

# Sierra Borealis

Summer 2004

## Bush Administration Attacks Roadless Area Conservation Rule

### Help Protect Wild Forests – Keep Intact the Roadless Rule!

One of the most popular conservation policies in American history was dealt a crippling blow with the Bush administration's decision to abandon the landmark Roadless Area Conservation Rule. The Bush administration has proposed a convoluted process that will leave America's last wild forests open to destructive commercial logging and road building. This controversial decision forces Governors to petition the Department of Agriculture to protect their wild, roadless National Forests. The public comment period officially began last week and continues through September 14, 2004.

Already, 440,000 miles of roads are carved into America's National Forests. The wildly popular Roadless Rule helped protect our remaining wild forests and the clean water, wildlife habitat and outstanding backcountry recreation opportunities from more taxpayer-subsidized commercial logging. The Roadless Rule was developed over three years of public hearings and scientific analysis. To date more than 2 million Americans have commented on the original rule, with 95 percent



supporting the strongest wild forests protections.

This policy change is the Bush administration's latest effort to reduce or eliminate decades of National Forest protection and increase spending to benefit timber companies.

#### Background:

The Bush administration's new policy will render the Roadless Area Conservation Rule meaningless by requiring governors to petition the Forest Service to not construct roads in or otherwise develop inventoried

wild roadless forest areas. The administration also indicated that it intends to permanently exempt the national forests in Alaska from the roadless rule.

The "state petition" process that the Forest Service proposed would require a two-step process for permanent protection of roadless

*continued on page 7*

### INSIDE

Who We Are.....	2
AK Wilderness Week .....	3
2004 Outing Schedule.....	4
2004 National Trails Day.....	5
Flash from the Past.....	6
Sierra Club & Politics.....	7



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

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Katherine Polan, *Conservation Organizer*

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# Who We Are...



Irene Alexakos, Southeast Volunteer Coordinator, at her favorite place, Eagle Beach



National Forest Campaign Intern, Josh Hannon, and his girlfriend, Jen Grey, on their way to Alaska from Massachusetts



Katherine Polan, Forest Organizer, and Betsy Goll, Associate Representative organizing in Southeast.



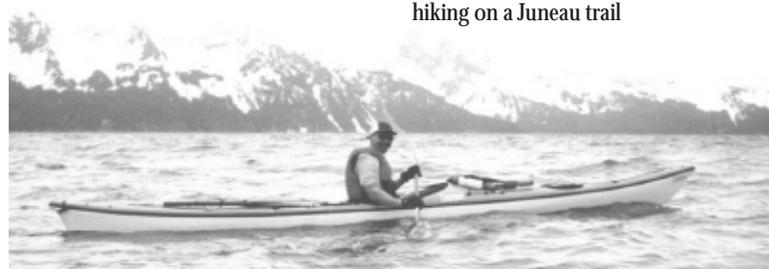
Two of our Awesome Volunteers, Dana Durham and Joan Galt, take a break during the National Trails Day outing.



Maryellen Oman, Program Assistant, enjoying some time off in the Gates of the Arctic National Park



Mark (Chair) and Patte (Treasurer) Rorick of the Juneau Group celebrating their 10th Anniversary hiking on a Juneau trail



Alaska Chapter Treasurer, Pat Fort, kayaking in Resurrection Bay near Seward

# Alaska Wilderness Week in D.C.

Joan Galt

A group of Sierra Club members from around Alaska flew to Washington, D.C. in February to participate in Alaska Wilderness Week. The four day event brought volunteer activists together from twenty-three states to learn how to lobby members of congress about critical Alaskan wilderness issues effecting the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and the Tongass National Forest. Following a welcoming open house at the Sierra Club on Saturday evening, approximately eighty participants gathered at the World Wildlife Fund on Sunday for a full day of workshops packed with information, including legislative, policy and political background, as well as current status of the Arctic Refuge and the Tongass Forest, how congress really works as seen through the eyes of actual congressional staff members, and useful tips on how to be an effective lobbyist, including successful ways of messaging. Armed with their newly learned lobbying skills, and high on enthusiasm, Wilderness Week participants spent the next three days on Capitol Hill, working in lobby teams designated by state, planning interview strategies and making the scheduled visits to congressional offices. Each state delegation included at least one

Alaskan to accompany them on their lobbying visits to offer personal accounts, photos and stories of living near, or having visited the Arctic Refuge or the Tongass Forest. The Tongass area impacts their traditional culture and livelihood. Four Canadian



Sierra Club members Corey Thole and Dana Durham speak with Senator Durbin of Illinois

participants from the village of Old Crow, YT gave further testimony to Alaska Native concerns that drilling in the Arctic Refuge will have similar effects on the well-being of Gwitchin people and the caribou upon which they depend on the Canadian side of the Coastal Plain. A delegation consisting of six Alaskan and one Canadian activist paid a scheduled visit to Senator Lisa Murkowski's office, where they were met by two of her legislative aides. Since the likelihood of influencing Senator Murkowski's position on the Arctic Refuge seemed remote, given her long time pro-drilling stance, the group concentrated on educating the legislative staff about

Tongass Forest issues. The encounter with Senator Murkowski's staff was a challenging experience, but productive if, even for no other reason, it demonstrated that there are many Alaskan constituents who strongly oppose oil drilling in the Arctic Refuge, and who are committed to protecting the Tongass Forest from further logging and road building by the timber industry. Other highlights included a personal meeting with Representative Mark Udall of Colorado, and evening receptions in honor of Alaska Wilderness Week at the Canadian Embassy and the Hart Senate Office Building. Encouraging words about the effectiveness of grassroots activism,

and the promises of commitment to pursuing protection of Alaska's wilderness made by five US Congressmen who attended the Senate reception, were greatly appreciated. Sierra Club members who attended Alaska Wilderness Week were: Dana Durham, Girdwood; Tina Edwards, Ketchikan; Joan Galt, Anchorage; Betsy Goll, Anchorage; Elmer Makua, Ketchikan; Jon Miller, Fairbanks; Selina Pitka, Beaver; Jonathon Solomon, Fort Yukon; and Corey Thole, Skagway

*Joan Galt, member/volunteer extraordinaire was a participant at Wilderness Week.*



# Sierra Club Summer 2004 Outings & Events Schedule

## August

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup>: Wilderness Act 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration** at the Alaska Native Heritage Center. This will be an evening affair to celebrate Alaska's vast wilderness system with traditional songs, dancing, story telling, and speeches. Consider this a prelude to the upcoming 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ANILCA in 2005. Contact: Betsy, 276-4044.

**Monday 30<sup>th</sup>: Sierra Club Office Open House 5 pm** Come see our new office in the Village at Ship Creek. 333 West 4th Avenue Suite 307. Contact: Maryellen, 276-4068.

## September

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>: Forest hike for Peace.** A hike on the Winner Creek trail in Girdwood. It's a beautiful rainforest hike, easy to moderate, 6-miles roundtrip, bring lunch. Meet at the Alyeska tram at 10 am. Contact: Katherine 276-4060.

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>: Door-to-door canvass for Roadless** comments in Girdwood, volunteers needed. Contact: Katherine, 276-4060.

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>: Hike to the top of Mount Magnificent** out of Eagle River. The short steep walk to the top of this 4000-foot peak will be well rewarded with magnificent views of south-central Alaska. Contact: DeeAnn, 276-4088.

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>-Monday 20<sup>th</sup>: Swan Lake/Moose River Canoe Trip** Join member Bill Cox for a canoe weekend in the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. Contact: DeeAnn, 276-4088.

**\*\*schedule subject to change\*\***



## 2004 Creek Cleanup "Team Sierra"

left to right: Tara Walker, Joyce Guest, Tessa Sutton, Joan Galt, Leo Hannon, Pamela Weiss, Frage Schaefer, Carl Battreall, Stacey Cooper, Suzanne Moore, Stacey Re, Tony Yeo and Dana Durham.

not pictured: DeeAnn Apgar, Ben Virgin, Larry Rosenkranz, Becky Kurtz, Larry Rundquist, Kevin Apgar, and Jacob Frankson.

# A big THANK YOU to all who donated to the Alaska Chapter March Fundraising Appeal!

Adrian Celewycz • Allen Tigert • Amy Zacheis • Anne DeMuth • Anne Wieland • Arthur E. Curtis • Betty Dean • Carol Welch • Carolyn Sayre • Chuck Zimmer • D. Rebecca Snow • Diana Lingle • Dave Haas • David DeLong & Nina Harun • Denali Mountain Morning Hostel • Don Dumm • Don Soilleau • Donald & Arlene Ronda • Donald Greenberg • Donna Hackenberger • Donna Troyer • Dorothy & Lane Thompson • Douglas Armstrong • Douglas McIntosh • Edgar Bailey • Edith Fleming • Eleanor W. Anderson • Eric Genty • Geoff Downes • George & Grace Gilson • Hannah Howard • James Leonard • Jean Williams • Jenny Pursell & Mike Tobin • Jim Levine & Sue Post • John & Melinda Nicholson • John Withers • Julie & Bill Overbaugh • Karen Lester • Karen Lew • Ken Zafren, M.D. • Lance & Charlotte Westing • Libby Burgess • Linda Johnson • Lisa Pieper • Lisa Stuby • Lowell Thomas, Jr. • Martin R. Sherman • Marty Margeson • Mary Putman • Maryellen Oman • MaryLee Hayes • Mason Bryant • Megan Brokaw • Michael Malachowski & Leslie Bialas • Michelle Cullen • Mike O'Meara • Nancy Levinson • Neil & R. Davis • Priscilla Hamilton • Ramona Green • Sarah Crepeau & James Dunn • Sarah Hudson • Shannon Thomas • Sharon Lowe • Stan Read & Ann Mallard • Steve & Gertrude Vilter • Susan Olsen • Susan Vogt • Suzanne Milette • Taber Rehbaum • Tammie Stoops • Tara Walker • Terri Lauterbach • Thomas Hamilton • Thomas Stewart • Todd Odenburg • Vera Paschke • William Cox • William H. Fuller • William W. Bacon

## 2004 National Trails Day

In celebration of National Trails Day, Sierra Club Alaska organized a hike to Juneau Falls on the Kenai Peninsula's Resurrection Pass Trail. Phone banking, postcards, and pre-event press coverage in the Anchorage Daily News and Kenai Peninsula Clarion helped bring out 40 Sierra Club members from around south central to join EPEC organizer Katherine Polan for an enjoyable 10-mile day hike in our wild Chugach National Forest.

Before heading into prime Kenai brown bear habitat, we met with Larry Lewis from Alaska's Department of Fish and Game for an informative bear safety talk as part of the agency's "Living in Harmony with Bears" program. Along the trail to the falls we were blessed with knee high wild flowers, song birds, forested vistas, calm weather and great communication.

We took a break at an overlook to Juneau Creek and the valley of the Kenai River, and discussed the proposed Sterling Highway by-pass project and the Juneau Creek alternative that would put a bridge and highway right where we were standing (and awing at the magnificent view). Having lunch at the falls, we snapped a few photos and held a victory cheer for all those who had helped last year to remove the Juneau Falls alternative from the highway by-pass proposal. With the importance of roadless areas on our minds, we spoke about the Bush Administration's assault on our backyard National Forests and had all participants sign a postcard to US Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth telling him that we want the Chugach and Tongass National Forests kept under the Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

Our five-mile journey back down to the trailhead allowed for more one-to-one conversations about forest conservation and upcoming EPEC events that people could participate in. As a special treat, one participant was a research scientist who is looking at natural deterrents for the spruce tree bark beetle infestation and so showed us how ravaging the beetles really can be to our forests and talked about organic deterrents. It was a wonderful outing and we are already planning for next year's National Trails Day event.



# *Flash From the Past*

## **“A Juneau-Haines Road—Is it Needed?”**

**This article appeared in the April 1974 Alaska Newsletter**

Is it worth changing the character of Southeast Alaska, destroying eagle nesting trees and endangering excellent moose grazing pastures just to save a little time on the Juneau-Haines trip? These are some of the questions being raised in response to the Alaska Highway Dept's proposal to build a road between the two towns. The executive committee's answer has been, NO. Instead, the committee favors improving the existing ferry service. Speaking at a general membership meeting in October 1973, Schuyler Stevens, pre-construction engineer for the Highway Department said the road would cut travel time between Juneau and Haines by as much as two and a half to three hours and would be cheaper "in the long run." Stevens seemed generally unconcerned about a congressional act which bans the cutting of eagle nesting trees, but Fred Robards, of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, feels that the act could be a "real stumbling block" to the Juneau-Haines road as well as future ones. According to Robards, who spoke at the November 1973 general meeting, 23 nesting trees lie directly in the middle of the road right-of-way, another nine are within the right-of-way cut, and 10 more are located in the fringe area. Club members raised several points:

\*If the road is built, the area may be opened to roadside developments such as motels.

\*The road represents only the first step in a long-range plan to link all the islands with a road-ferry system which would change the marine nature of southeast Alaska and could have drastic cultural effects on the small isolated communities.

\*With gasoline and oil in ever shorter supply, should we not be looking to alternatives to more roads?

\*Would a road really be more economical than improved ferry services as Stevens claims? And would it really be much faster?

Several members have pointed out that taking a ferry from Echo Cove to Haines would not take much longer than taking a ferry from Echo Cove to Sullivan River and then driving to Haines. (The Highway Dept. maintains that the cost of building a road from Sullivan River would equal ferry maintenance costs in 20 years.) Recently, at the invitation on the Alaska Chapter executive committee, President Sandy Sagalkin gave a presentation on the Haines road. "We're hoping the Alaska Chapter will support us in efforts to discourage road expansion," he said.

## **Bioneers in Alaska: Creating Sustainable Communities**

**The largest sustainability conference in the country is coming to Alaska!**

A diverse group of Alaskans has been awarded the honor of hosting, via satellite, the plenary speakers from the 15th annual Bioneers Conference. The "Bioneers in Alaska: Creating Sustainable Communities" Conference will be held October 15-17, 2004, at the University of Alaska Anchorage. The main goal of this conference is to provide inspiration and networking opportunities for those Alaskans already working to create a positive future in their community and state.

The Bioneers (biological pioneers) Conference promotes practical solutions and innovative strategies for our most pressing economic, environmental and social challenges. Paul Hawken, author of *Natural Capitalism*, says, "No conference on Earth celebrates more fully the possibilities of creating a world that is conducive to life. Bioneers is central to the re-imagining of what it is to be human."

We will receive, via satellite, the plenary speakers from the 15th annual Bioneers conference in California. Speakers include Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins, Terry Tempest Williams, and many more. For more details, please visit the Bioneers web site at [www.bioneers.org](http://www.bioneers.org)

For information on the conference, how to apply and registration fees contact:  
Mark Masteller, [m.masteller@acat.org](mailto:m.masteller@acat.org), 907-373-0909 or visit [www.akbioneers.org](http://www.akbioneers.org)

# Roadless Area Conservation Rule

*continued from page 1*

areas on the national forests. First, a state governor would have to prepare an administrative petition “to adjust management direction” for roadless areas in their state. The Forest Service could simply reject this petition out-of-hand. Second, if the petition were agreed to, the Secretary of Agriculture would establish a formal rulemaking process on a state-by-state basis to consider permanent protection of the roadless areas in question. This administrative rulemaking is time-consuming and the administration could simply decide not to grant protection.

The proposed rule would replace the Roadless Rule, leaving all 58.5 million acres of inventoried roadless areas in the United States open to road building, logging, and resource development. Until a state governor petitions for protection,

management of inventoried roadless areas would be based on the individual forest management plans, which often require no special protections.

## **Roadless Area Conservation Rule Background**

The Roadless Rule, designed to protect 58.5 million acres of roadless wild forests in 39 states, was the result of the most extensive public comment process in history, spanning three years and 600 public meetings. During the rulemaking, the Clinton administration received a record-breaking one million public comments in support of protecting wild forests. By January 2004, the Forest Service has received more than 2.5 million comments from the American people, 95 percent of which favor the strongest protections for these wild forests. From the day President Bush entered the White

House, his administration’s intentions have been clear: blocking the Roadless Rule was one of the new administration’s first decisions, followed shortly by refusal to defend the rule in court.

For more information visit [www.sierraclub.org/forests](http://www.sierraclub.org/forests)

**Take Action:** Submit a Comment Today!!

Mail comments to:  
Content Analysis Team,  
ATTN: Roadless State Petitions  
USDA Forest Service

P.O. Box 221090  
Salt Lake City, UT 84122

Fax to: (801) 517-1014

Email to:

[statepetitionroadless@fs.fed.us](mailto:statepetitionroadless@fs.fed.us)

Comments also may be submitted from: <http://www.regulations.gov>

## Sierra Club and Politics

On a national level the Sierra Club has been very active in key races for Congress. The Club will be vigorously opposing the reelection of George Bush, whose Administration has hit all-time new lows for abandoning the environment.

On the Alaska level, though, we haven’t been active enough to try to influence key elections here. To that end our Political Committee has reorganized to try to make a difference in this important election. If you’d like to get involved, now is the time to do it. With our small population it’s easy for a group like ours to have an effect on the outcome of the elections.

Our current plans are to focus on our approximately 2000 members around the state and increase their involvement in the 2004 elections. Our members have always had a relatively high level of voter registration, but we’ll be contacting as many as we can to make sure everyone is registered to vote in time. We’ll also be surveying members on their interests in the upcoming elections.

Eventually, as the elections near, we’ll be distributing materials comparing the environmental records/positions of candidates in key races. The final step will be a major get-out-the-vote campaign focused on maximizing the environmental turnout.

This is just our preliminary plan, though. If you would like to be more involved in political activities please join the Sierra Club Political Committee, or just let us know if you have a few hours to help out. Our plans are still developing, and if you get involved you can help steer us in the right direction.

To become involved please email Dan Frank at [frankd@gci.net](mailto:frankd@gci.net) or DeeAnn Apgar at [deeann@sierraclubalaska.org](mailto:deeann@sierraclubalaska.org).



333 West 4th Ave Suite 307  
Anchorage, AK 99501

**We've Moved!**

**333 West 4th Avenue Suite 307, Anchorage, AK 99501**

**Join us for an open house August 30<sup>th</sup> 5 pm**



**I am the  
Sierra Club**

**BELLE DAWSON - A SUPER VOLUNTEER!** by David Finkelstein

How do you know when someone's a great volunteer? Well, in the case of Belle Dawson, it's been clear for decades. Belle Dawson has done a variety of critical tasks for the Alaska Chapter of Sierra Club, from organizing Anchorage events to donating artwork for auctions. But the role I remember the most occurred over twenty years ago.

At the time we were trying to do a conversion of our legislative alert system to an electronic phoning system. It was a new idea back then, and Dave McCargo and I spent hours tinkering with the system trying to get the bugs out. In theory our activists would get a prerecorded call once a week from 6-9 PM when critical issues were before the Legislature. We thought everything was fine with the system after the first round of calls worked, and many activists sent POMs to the Legislature. But on the second week something went wrong and the prerecorded calls occurred between 1 AM and 4 AM! I found out about the problem when Belle Dawson called the next day. She wasn't mad at all, just wanted to let us know that she was so sleepy that she only got part of the message written down! Now that's a devoted Sierra Club volunteer!

Belle first came to Alaska in 1972, drawn north by her love of the outdoors. Exploring, painting and protecting the great Alaskan wilderness soon became her passion. She first got involved in Alaska Chapter activities in 1974. Among her many accomplishments has been organizing dozens of educational meetings on a variety of Alaskan issues. No matter what the project, Belle could almost always find time to lend a hand.

Belle - we love you!