work, AFO met with interested residents, tribes, cities, and Alaska Native corporations in eight villages and Anchorage. The meetings gave participants the opportunity to learn about the project and share information about subsistence uses in the area. While the level of interest and concern varied from village to village, a consistent theme was protecting the Kuskokwim River fisheries as a critical subsistence resource in local communities.

A BLM contractor completed a contaminated soil remediation project at the site in July. The ARRA funded project involved treating petroleum contaminated soil and sampling of soil and groundwater to investigate residual contamination.



A concurrent CERCLA (Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act) investigation is underway to determine potential risks the site may pose for human health and the environment and how to mitigate those risks. Fish tissue sampling was conducted in June and will continue in September, with analysis to be completed by spring of 2011.

ABOVE RIGHT: Community meeting at Stony River. LEFT: A temporary bridge over Red Devil Creek allows the contractor to move contaminated soil to a nearby clearing for treatment.





This month AFO will complete the last of four new public safety shelters that will make travel along remote segments of the **Iditarod National Historic Trail** safer this winter. The shelters are a partnership project of the BLM, the nonprofit Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance, the State of Alaska, and local communities. The project creates temporary jobs in communities along the Iditarod National Historic Trail, enhances public safety, and provides hands-on training for rural Alaskan youth.

BLM hired carpentry students from the Alaska Job Corps Center in Palmer to construct the 16x16-foot log shelters, made from Alaska spruce milled at a Fairbanks lumber yard.

BLM also worked with the nonprofit Youth Restoration Corps to hire youth ages 16-19 from area villages to work with the Job Corps carpenters to construct the shelters.

Iditarod safety shelters are open to travelers along the Iditarod National Historic Trail for emergency use primarily during winter. The shelters help meet local transportation and public safety needs along remote segments of the trail.



TOP PHOTO: The cabin crew on the porch of the new Foothills safety shelter between Shaktoolik and Unalakleet. **RIGHT:** Mike Prince of Emmonak is a Job Corps carpentry student who helped construct the new shelters.

Two **invasive plants projects** funded by ARRA are largely completed. The first was an invasive plant survey and assessment at Salmon Lake near Nome, the northernmost spawning ground for sockeye salmon on the Seward Peninsula. BLM hired four young adults from the Nome area who worked with a fisheries biologist from Kawerak, Inc., and two botanists from the Alaska Natural Heritage Program (ANHP). The survey found no invasive plants in the Salmon Lake area.

The second project was a similar survey along 81 miles of the Unalakleet Wild and Scenic River, also a critical anadromous salmon habitat. BLM hired four young adults from the Unalakleet area and three local boat operators for this project. The crew conducted a ten-day inventory of invasive plants along the river corridor. The crew, with help from ANHP botanists, will write an invasive plant monitoring, prevention, and management plan for the area.

Other ARRA projects at AFO include a pedestrian bridge extension, riparian restoration, and trail work projects at Campbell Tract. These projects were completed at the end of July.

Land use planning

A 30-day public scoping period for the **Campbell Tract Facility** plan amendment concluded April 30. AFO received approximately 45 comments during scoping. Most comments addressed recreation uses, proposed commercial uses, and public safety concerns. AFO completed a scoping report and is currently developing draft alternatives for the environmental assessment. AFO will offer a second public involvement opportunity upon release of a draft amendment later this year.

Work is on schedule to complete a draft amendment to the Ring of Fire Resource Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement by the end of the calendar year for 320,000 acres of BLM-administered lands in the **Haines Block**. RAC members will be invited to review and comment on the draft plan at that time.



Unalakleet fish weir

BLM worked with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to secure funding from the Federal Office of Subsistence Management to construct, install, and operate a floating fish weir on the main fork of the Unalakleet River this field season. BLM also met with elders in the community to enlist local support for the project.

BLM and ADF&G worked with Norton Sound Economic Development Corp. and the Native Village of Unalakleet to hire local fishery techs to build and operate the weir. The project will help biologists monitor escapement rates for Chinook salmon, which have declined considerably on the Unalakleet since 2000.



Campbell Tract news

AFO continues to work with the Anchorage Bear Committee to educate and inform recreation visitors this summer. AFO hired young adults through the Southeast Alaska Guidance Association (SAGA) to install gates at three trail junctions near Rover's Run Trail. The gates were purchased by the Municipality of Anchorage and could be used to limit access to specific trail sections should bear activity prompt this action. Cameras installed by the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game recorded heavy bear usage on this trail in recent weeks. BLM posted signs on the trail advising users to avoid these sections of trail during salmon runs in Campbell Creek.

LEFT: A brown bear sow with three 2-year-old cubs on Rover's Run Trail, July 14, 2010.

It's been a busy summer at the **Campbell Creek Science Center**—and the start of the new school year is just around the corner. The Science Center partnered with Campfire USA to provide environmental education for one week in July at a camp program in the village of White Mountain. At the end of the week, community members invited Science Center staff to come back: "They saw how much we loved their village, the landscape, and especially the children," explains instructor Cheryl Larsen.

The Science Center teamed up with KSKA public radio to bring Sitka naturalist Richard Nelson to the center for a behind-the-scenes glimpse into his weekly public radio program "Encounters." More than 300 people crowded into the Science Center for Nelson's presentation, while some 50 more peered through the windows on a beautiful summer evening to hear the stories and sounds of Alaska's cultural and natural heritage.



Glennallen Field Office news

Beth Maclean, Field Manager

ARRA update

The **Top-of-the-World Trail** restoration project was completed by a Student Conservation Association trail crew over 21 days in July. The crew hardened and rehabilitated approximately 3,500 feet of the trail. The Top-of-the-World Trail is an access route to the Delta Wild and Scenic River and is also popular for recreation and subsistence opportunities.



Student Conservation Corps members help rehabilitate the Top-of-the-World Trail.

Tangle Lakes Campground entrance road improvements began in late July. A private contractor is working to resurface and improve drainage along the entire 2,800-foot stretch and widen two 500-foot sections of the Tangle Lakes Campground entrance road. The entrance road provides access to camping and boating facilities within the Delta Wild and Scenic River corridor.

A temporary road closure may be necessary during the course of construction. Updates to construction are being provided on location and through the BLM-Alaska website and public information offices. The project is scheduled to be completed by late August.

Subsistence

GFO is issuing permits for the 2010-2011 Federal subsistence moose and caribou hunting seasons in Game Management Unit 13. GFO anticipates issuing nearly 3,500 permits. A July 2010 caribou herd count, in cooperation with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, found the population to be in excess of the objective of 33,000 – 35,000 caribou. The Federal subsistence caribou hunt take in Units 13A and B will be for any caribou. The take for Units 13C and D is bull only. Takings established for the Units are intended to maintain the health of the Nelchina caribou herd for this regulatory year.



Bering Glacier Research Camp

The camp opened for a two-week period, July 26 – Aug. 6, after a one-year hiatus. Participants in the camp included Michigan Technical Research Institute, US Geological Survey, and BLM. BLM received Climate Change funds as well as challenge cost share to support the camp. Participants were charged a daily rate to utilize the camp. Research at the camp this year focused on gathering melting rates from the Bering Glacier and fresh water discharge rates into the Gulf of Alaska from Vitus Lake. These measurements go hand in hand in understanding the overall effects of climate change on the Earth's largest temperate surging glacier.

Youth news

A 10-day youth environmental field course along the Gulkana River and throughout the Copper River Basin and Delta began July 30 for 10 “stewardship ambassadors” from the Copper River Basin and Delta, Valdez, Chickaloon, and Anchorage. The teen ambassadors will be introduced to the entire Copper River Watershed and will learn and discuss similarities and differences between the basin and the delta, watershed dynamics, stewardship, economics, subsistence, and future issues and potential impacts for the watershed.

Participants will keep journals and prepare slide shows, videos, on-line resources, and other projects to document their experience. They will also give presentations to the Copper Basin community on Aug. 4 and to Cordova residents on Aug. 7.

The stewardship project is conducted through a partnership between the BLM, the National Park Service, Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment, Copper River Watershed Project, and the Prince William Sound Science Center.



ABOVE: Youth hiking at Upper Tangle Lake in the Delta Wild and Scenic River corridor and Aspen Interpretive Trail.

National Public Lands Day

On June 19 GFO hosted a National Public Lands Day/ National Landscape Conservation System tenth anniversary event at the BLM Paxson Lake Campground. More than 50 volunteers and field staff worked to remove and relocate an aging boardwalk to a more sustainable location, brushed out a water line and maintenance area, and planted native seeds and trees. Participants enjoyed a free barbecue, fun educational activities, and the release of a rescued bald eagle into the wild by the Alaska Wild Bird Rehabilitation Center.

