



# Sierra Borealis *alaska report*

SIERRA CLUB ALASKA CHAPTER  
JUNE 2019



**Pebble Comment period extended to June 29—tell them: NO Pebble! NO WAY! NO Go!**

## "Bring Back my Sockeye to Me"

On April 16, members of the Sierra Club Alaska Chapter gave comment on the Pebble Mine draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) at the public hearing held by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at the Denaina Center in Anchorage. There was a rally outside the Center — which I went to right after work, joining a vocal throng of maybe 200 people with "No Pebble" stickers and signs. It was a spirited group, with music, dancing, children carrying toy fish, and everyone singing "Bring Back my Sockeye to Me".

There was also a terrifying giant puppet of Tom Collier, Pebble Partnership CEO, holding a fistful of cash in one hand and in the other the strings to a live puppet representing Army Corps of Engineers! After a number of speeches,



Christin Swearingen at NO PEBBLE rally

songs, and cheers, hundreds of Pebble opponents flooded into the Denaina Center to give their comments.

I was one of the first in line, but after more than two hours of waiting, my number was never called. This hearing felt very different from the BLM hearing about the Arctic Refuge in February. At that one, people could speak without limitation, and the

*You are invited!*  
to the next meeting of Sierra Club Alaska Chapter

**WHEN:** June 26, 6 pm

**WHERE:** Goose Lake.--off UAA Drive and Northern Lights Blvd. (Meet at the covered picnic tables 2811 UAA Dr.)

Meet the Alaska Chapter Excom and join them to discuss current Sierra Club topics. (For details, see p. 8.) For Sierra Club members and interested public.

hearing was extended for hours in order to give everyone a chance to speak. At this hearing, comments were limited to three minutes, and they cut it off abruptly at 8 pm. Most people therefore seemed rushed and flustered, especially the Alaska Native people, who speak deliberately and take time to introduce themselves before speaking. One man had to read from his notes so fast he hardly took a breath in the three minutes he was allowed!

Senator Lisa Murkowski recently voted to extend the comment period for the Pebble Mine EIS to June 29; however, such an extension does nothing to improve the rushed EIS or make it any more acceptable.

At least the extension — *continued p.2*

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## NO PEBBLE: comments needed -- from page 1

gives us all a chance to submit important comments online at: <https://www.pebbleprojecteis.com/publiccomments/newcomment>.

In your comments—point out:

\*\*\* The Army Corps rushed through a scoping process that ignored inputs from experts at EPA, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Alaska tribes, and other Alaska residents.

\*\*\* The Corps of Engineers' EIS is flawed—incomplete, unscientific; it fails in its legal obligation to take a hard look at all reasonably foreseeable significant impacts of this proposed mine.

\*\*\* The most glaring flaw is failure to address the prospect of a catastrophic tailings dam failure—the single-largest danger associated with Pebble. Earthen tailings dams fail frequently.

\*\*\* Another flaw is limitation of the EIS to study a “smaller” 20-year mine plan—even though leaders of Pebble’s parent company, Northern Dynasty, talk about decades and generations of mining. Many risks worsen after an initial 20-year period and cannot simply be shrugged off as “low probability.” And what about earthquakes?

\*\*\* the EIS fails to thoroughly examine threats to the two major iconic national parks within the Bistol Bay watershed system—Lake Clark and Katmai.

\*\*\* The proposed transportation corridor to connect the new mine to shipping and other infrastructure would gravely wound the world’s largest sockeye salmon fishery—blocking salmon streams by culverts or other stream diversions and by toxic spills from truck accidents.

### ➔ Your comments urgently needed to stop Pebble

It is crucial for everyone reading this to submit comments to the Army Corps. This is the way to convince the government to do the job right on the Pebble EIS.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski has said she wants a robust permitting process that involves Alaskans and addresses their concerns. This DEIS fails to meet that standard; Lisa Murkowski needs to hear of your strong opposition. Contact Sen. Murkowski: (202) 224-6665 or (907)271-3735, or (907)225-6880. Or via [murkowski.senate.gov](http://murkowski.senate.gov).

Mail DEIS comments to:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Alaska District,  
645 G St., Suite 100-921; Anchorage, AK 99501.

Or submit comments on the Corps of Engineers Pebble site at <https://pebbleprojecteis.com/publiccomments/newcomment>. ❖

-- Christin Swearingen  
Chair, Alaska Chapter, <[mushroomchristin@gmail.com](mailto:mushroomchristin@gmail.com)>

Annie Passarello photo  
from NPS website



Lake Clark National Park vista

## New bridge on Brooks River in Katmai National Park ready for summer

### Multimillion dollar visitor project leaves bear-human interaction problem intact

Visitors arriving at Brooks Camp this summer to watch brown bears fish for salmon will use a new elevated pedestrian/vehicle wooden bridge/boardwalk on their way to the bear viewing platforms and the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. It consists of a 560-foot elevated north boardwalk to the 360-foot long bridge, with a planned 630 foot long south boardwalk. In 2013 the estimated construction cost was between \$5.2 million and \$11.1 million, according to the Final EIS.

The project replaces a seasonal floating pedestrian/vehicle bridge that sometimes was closed due to bears swimming next to it, under it, and occasionally on it. Closures caused “bear jams”—holding up visitors on both sides of the river, some with tight flight schedules, and inconveniencing anglers from sport fishing lodges in the region.

### Background

According to the NPS in 2013, “This project is intended to facilitate the phased relocation of Brooks Camp facilities and operations to the south side of Brooks River, as funding becomes available...” A future relocation, however, is most unlikely because of the high cost and because Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski, who controls appropriations for the NPS, prefers the status quo.

In any event a south side relocation into prime bear habitat would not solve the fundamental management problem of thousands of visitors each summer—most of them wandering freely around in the midst of the most important brown bear concentration area in the national park system.

Dr. Barrie Gilbert, who carried out NPS-funded research on bear-human interactions, concluded that relocating Brooks Camp, now in critical bear habitat, is necessary to protect both the bears’ natural behavior and visitors. He recommends moving the overnight accommodations (lodge and campground) and NPS administrative facilities to the west end of Naknek Lake adjacent to the gateway community of King Salmon, and instituting a day use visitor program at Brooks River.

Day use, which the Alaska Chapter also recommended, would increase visitor safety, further the bears’ natural behavior, and benefit the economy of King Salmon, the gateway community that is the first stop for most park and Brooks River visitors.

Given the new bridge/boardwalk and the politics, a Brooks Camp relocation is unlikely. Bears, including sows with cubs, on their way to the river will continue to run the gauntlet of numerous float planes, boats, and visitors on the lodge beach, and move through the lodge and NPS visitor area. Campers staying in the electrified campground some distance from the river will continue to share the beach trail and the beach with the bears. All this is obviously incompatible with the safety of visitors and staffs, and the welfare of the bears. Now a costly, superfluous structure for the convenience of visitors adds a Disneyland touch to the Brooks Camp circus. ❖



-- Jack Hession

# Gwich'in and Sierra Club to Oil Companies: *Arctic Refuge too risky to drill!*

Throughout April and May, major oil companies, as well as the banks that fund them, have faced pressure at each of their annual meetings from shareholders and activists urging them to commit to not engage in or give financial support for drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Also during this time, Sierra Club spoke in strong support and publicized a new Arctic protection bill in Congress, championed by California Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA2,) to prohibit any oil and gas leasing, development, production, and transportation program in and from the Coastal Plain of the Arctic Refuge. HR 1146, the Arctic Cultural and Coastal Plain Protection Act, had 180 cosponsors by early June.

Sierra Club's national campaign to pressure major banks and oil companies not to drill in the Arctic Refuge picked up major steam in mid-May, with various coordinated events:

\*\* Activists gathered in Denver, Colorado, to train on corporate campaigning leadership and to pressure oil mega-

Gwich'in people at the heart of this fight and threads the narrative ties across these AGMs together in one succinct story. Give it a share on Twitter and Facebook if you can!

## Denver training and BP protest

Over the weekend of May 17, in conjunction with "STAND.earth", Sierra Club hosted a two-day activist training in Denver for leaders across the country who wanted to engage with the growing corporate piece of the Arctic Refuge campaign. We were honored to have the presence of the Gwich'in Steering Committee who sent two Alaskan delegates to Denver--Donald Tritt from Arctic Village and Aleta Ketzler from Fort Yukon.

During that weekend, Greenpeace published a report exposing how BP lobbied the Trump Administration to open the Arctic Refuge, making the training and upcoming BP AGM a particularly key moment to call out the company.

Then on Monday, the trainees moved into action by organizing a protest at BP's new Denver headquarters. Evidently, the mere thought of 40 activists holding a peaceful rally on a rainy day was threatening to BP -- BP employees were instructed to stay home. The doors to the building were locked with a notable number of security personnel inside. We rallied despite this, while a mobile billboard aiming the "Arctic drilling is bad business" message to BP circled the neighborhood. Even with a locked building, the message to BP was clear--if the corporation moves forward with leasing in the Arctic coastal plain, it will face a powerful public backlash from the overwhelming majority of

Americans who oppose drilling there.

Immediately thereafter, in the UK, the Gwich'in Steering Committee led a rally in Aberdeen, Scotland, outside BP's shareholder meeting to carry the same message from the Gwich'in people of the need to protect the Arctic Refuge from destructive drilling.

"If BP or any other oil company attempts to destroy the Arctic Refuge, they will have to answer to the Gwich'in and to the millions of Americans who stand with us," said Gwich'in Steering Committee Executive Director Bernadette Demientieff. "The coastal plain is sacred to our people, and our food security, culture, and way of life depend on its protection. It is no place for drilling, and we will continue to send this message to BP and the rest of the oil industry until they pledge to leave our sacred lands intact."

-- continued on p 4, bottom



Rally Outside BP offices in Denver in mid-May

corporation British Petroleum (BP) not to bid on Arctic Refuge lease sales;

\*\* Gwich'in and Inupiaq leaders traveled across the big pond to Aberdeen, Scotland, to speak directly to BP at their Annual General Meeting (AGM) of executives and shareholders;

\*\*We spoke out at the JPMorgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, and BlackRock AGMs. The collective efforts across all of these corporate meetings are taking off on mainstream and social media, sending the critical message industry-wide that the Arctic Refuge is too risky to drill. Check out the great video produced by Sierra Club and "NowThis", featuring actions at BP in Denver and Scotland, as well as some of the other shareholder meetings: Indigenous Activists Protest BP Plans for Oil Drilling in Arctic Circle. (go to: <https://nowthisnews.com/videos/news/indigenous-activists-protest-bp>.) This powerful video centers the

**Update:**

*Sturgeon v. NPS hovercraft litigation*

## Supreme Court blows National Park Service, other federal agencies out of the waters in national conservation system units

In March, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that hovercraft can operate on the Nation River, a navigable river in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, and that the State, not the National Park Service (NPS), has exclusive control of uses on the river and on other navigable rivers in the Preserve. The Court's decision voided the NPS's regulation banning hovercrafts in the Preserve. (see **sierra borealis**, Dec 2018, Dec. 2017, March 2016, Dec. 2015, June 2012.)

The ruling means that in addition to park and preserve rivers, the State gains exclusive control of uses on navigable rivers in Alaska's other national conservation system units (CSUs)—national park, wildlife refuge, trails, and wilderness systems. The wild and scenic rivers system may be the exception, as it "raises issues outside the scope of this case," according to the Court, and it said it "may leave for another day" the question whether its decision applies to wild and scenic rivers. (The Nation is not one of Alaska's 24 designated wild & scenic rivers.)

The State doesn't regulate uses on rivers flowing across its 103 million acres, and it cannot be expected to do so on CSU navigable rivers.

Subsistence users and others use outboards subject to reasonable federal regulations. Now, hovercrafts, airboats, jetboats, and personal watercraft (jet skis) can be freely deployed on navigable rivers in the CSUs in the absence of regulation. The public can expect to see damage to vitally important fish habitat and salmon spawning grounds needed to sustain subsistence, sport, and commercial fishing. The safety of non-motorized boaters is compromised, and the opportunity to observe undisturbed wildlife is diminished.

### Background

John Sturgeon was moose hunting using his hovercraft on the Nation River when he was told by park rangers in 2011 that hovercrafts are prohibited in units of the national park system. Sturgeon sued the agency, arguing that in Alaska the State controls uses on the river,

not the NPS. Losing in federal district court and on appeal in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, he petitioned the Supreme Court to take his case.

Although the Court usually hears cases involving conflicting decisions by the appeals courts and lets an appeals court's decision stand, the justices agreed to hear Sturgeon's case. They determined that Sec.103(c) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) makes state-owned, Native corporation, and private lands within Alaska CSUs immune from regulations governing the public (federal) lands in the units. The section reads, "No lands which, before, on, or after the date of enactment of this Act,

are conveyed to the State, to any Native Corporation, or to any private party shall be subject to the regulations applicable solely to public lands within such units." State-owned land within CSUs includes the bed and banks (up to the ordinary high water mark) of navigable rivers whose submerged lands were not reserved for federal purposes prior to Alaska statehood. Unreserved submerged lands became state property pursuant to the Submerged Lands Act and the Alaska Statehood Act when Alaska



Salmon © Israel Shotridge

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### Defending the Arctic Refuge -- from page 3

"BP needs to recognize that drilling in the Arctic Refuge is not just bad for the climate and human rights, it's bad business," said Sierra Club Alaska Campaign Representative Alli Harvey. "The vast majority of the American public does not want to see the Arctic Refuge devastated by drilling, and any company foolish enough to lease there will face enormous public backlash and reputational risk."

"Drilling in the Arctic Refuge is an unacceptable act that flies in the face of the rights of the Gwich'in. Banks and

investors have seen what happens when an oil company dares to go against the will of the people and trample the rights of Indigenous peoples whose lands we have stolen," said Stand. earth's Extreme Oil campaign director Matt Krogh. "We saw it with the Dakota Access Pipeline, we saw it with the Keystone Pipeline, and we saw it with the Trans Mountain Pipeline. The only right thing to do is to leave the Refuge in peace by respecting the rights of the Gwich'in." ❖

-- Alli Harvey

# The clock is ticking on wildlife and wild places.

## New U.N. report gives dire prediction for massive extinctions, as feds plan to nix wolf and other wildlife protections

Without immediate action, more than a million species could face extinction within a few decades, according to a new report by the United Nations.(see endnote).

Keystone species like wolves, grizzly bears and polar bears are on the front lines of this crisis. Without our top predators, whole ecosystems and the endangered animals that depend on them will collapse.

In Yellowstone National Park, wolves were reintroduced in the 1990s after the last wolf pack in Yellowstone was killed in 1926. With the reintroduction of wolves, the behavior of the herds of elk changed. The elk no longer stayed in one place where they had eaten aspen saplings down to nubbins. Thus the willow and aspen forests returned. Streams returned. And the animals (beavers, fish, frogs and songbirds) who had thrived in these streams and forests returned.

In Alaska, wolves have never been listed under ESA protections. But they have long been persecuted in Alaska through the state's "predator control" policies, and especially

with the current political appointees by Governor Dunleavy, their future is definitely at risk.

And now, just when we desperately need to go all out to save the planet's biodiversity, the Trump administration is doing everything it can to wipe out protections for vulnerable species. It has launched an all-out attack on the Endangered Species Act and is gunning to strip protection from gray wolves in the Lower 48.

The Trump Administration via the Department of the Interior and the US Fish & Wildlife Service proposes to remove wolves in the Midwest from the Endangered Species Act (ESA) protections. Acting Secretary of Interior, David Bernhardt claims that the gray wolf's recovery in the Lower 48 is a "great conservatiosuccess" (March 2019 npr).

According n --continued p 6



*Silene acaulis* (moss campion) in Western Arctic

photo: Beth Blattenberger

### Hovercraft and Supreme Court

-- from page 4

joined the Union in 1959.

The Court held that because the bed and banks of the Nation River are state-owned lands, they are not subject to NPS regulation. Moreover, the Court, citing precedent, noted that "...a State's title to the land beneath navigable waters brings with it *regulatory authority over 'navigation, fishing, and other public uses of those waters.'*" United States v. Alaska, 521 U.S.1, 5 (1997). All told, the State thus emerged a formidable property owner. (Emphasis added.)

The Court's decision left the Park Service holding a mere interest in federal reserved water rights in the preserve's navigable rivers. Water rights allow the NPS only to prevent diversions and deletions of waters that would reduce the amount needed to fulfill the purposes and values of the river and the preserve. Other federal laws, such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act, continue to apply, but they do not give the Park Service regulatory authority.

### Court overruled congressional intent in ANILCA

Sec. 103(c) was included in a bill of non-controversial technical amendments added in the fall of 1980 to the compromise Alaska lands bill reported in August by the House and Senate conferees. President Carter signed ANILCA on December 2, 1980. Representatives Morris K. Udall and John F. Seiberling, lead sponsors of the House bill, emphasized on the House floor that the technical corrections did not change in any way the purposes and intent of Congress in enacting what became ANILCA. Senate principals agreed.

In the opening "purposes" section of ANILCA,

Congress stated its intent is to "protect and preserve" rivers, and to "protect wilderness resource values and related recreational opportunities ... on free-flowing rivers." Management directives for several of the parks reflect Congress's intent. For example, Kobuk Valley National Park "shall be managed for [various] purposes", among them "to maintain the environmental integrity of the natural features of the Kobuk River Valley, including the Kobuk, Salmon, and other rivers."

Nevertheless, the Court found that Congress's purposes and directives are not sufficient to affirm NPS regulatory authority over the preserve's navigable rivers. The Court noted that Congress permitted the use of snow machines, motorboats, airplanes, and non-motorized surface transportation methods in CSUs. The Court reasoned that these exceptions to park standards that apply in the other states mean that mean that hovercraft use is consistent with the exceptions and hence hovercraft can be operated on park system and other CSU rivers.

### Conclusion

Most importantly, in turning over control of navigable CSU rivers (except maybe wild and scenic rivers), the Court dismissed Congress's explicit intent to give the rivers full federal security. To prevent degradation of the rivers now suddenly under state jurisdiction, Congress needs to restore federal regulatory authority. That's the next stage in the decades-long battle to defend ANILCA from its numerous enemies. ❖

-- Jack Hession

## The clock is ticking -- from page 5 Keep Wildlife protections in place!

to Brett Hartl of the Center for Biological Diversity, (CBD): "This is not a scientific determination. It's simply an arbitrary policy choice to ignore how much [potential wolf] habitat is unoccupied" Currently gray wolves occupy less than ten percent of their historic range. When Europeans first settled in the New World, scientists estimate that two million wolves existed in North America.

US government and state policies on hunting, trapping and poisoning wolves, erased the species from the Lower 48 states by the 1930s. Today approximately 6,000 gray wolves exist in fragmented populations across the West and Great Lakes. The Mexican gray wolf in Arizona and New Mexico is struggling to exist in very small wild populations. The red wolf which once roamed throughout southeast United State is nearly extinct. (Neither the Mexican gray wolf or the red wolf would be delisted from the Endangered Species Act.)

Gray wolves in the Lower 48 were placed on the ESA list in 1974. In 2011, Congress passed legislation that removed federal gray wolf protections and returned management of the species back to state wildlife agencies in Idaho, Montana, eastern Washington and Oregon, and northern Utah. In 2017, the Fish and Wildlife Service delisted Wyoming's wolves from Endangered Species Act protections. If this new Administration proposal to delist wolves passes, the wolves in Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin and parts of Washington and Oregon would lose their ESA protections.

### ESA requires recovery of wolves to additional areas in US

The primary purpose of the ESA is to conserve the ecosystems upon which endangered species depend (16 U.S.C. 1531(b).) The Act defines an endangered species as any species in danger of extinction in all or a significant portion of its (historic) range (16 U.S.C. 1532(6).) This means that a species cannot be considered recovered until it is no longer endangered in a significant portion of its range. Wolves remain absent or at very low numbers over significant portions of their historic range--including in the Northeast, southern Rocky Mountains, West Coast and elsewhere ("Making Room for Wolf Recovery: The Case for Maintaining Endangered Species Act Protections for American Wolves" by Amaroq Weiss, Noah Greenwald, Curt Bradley, November 2014 CBD, pp 4-5).

According to the Center for Biological Diversity,

the gray wolf in the Lower 48 currently occupies less than ten percent of its historic range. Thus the current administration's proposal to delist gray wolves from the ESA protections and to allow states to fully manage gray wolves jeopardizes the future of existing wolf populations. Small fragmented wolf populations will be subject to genetic inbreeding. Dispersing wolves will find it nearly impossible to make their way to adjacent states to establish new populations. These dispersing wolves are often young two- year-old males who leave the pack in search of a new territory and a mate.

Following the removal of Endangered Species Act protections in several Lower 48 states, some states (Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, etc.) enacted aggressive hunting and trapping seasons that resulted in thousands of wolves being killed in a short period of time. Montana just announced 315 recent wolf kills--representing 40 percent of the state's estimated population of 850 wolves. In South Dakota the state passed a law that classifies wolves as "varmints" in the eastern half of the state. Thus they can be shot on sight.

These examples show that state management of wolves has been a political, rather than a science-based endeavor. Amaroq Weiss of CBD states: "To achieve true long-term, sustainable, recovery of the gray wolf, federal protections should be maintained and recovery plans developed, with the goal of restoring connected, resilient, ecologically effective wolf populations wherever suitable wolf habitat exists..." Highly qualified wildlife biologists and other scientists should lead recovery teams to ensure a scientifically and legally defensible recovery strategy.

### ➡ WHAT YOU CAN DO

Send a comment on the proposal to delist gray wolves in the Lower 48 **by July 15--Eastern time**. To submit your comments:

1. Google "Emergency Action to Save America's Gray Wolves" Wolf Conservation Center
2. Click on "talking points here".
3. Go to proposed rule on "Federal Register here" and comment.

**OR** submit comments electronically at <https://www.fws.gov/home/wolfrecovery>;

**OR** send a hard copy of your comments US mail to :  
US Fish & Wildlife Service, MS: BPHC  
5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

Include the Docket Number with your comments FWS-HQ-ES-2018-0097-0001 ❖

Note: See the stark and urgent warning delivered in a report released by the United Nations in May--predicting the extinction of 1 million species within the next few decades. The U.N.'s research shows that ecosystem collapse is a direct symptom of human activity and also exposes the severity of the Trump administration's disregard for the protection of our environment and threatened species. See <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/06/climate/biodiversity-extinction-united-nations.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share>.

-- Susan Hansen  
Alaska Chapter Conservation Chair



## Alaska Chapter Spring Outings plus some upcoming events and reports of spring meeting:



Good work at Alaska Chapter Spring Clean-up outing in Russian Jack Park



Christin Swearingen and other participants have fun at Russian Jack Park outing

photos: Christin Swearingen

### Spring Outings

In conjunction with Anchorage's annual Spring Cleanup events, the Alaska Chapter organized a couple of cleanup outings in early May. We picked up garbage at Woronzof Point and Russian Jack Park, enjoying sunny weather both days while picking up quite a bit of trash.

We hope to organize other cleanup outings throughout the summer and fall. Watch the Chapter facebook page for specifics.

-- Amy Murphy

### Upcoming Outing events

#### August 21:

Mark your calendars for the annual mushroom fair at Campbell Creek Science Center! Bring mushrooms from your neighborhood on Aug. 21 at 6 pm for mycologist Christin Swearingen to identify, and learn from Christin what mushrooms are and what they do.

**September 5:** Starting 7 pm at Goose Lake Park. Christin Swearingen, Chapter chair and mycologist, will lead a Sierra Club evening mushroom walk.

### Report on recent Chapter meetings:

Film Screening of "ROCK-PAPER-FISH" was shown at our **May 22nd** meeting. Every year all five species of salmon return to Southeast Alaska's Chilkat River to sustain the communities of Haines and Klukwan, as well as insatiable grizzly bears, hordes of fascinated tourists, and the world's largest gathering of bald eagles. But now a modern-day gold rush is underway in the mountains above the river's headwaters, and locals are reckoning with the changes that could come with a hard-rock mine. "Rock-Paper-Fish" offers a vivid look into the lives of Alaskans grappling with questions as immense as the place they call home.

At the **April 24th** meeting Colleen Fisk, the Energy Education Director at REAP (Renewable Energy Alaska Project), spoke on energy efficiency and renewable energy. One of the obvious ways to protect our environment is through increased energy efficiency and use of renewable energy in all aspects of our lives. However, many of us aren't fluent in our energy landscape. Discussion and questions centered around where we are in Alaska; and what work is being done to promote clean energy in the state. To learn more about this non-profit's work and get a snapshot of current energy use in the state. go to- <http://alaskarenewableenergy.org/>.

At the Alaska Chapter's **March 27th** meeting George Donart of Citizens Climate Lobby ([www.citizensclimatelobby.org](http://www.citizensclimatelobby.org)) discussed bipartisan Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019, which would reduce climate disruption. George stressed the ways in which changes of the new Congress will affect climate legislation. Ceal Smith of Alaska Climate Action Network ([www.akclimateaction.org](http://www.akclimateaction.org)) discussed advances in climate and energy issues on the front line. (see photo next page)

Also, on May 31, members of the Sierra Club Alaska Chapter's excom attended a meeting with Filmmaker Ramey Newell, sponsored by the Alaska Wildlife Alliance, that focused on the issue of wolf trapping along the Stampede Trail near Denali National Park. In brief, the issue is that trappers and hunters are baiting wolves that wander out of the park and killing them, including pregnant females. The conflict between tourism and trapping interests has become entrenched in the past 30 years, so Alaska Wildlife Alliance is partnering with filmmaker Ramey Newell to pitch a new documentary about the issue. The May 31 meeting sought to raise funds for a trailer that will then be used to secure larger grants for a professional, full-length film exploring the issue. You can learn more and donate at: [https://www.akwildlife.org/film-fund?fbclid=IwAR2M2EEvFNfsfuLA5eZBa8xruQeGs3W\\_yKUA4SdNWYGlfyudmMliYz4WfQU](https://www.akwildlife.org/film-fund?fbclid=IwAR2M2EEvFNfsfuLA5eZBa8xruQeGs3W_yKUA4SdNWYGlfyudmMliYz4WfQU). ❖

-- Denise Saigh

## Alaska Chapter's next meeting--June 26-Goose Lake, Anchorage

Sierra Club Meeting to take place on June 26 at 6 pm at Goose Lake off UAA Drive and Northern Lights Blvd. (Come to the covered picnic tables at 2811 UAA Drive for this outdoor meeting.)

All invited to meet the 2019 Alaska Chapter Executive Committee and join the Excom to discuss current Sierra Club business and current topics of interest. Your questions to Chapter leaders will be welcome.

### Tentative agenda:

- Discuss and vote on funding for Ramey Newell's documentary film about wolf trapping along the Stampede Trail near Denali Park. ([www.akwildlife.org/film-fund](http://www.akwildlife.org/film-fund))
- Brainstorm comments to send the Fish & Wildlife Service on delisting all Lower 48 gray wolves from the Endangered Species Act; comments are due by July 15, 2019. (See article pp 1-2.)
- Plan future hiking trips. Attendees are invited to suggest new desirable hiking locations.
- Recruiting future volunteers who would be interested in political campaigning--especially in connection with the upcoming crucial 2020 national election--as well as regular local and statewide campaigning. We need to elect candidates at all levels of government who will work to protect the environment.

ENJOY THE OUTDOORS!



photo: Christin Swearingen

Ceal Smith, of REAP (Alaska Renewable Energy Project) discusses energy issues at the Alaska Chapter's late-March meeting

## Sierra Borealis / alaska report

is the newsletter of the Alaska Chapter of the Sierra Club

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Please keep an eye on our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/SierraClubAlaska/>

Find Sierra Borealis at: <https://www.sierraclub.org/alaska/newsletters>



In the last week of March 2019, Kotzebue set or tied its record high temperature every day. Klawock, in Southeast, reached 70 degrees F. on March 19--the earliest any spot in Alaska has hit that high.

Anchorage had no measurable snow in March for the second time on record.

This March was also the 29th month since January 2013 to rank among the warmest ten percent since 1925, while only one month in this period-April 2013--was in the coldest ten percent.

-- from "Alaska is Melting", a CNN report, March 29, 2019