



# Outdoor Alaska



The Official publication of the Alaska Outdoor Council and Alaska Fish & Wildlife Conservation Fund.

"Protecting your hunting, fishing, trapping, and outdoor heritage since 1955"

Volume 14, Issue 5

[www.alaskaoutdoorcouncil.org](http://www.alaskaoutdoorcouncil.org)

Summer 2006

## Schedule of upcoming events:

**2nd Tuesday each month Fairbanks**  
AOC/TVSA meeting, 7:00pm  
TVSA Clubhouse. Info: 455-4262

**August 4-6 Juneau**  
60th Annual Golden North  
Salmon Derby, sponsored by  
Territorial Sportsmen  
[www.salmonderby.org](http://www.salmonderby.org)

**August 24-Sept. 4 Palmer**  
Alaska State Fair;  
Volunteers contact  
Susan at 745-6166.

**September 22-24 Anchorage**  
Winter Recreation &  
Travel Show

**October Palmer**  
AGCA Fall Gun Show

**October 28 Wasilla**  
AOC Banquet & Fundraiser  
Volunteers contact  
Rod Arno at 376-2913

**November 4 Fairbanks**  
AF&WCF Banquet & Fundraiser

**February Juneau**  
AOC Banquet & Fundraiser  
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(L to R in red) Archery instructors Del DeMeritt and John Abrams, With a class of archers (yellow) at the June 2006 Becoming an Outdoor Woman (BOW) workshop at Lost Lake Boy Scout Camp out of Fairbanks. Photo by Bill Greiner.

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## 2006 Legislative Session Overview

By Executive Director Rod Arno

AOC members and staff influenced the outcome of several bills considered this year by the Alaska Legislature. This Session Overview represents a considerable amount of work and dedication by AOC Lobbyist Jeff Logan.

After the US Supreme Court ruled that government can take private property through **eminent domain** to promote economic development (government has long had the power to take private property for roads, etc.), several bills were introduced within the legislature to set limits on the power of eminent domain in Alaska. The bill that rose to the top was HB 318 sponsored by Representative Lesil McGuire, along with several co-sponsors. AOC was primarily concerned about access to public land, and whether or not new language would limit government's ability to ensure that access. AOC worked with Rep. McGuire's staff and other legislators to craft language that allows government to take land for recreational access, but protects a person's property if it is their personal residence. While we support limits on the power of government, we also recognize that public land is *our* land, and we need to have reasonable access to it to be able to enjoy it. HB 318 was approved

by the Legislature and signed by the Governor on July 5, 2006.

Two important pieces of legislation dealing with 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment rights passed the legislature, with AOC's full support. Senator Gene Therriault and House Majority Leader John Coghill both sponsored legislation that allows homeowners to use deadly force to protect their homes. Known as the "**Castle Doctrine**" from times when a king could protect his castle with force, this legislation also limits certain liability that could be held against a homeowner for using force. Representative Coghill also sponsored and passed HB 400 which prohibits the state from **confiscating firearms** during an emergency. Rep. Coghill said that he sponsored the bill after seeing police in New Orleans confiscating weapons in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Therriault and Coghill are both long time supporters of 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment rights; AOC appreciates their efforts.

Many AOC members in Southcentral recreate at the Knik River, upstream from the Old Glenn

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# President's Message

By Teresa Sager Albaugh



## Setting Standards

In all the incredible beauty Alaska's wilderness has to offer, I can recall only a few of my own outings when the enjoyment wasn't tarnished by an encounter with human waste, in one or more of its many revolting forms. I'm talking not just about the trash one would otherwise put in a kitchen waste container, but also the stuff that is normally flushed down the toilet.

Thirty or forty years ago, a faded, rusty beer can half buried in the tundra was a fairly rare sight. But that was a long time ago when Alaska's population was much lower than today, before trends had developed that are now so typical, where large numbers of people concentrate in popular areas to enjoy the outdoors. Areas of heavy human use where the means don't necessarily exist to accommodate human waste are becoming increasingly common, so it is critical that we make a conscious effort to remove trash and dispose of it properly after the snow machine outings and the marathon fishing weekends. It is equally important to do the same in very remote areas, even if nobody else is around for miles. I believe the majority of us who love the outdoors are responsible stewards of our natural resources, but it takes only a handful of careless people or a few minor acts of convenience to create a foul landscape.

As our population grows the circumstance will likely worsen, but it is not impossible to reverse the trend. The individual members of the Alaska Outdoor Council, you and me, as well as the Council's member clubs, have a great opportunity to set the standard for respecting our environment by internalizing a few simple habits. The core principle should be for each of us to remove our waste from where we've been. I won't list rules for how to achieve this, just use good judgment. If you wouldn't put it on your coffee table or kitchen table, don't leave it on the ground or throw it in the water.

Failure to deal with the waste we create while afield will undoubtedly result in more bureaucratic rules, restrictions, fines and penalties. Such schoolroom methods are pretty offensive to the average outdoorsman, and are totally avoidable if we practice common sense and take care of our environment just as we do our own homes and property. ■

# Nuisance Wildlife Management

By Rod Arno AOC Executive Director



It's hard to think of wildlife as being a nuisance but when animals interfere with human development and activities, a nuisance is what they become to some people. Waterfowl near airports bring down planes when they fly into the props, beaver flood highways, marten destroy the interiors of cabins, bears break into caches and attack fisherman on the rivers, and moose stomp people and cause highway collisions resulting in human fatalities and vehicle damage. That is the price Alaskan's have to pay because fortunately over 90% of the state's wildlife habitat is still intact today.

In the past, native villages, trappers, and early mining settlements all had to deal with the same problem of wildlife endangering life and property. Animals that became habituated to human presence got trapped or shot. Today, as fewer people living in Alaska have any

hunting or trapping experience, they have to depend on state agencies or private companies to take care of their encounters, which can become expensive for state agencies such as the Department of Fish & Game and the Alaska bureau of Wildlife Enforcement.

With that in mind the legislature has recently passed statutes dealing with these habituated animals. Individuals can now make a living by getting permits to remove nuisance animals. That's all well and good until the "nuisance moose" statute is used to manage game by taking state funds to rebuild wildlife populations on public lands. The state has allowed this abuse to occur by approving capital funding to the Alaska Moose Federation (AMF) for a Statewide Moose Safety and Rebuilding Task Force. The Alaska Moose Federation, which introduced the "nuisance moose" law concept to the legislature, has

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## Outdoor Alaska

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# Fishing at Flat Island

By Les Palmer

*The following story appeared in The Peninsula Clarion (June 23, 2006).*

On June 11, I was one of six anglers aboard the 44-foot Homer-based charter-boat "Ashtikan," with Capt. Bryan Bondioli at the helm.

This halibut fishing trip was dreamed up by Rod Arno, executive director of the Alaska Outdoor Council, as bait to entice people to join the AOC. During April and May, 203 people entered their names in a drawing for the trip. Fishing with Arno and me supposedly was part of the prize, though I still haven't figured out what I added to the proceedings. Ballast comes to mind.

Two names were drawn, Mike Fetko and Anthony Story Jr., both of Anchorage. Story couldn't go so another name was drawn, Evelyn Clough, of Soldotna. The winners were allowed to bring one guest. Mike Fetko brought his brother, John Fetko, of Anchorage; Clough brought her father, John Conner, of Soldotna. Everyone showed up at the appointed hour, 6 a.m., and after introductions, we were on our way.

The weather outside Kachemak Bay was stormy, so the skipper headed for Flat Island, just off the lower Kenai Peninsula. We spent the hour-long ride to the fishing grounds eating doughnuts and swapping tall tales in the boat's warm and comfortable cabin.

In choppy seas, we anchored in about 100 feet of water near Flat Island. With a minus tide running out of the inlet, it was like being anchored in a river. The Native village of Nanwalek was just visible in the distance through a misty rain.

With high anticipation, we gathered on the aft deck. The deck hand, Joe, had baited our hooks with octopus and chunks of herring. After he showed us how to properly free-spool our bait to the bottom, we began fishing in the clear, fast-moving water.

Even with 4-pound lead blocks for sinkers, the swift current soon had our lines trailing off toward Kodiak Island. It was all we could do to keep them on the bottom. However, it was the tail-end of the outgoing tide. Within a few minutes, the current slowed, and the fishing became easier.

As the current abated, we started feeling the telltale "yank, yank" head-shaking of halibut on our lines. All of us caught and released a few small ones, hoping for a bigger one.

As we fished, the wind worsened. Strong gusts slammed into the boat and whipped up whitecaps. It was good to be on one of the larger boats, which remained stable despite the rough water.

Conner, who is 80, showed us that four score isn't too old for halibut fishing. As usual, a woman "Clough" caught the biggest fish, a 40-pounder. We all ended up with limits of nice-sized halibut that averaged about 20 pounds. All of us except John Fetko, who is a real glutton for punishment, were too tired to reel in another fish.

Seemingly in no time, we were unloading our catch and saying good-bye at the dock in Homer. Everyone had a good time and took home several pounds of fresh halibut.

As a contest prize, a fun fishing trip is hard to beat. ■



*Sitting in calm, protected waters on the wide deck of the 44' M/V Ashtikan. (L to R) John Fetko, sweepstakes winner Mike Fetko, sweepstakes winner Evelyn Clough, AOC Ex. Dir. Rod Arno, and writer Les Palmer.*



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## Overview *continued from page 1*

Highway. With support from the AOC Representative Bill Stoltze and Senator Charlie Huggins sponsored legislation to create the **Knik River Public Use Area** after some people proposed banning ATVs and airboats from the area. The Department of Natural Resources will now initiate a public process to determine just how the area is regulated. Watch for more details here, or in AOC Email Alerts.

Rep. Stoltze introduced legislation that would **allow the Mat-Su Borough to take state land** from the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area. AOC opposed this legislation because the Mat-Su Borough has failed to allow reasonable access to public lands. AOC opposes giving the Borough more land until they allow public access to the public land they have now. After it became clear that the Borough had failed to gain support of Mat-Su residents in their quest to take lands out of the public use area, Rep. Stoltze withdrew his legislation, effectively killing the land transfer for another year.

Long-time AOC supporter Senator Ralph Seekins introduced SB 170 last year in an effort to combine an **increase in hunting and trapping fees with several changes to Fish and Game statutes (Title 16)**. AOC testified on the bill last summer when the Senate Resources Committee held hearings around the state. Senator Seekins brought the bill up again this year, with support from AOC, but ran out of time. AOC's proposed changes to the fish and game statutes were addressed in the Spring 2006 newsletter. AOC will continue to work with legislators during the next session to secure needed funding from license holders for active game management.

For some time now Senator Seekins has been trying to open up state land in the **Dalton Highway corridor** from the Yukon River north. Current law bans off-road vehicles from operation for 5-miles on either side of the road. Seekins sponsored SB 85, which would repeal the ban and start a planning process within DNR to implement rules for ORV use in the corridor. BLM has also begun preliminary plans for developing a comprehensive off-highway vehicle plan in partnership with the state. The bill passed the Senate but fell short in the House. AOC supported SB 85 just as we support most legislation to allow access to state land as long as regulations are in place to maintain the high quality of the wildlife habitat. We hope Senator Seekins will re-introduce this legislation to allow more Alaskans to enjoy the outdoors.

Over the past couple of years legislators have introduced various versions of a bill that would create a **wildlife viewing fee**. Again this year there were bills in both the House and Senate. Senator Con Bunde sponsored SB 166, which would require that anyone between 16 and 60 pay a \$5 fee to view Alaska's wildlife. The fee would be waived for anyone who already holds a hunting, trapping or fishing license. SB 166 died in the Senate Resources Committee. Look for some version of this idea to surface again next year.

Rep. Paul Seaton, of Homer, introduced HB 415, which would have held **landowners immune from liability** if they allowed access to their lands free of charge. There are cases where public recreational lands are separated by sections of private land. The private land holders don't oppose people crossing their land, but fear the potential for liability. Seaton tried to waive that liability if the land owners warn of any dangerous conditions. The bill passed the House, but never got a vote in the Senate. Chances are that a bill similar to HB 415 will be re-introduced next year.

Two management bills that didn't make it were HB 464 and HB 472. HB 464 was introduced by AOC member and outdoorsman Rep. Eric Croft and would have prohibited a hunter from taking the horns or antlers unless they **salvaged at least 50% of the meat** from the kill. The House Resources Committee held a couple of good hearings on this bill late in the session. Rather than supporting a reduction in the amount of meat currently required by law for salvage, which is essentially *all* the edible meat, AOC used the hearings to again advocate for stronger enforcement of game laws. HB 464 died in the House Judiciary Committee. HB 472 was introduced by our good friend Rep. Bill Stoltze and would have put the **Susitna Drainage Salmon Management Plan**, currently in policy, into statute. ADF&G opposed this legislation stating that they oppose putting regulations into statute because policy language is too specific to be appropriate for statutory language. AOC supported this bill because we believe that the present commercial fisheries interest domination of the Alaska Board of Fisheries has been detrimental to the sustainability of some salmon runs in the past. Unfortunately, the bill was referred to the House Special Committee on Fisheries where it met a quick death at the hands of legislators from commercial fishing districts.

AOC actively supported new members to the **Boards of Fisheries (BOF) and Game (BOG)**. Governor Murkowski appointed **Jeremiah Campbell** to the BOF, first to fill the remainder of an unexpired term, and then for a new 3-year term. Mr. Campbell has experience in both commercial and sport fishing, and we were impressed with his knowledge of, and concern for, in-river fisheries. Mr. Campbell's votes on the board regarding salmon returns to the Copper River and upper Susitna drainage showed his concern for sustainable salmon runs. AOC worked with Kenai River Sportfishing Association in supporting Mr. Campbell's confirmation. We are especially appreciative of the efforts of Cook Inlet Sportfishing Caucus member, Bob Penney, during this exercise.

AOC also supported the confirmation of long-time AOC supporter **Bonnie Williams** of Fairbanks to the BOF. Bonnie has served with distinction on the Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly. Bonnie has been an avid personal use fisher for 55 years in Alaska and has a strong personal dedication to maintaining the integrity of Alaska's wildlife regulatory development process, which considers the opinions and experience of all individuals who use and enjoy fish and game. In her testimony during confirmation hearings before the Legislature, Bonnie affirmed her commitment to ensuring healthy, strong fisheries that sustain and meet the needs of subsistence, sport/personal use, and commercial fishing in Alaska.

AOC appreciated Governor Murkowski's reappointment of **Cliff Judkins** of Wasilla to a second term on the Board of Game. The Governor also added two new BOG members, **Dick Burley** of Fairbanks and **Paul Johnson** of Unalakleet. They were confirmed by the legislature with AOC's full support. Mr. Burley previously served on the Board of Game a few years back and did a very admirable job as chairman, maintaining a balanced and objective approach. His service was very beneficial to AOC's membership and we now look forward to another term for Mr. Burley on the BOG.

Members of the Boards of Fisheries Game have one of the toughest jobs in the state. AOC recognizes the personal commitment every one of these Alaskans makes when they accept an appointment. We thank them all. ■





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## News from the AOC Fisheries Committee

*By AOC Board Member Bruce Knowles, Chairman of AOC Fisheries Committee*

I knew in January that 2006 was going to be a special fishing year when I caught an 11 lb. bass on a trip to Florida! In March and April I had to pay my dues and take my bride on a much awaited spring flower viewing trip up the east coast, we drove more than 2,500 miles and visited nine states so at the end of the trip I had a full book of kitchen passes. When we got back to Willow in late April the rivers were still frozen but not enough to go back to my pike fishing hole that had paid off so well during the winter.

As we all know it seemed like spring would never get here, but when it did the rainbow fishing really took off here in the Mat-Su. Valley trips to the Willow, Little Willow and other valley creeks proved successful. Early season lake fishing was equally good due to an effective stocking program. I talked with Alaska Department of Fish and Game staff in Palmer about the coming fishing salmon season. Dave Rutz, the area biologist, was very optimistic about the upcoming king and coho seasons on the Deshka River because of the weir count on the river. Other streams in the area should have good returns also due to aerial counts.

There are major concerns about the sockeye and chum salmon returns in the Northern District of Cook Inlet since the forecast by Commercial Fishing Division for the entire Susitna River drainage is 190,000 sockeye salmon, which is just 10,000 above the minimum escapement goals. It is expected that the commercial harvest will take a portion of the 190,000 forecasted sockeye salmon as their preseason plan is to keep the drift fleet restricted from the center of Cook Inlet, thusly establishing a much needed conservation corridor which will allow many sockeye salmon to pass safely into the Northern District. However, any harvests will most likely mean another year of missed escapement goals for seven of the last ten years, and emergency closures for consumptive users for the third year in a row. If this corridor is enforced, the chum salmon may be able to start their comeback from a steady decline from a harvest of 1.3 million in 1986 to a low of less than 70,000 last year. There is no scientific explanation for this decline; no studies have ever been conducted or are scheduled to be conducted. To hear some within the Alaska Department of Fish and Game speak chums are not important enough to be concerned about.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game will be starting a new multi-year study of the Susitna River drainage sockeye salmon over the next three years. The money was funded by the legislature because the Valley delegates were the driving force for this study. Representative Mark Neuman worked with Senator Lyda Green and they were able to earmark an additional \$500,000 for an Economic Survey of Sports Fishing Effort in Cook Inlet. This survey is needed to help in relocating salmon among users groups in accordance with state law.

The king salmon escapement on the Deshka River has exceeded 20,000 and the limit has been raised to two fish a day and 24/7 fishing. Lots of Alaskans have come to the Deshka to get their kings. The abundant return rate of one and two year old fish indicates a high ocean survival rate which translates into good fishing in the future. Other valley streams are being affected by high water so the fish have not reached the upper Susitna and Talkeetna in large numbers yet.

Now for a fish tail: A friend and I flew to King Salmon in mid June to fish for rainbows- we had a trip of a life time! We caught more B-I-I G rainbows in five days than I thought possible; the best was 34" long and between 22" and 23" around. Plus we caught four or five others over 30", and several grayling over 20".

Thanks to all those who help keep Alaska's fisheries resources healthy. There are a lot of issues facing Alaskans in the near future. Realistic allocations between user groups and completing studies of salmon stocks to insure that information is available to manage all salmon resources in accordance with our state constitution are just a few so stay strong and fish lots. ■



*Rose Knowles and grandson Connor Knowles caught & released king fishing on the Deshka River the last week of the season.*



# It's Up To Us. Hunter Heritage or Defending an Illusion?

By Jack Whitman

*This article first appeared in the Fairbanks News-Miner, June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2006*

I consider myself a hunter. I've hunted for food, for recreation, and for peace of mind for almost 4 decades, most of that time in Alaska. I'm intimately involved in hunting, both professionally (for 35 years a biologist) and personally in my everyday life. I'm proud of that heritage which has been handed down through the generations. I'll do what I can to maintain it for my children and for their children.

At the periphery of my consciousness have been the nay-sayers. Sure, I'm aware of the "other" faction out there that's against hunting. The finger-pointing at the knuckle-dragging Cretins that are the so-called "slob

hunters". Up to this point, I've not taken too much notice. After all, these slobbers are in the great minority, and their despicable actions shouldn't be a reflection on me. Sure, I can't help but notice the garbage and the spent shell casings at the Chena Pump boat launch. I've even filled my pick-up with it a couple times and hauled it to the transfer site. I can't help but notice that virtually every road sign up the Steese is riddled with holes. I've always opined that the perpetrators of such things are not "hunters", they're simple vandals. I'm not to be confused with "them".

However, two actions have recently occurred that sadly, have made it personal. Is this the wave of the future on a grand scale, or is this just a select few Fairbanks "hunters" that I've had the recent misfortune to encounter?

As part of my job, I work with hawks, owls, and falcons. One of the things I do to gather ecological data on owls is put up artificial nest boxes to look at timing of reproduction, food selection, and other things associated with boreal owls. Last week, as I was dragging my extension ladder up to the base of an aspen on the Steese Highway, I found an adult female boreal owl dead beneath the box. There were spent .22 casings scattered about, and the box was riddled with holes. The six eggs in the box, obviously, were cold. I shake my head and wonder at the mentality of the "hunter" who would enjoy bagging a trophy box tacked twenty feet up on a tree, as well as its occupant and her progeny. These things eat

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## MY OUTDOOR AGENDA FOR ALASKANS.



- Secure the State's right to manage its own resources
- Work to increase harvest levels for human consumption
- Supports predator control
- Ensure access to public resources
- Support balance on the Board of Fish and the Board of Game

As a third generation Alaskan, pilot, riverboat captain, hunter and fisherman, I regard access to Alaska's wildlife, fish and public places as the most important aspect of the Alaska tradition. As your Governor, I will work to make sure those traditions endure for future generations.

**John Binkley**  
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# ADF&G to Survey Sport Anglers on Satisfaction, Economic Impact

By Kelly Hepler, Director, Division of Sport Fish,  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Alaska is blessed with some of the finest recreational fishing opportunities in the world. As a result, more and more anglers, both residents and non-residents, are participating in our fisheries. Meeting the demand for the diverse recreational fishing opportunities sought by these anglers has become increasingly complex as angler participation has risen.

To maintain and improve our state's abundant recreational fisheries, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and other resource decision-makers (such as the Alaska Board of Fisheries) frequently find that we need more information on the socio-economic aspects of sport fishing in Alaska. We also need this information to meet the Department's statutory goal of optimizing social and economic benefits to the angling public and the state. Thanks to an appropriation in Governor Murkowski's Capital Budget that passed the State Legislature in May, ADF&G will be gathering some of this information in the coming months.

The Department will hire an independent company to conduct surveys focused on two issues: the economic impacts of recreational fishing in Alaska, and the level of satisfaction among people who sport fish in our state.

Businesses and organizations that serve the public often gather socio-economic data using "market" surveys. In such surveys, the opinions and expenditures of consumers of a product are collected. In the case of sport fishing, our "consumers" are you, the sport fish license holders, and the product is sport fishing opportunity. Because opinions and expenditures vary within the market, for example between residents and non-residents, these surveys are often "segmented".

For economic information, ADF&G's Division of Sport Fish periodically obtains estimates of the economic value of sport fishing at the statewide and regional level. The most recent economic assessment was completed in 1999 with estimates for the 1993 fishing activity, meaning that available economic impact estimates are at best 6 years old, but more likely closer to 10 years old. Summaries of this work, and other surveys, can be found at [www.sfg.adfg.state.ak.us/statewide/SF Economics.cfm](http://www.sfg.adfg.state.ak.us/statewide/SF Economics.cfm)

In order to provide a more updated estimate of the economic impact of sport fishing to Alaska, the Division will contract a survey this winter to estimate the economic contribution of sport fishing to the economy of Alaska. The Division is looking to establish a consistent methodology for obtaining economic measures every 3 to 5 years to provide meaningful updates on the economic importance of sport fishing to Alaska.

Fishery managers and regulatory decision-makers also need information on the motivations, preferences and relative satisfaction of the people who participate in Alaska's diverse recreational fisheries. The Division of Sport Fish conducted its first statewide angler satisfaction survey in 1997 to obtain baseline information on Alaska's angling public, both resident and nonresident, with the goal of periodically repeating the survey to assess trends or changes in the preferences and satisfaction of anglers relative to the mix of recreational fishing opportunities managed by the Division.

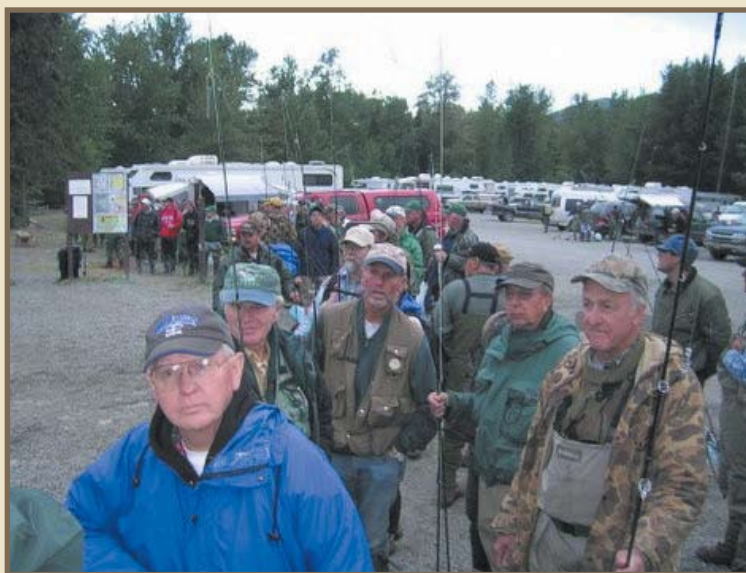
This survey showed that the Division was meeting its goals for satisfaction of non-resident anglers, but not for resident anglers. In response to this survey, the Division tried various approaches to increase



Kelly Hepler, Director, Division of Sport Fish, ADF&G

resident angling opportunities and satisfaction. These efforts included developing management plans for resident trout and grayling fisheries, improving angler access, and investing in the hatchery stocking program. Now, we want to update our angler satisfaction information to assess the success of these programs, factoring in the changes in Alaska's population as well as continued growth and expansion of the sport fishing tourism industry in Alaska during the past 10 years.

If you have an Alaska sport fishing license, you may be contacted this winter (through the mail or on the phone) by a researcher working on behalf of the Department. Please take the time to honestly answer all the questions, since this information will be extremely important in our ability to serve you better. With these surveys, and your help, we can gain a better understanding of how important recreational fishing is to Alaska's economy, and we can implement changes to our management practices and customer service to make this state's recreational fishing experience the best it can be. ■



Alaskan sport anglers lined up to catch ferry for Russian River. All are looking for satisfaction and their limit of Sockeye salmon.



# AOC Flexes Political Muscle

By AOC Lobbyist Jeff Logan


Management of fish and game is an expensive proposition. It takes people, equipment, and time to do the job, and all cost money. Fishers, hunters, trappers, guides and shooters are proud of the fact that revenues from licenses and tag fees, and taxes on guns and ammo, have paid for Alaska's fish and wildlife management for decades. But with expenses increasing, and revenues from our licenses and purchases decreasing, a funding gap has emerged. Over the past few years AOC leadership has been reviewing budgets, talking to biologists at the Department of Fish and Game, and looking at the results.

After talking with AOC members, board members, and various state officials, AOC leadership agreed to support increased funding for ADF&G. During this process many people expressed frustration with how the department has spent money in the past, and questioned whether AOC should support more money without results. In the end, most agreed that doing nothing is not an option. AOC President Teresa Sager Albaugh wrote Governor Murkowski to share AOC's perspective and request that he include general fund monies in the state operating budget for the Division of Sport Fish, the Division of Wildlife Conservation, and for Board Support. Albaugh's letter stated

that the department needed funding for basic field research to support the Board of Fisheries' and the Board of Game's allocation decisions, and to support science-based management like the predator control program. AOC has also observed a trend of "de-funding" citizen involvement through the Advisory Committee ("AC") process. AOC expressed strong support for funding to get the public involved once again with the AC and board process. Governor Murkowski listened to AOC, and when he released his Fiscal Year 2007 budget last December additional funding for ADF&G was included. AOC's focus in Juneau during the recently-ended legislative session was to ensure that these monies stayed in the budget.


In our system of checks and balances once the governor proposes spending money, both the house and senate review the proposal and make the changes they see fit. The House Finance Budget Subcommittee for the Department of Fish and Game is chaired by Representative Jim Holm of Fairbanks. Holm was skeptical of the governor's increases, partly because of the way the department had spent and accounted

*continued on page 13*



## Sarah Palin

### Governor



Help Make A Positive Change For All Alaskans

## *Taking A Stand For The Rights Of All Alaskans*

It takes but one day on the river, in the mountains, or in the forest to know the wonder and beauty of our unique state. To fully enjoy our land and outdoor pursuits tomorrow, we must take a stand today. I am an Alaska Outdoor Council member, NRA lifetime member, and avid sportsman. I will see that our resources are responsibly managed and that the rights of all Alaskans are protected – for years to come.

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*"I'm proud to support Sarah Palin because she's a true Alaskan and will fight to protect our freedoms." —Wayne Anthony Ross*

# Friends of NRA News

Hello Everybody!

Where to begin, where to begin? This spring has been absolutely STELLAR for the Alaska Friends of NRA! We held 8 banquets in different communities around our great state and have raised over \$140,000 so far this year!! Last year was the best year ever for the Alaska Friends of NRA and we are 20% over where we were last year at this time of year!!! Absolutely AMAZING!

Every ounce of credit must go to the volunteers. They have adopted the attitude that we want to fund more grants and more shooting sports projects than ever before here in the State of Alaska, and they are on track!!! They have come up with a lot of new ideas and good old fashioned "elbow grease" to make our Friends of NRA Banquets more fun and to raise more money to promote the shooting sports at the local level. If you didn't make one of our Banquets this spring you really missed out, but we have a great lineup of banquets coming this fall around the state. The Anchorage Friends of NRA Committee is planning on throwing a "barn burner" this year so if you plan on going be sure to get your tickets early, cuz when they are gone they are gone!

The Alaska Friends of NRA is not only growing monetarily, we are growing geographically!! We would like to welcome two new volunteer committees!! The first one is in Seward headed up by Mr. Bob White and Mr. Fred Moore. These guys are both dedicated hunters and shooters and want to ensure that our traditions are passed on to the next generation. This is going to be a committee to watch, as I am sure they are going to accomplish great things.

The second new volunteer committee is in Kotzebue. That's right the AK Friends of NRA have finally broken the Arctic Circle!! This committee is headed up by a father-son team, Joe and Eric Swisher. These guys have NRA in their DNA and are looking to reinvigorate the shooting sports in their home town. They are having their banquet the 11th of Nov. I asked my boss in Arizona if he wanted to attend to observe NRA's most northerly banquet but at this time he would be unable to make the trip. The sky is the limit for both of these new committees.

*The AK Friends of NRA banquets accomplish two missions simultaneously:*

1. The first is obvious; we raise funds to promote the shooting sports at the national level and at the state and local level.
2. The second is that a FNRA Banquet raises awareness of the local gunclub or shooting sports events occurring at the local level. I have seen this personally time and time again. The range is always full after an FNRA Banquet!! People want to try out the guns they just won and a lot of people are reminded that shooting is a great family recreational activity!!!

If you have more questions about the Alaska Friends of NRA you can check out our website at NRAALASKA.COM or NRA.ORG or please give me a call 907-235-9059.

If you are interested in being a positive influence for the shooting sports and wish to pass on our traditions and heritage we welcome you to join the Alaska Friends of NRA. "Many hands make light work."

Sincerely,  
Brad Kruger, AK NRA Field Rep



## BANQUET SCHEDULE

Midnight Sun - August 11, 2006

Eddie Grasser - 745-6166

Sitka - September 30, 2006

Nome - October 7, 2006

Delta Junction - October 14, 2006

Glenallen - October 21, 2006

Anchorage - October 21, 2006

Kenai - October 28, 2006

Bethel - November 4, 2006

Visit the official website for more information  
**[www.nraalaska.com](http://www.nraalaska.com)**



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# Hunter Heritage Foundation News

Outdoor education is a growing business, and the HHFA is poised to lead Alaska as the premier provider of conservation based programs throughout the state. It is an endeavor that is as important as anything else we do at the Alaska Outdoor Council. In fact a growing body of research supports outdoor education as the most critical element in not only preserving our wild heritage, but also humanity's well-being.

Although I don't agree with everything put forth in a new book by Richard Louv, I do believe his premise about getting kids outside is a sound one. "Last Child in the Woods" makes a compelling case for adults, especially parents, to provide children with free time in the natural world. Research indicates children who have access to creative playtime in the outdoors are better adjusted, have less problems with childhood disorders such as attention deficit disorder and are better at conflict resolution.

We may not have known all the information provided by Mr. Louv in his book, but the volunteers at the Hunter Heritage Foundation were well on the way to building education programs that would assist parents in getting their children going in Alaska's great outdoors. From hunter clinics done in partnership with ADF&G's Hunter Information and Training program to Becoming an Outdoors Woman classes, HHFA was laying the foundation for conservation education meant to make a difference.

HHFA has already started 2006 with a bang. Along with ADF&G we have held two highly successful B.O.W. programs, started a youth conservation camp and lent major support to programs such as the Youth Education Summit, Youth Hunter Education Challenge, and a NRA Shooting Sports Camp for youth. We are in the planning stages for several youth small game hunting clinics for this fall, a couple of Beyond BOW fishing trips and one Beyond BOW caribou hunt.

All of these education efforts take a tremendous amount of financial and volunteer support. There are no employees at HHFA and in order to keep costs down so that we can offer classes to all Alaskans, several of us have to dedicate a good deal of our time to fund-raising. Fortunately, we have had one of Alaska's leading ladies come to our aid. U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski began hosting our Midnight Sun Shootout and Banquet fund-raiser three years ago. Through her support and the work of a group of dedicated volunteers we have began the arduous task of laying a sound financial foundation for the Hunter Heritage Foundation and the important education programs it provides.

The planning for this year's Shootout is well underway and Lisa is being joined by Washington Redskins standout Dave Butz, Senator Gene Theriault, Representative Mike Chenault, Captain John Binkley of the Riverboat Discovery and Lisa Marquiss from Carlile Transportation Systems. Although this is a stellar list of hosts, the real "Conservation Education Heroes" for this event are the sponsors. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest appreciation to them and all the dedicated volunteers who will make this year's Shootout the best ever.

At this time I would like to recognize those sponsors from last year, and those who have already committed to this year's event. They are:

**Alaska Chapter SCI**

**Carlile Transportation Systems**

**Alaska Communications Systems**

**TelAlaska Communications**

**Alaska Tanker Company**

**AVIS Alaska**

**PACWEST Communications**

**Alaska Frontier Constructors**

**Udelhoven Oilfield System Services, Inc.**

**Alaska Airlines, Anadarko**

**IBEW Local 1547**

**ConocoPhillips**

**Carl Marrs & Company**

**Northern Dynasty Mines**

**Holland America**

**Alaska Homebuilders**



*Hunter Heritage Foundation Float wins first place in Palmer Colony Days Parade. The first place award for service organizations was largely due to the hard work and organization of Susan Grasser who created the float. Also thank to the Ruesch Family for their assistance and to the Lytle Family and Rep. Bill Stoltze for participating in the parade. The float was pulled by a 2006 Polaris Sportsman donated for the occasion by Hartley Motors.*

I know we are all busy pursuing all those fun things that summer brings here in Alaska, **but this is a golden opportunity to make difference.** Join us for this year's Shootout on **August 10 & 11, 2006.** The Shoot will be at Grouse Ridge and the Banquet will be at 5:30 PM on August 11 at the Captain Cook Hotel in Anchorage. Call 745-6166 for more details or to volunteer to help out.

Hunter Heritage Foundation News is provided by HHFA President Eddie Grasser. Board members are Cathie Harms, Vice President, Lee Rogers, Secretary-Treasurer and Kurt Norby.

# Special Assistant to U.S. Secretary of Interior For Alaska

AOC member Hans Neidig has been appointed Special Assistant to the Secretary of the U. S. Department of the Interior for Alaska, filling the position recently vacated by Cam Toohey. Neidig will report to Drue Pearce, the Washington, D.C.-based Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Alaska Affairs. Neidig will assist the Secretary in managing Alaska's federal public lands.

Hans is a true Alaskan outdoorsman with a lifetime of experience as a hunter, trapper, and fisherman having grown up in the Mat-Su valley. He and his wife, Anna, live in Wasilla.

Neidig has years of experience working on natural resource issues as a legislative assistant in the Alaska House and Senate, including service as an aide to the House Resources Committee. As an aid, to U. S. Senator Ted Stevens, as well as Alan Simpson of Wyoming, Neidig developed the skill and knowledge necessary to deal effectively with Alaska's federal public land managers.

AOC looks forward to working with Hans to help assure the well being of Alaska's wildlife and the habitat it depends. He will be of great assistance to Alaska Outdoor Council members as we continue the fight to maintain public access to national interest lands guaranteed to the people when Congress passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA).



*Hans Neidig of Wasilla, new Special Assistant to the Secretary of the US Department of the Interior for Alaska.*

## Nuisance *continued from page 2*

asked for support from AOC to release orphaned moose calves into GMU 13, claiming that the appropriation for the Task Force is evidence that the State supports private moose rebuilding efforts.

AOC's By-Laws make it clear that our purpose is to support state management of natural resources by professional managers. Neither AOC, the Board of Game, nor the Governor support state funding for game rebuilding programs that circumvent our well established public process. Nor does AOC condone the expenditure of state general funds appropriated for the Statewide Moose Safety and Rebuilding Task Force for hiring office staff for the Alaska Moose Federation, or any other wildlife advocacy group for that matter. The AMF had asked the legislature for \$200,000 to hire staff and purchase office equipment. We are pleased to see Governor Murkowski has said that none of the

money appropriated to AMF can be used for administrative expenses. Public wildlife interest groups funded with state general fund money defeats the principal of public process that the legislature had in mind when they created the fish & game advisory committees and boards of fisheries and game.

AOC remains a strong advocate for public involvement through the fish & game advisory committees and board processes for developing game management programs. AOC would work willingly with state agencies to help mitigate injuries to people and damage to property caused by moose, and other wildlife. These are legitimate concerns. What Alaska doesn't need is the nuisance caused by private wildlife "managers" competing with professional state game management. ■

## Heritage or Illusion *continued from page 7*

voles. They're not competing with humans for grouse, hares, or moose. Where is the sense in this? I shake my head at the mentality of this great "hunter", and go about my business. But I reflect on it several times, wondering at the motivation behind the actions.

The second scenario hit a bit closer to home. Saturday morning I went out for a load of firewood in upper Rosy Creek. I was grunting up the hill to my truck with a nice spruce round when a couple of shots rang out. My 13-yr-old Lab, carrying a stick in her mouth, long tail, floppy ears, and a new bright red collar, 100 feet up the hill from me, let out a yip as she was blown to the ground. I dropped what I was carrying and ran to her. She was dead. On the logging road opposite me, 200 yards away, I hear two vehicle doors slam and a red pickup truck was frantically backing out of there. I ran down to my truck, chased them up the road and on in to town. Probably good that I

didn't catch up with them. Were they bear hunters that mistook her for a blackie? I can only speculate. They obviously were completely gutless. I've had that dog since she was 49 days old. She's been a good buddy for a lot of years through thick and thin. She had another couple of grouse seasons in her, until a couple of "hunters" changed all that...

The point I'm trying to make should be obvious. The ethical hunter (are we now in the minority?) needs to take some action against these slobbers. We're going to slowly erode away our ability to continue hunting. I don't blame the anti-hunting factions that point out what a bunch of slobbers hunters are. The Troopers and Fish and Game employees can't be everywhere. You (we) see a guy off-loading garbage into a roadside ditch, bagging a trophy road sign, sluicing a grouse on a busy road, neglecting to notch his moose tag, or pulling in a couple extra fish, we need to report it. If we don't, I'm scared that I'm going to lose one of the activities that is passionately near and dear to my heart. ■



## Political Muscle *continued from page 9*

for money in the past. Holm said that while his constituents were complaining about dwindling numbers of moose and caribou the department simply wanted to conduct more studies. The department promised to do better. Sportsmen from the Interior, Southcentral, and Southeast called, wrote and testified in support of additional money for the department. In partial response, the House voted to add some but not all of the Governor's increases. Our attention then turned to the Senate.

Senate Finance Budget Subcommittee Chairman Con Bunde of Anchorage, who has years of experience with ADF&G's budget, did grant a partial increase but offered some of the same concerns about how the department had spent their money in the past. Again, the department promised to do better. Sportsmen, including many AOC members, called, wrote and testified in support of additional monies for the department, which proved to be critically important in the end. The House and Senate both proposed different funding levels for the department, and in such cases they meet in conference committee to decide which numbers to forward to the full House and Senate for final approval. In virtually every case the conference committee, Chaired by Senator Gary Wilken of Fairbanks, approved numbers supported by AOC.

The legislature assembles two budgets: an operating budget to fund general state operations, and a capital budget to fund projects. As it turns out, the items that AOC supported that were left unfunded

were, in essence, projects. We turned to Mat-Su Senator Lyda Green, who controls the state capital budget. Senator Green agreed with the need for the capital budget money and, with support from the citizen members of the Boards of Fish and Game, fully-funded important field data projects.

In the end, virtually all of the monies AOC President Teresa Albaugh requested were appropriated by the legislature and signed into law by the governor. Now it's up to AOC to "follow the money," make sure it is spent properly, accounted for in a transparent manner, and results in fish and game abundance and thus increased harvest opportunity.

We learned several lessons this past session during our exercise to support additional funding for ADF&G. The first is that AOC's voice *does* matter, and that it's important for AOC members to communicate with their legislators about what they want – and what they don't want. Another important lesson is that perceptions and mis-perceptions about how ADF&G spends their money linger for a long time. If AOC members want more fish, moose and caribou available for harvest, it is critical that we as citizens closely monitor our government to ensure that our public monies are being spent properly. It is equally critical that we act on fact, not fiction, when we do so. Finally, a lesson that we learn year after year is that it's critical to have friends in Juneau, and AOC has many. We need to recognize and thank those people who have helped us, and continue to educate those who don't. Alaska's most important renewable resource – our fish and wildlife – depend on it. ■

## Knik River Public Use Area Signed By Governor



Governor Frank Murkowski, Representative Bill Stoltze (Chugiak/Mat-Su) and Senator Charlie Huggins (Chugiak/Mat-Su) at signing on the bank of the Knik River.

The bill creating the Knik River Public Use Area was signed into law on June 30<sup>th</sup> along the banks of the Knik River. House Bill 307, sponsored by local legislators Representative Bill Stoltze (Chugiak/Mat-Su) and Senator Charlie Huggins (Chugiak/Mat-Su), underwent an extensive public comment period. In addition to the committee meetings, two public hearings were held in the Butte to give people ample opportunity to provide their thoughts and ideas. Rep. Stoltze and Sen. Huggins then worked the bill through the committee process, making many changes along the way. The end product is a far better bill that protects habitat while maintaining access and use of the area.

Support from members of the Alaska Outdoor Council, Alaska Outdoor Access Alliance, and Alaska ATV-Club was essential to the process and eventual passage of the Knik River Public Use Area. The next important step will be the development of the area's management plan, which may take up to two years, and will include a number of meetings for public input. AOC strongly encourages everyone to stay involved in the management planning process.

# Alaska Trust Fund

Dear Fellow Alaskans,

The Alaska Trust Fund or “Trust” was established in 1999 in response to the members citing a need for permanent and long-term funding of the Alaska Outdoor Council operations. Similar to other trust funds, the principal or “trust” is protected from invasion in perpetuity. Every dollar you invest in the Trust stays there- and only the interest it generates can be used for operations.

The Alaska Trust Fund is the only trust fund in the nation dedicated entirely to protecting Alaska’s hunting, fishing, trapping, firearms ownership, and access to public lands and waters. Every dollar donated to the Trust stays right here at home- protecting the outdoor heritage we’ve grown to love and enjoy.

There are many different ways to donate: cash, stocks, estate gifts, annuities, land, & more. Donors are also awarded with a level of distinction commensurate with their gift. For example, if you donate \$10,000 or more, you can name your own Endowment, i.e. the John Smith Outdoor Endowment. Be sure to contact your attorney and/or accountant about gifting options.

The board of the Alaska Trust Fund has set a target of reaching their stated goal of \$1 million by the year 2020. Contact the Alaska Outdoor Council (AOC) office to make donations to the Trust.



Share the vision of Bob Rausch, Duane Goodrich, Lyle Carlson, and other Alaskans by including a bequest to the Alaska Trust Fund in your will.

A few simple words in your will can establish a truly Alaskan Heritage designed to ensure conservation of our game resources for generations to come.

Make your bequest by giving the following language to your attorney:

“To the Alaska Trust Fund I give\_\_\_\_\_ % of my residuary estate.”

Or you can name a fixed amount. Contributions to the Trust are tax deductible.

Please contact the Alaska Trust Fund for more information at:

Alaska Trust Fund  
PO Box 73902 • Fairbanks, AK 99707



# Above and Beyond

At the February 2006 AOC Annual Meeting, delegates bid farewell to three outgoing members of the Board of Directors. **Representative Bill Stoltze** of Eagle River served from 2004 to 2006. Bill's depth of knowledge of legislative and administrative processes offered valuable insight to the board in the development of policies and key decisions. A lifelong Alaskan, Bill's personal devotion to the core outdoor values of our members strongly influenced his contribution and service to the organization.

**Susan Grasser** of Palmer served as AOC's Secretary / Treasurer from 2002 to 2006. Susan's diligence in her position on the board was truly impressive, yet was only a fraction of the effort she gives to the organization. Susan devotes herself fully as the organizer and chair of many AOC events, including booths at Southcentral gun/sports/outdoor shows and fairs throughout each year, the AOC annual meetings, and the annual Mat-Su Banquet & Auction – a fund raising event that brings in one of the largest shares of the Council's annual operating revenue. During her tenure on the board, Susan maintained a persistent focus on sound financial decision making and the importance of fund raising, membership recruitment, and public outreach.

**Dick Bishop** of Fairbanks has served the Outdoor Council for years almost too numerous to count, including chairmanship of AOC's Alaska Trust Fund. Dick most recently served as AOC's President until 2005, and continued as an at-large board member until the 2006 election. Dick's steady disposition and amazing historical knowledge of state and federal outdoor issues in Alaska have given us strong leadership and earned the respect and reputation enjoyed by a rare few advocacy organizations in Alaska, particularly in the legislative and executive branches of our state government.

While appreciation for volunteer work never seems adequate enough, the staff and board of directors of the Outdoor Council extend our very sincere thanks for the outstanding contributions of Bill Stoltze, Susan Grasser and Dick Bishop to the future of the organization.

## New AOC Board Members Biographical Sketches

### Wayne R. Nicolls

Wayne is a native of Wisconsin and a graduate in forestry from the University of Minnesota. His 37-year career with the US Forest Service starting in national forests in the Lakes States took him and his family to the Intermountain West, the Southwest, Washington, DC and finally to Alaska in 1987. His Forest Service career was briefly interrupted by a two-year hitch in the army. He retired from the Forest Service in 1994 and since has devoted most of his time to volunteer efforts related to conservation. He wrote numerous outdoor articles for two regional magazines published in Juneau and for three years wrote a column in Fishing & Hunting News magazine. Wayne is currently vice president of Territorial Sportsmen, Inc. and has served as president in the organization and as a member of the Board of Directors for ten years. He is a Certified Forester and Fellow member of the Society of American Foresters serving as state chair and several terms as Juneau Chapter chair. Wayne was appointed by Governor Murkowski to the Board of Forestry in 2005. He was instrumental in reviving the Juneau Gun Club serving as its president for two years. He spends as much time fishing, hunting and shooting as possible. Wayne has been an AOC member nearly the entire time he has lived in Alaska, joining the board earlier this year.

### Patrick Valkenburg

Patrick Valkenburg came to Alaska in 1972 after living in South Africa, New York, and Maine. He obtained an MS in Wildlife Management from UAF in 1976 and worked for ADF&G as a caribou research and management biologist, and later as Research Coordinator until 2003. During his career with ADF&G he conducted long-term research on caribou in the Delta Herd and participated in many other research and management projects on caribou, wolves, black bears, and moose in northern, interior, and southwestern Alaska. Pat has published many scientific papers and popular articles on caribou biology and management and predator-prey relationships and advocated for scientifically based predator management. He now co-owns a wildlife consulting service with his wife, Audrey Magoun. Pat and Audrey continue to work on wildlife research projects in Alaska and Canada, and Pat specializes in conducting wildlife surveys with his Supercub.

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## Alaska Boating Safety Advisory Council

*Office of Boating Safety, DNR, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation*

Boating safety instructors have known for quite some time that hunters and anglers are a high-risk group, now there's research to substantiate this belief. The Boat U.S. Foundation and the Sportsman's Forum completed a study using focus groups and a national survey. The results are available on their website at [www.boatus.com/foundation](http://www.boatus.com/foundation).

Perhaps the most eye-opening discovery was that 91% of sportsmen who died in boating related accidents were not wearing personal flotation devices (life jackets). Over the last five years, one out of every four boating fatalities involved boaters who were actively fishing or hunting – yet when surveyed only a small percentage of boaters (less than 10 percent) listed fishing or hunting as their primary activity. In addition, most of the hunters and anglers surveyed did not consider themselves boaters; therefore they were not receptive to standard boating safety messages.

It has become clear that sportsmen are more at risk for boating fatalities than the general boating population, and are in dire need of boating safety education. The Alaska Office of Boating Safety wants to help by offering programs that are of interest to hunters and anglers in the state. *Alaska Water Wise*, the state's nationally approved boating safety course can be tailored to meet the needs of hunters and anglers. In addition, the Office of Boating Safety offers one- to two-hour presentations and would be glad to send guest instructors to participate in Hunter Education courses. "We hope to develop partnerships that will help us develop programs" says Jeff Johnson, Alaska's Boating Law Administrator.

For more information about classes, presentations and other resources contact Joe McCullough, Education Coordinator, at (907) 269-8704 or [josephm@dnr.state.ak.us](mailto:josephm@dnr.state.ak.us).



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## Tanana Valley Campus Sport Fishing Instructor Selected for National Outdoor Education Committee

AOC member Shann Jones, who is an instructor of outdoor activities for University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Tanana Valley Campus, was recently elected to the executive committee of the Council for Adventure and Outdoor Education/Recreation. Part of the American Association for Physical Activity and Recreation, the council promotes personal growth in the outdoors, and aims to develop programs for K-12 and university curricula that develop awareness of the environment, group dynamics and self development.

Jones has also taught both Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) workshops and Beyond BOW fly fishing events for the Hunter Heritage Foundation. This fall at UAF, he is presenting Alaska Fly Fishing.

Also popular are Jones' summer programs. He generally teaches a number of affordable and thorough outdoor education weekend workshops between May and August. In 2006, his summer programs usually include, fly fishing, gold prospecting, mineral and rock identification and The Science of Fly Fishing teacher training workshop held at Denali National Park. Overall, Jones had over 200 adult registrants in 16 different University of Alaska and cooperative education events.

Jones hopes his work helps bolster national recognition of sport fishing and shooting sports as topics which should be taught at all age levels.



# AOC News Updates

*By Executive Director, Rod Arno*

- The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is in the process of developing a strategic plan for Alaska State Parks. Currently a public survey is underway to assist DNR in developing their new plan. A short questionnaire has been posted online or can be found at your local State Parks office. Public meetings will be scheduled around the state for this fall. To complete the questionnaire and learn more about the planning process, visit: <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/plans/strategicplan.htm> or contact Bruce Talbot at (907) 269-8536.
- BLM has released the East Alaska Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement. This management plan along with the revised Gulkana and Delta River Management Plan and the completed NEPA process for trails in the Tangle Lakes Archaeological District will determine hunting, fishing, and recreational access on 7 million acres of BLM lands in Southcentral Alaska. Visit: <http://www.blm.gov/ak/gdo/landplan/index.html> or call (907) 822-3217.
- The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) is suing the National Park Service to stop issuing ORV permits for recreational and non-subsistence use in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. The suit claims that the Park Service failed to go through the legally required process to designate ORV trails and determine that ORV use is compatible with park values. If the court rules in NPCA's favor, recreational ORV use will be banned in Wrangell-St. Elias Park and Preserve. AOC is reviewing the case and will determine what course of action to take.
- The Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) is being challenged in court by the State of Alaska over a recent customary & traditional (C&T) use decision. The FSB has increased the C&T use determination for residents of Chistochina for moose from an area 206 sq. miles to over 10,000 sq. miles in Game Management Unit (GMU) 12. The State attorneys call the decision arbitrary, capricious, and not supported by substantial evidence. The FSB will meet this month to consider lifting the ban on Dall sheep hunting in part of ANWR, the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area in GMU 25A. During the last 10 years of closure to non-subsistence sheep hunters, there has been no legal harvest by any federally qualified local subsistence hunters. The State is prepared to go to court over this closure if the FSB doesn't lift the ban.
- The State of Alaska has asked the FSB to reconsider its C&T determination for all fish species in the Kasilof River drainage in the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) for residents of Ninilchik. This is the only national wildlife refuge in Alaska whose purposes does not include "continued subsistence use" but rather calls for "opportunities for fish and wildlife-oriented recreation."
- The federal North Pacific Fishery Management Council continues to work toward a new management framework to limit the harvest of halibut taken by the guided sport (charter) sector. Rather than increasing the guideline harvest level (GHL) for non-commercial harvest of halibut in near shore waters to meet growing demands, the Council is considering a moratorium on the guided sport sector, which would include elements of a limited entry program using a December 9, 2005 control date.
- USF&WS is asking for public comments on guidelines to interpret how laws, regulations, and policies are implemented on National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) in Alaska (72 million acres). Once updated, these guidelines will be used to complete revisions to the comprehensive conservation plans (CCPs) for all NWRs in Alaska by 2012. Among other things the CCP for NWRs will determine which activities are compatible and which are not. The draft management guidelines may be obtained from the USF&WS at <http://alaska.fws.gov/nwr/planning/plans.htm> or by calling (907) 780-1169. Comments are due August 15, 2006. ■

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