

frontiers



America's Coolest Trail



what's inside

- 4 Iditarod
- 7 Nature Gets Hygge
- 8 Tales, Fish, Weirs and a Potlatch
- 11 PEGed by Archaeology
- 12 In Wake of Disaster
- 14 Innovation is Elementary
- 16 Fireside Chats
- 17 Trail Etiquette
- 18 Discover White Mountains
- 19 Winning Big
- 20 Vengeful Bears
- 22 Frontiers Flashes



Bob Wick

Welcome to *frontiers*!

It has been great to receive continued requests for notification when our digital BLM Alaska *frontiers* news magazine is online, and we appreciate your interest. This issue we are celebrating the Iditarod National Historic Trail and it's 40th birthday, along with 50th Anniversary of the National Trails System (see <http://www.trails50.org> #FindYourWay). While the 2008-2012 Iditarod Trail Centennial commemorated the Gold Rush and history of the trail, the Iditarod remains the only National Historic Trail in Alaska and the first designated National Historic Trail. We are including stories from around the state and updates on land use planning and much more. We hope you enjoy this Winter 2017-2018 issue.

Karen J. Laubenstein
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@BLMAlaska

#MooseOnTheLoose Knows the BLM Inside-out and Outside-in



Lisa Gleason

On Facebook during December, BLM Alaska ran a comical social media campaign spoofing the wildly popular Elf on the Shelf. For 25 days, Matanuska “Matty” Moose educated and promoted the BLM’s multi-use mission and program through several Alaskan antics.

Matty will continue his journey through public lands in Alaska this year. Who knows what day Matty Moose may pop up to work ... or play! Look out for more from Matty #MooseOnTheLoose!



Lisa Gleason

Alaska is BEAR Country Are you READY?

Alaska’s bear country means taking responsibility to avoid conflicts with bears. You can encounter bears on the 730-acre BLM Campbell Tract in Anchorage and other BLM-managed public lands statewide.

Bear country essentials:

- Learn to use bear spray or capsicum spray.
- Bring a beacon and leave your hiking or trip plans with someone you know.
- Stay in a group where possible.
- Make noise (sing or talk loudly) so you don’t surprise a bear. Stay alert (don’t wear headphones) and look for signs of bears (scat, especially steaming scat).
- Never approach or crowd bears; respect their “personal space,” especially female bears and bears with cubs.
- Keep food, garbage and other attractants out of reach of bears.
- Avoid areas where you see or smell fish or animal carcasses or see scavengers congregated.
- Stay calm during a bear encounter, talk and wave your arms.
- Never run! The chance of outrunning a bear are slim to none.

Bear attack information has changed from years past. Whether you play dead or fight back depends on the type of bear and their behavior. Read up on the latest bear safety training at: <http://www.alaskabears.alaska.gov> and check out the “Know Your Bear Facts: The Essentials for Traveling in Alaska’s Bear Country” brochure. The brochure can be found at Alaska Public Information Centers and the Fairbanks and Anchorage BLM Public Rooms.



Bob Wick

Brown bear in the northeast National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska.

rules to play by



IDITAROD

**Behind the Scenes of America's only
Congressionally designated historic "winter trail"**

In 2018, as America celebrates the 50th anniversary of the National Trails System Act of 1968, join the celebration and the ongoing conversations on Facebook, Twitter, and our websites www.blm.gov/alaska/iditarod; www.trails50.org. Forty years ago, President Jimmy Carter signed the National Historic Trail legislation into law, creating Alaska's Iditarod National Historic Trail. Like the other 18 long-distance historic trails, the Iditarod's purpose is the identification and protection of the historic route and its historic remnants and artifacts for public use and enjoyment.

The Iditarod National Historic Trail, the only winter trail in the National Trails System, traverses about 1,000 miles of main trail between Seward and Nome, and an additional 1,400 of side/connecting trails that link communities and historic sites or provide a parallel route across Alaska. The winter trails system originally connected ancient villages of the interior Dena'ina, Deg Hit'an Indians and the coastal Iñupiaq and Yupik Eskimos. Later, the trail was an access route to mining districts during the Gold Rush era, beginning in the late 1800's through the early 1900's, adopting native forms of transport that often involved dog sleds and snowshoes. Other transport included a mixture of steamship and steamboat lines, railroads, wagon roads, and various cross-country trails including some designed principally for winter dogsled travel. The original surveyed mail route from Seward to Nome was 938 miles.

Today, the trail remains richly diverse – its scenery, climate, terrain, wildlife, recreation, history, and resources are largely unchanged since the time of the gold stamperders. The Iditarod National Historic Trail Management Plan identifies about 1,500 miles of the Trail for active use and management. Portions of the Trail serve as the route for the 1,000-mile Iditarod Sled Dog Race and other competitive sports, including

the run-walk-bike Iditarod Trail Invitational and the Iron Dog snowmobile race. The Trail remains a symbol of frontier travel and an important artery of Alaska's winter commerce. Although mostly a winter trail, summer hiking occurs in the Seward area, mountains near Anchorage, and the beach at Nome. The Chugach National Forest is restoring and developing over 180 miles of the Southern Trek of the Iditarod Trail between Seward and Girdwood. Visitors to Nome can hike east along the trail near the Bering Sea coast for approximately 30 miles. Most of the Historic Trail are on public State of Alaska lands (50%), public easements across private Native lands (30%), and a combination of BLM, Forest Service, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service lands (20%).

Behind the scenes, the BLM works with partners to maintain and promote the historic qualities that make the Iditarod unique among our nation's National Historic Trails. The BLM directly maintains about 120 miles of the trail, including five public shelter cabins. As the designated Trail Administrator, the BLM facilitates



BLM's Tripod Flats public shelter cabin.

Bob Wick



Historic photo of Eric Johnson being pulled by dog team carrying U.S. Mail near Portage, Alaska.



BLM's Old Woman public shelter cabin.

Bob Wick



Kevin Keeler



(Top left) Visitors to the BLM Campbell Tract get an up-close view of the mushers. (Above) A photo of Wada from the July 5, 1908 issue of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. (Left) Trail Coordinator, Kevin Keeler putting up signage for distance to Shelter Cabin.



Bob Wick

efforts by volunteers and local, state, and federal agencies for the entire Trail. The BLM is the lead federal agency for trail-wide planning and management, uniform trail marking, public outreach and education, and capacity building with regional and local trail “friends” groups. Trail segments that cross BLM-managed lands are part of the BLM’s National Conservation Lands. Most federal and state lands along the Iditarod are open to snowmachine use. It is best to check with the administering agency before travel to see if there are any temporary closures. North of Wasilla, the trail enters an essentially roadless wilderness with very limited

service and support facilities. Some small towns along the trail have air service, but are limited in other support facilities.

Every year, the BLM sponsors the conclusion of the Iditarod Ceremonial Start in Anchorage, ending on the 730-acre BLM Campbell Tract. That event involves about 3,000 visitors who come to see the mushers before they are off to Nome, and involves about 300 cars, as well as shuttle buses, over a 6-hour period for the event. BLM has provided exhibits and information on the Trail at the Alaska State Fair for several years.

The BLM has also provided technical information and interviews to film crews as part of documentaries. One of these projects was a Japanese film crew creating a documentary about Jujiro Wada, a famous Iditarod musher the Japanese know as the “Samurai Musher.”

The BLM worked with the Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance and partners to develop a sign plan for the Trail, involving 104 trail safety way-marking signs over 220 miles, as well as between Unalakleet and Old Woman over a heavily used 25-mile segment. For six years, the BLM Campbell Creek Science Center has provided staff support for a teacher-training 100-hour curriculum development program, the Iditarod Trail to Every Classroom! (iTREC!). Organized by the Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance with grant funding from the BLM, other partners for iTREC! include Chugach National Forest and Alaska Geographic.

In 2015, the biggest wildland fire year ever recorded in Alaska, state and federal interagency wildland fire crews saved the remains of the historic ghost towns of Iditarod and Flat and the BLM's Tripod Flat Public Shelter Cabin, although fires burned over 40 miles of Trail in that area. Also destroyed were approximately 120 trail-marking tripods, 400 trail-marking reflectors, and seven waymarking signs.

The BLM continues to bring Trail history alive, its stories (both past and present) are the stories of Alaska.

— *Karen Laubenstein*
Writer/Editor
Alaska State Office



Tripod marking the trail between Kaltag and Unalakleet.

Bob Wick

Nature Gets *Hygge* [Cozy] too!

As darker days descended and winter encroached on Alaska, the BLM Campbell Creek Science Center found a way to bring a little coziness to the 730-acre Campbell Tract.

Science Center manager Nancy Patterson and her staff organized monthly interpretive hikes focused on the Danish concept of *hygge* (h(j)u:gə/), a word that refers to the spirit of coziness, comfort, and wellbeing that winter brings.

“People can tend to hole up and spend more time indoors during winter months,” Patterson said. “We wanted to encourage people to spend time outside, experience the wonders of winter, and discover how nature gets ‘hygge’ too.”

The first *hygge* hike took place the day after Thanksgiving and had gratitude as its theme. In addition to getting a good hike in brisk temperatures, the participants shared their thoughts about the opportunity to get outdoors and enjoy their public lands.

The second walk took place on the Winter Solstice. During the evening stroll, Science Center staff shared how animals, plants, and ecosystems adapt as the temperatures drop – the animal world’s own version of *hygge*.

The third interpretive hike, held in late January, focused on complex ways that snow shapes the world around us. Participants learned snow is so much more than cold, white stuff on the ground.

On the last hike in late February, science center naturalists explored how the returning daylight changes the landscape and animal behavior.



Maureen Clark

Hardy folks who braved single-digit temperatures Nov. 24 for the first post-Thanksgiving interpretive hike with Campbell Creek Science Center naturalist Brian Janson.

The interpretive hikes helped people get out and explore the natural world at a time when we may be inclined to hibernate. Look for more *hygge* hikes next winter as the daylight again grows short and the snow covers the many trails on the Campbell Tract.

— *Nancy Patterson and Maureen Clark*
contributed to this story

Tales, Fish, Weirs and a Potlatch



Jim Hart

Assanaq (Ossie) Kairaiuk
tells a story about Alaska
Native culture.

The storyteller told of an Auntie who was “kind of a nag.” They were at a fish camp and, as a kid, he was tossing fish up to the folks at the drying rack. His aunt was below him cleaning the fish. Being chewed up by mosquitoes, she called up to him to start a smoldering fire, hoping the smoke would give some relief.

He found some good wood and oil to get the fire started upwind of his aunt, but he didn’t consider he was directly under the drying fish. The fire was soon getting too hot, and his friends warned him, “You’re going to cook those fish!”

In a panic, he covered the now very hot fire with heaps of very green grass. The resulting smoke was so thick, it didn’t waft, it almost oozed. Soon, the breeze carried the heavy smoke directly to his aunt. Within moments, the only thing visible was her silhouette.

Cough.

The boy was certain he would be in trouble, so he called his father and pointed in his aunt’s direction.

The father looked down, smiled broadly, and simply chuckled, “Hee-hee.”

“You used too much grass,” his aunt coughed.

His father again smiled and chuckled.

This story was presented to a session of almost 100 people (including 20 Elders and cadre) at the Alaska Native Relations Training held at the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage, Alaska Jan. 29 through Feb. 2. This year’s class was hosted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and was open to all Department of Interior agencies in Alaska.

Stories and sharing experiences were a large part of the five-day course. It immersed the attendees in Alaska Native and American Indian culture classes, presentations and even

included a potlatch with cultural dishes (class participants were encouraged to bring food from their cultures to share).

Storytelling is as much part of Alaska Native culture as hunting and fishing. Alaska Natives have a rich heritage



Jim Hart

Traditional Cupik storyteller, Polly Andrews, shares stories from her childhood.



Jim Hart

Luise Woelfein, BLM employee at Campbell Tract Science Center, addresses participants in the Alaska Native Relations Training Feb. 1 in the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage, Alaska.

expressed generationally between elders and younger generations through stories, song, and dance. Time can seem to stop during a story; nothing is hurried, nothing is so urgent that the Elder can't finish what's being said — certainly nothing bureaucratic carries that kind of weight.

It's this culture with which government employees must learn to interface. To make things more complex, the culture can vary widely between tribes (even between communities along the same river). But there is one common thread through all of it.

“Respect the people,” Ralph Eluska, Alutiiq elder and BLM Alaska employee, explained. “Government agencies should respect the people who will be affected by the laws and regulations they implement.”

Ralph illustrated his point with hunting regulations. In the State of Alaska, a legal bull moose has a rack that's 51 inches across. In Alaska Native culture, the hunter should take the first animal that presents itself to you.

“Essentially, if you don't take a perfectly good bull because its rack isn't big enough, you've insulted the animal,” Eluska said.

This belief was reflected in another story told of a young boy who, in order to become a good hunter, becomes a seal. He learned to see people as the seals do. The hunters who respected the water and took care of the meat, and the women who took care of the bones, had an aura. When the boy presented himself to his hunter, he knew his body would be taken care of. The boy in the story ultimately became the best hunter in his village, providing for many families.



Florence Newman, Gwich'in Athabascan Elder, tells stories from her youth.

Jim Hart



Jim Hart

(Above) Class participants role-play a meeting between Alaska Native community leaders and agency officials about installing a fish weir to count salmon. The roles for each side of the discussion are scripted to help the participants see how discussions can flow in real-world encounters.



Jim Hart

(Left) Roy Nageak, BLM employee, role plays a Alaska Native elder in a breakout session. The focus was to introduce Interior employees to Alaska Native culture.

The training is offered as needed, with employees from across the Department participating. Early feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

— Jim Hart
Public Affairs Specialist
Alaska State Office

At-Risk Alaskan Youth get PEGed by Archaeology

One of the most rewarding aspects of anthropology is a chance to teach young people about our past and about other cultures. In Alaska, there is a dedicated group of archaeologists and cultural anthropologists who work together on outreach and education, through the Alaska Anthropological Association's Public Education Group (PEG for short). Recently several PEG members in Anchorage created a program for teenagers at the McLaughlin Youth Detention Facility.

Instructors included the BLM Anchorage Field Office Archaeologist, two National Park Service archaeologists, two private sector archaeologists, and an Alaska Native ethnobotanist and traditional healer.

The class was held on a Sunday, because the youth facility's extremely structured weekday schedule didn't allow much time for "extra" activities. In the morning, the students (ten young men) learned how to make traditional paints using materials like ochre, clay, and charcoal. They learned how different materials were made into paint in different cultures, and practiced making their own. They learned how Alaska Natives would eat seasonally and use different plants to aide their digestion and get nutrients they couldn't get from eating meat. They also learned which Alaska plants are used for medicinal purposes, and how they reduce inflammation, disinfect wounds, and so on. The instructor brought samples of several plants so the students could see, feel, and smell them.

In the afternoon, the students learned how to map an

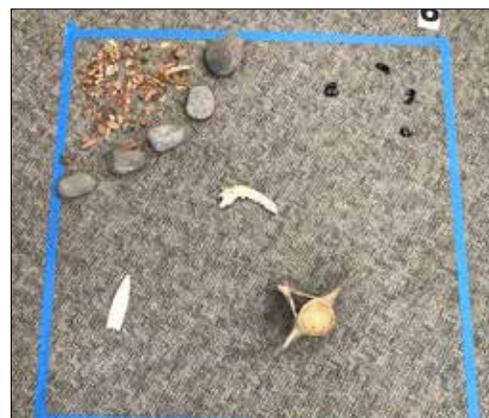


McLaughlin students and staff try using traditional paints that they just made.

Tim Mraz

archaeological site. They worked in pairs to document the artifacts and features in the "excavation units" archaeologists laid out on the floor. They had to create a scale and make a measured drawing of their part of the site. Then they put all the drawings together to see how they could put all their data together to learn about the site as a whole.

The final activities of the day focused on hunting and use of animals. They looked at different animal bones, furs, and hides to see how archaeologists identify animal bones in archaeological sites, and to learn how different parts of various animals were used. Then they learned how some prehistoric Alaskans hunted using spears and atlatls. They learned how to hold their atlatls and practiced throwing spears at seal and woolly mammoth targets.



One of the "excavation units" that the students used to practice mapping.

Jenny Blanchard

The young men were interested and engaged, and we had a wonderful day teaching them. We truly appreciate the staff that worked with us to put on this day of classes. We are already planning a return trip to teach the young women at McLaughlin.

— Jenny Blanchard,
Archaeologist
Anchorage Field Office



In the Wake of Disaster ...

Stepping off the plane, the heat and humidity were the first things he noticed. Temperatures hovering around 85 degrees with 90 percent humidity would tempt anyone from Alaska to look for the nearest walk-in freezer, except there weren't too many working.

He was stepping onto an island where the devastation was so complete, it more closely resembled a combat zone than the results of a hurricane. On St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands, roofs lifted off buildings were deposited in the neighbor's driveway. Walls of houses were scoured from their foundations, and telephone poles that had stood through countless storms were snapped in two.

Kevin Kearney, a project lead at BLM Alaska, had seen hurricane damage before when he worked for the Coast Guard, and later for Federal Emergency Management Agency. This one was different.

"Even the steel gate and heavy iron fence around the port was laid flat, ripped from the foundation," Kevin explained. "That's a lot of force."

Multi-million dollar homes on hillsides weren't spared, neither were sturdily constructed commercial properties. Each destroyed house and building represented possessions and livelihoods for families who might not see an economic recovery for years.

Kevin was going to work for the Small Business Administration. He and a handful of others were the front line of a much more robust assistance mechanism

on the mainland. Their job was to take in as many loan applications as possible and, if they didn't qualify for SBA assistance, to get folks in touch with agencies that might be able to help.

Working out of a fire station with no air conditioning and no ventilation (they couldn't open other doors for security concerns), they each would process a loan application in 30 minutes. Each applicant was interviewed to find out if they had any income that might be used to repay the loan, and that took time. Many people broke down in tears as they explained what was lost. It's hard to rush the human factor.

"Even with all the devastation, the people were remarkably resilient," Kevin said. "We helped them fill the applications, writing down every dime of income we could find, sometimes it wasn't enough. That's when we sent them to FEMA with a letter explaining they didn't qualify for a loan."

In Washington D.C. there was another crew working — A few dozen people in a basement room roughly the size of a small cafeteria. They worked from tables, not desks, and were packed so tightly they had to turn one of their two monitors vertically to make room for the people on either side. It was a setup that could make a person miss their cubicle walls. They not only worked the St. Thomas

(Above) The force of Hurricane Irma knocked out power across St. Thomas island. A resident just manages to drive under downed utility poles and wires on Smith Bay Road in Charlotte Amalie.

disaster loans, but also disaster and economic injury loans from Puerto Rico, Texas, Florida, Georgia, and California.

There, working ten-hour shifts didn't seem to be enough to get through the thousands of emails asking about SBA loans. People from all sorts of agencies and backgrounds completely foreign to the SBA mission had to learn the software systems well enough to keep the processes moving — this was asking people to compress what would otherwise be a couple years of learning into one intense detail.

Satrina Lord's regular assignment is the Alaska State Office information management section manager. At SBA, she was a customer service representative and occasionally a loan officer. She described an intense workload driven by need. Unfortunately, where there is a lot of fast-moving money, there are people willing to take advantage.

"And there were issues of fraud," Satrina explained. "People would call and tell us they were being contacted by the SBA, but they hadn't applied for a loan [...] we had templates and processes for how to deal with fraud because it's so prevalent."

As tough as the mission is, both Kevin and Satrina said the work is rewarding.

"When you're in that [disaster recovery] environment, you realize it may not be as newsworthy, but there are still people who don't have basic needs," Satrina said. "It's made me more open to the plight that people are suffering through."

"I would do it again. I like being in the trenches," Satrina smiled.

To volunteer for an assignment with FEMA or SBA in future disaster operations, interested BLM employees will need to complete the required FEMA Incident Command System courses (100b, 200b and 700a) and have an Incident Qualifications and Certification System account.

— *Jim Hart*
Public Affairs Specialist
Alaska State Office



Landsat 8 satellite photos of the U.S. Virgin Islands before and after Hurricane Irma. According to NASA, the differences in ocean color are likely from the rougher water, which scatters more light. The brown color on the land can come from fewer leaves on the vegetation, but also salt coatings on the leaves that remain.

NASA



Steel girders and torn sheet metal are all that remain of the structure that covers the fuel tanks at a local service station on St. Thomas. The force of the winds from Hurricane Irma ripped apart this gas station in Charlotte Amalie.

K.C. Wise/FEMA



A cruise ship is chartered for use as temporary lodging on St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Hurricanes Irma and Maria made the existing hotels on the island uninhabitable. The cruise ship wasn't there for relaxation and entertainment, providing only hotel-type accommodations. It took about a half an hour to get on board at the end of the day.

Satrina Lord

In Alaska, innovation is elementary

It all started with one phone call to the BLM from a fifth grader at Klatt Elementary School in Anchorage, Alaska. It quickly moved to an outreach experience that began with a FaceTime demonstration and continued with 10 elementary students winning the award for best project at the Anchorage District Lego Robotics Program competition. Not only did they win the award, but the Klatt Robotics Club received an invitation to the state competition where they competed against 60 teams from across Alaska.



Jim Hart

The Klatt Elementary Robotics Club is a team of 10 fifth-graders who participate in their school's Lego Robotics Program. The program is broken into two parts: the first involves robotics, and the second is a focused project to address a societal or environmental issue. The robotics program teaches these students to use creative higher-level thinking skills to design, build, modify, break-down, program, and reprogram robots to independently accomplish functions on a game board with 10-15 challenges.

This year's project portion of the contest required the students to address a problem in the areas of water, cleanliness, conservation and transportation. The Klatt Club decided to tackle a problem in their own backyard — cleaning overspill of oil from recreational boating vehicles in Big Lake, Alaska.

By working on the project just a couple afternoons per week after school, the club designed a solution



Lisa Gleason



Lisa Gleason

that combined a channel design where the movement of boats would churn water and capture the loose oil in a bilge sock, which collected the oil and encapsulated it into gel form. To take the project to the next level, they proposed a plan to cut the dried bilge sock into three-inch cakes for fire starters and selling them to recoup the overall costs of the innovation.

As the district competition day closed in, the students contacted BLM Alaska with a request to present their project for both practice and feedback. Just hours later, the club connected with Energy and Minerals Chief Rob Brumbaugh and Graphic Designer Vanessa Rathbun via

FaceTime for a video demonstration. Both Rob and Vanessa were impressed with the exhibition and after asking a few questions, gave the students advice for the upcoming contest.

(Far left) BLM Alaska Oil and Gas Section Chief Rob Brumbaugh and Graphic Designer Vanessa Rathbun observe Klatt Elementary Robotics Club students via FaceTime presenting their idea for cleaning up polluted waters in Big Lake, Alaska. *(Top)* BLM Alaska State Lead Fisheries Biologist Matt Varner offers feedback and advice to Klatt Elementary Robotics Club students after they demonstrated their channel design and bilge sock concept. *(Above)* Klatt Elementary Robotics Club students listening to Matt's feedback.

Lisa Gleason



Matt Varner gets an up-close look at the Klatt Elementary Robotics Club program for robotics.

“It was so impressive meeting a group of fifth-graders with the initiative and tenacity to contact a Federal agency for feedback on a project of this nature,” said Rob.

“The visual aids prepared by the students combined color, creativity and information in a way that made the project easy to understand,” said Vanessa.

After learning they’d won the project portion of the district event, the students increased their club time from two to four afternoons per week to prepare for the January 2018 state competition. Again the club

contacted BLM Alaska, this time with an offer to see their progress in person at Klatt Elementary School. Fisheries biologist Matt Varner accepted their invitation for an up-close look at their project and a lively robotics display. In just three weeks, the club had completed a realistic model of their channel and bilge sock concept, and each participant articulated the details and features from memory. After finishing, Matt answered several questions from the students and then volleyed a few of his own back to them.

“The ingenuity and dedication of these kids and their teachers is inspiring. They took a real environmental issue, like waterbody fuel spills, and developed a highly effective solution in terms of both fuel capture and cost,” said Matt. “They even went a step further to address the disposal of the fuel capture material and created a revenue generating a recreational fire starter product!”

Strong youth engagement is essential to BLM Alaska’s effort to engage citizens in the work they do on behalf of the American people. Connecting with the Klatt Club established a meaningful connection between the BLM and these students. By engaging at an early age in learning and innovation, they are encouraged to contribute to the future health, productivity and diversity of America’s public lands.

— Lisa Gleason
Public Affairs Specialist
Alaska State Office

Lisa Gleason



Kudos to Klatt! Having won the project portion of the Lego Robotics District Competition in Anchorage, they advanced to the state contest on Jan. 20, 2018.

Fireside Chat Series still Drawing in Lifelong Learners



Wolverine activity in the nearby Chugach Mountains was the subject of a recent Fireside Chat.



Meeting a Northern Saw-whet owl at a Fireside Chat on Alaska's small owls.



Examining core samples from a Fireside Chat on what the bottoms of lakes and bogs can tell us about the past.

For more than two decades, people have been gathering by the fireplace at the BLM Campbell Creek Science Center in Anchorage one evening each month to learn about everything from prehistoric hunting techniques to sled dog physiology, and from Alaska's energy future to the science of skiing.

The Fireside Chat lecture series runs from October through April, typically on the third Wednesday of the month, and features a different science or natural resource topic each month.

Scores of experts in a wide variety of fields have shared their knowledge on a staggering array of topics. Curious about the dinosaurs that once roamed what is now Denali National Park? There's been a Fireside Chat on the topic. Interested in Alaska mining history, spectacled eiders, or polar plankton? How about the secret lives of porcupines, bar-tailed godwits, Bering Sea coral communities, or the sea otters of Kachemak Bay? They've all been the subject of Fireside Chats.

"We are fortunate to have so many local experts who are willing to share what they know and an audience that's so curious about science, resource management, and public lands," said Luise Woelflein, the Science Center's Environmental Education Coordinator. Woelflein searches for engaging speakers on topics that will draw people out on a cold winter evening. "Our speakers are always impressed by the questions people in the audience ask."

Warmed by the fireplace and by the hot drinks and cookies provided by the Friends of the Campbell Creek Science Center, the atmosphere is friendly and informal, with plenty of time for questions.

"We really enjoy the Fireside Chats!" said long-time attendee Emmy Zartman. "They are an excellent way to learn something new and interesting related to science, our world, or our local environment—Anchorage's 'backyard.'"

Another long-time attendee, Ed Kamienski agreed, "They're also a great way for the BLM to share the Science Center with the community."

Upcoming Fireside Chats:

April 18 – Hot Times in Cold Places: The Hidden World of Permafrost

— *Maureen Clark*
Anchorage District Office
Public Affairs Specialist

Enjoy your public trails at the BLM's Campbell Tract

With over 12 miles of non-motorized trails through the boreal forested 730-acre Campbell Tract, there is plenty of space to get out and explore. More than 300,000 people and an estimated 40,000 dogs visit the trails annually. Be courteous on the trails — keep right except to pass, use safe speeds, use your voice or a bell when passing, and yield to other trail users. Dog waste bags are available at each trailhead. Please do your part to ensure the waste makes it into the garbage receptacle and fecal coliform stays out of Campbell Creek!

Did you know the BLM Campbell Tract in Anchorage requires your dogs to be on a leash? A leash helps you control your dog on the trails and is a great way to protect your pet from other animals or running away where they can eventually reach a roadway or street and be in danger from vehicles. The rules do not allow electronic collars. Please plan ahead and bring the leash with your pet.

In the winter, some trails are open only to dog mushing. Dog teams are fast, quiet, and cannot stop quickly. Please look and listen carefully near mushing trail intersections.

The Campbell Tract is home to a variety of wildlife. Moose, porcupine, lynx, fox, coyote, snowshoe hare, red squirrel, and both black and brown bears can all be found there. King and silver salmon are commonly viewed from Salmon Run Trail.

For the safety of you and your dog, always give moose a wide berth and run if a moose charges. Make noise to avoid a bear encounter, and NEVER run from a bear. Go to www.alaskabears.gov for more information on keeping safe in bear country.

AllTrails ranked the Campbell Tract Loop National Recreation Trail as



Interpretive signs provide information on trail etiquette, location, and wildlife safety tips.

#2 for “Best Dogs on a Leash Trails” near Anchorage. The Campbell Tract Loop National Recreation Trail is a 4.5-mile moderately trafficked loop trail that is accessible year-round. It’s kid-friendly, and a favorite jaunt for birders, cross-country skiers, hikers, horseback riders, mountain bikers, snowshoers, runners, and walkers. It’s also a great trail for taking in scenic views, and wildlife can often be spotted. There is a 390-foot elevation gain on this trail.

Be sure to stop in and visit the Campbell Creek Science Center. The Science Center is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m., and offers a wealth of interesting information about the natural history of the area and the BLM.

This year is the 50th anniversary of the National Trails Act. Come out and celebrate your local trails.

— Maureen Clark
Anchorage District Office
Public Affairs Specialist



(Above) Trail users enjoying winter landscape of BLM's Campbell Tract.

Discover White Mountains National Recreation Area

The White Mountains National Recreation Area offers 250 miles of maintained winter trails and 14 public recreation cabins and trail shelters surrounded by jagged limestone mountains and cliffs, high mountain passes, and broad, rounded valleys. Whether you choose to explore these trails in the White Mountains by ski, snowshoe, snowmobile, or dog team — you'll find crisp, clean air, dazzling views, and if you're lucky, shimmering northern lights against a star-studded sky.

One of the highlights of a tour through the White Mountains is an overnight stay at one of BLM's 12 public recreation cabins and two trail shelters — the perfect place to warm up, dry out gear, and enjoy a hearty dinner after a day on the trail.

Cabins must be reserved prior to use, although the two trail shelters are "first-come, first-served." Be sure to carry your permit of stay at all times while in the White Mountains National Recreation Area. You can find info to know before you go, getting there, cabin reservations, current trail conditions, weather information, activities, and amenities on the [White Mountains webpage](#). Call the Fairbanks District Office if you have any questions at (907) 474-2200.



Bob Wick

Reserve your Cabin today!

Lee's Cabin
Eleazar's Cabin
Borealis-LeFevre Cabin
Caribou Bluff Cabin
Windy Gap Cabin
Moose Creek Cabin
Crowberry Cabin
Cache Mountain Cabin
Colorado Creek Cabin
Wolf Run Cabin
Richard's Cabin
Fred Blixt Cabin

Visit [Recreation.gov](#)



Bob Wick

(Top) Green northern lights paint the night sky above Moose Creek Cabin. (Above) The cozy interior of Lee's cabin. Cabins are primitive with no electricity, no indoor plumbing and no cell phone coverage. Tables, benches, wood stove, and tools for cutting wood and shoveling are provided.

Small Mine Operator Wins Big

The Bureau of Land Management recognized Ron Timroth and his mining company, 12 Caesars Gold, LLC, with a BLM Reclamation and Sustainable Mineral Development Award. One of four honorees, Timroth, operated a placer mine on Uhler Creek in Alaska's Fortymile Mining District.

Timroth's company was awarded the 2017 Hardrock Mineral Small Operator Award, which acknowledges environmental stewardship successes of operators with fewer than 15 employees. BLM presented the award to Timroth at a luncheon co-sponsored by the BLM and the National Mining Association in Washington, D.C. and with a short presentation at the Alaska Miners Association Annual Convention in Anchorage. The company's award is based upon Timroth's diligent and innovative effort to expedite upland revegetation.

Notably, 12 Caesars Gold was recognized for their:

- Use of a custom mix of certified weed-free seed produced in Alaska;
- Attendance at BLM Alaska-sponsored reclamation training events and their work with the field office to make the most of the limited resources;
- Successful transplant of birch and aspen trees patches to facilitate rapid reclamation; and,
- Using older, perforated hoses to water their reclamation, while simultaneously dewatering their operation pit.

"Along with these achievements, Timroth's operation continued to make improvements on how they conducted reclamation prior to selling the operation last summer," said BLM's former Deputy State Director of Resources in Alaska Steve Cohn, "We greatly appreciate Timroth's substantial efforts to work with our BLM Alaska team and for their commitment to responsible development of our public lands."

For more information on the awardees, visit the [BLM's Minerals Program website](#). Watch the [video about the 2017 awardees](#) and view their [award photos](#).

— Lisa Gleason
Public Affairs Specialist
Alaska State Office



BLM Photo

Ron Timroth (*center*) of XII Caesars Gold, LLC of Snowmass, Colorado, receiving the Hardrock Mineral Small Operator Award, in Washington D.C.

Nominations for the 2018 BLM Reclamation and Sustainable Mineral Development Award

The BLM is seeking nominations for the 2018 Reclamation and Sustainable Mineral Development Awards. These awards recognize those initiatives to foster sustainable development, which encourages environmental health, social responsibility and economic security.

"Every year at this time, the BLM recognizes and thanks those within the mineral resource community who have demonstrated their commitment to responsible development," said Brian Steed, BLM Deputy Director for Policy and Programs. "The BLM strives to be a good neighbor in the communities we serve, and we appreciate those who share this commitment."

Awards are presented through one of five categories. These include the Hardrock Mineral Environmental Award, the Hardrock Mineral Community Outreach and Economic Security Award, the Hardrock Mineral Small Operator Award, the Hardrock Mineral Director's Award and the "Fix a Shaft Today!" Award.

Nominations should be submitted to the BLM State Office having jurisdiction of the public lands where the operation or project is located. Addresses can be found on the [awards program brochure](#). This brochure offers detailed information on the nomination and selection process, as well as state contact information.

The deadline for submissions is **April 30, 2018**. Awards will be presented this fall.

Vengeful bears and survey sleuthing

As a young surveyor running a survey crew in southeast Alaska, Doug Haywood was “blazing trees” through thick woods on Prince of Wales Island, marking each blazed tree with paint while cutting back saplings and brush the whole way. An awful lot of hard work.

When it was time to trace back the cutline and place monuments, and as they approached the last two miles, he and his survey partner started to notice every single one of their survey points was destroyed. Not by vandals, but by a bear; a black bear, judging by the tracks. The stakes weren’t coated in anything tasty, and it was only the stakes and nails that were damaged, nothing else in the area was touched. Why on earth would a bear have such a major issue with survey stakes?

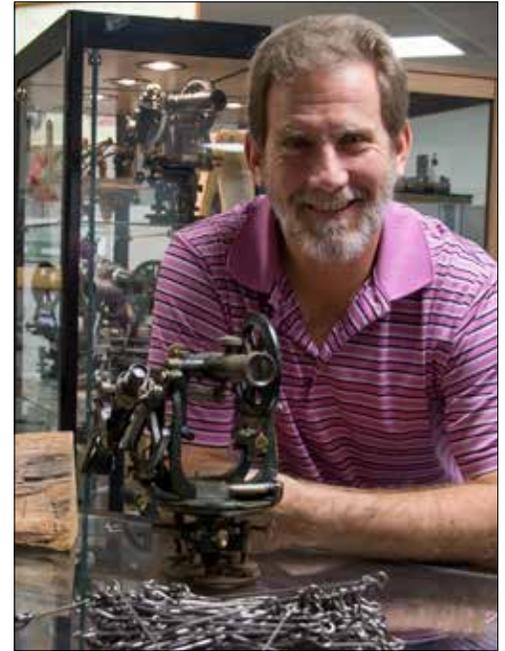
Walking back with all the recent bear signs would make most people a bit more alert; signs of an irrational and angry bear could make people wonder if their life insurance is paid up.

Perhaps another observation would be prudent here. This is one of Doug’s fond memories. He smiled as he told it. It could be a yarn, but Doug wasn’t kidding. Bear encounters are common in Alaska, and that’s one of the reasons he came back from New Mexico to become BLM Alaska’s newest cadastral chief.

Well, maybe not the bears themselves, but the outdoors. Doug is an avid outdoorsman, he loves to hunt, fish and to feel like he’s walking where few have trod.

“When my wife and I left in 2001 we said we want to come back,” Doug said, “I’m an outdoorsman [...] and Alaska is the Last Frontier, and being able to come up here and leave my mark as an original surveyor is just something that’s great to say.”

The work in Alaska is often unique for the current generation of cadastral surveyors. Most of the surveys they conduct are original, meaning no one else



New Cadastral Survey Chief, Doug Haywood.

Jim Hart



Example of a Bearing Tree

has surveyed in the area. In the Lower 48, those kinds of surveys are very rare — most are using earlier work. However, tracing work from 100 years ago (or older) can be exciting, too.

You can learn a lot about a past surveyor's methods when you retrace his work. Another of Doug's memories involved tracing surveys from the late 1800s and early 1900s in southeast Alaska.

"I was retracing a lot of this individual's work and adding work onto it." Doug explained. "One of the things I learned after doing it a couple years and following the same surveyor, I realized he was always off on his distances by 16 1/2 feet [the length a "pole" in a survey chain]. Once I made the connection, I was almost always able to find his corners."

Memories aside, Doug is playing a major role in the largest land-conveyance program in the U.S. He has to work collaboratively with the state of Alaska to make sure his team's surveys meet both the BLM's and the state's needs.

"The main thing I want to focus on is getting the rest of the state-selected land surveyed at a level that meets the needs of the state and is the most economical to BLM," Doug said. "Hopefully we can come up with a workable plan that is acceptable to both agencies and we can finish the land transfer process, and then convert our survey operations over to a land-management agency instead of a land-transfer agency."

It's a lot of work to finish in a state this vast, with a land pattern so far-flung and remote. Doug has a very big puzzle to finish.

Back to the earlier story, why did the bear attack the markers? It turns out the bear bit into a few cans of spray paint.

"There was red paint everywhere," Doug laughed. "After he popped that can of paint, he just went down the line and anything with a human smell on it, he took out. Never saw him, but it was probably a good thing — he was [truly angry]."

Welcome aboard, Doug.

— Jim Hart
Public Affairs Specialist
Alaska State Office



Two BLM Alaska surveyors using GPS surveying equipment to set a survey corner



Surveyor scribing a bearing tree in southeast Alaska.



frontiers *flashes*

What are BLM's Resource Management Plans?

BLM's Resource Management Plans (RMPs) form the basis for every action and approved use on BLM-managed public lands in Alaska. The RMPs are for areas of public lands, called planning areas, which tend to have similar resource characteristics. Planning emphasizes a collaborative environment in which local, state, and tribal governments, the public, user groups, and industry work with the BLM to identify appropriate multiple uses of these public lands. BLM Alaska is actively working to streamline the associated NEPA process in accordance with *Secretarial Order 3355 Streamlining National Environmental Policy Reviews and Implementation of Executive Order 13807, "Establishing Discipline and Accountability in the Environmental Review and Permitting Process for Infrastructure Projects"*.

Managers and the public use RMPs to:

- Allocate resources and determine appropriate multiple uses for the public lands;
- Develop a strategy to manage and protect resources; and
- Establish systems to monitor and evaluate status of resources and effectiveness of management practices over time.

Read about featured plans and NEPA documents currently being developed, revised or amended, and get involved in the planning process here: <https://www.blm.gov/programs/planning-and-nepa/plans-in-development/alaska>

Haines Block: Supplemental EIS to Ring of Fire Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment

The BLM Glennallen Field Office staff is conducting public outreach meetings in Haines, Skagway, and Juneau during the week of April 2 as it develops a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to the Ring of Fire Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment. The BLM welcomes and values diverse views, and the information garnered from this outreach will be used to develop supplemental alternatives to the previous plan amendment, as applied in the Haines area. Decisions to be made include whether to retain a monitor and control area for wildlife studies, whether to retain or change special land area designations, and whether to establish a maximum number of annual helicopter landings on these BLM-managed public lands. More information is at www.blm.gov/alaska/rof-haines-amendment.

Coastal Plain Environmental Impact Statement

As directed by Congress in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, the BLM is working toward holding an oil and gas lease sale in the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge within the next four years. This work includes conducting outreach to our partners and stakeholders, and conducting consultation with affected Alaska Native Tribes and Corporations, as well as laying the groundwork for an environmental analysis that is required before a lease sale can be held. Because it is a major unexplored, but potentially productive, geologic onshore basin, oil and gas from the Coastal Plain is an important resource for meeting our nation's energy demands and achieving energy dominance. The BLM will initiate this project in the near future.

Work begins on a Recreation Area plan for the Squirrel River outside of Kotzebue

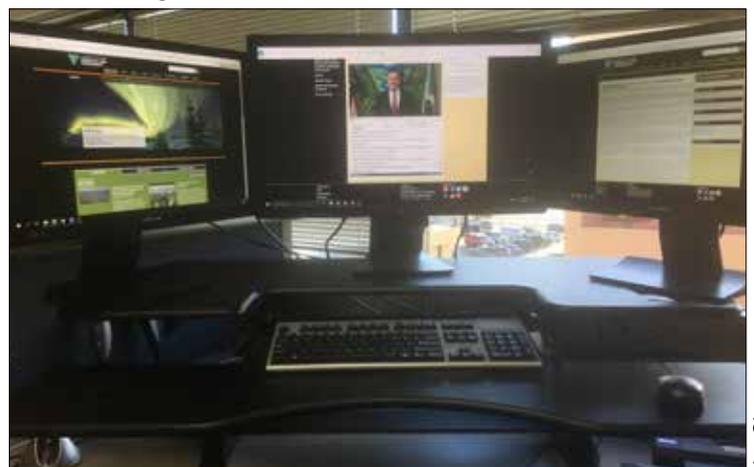
BLM Anchorage Field Office staff are planning public outreach meetings the week of April 9 in Kotzebue, Noorvik, and Kiana as it prepares for the development of an Environmental Assessment and Recreation Area Management Plan for the Squirrel River area. The Squirrel River area is located 30 miles northwest of Kotzebue and is a popular caribou hunting area. The plan will address user conflicts and enhance management of the area. The field office plans public meetings in Anchorage and Fairbanks for later in April. More information is at www.blm.gov/alaska/ks-squirrel-river-plan.

Ambler Road Environmental Impact Statement

The BLM is the lead federal agency in the development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a proposed right-of-way grant and related authorizations to construct, operate, and maintain a 211-mile, all-season industrial access road from the Dalton Highway to the Ambler Mining District. The district may be among the largest undeveloped copper-zinc mineral belts in the world. The proposed Ambler Road would serve to further mineral exploration and facilitate development of mines. The first 18 miles of the Ambler Road would be on BLM-managed lands within the Dalton Highway Utility Corridor. The road would also cross National Park Service, State of Alaska, and Native corporation lands. Public scoping meetings have concluded, and BLM expects to release the Final EIS in December 2019. Cooperating agencies with BLM for the EIS include the Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Corps of Engineers, State of Alaska, and Northwest Arctic Borough. The Federal Register published the Notice of Intent (NOI) on Feb. 28, 2017 that announced the beginning of the EIS scoping process to solicit public comments and identify issues.

Livestreamed: The 2017 NPR-A Oil & Gas Lease Sale

The December 2017 sale generated \$1,159,357. The State of Alaska will receive 50 percent of the bid receipts, or \$579,678.50. BLM Alaska received seven bids and opened them during its first-ever video livestream event. Two companies, ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc., and Anadarko E&P Onshore, LLC, submitted joint bids on seven tracts, covering 79,998 acres in the reserve.



Lisa Gleason

News from around the State



Meet Tom Heinlein, the new Anchorage District Manager

Tom is moving to Alaska from Canon City, Colorado, where he has been the District Manager since 2012 at the BLM's Rocky Mountain District and its three field offices – Royal Gorge, San Luis Valley, and Gunnison. As a district manager, he focused on building and maintaining resource stewardship partnerships, increasing effectiveness

of tribal consultations, and recruitment and retention efforts. This won't be Tom's first assignment in Alaska, as he had extensive experiencing working as Park Superintendent in Kotzebue. He also has served as a BLM field manager and acted in several positions including Associate Director for the National Operations Center and Eastern State's Deputy State Director for Resources. Tom begins as Anchorage District Manager in April.

BLM Alaska Resource Advisory Council to meet

The BLM Alaska Resource Advisory Council will meet May 16-17 in Fairbanks. The agenda for this public meeting will include updates on the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, the Greater Mooses Tooth Unit 2 project, and the proposed Willow Development. There will be updates on current planning efforts, such as the Road to Ambler Mining District Environmental Impact Statement and the Bering Sea-Western Interior and Central Yukon resource management plans. Four of the council's subcommittees will present their reports on placer mining, recreation, Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. Council members will receive an overview on Alaska subsistence; Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) including the Northwest Boreal LCC, Western Alaska LCC, and Aleutian Bering Sea Islands LCC; and explore partnership opportunities with local, regional, state, and federal entities. The agenda will be available online on May 1.

Find BLM at the Great Alaska Sportsman Show and the Fairbanks Outdoor Show

The BLM will have informational booths at two upcoming outdoor shows in April where staff will share information on summer and fall recreational opportunities on BLM-managed public lands in Alaska. The annual events attract thousands of outdoor recreation enthusiasts.

The Great Alaska Sportsman Show is April 5-8 in the Sullivan Arena in Anchorage. This year's booth theme highlights the 50th anniversaries of the Rivers and Trails System and the Wild & Scenic Rivers acts. Photo opportunities with props and Johnny Horizon abound!

The Fairbanks Outdoor Show is April 20-22 in the Carlson Center in Fairbanks. Stop by the booth and grab some brochures and get info before planning your next Alaskan adventure.

"Chosen Frozen" winter camp at BLM Paxson Lake Campground



Marnie Graham

From April 9-13, the Glennallen Field Office is co-hosting the annual "Chosen Frozen" winter camp. At this "Hands on the Land" based event, teens will learn winter survival and camping techniques, including how to build survival shelters, snowshoe, cross-country ski, ice fish, sew fur, and learn about winter animal habitat and behaviors. Approximately 60 teens will rotate through the "Chosen Frozen" winter camp at BLM's Paxson Lake Campground. The winter camp is a partnership with the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve and the Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment. For more information, contact the Glennallen Field Office (907) 822-3217.

Annual family ice fishing clinic April 7th



Nora Berner

The Glennallen Field Office will co-host an annual family ice fishing clinic with the Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment. During the clinic, youth and their parents learn ice-fishing techniques, lure and bait selection, ice safety, and proper use of ice fishing equipment from fisheries biologists, staff, and volunteers. For more information, contact the Glennallen Field Office (907) 822-3217.



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4700 BLM Road
Anchorage, AK 99507
Phone: 907-267-1246



moose, bear,
bald eagle,
osprey, wolf,
fox, and beaver

Sport fish:
chinook (king) salmon
coho (silver) salmon
sockeye (red) salmon
pink salmon
chum salmon

Other Species:
Arctic grayling
Arctic char
Dolly Varden

