

# Anchorage District Office



Gary Reimer, District Manager

## Anchorage Field Office news

### Red Devil Mine community involvement

This spring the BLM held community meetings in six Kuskokwim River villages to discuss the Red Devil Mine Remedial Investigation work plan and invite local knowledge and participation in the project. The BLM also hosted a regional workshop in Anchorage in early



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April for representatives of six tribal organizations who elected to meet jointly. A seventh community meeting will be held in the village of Sleetmute in late April.

The objectives of the meetings and the workshop are to ensure ongoing transparency of the Red Devil Mine investigation process and to continue to seek local and/or traditional knowledge from residents about the site.

The BLM is working cooperatively with DEC and EPA to ensure compliance with state and federal regulatory requirements. Representatives from regulatory and public health agencies attended the Anchorage workshop and many of the community meetings. This allowed local participants to ask questions of key state and federal agencies involved in the Red Devil Mine investigation.

The concerns expressed by the residents of local communities varied greatly. Some residents would like to see a thorough and complete cleanup of all potential contaminants at the Red Devil Mine site, followed by a vigorous program of long-term monitoring. Others wondered if disturbing mining materials left in place so long ago might do more harm than good to the people of the region, and urged the BLM and regulatory agencies to act with caution. The BLM has assured residents that the Red Devil Mine investigation will be a thoughtful, scientific process and affected communities will be kept informed throughout the project.



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Next steps include the release of a fish tissue and aquatic insect contaminants report, which will describe the levels of methylmercury in the aquatic food web of the middle Kuskokwim. This study includes pike and burbot, which are important subsistence resources in the middle and lower Kuskokwim River. The final report is due this August. The BLM will contact local communities to discuss the report and schedule meetings with interested communities.



The Red Devil Mine is a former cinnabar mine and mercury production facility on the Kuskokwim River. After removing physical hazards and spilled petroleum at the site, the BLM is now conducting a multi-year CERCLA (Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act) investigation to determine the extent of residual contamination and appropriate cleanup actions. The BLM will continue to engage local communities throughout the process.

To learn more about the Red Devil Mine investigation, visit [www.blm.gov/ak/red\\_devil\\_mine](http://www.blm.gov/ak/red_devil_mine) or contact project lead Mike McCrum at [akreddevil@blm.gov](mailto:akreddevil@blm.gov).

### iTREC! connects youth and communities along Iditarod Trail

Fourteen teachers from Seward to Nome just completed the final workshop in the Iditarod Trail to Every Classroom or iTREC! teacher training initiative. This place-based, service learning approach helps teachers connect their students to the natural and cultural heritage of their place along the Iditarod National Historic Trail. The program brings students out of their classrooms and into the outdoors, fosters



an understanding of their local landscape and community, and inspires them to become long-term stewards of our natural and cultural resources.

iTREC! is co-sponsored by the BLM Anchorage Field Office and five federal and private sector partners. This summer the iTREC! partnership will host a new group of teachers from more schools along the Iditarod National Historic Trail. For more information about iTREC! or to apply for next year's program, contact BLM Campbell Creek Science Center education coordinator Luise Woelflein at [lwoelfle@blm.gov](mailto:lwoelfle@blm.gov).

**ABOVE:** Teachers learn about Nome history from museum director Laura Samuelson during a reception at the Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum. **UPPER RIGHT:** iTREC! teachers and workshop leaders on the Iditarod Trail in Nome after the April workshop.



### Meet Matt

BLM fisheries biologist Matt Varner is acting Anchorage Field Manager for the next few months while Jim Fincher lends a hand in the BLM's Washington Office. Matt participated in the recent Red Devil Mine community meetings to talk with residents about the fish tissue and aquatic insect survey.



Matt has led the BLM's statewide fisheries program since joining BLM-Alaska in 2008. His prior experience includes the BLM Winnemucca Field Office in Nevada, the U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Forest Service and National Park Service. He holds a BS in wildlife and fisheries management from West Virginia University.

**RIGHT:** Matt Varner discusses the Kuskokwim River fish tissue and aquatic insect survey with Akiak Native Community President Ivan M. Ivan, Sr. and members of the council.

# Glennallen Field Office news



**Beth Maclean**  
Glennallen  
Field Manager

## Ice Fishing Clinic gets kids into the Great Outdoors

Nearly 50 people of all ages turned out for the BLM and Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment's "Kid's Ice Fishing Clinic" held at Silver Lake in March as part of the Youth in the Great Outdoors initiative. The combination of bright sunshine and no wind created the perfect day for baiting hooks, hunkering down over ice holes, and catching nice big rainbow trout!

Glennallen Field Office fisheries biologist Tim Sundlov and Anchorage Field Office natural resource specialist Laurie Thorpe set up a tent with an underwater video camera and monitor that allowed youth to observe fish behavior below the ice. Local dog musher Diane Ellsworth brought her sled dog team and gave dog sled rides.



When it was time to give kids a ride home, organizers were rewarded with cries of, "Ahh, we want to fish more!" but promises had already been made to get them home in time for dinner. Smiling kids that had connected with nature could be seen departing the lake walking softly and carrying a big fish!

## BLM grants U.S. Air Force right-of-way to access F-22 crash site

In March the Glennallen Field Office received an application from the U.S. Air Force for a right-of-way over existing BLM trails for a period of three years to access, retrieve, and mitigate crash debris related to a November 2010 F-22 aircraft accident south of the Denali Highway along Watana Creek.

Access was granted in April and operations began immediately to move heavy equipment over the land while the ground is frozen. Equipment will be staged on site until conditions are suitable to allow the recovery and cleanup to begin. Cleanup is expected to take most of the summer.

Upon completion of the cleanup, the heavy equipment will remain on site until the ground is frozen and sufficient snow cover exists to allow their recovery with minimal impacts. The project utilizes techniques and equipment used on the North Slope.



## Bering Glacier Camp

Bering Glacier Camp will open again this year in late July with Southern University and Michigan Tech research teams arriving to study the recent surge of the glacier. They will set up ablation meters at six different sites to measure how much ice is melting at the face of the glacier.



## Government-to-government consultation

The Glennallen Field Office is conducting its 8th consecutive annual consultation meetings with federally recognized tribes.

Agenda items include federal subsistence, the America's Great Outdoors initiative, protection of cultural resources, implementation-level planning under the East Alaska Resource Management Plan, and education and management of the highway-accessible Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act 17(b) easements that have heavy public use.

Meetings are being scheduled with tribes throughout the East Alaska planning area, including Nay 'dini 'aa Na' of Chickaloon Village (March 30), Native Village of Eyak (April 12), Yakutat-Tlingit Tribe (April 18), Cheesh 'Na Tribal Council of Chistochina (April 21), the Ahtna, Inc. Land Committee (April 23), the Native Village of Tazlina (April 26), Gulkana Village, Gakona Village, Chitina Traditional Village, Mentasta Village tribes, and Cantwell Village (dates to be determined).

## Tangle Lakes Campground renovation

This summer, the popular Tangle Lakes Campground will be renovated. The campground will remain open throughout construction, but some parts of the campground will close while undergoing the renovations. Campsites are first-come, first-served. Right now, campers can park anywhere because campsites are undesignated.

The renovations will improve roadbeds, designate campsites, define foot trails, and provide a new day use area within the campground. They will also help to restore damaged areas and protect cultural resources.



Once construction is complete, the renovated Tangle Lakes Campground will become a fee site. Campground fees will be compatible with other campground facilities within the Glennallen Field Office management area. BLM will use one hundred percent of the collected fees for enhancements, including maintenance and repairs, accessibility, interpretation and other improvements.

