

THE BEAR FACTS

Newsletter of the Alaska Coalition Issue 1, Volume 3 – Summer 2004



John Hyde

AMERICA'S RAINFOREST

Right now, in Alaska's Tongass Rainforest, plans are underway to build roads and allow clearcut logging in 50 different road free areas of forest; areas once protected by the Roadless Area Conservation rule but now stripped of their protections by the Bush Administration. To add insult to injury, you're being asked to pay for these logging plans. Every year, the United States Forest Service, which manages the Tongass, blows tens of millions of dollars on its Tongass timber program. When you look closely at how the Forest Service is managing its biggest and wildest National Forest, it's clear this is a huge waste of taxpayer dollars and makes very little economic sense.

The Tongass, dropping down along the coast of British Columbia, in what is sometimes referred to as Alaska's "Panhandle" and simply as "Southeast" by locals, stretches nearly 500 miles north to south, covering 17 million acres, making it far and away America's largest national forest. The Tongass is a forest of islands, surrounded by the ultra rich waters of the north Pacific which pulse



Greenpeace/Laura Lombardi

Midway Sale, northwest of Tenakee Springs, Chichagof Island, Alaska USA – The Forest Service spent \$2.7 million building the Midway Road on the Tongass. The only use of the road is to access unsold old-growth trees for logging. The Forest Service has tried to sell the timber twice, once before building the road and once afterward. Both times the Forest Service failed to find a buyer.



Kim Novick

Activists gather on tax day in front of Champaign, IL Post Office to remind taxpayers that they are subsidizing the logging of last remaining temperate rainforest to the tune of \$35 million a year.

with life. Millions of salmon, pods of orca, humpback whales, sea lions and seals are all found along the Tongass' coastline. The forests rimming these waters are no less spectacular, ancient spruce, hemlock and cedar trees grow to enormous heights, nourished by the rainy temperate climate. The Tongass, classified as a temperate old growth rainforest, is one of the rarest ecosystem types on earth, and most other places where these forests are found, like coastal Washington and Oregon, have been logged off. The Tongass is America's last chance to preserve and protect this rare treasure.

Setting aside most of the Tongass for protection may seem like a no
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Director's Message

I've just put my shoes back on and reordered the contents of my disheveled pack. The ordeal I've just endured has stretched me to the breaking point, challenged my ability to remain in control. The noise and chaos around me leaves me disoriented. I'm tired, I'm stressed, I desperately want to be home where it's safe and comfortable.

No, I'm not on a gravel bar on some remote Interior river, resting after a rough patch of white-water. I'm not stranded on a wind and snow savaged mountainside in the Alaska Range. And I'm not paddling though brooding, building seas in Southeast. I'm in a place far more familiar to Alaska Coalition staff these days – an airport.

As I sit here at Sea-Tac International, I tick off the itineraries of my co-workers. Laurie's on the red-eye back from Cordova, Dan, who likely never unpacked from his last Alaska trip, is now in Chicago with Katie, and Kim, who recently returned from Wisconsin. Scott is deep in the Heartland, driving around Nebraska, Sue is in Hoonah, I'm on my way home from New Mexico, and Rachel is in one of three places – Paxon, Glenallen or Yakutat – there's no way to keep up with her.

For over three years now, the Alaska Coalition staff has flown, floated, and drove all over Alaska and throughout America in a tireless effort to protect our public lands up north. Whether it's a slide show at a senior center in Nebraska, sign wielding bears on the CBS morning show, or a discussion about hunting grounds in a remote cabin in
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The Alaska Coalition

Is a coalition of over 800 conservation, sporting, labor, and religious groups working together to protect Alaska's wild public land.

We work to safeguard the health and wildness of Alaska's public lands from the Tundra of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to the Chugach and Tongass National Forests, the lush temperate rainforests that stretch from Kodiak to Prince of Wales Island in south-east Alaska. The Alaska Coalition is a project of the Alaska Conservation Foundation.

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COALITION PROFILE

By Kristi Kashmer

Building a Bigger Nest

On a crisp October day last fall, the Alaska Coalition of Ohio and the Canton Audubon Society celebrated National Wildlife Refuge Week with a speech from their very own celebrity, Former Congressman and Chairman of the Subcommittee on Alaska Lands, John Seiberling. In his speech Seiberling called on Congress to pull Arctic Refuge language out of the Energy Bill being debated in Congress at that time.

The Canton Audubon Society, a member of the Alaska Coalition of Ohio, has been an integral part of Alaska Coalition efforts from the beginning. With 600 dedicated members, they are a constant help in Coalition efforts to protect Wild Alaska. With encouragement from current President Alan Dolan, members get involved with all Alaska issues whether it's protecting the Arctic Refuge from oil drilling or saving the Tongass and Chugach National Forests from continued road building, clear cutting and other large scale development.

Over the years, there have been many ways that the Canton Audubon Society have been supportive of the Alaska Coalition. They promoted participation in their "Armchair Activist" program. In this

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WHEN WILL NO MEAN NO?

One would think after losing two votes in the Senate, an avalanche of polling data revealing the majority of American's disagree with you, and numerous scientific and economic reports poking holes in your claims, that you would pack up and go home.

Well all of that has not stopped the single-minded push by those who want to reverse the law and open the coastal plain of the Arctic Wildlife Refuge to oil exploration and development. For the past three years they have pushed hard to open the Refuge, looking for any and every opportunity. In spite of these three years of failure they are back again.



The Jago River cuts through the heart of the coastal plain of the Arctic Wildlife Refuge.

Once again, the President called for including Arctic Wildlife Refuge drilling as part of the Federal Budget. This is a classic back door scheme — using highly speculative revenue projection figures from future oil and gas leasing in the Arctic Refuge, as a part of the Presidents' budget. This back-door scheme to open the Refuge would limit the opportunity for debate on the issue in the Senate. Once again the American people spoke up and told their elected official that this was not the way to decide the fate of our Nation's natural treasures. This year because of tremendous pressure from the grassroots neither the Senate nor the House of Representatives followed the Presidents wishes — the Federal Budget is clean.

But with rising gas prices the proponents of drilling see another opportunity to raise the issue, no doubt they will continue to push for drilling in the Refuge and use any excuse regardless of the facts. We must remain vigilant, and ready to act through the coming months. Drilling for oil in the Arctic Wildlife Refuge would do nothing to change the price of gas at the pumps — it is only six months of oil that wouldn't be available for at least ten years.

We can not drill our way to energy security, or to lower prices at the pump. The United States has about three percent of the worlds oil reserves, but each year we consume about one quarter of the oil burned in the world — simple math would tell us that the only way to become more energy secure is to use less oil. Conservation is the key.

Tongass Veneer Mill Stopped

Late last year the Alaska Coalition learned that an Oregon based timber company may be considering reopening a bankrupt and partially disassembled veneer slicing facility in Ketchikan, Alaska. The defunct veneer plant, located near where the infamous Ketchikan Pulp Company's pulp mill once stood, had already proven to be a loser; it required large amounts of Tongass old growth, it provided relatively few jobs for the amount of wood it gobbled up, and it had already been plunged into bankruptcy after less than a year of operation.



One of the the Alaska Coalition's main worries was that restarting the mill would lead to ramped up roadless area logging. According to a Forest Service official quoted in the Anchorage Daily News, the road free forests of the Tongass, which were up to recently, protected by the Roadless Rule, would be targeted for logging in order to supply this mill.

The Alaska Coalition, along with the Alaska Rainforest Campaign, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), ForestEthics, Rainforest Action Network and Greenpeace, worked to encourage the perspective operator, Timber Products Company (TPC) of Oregon to end negotiations to run the veneer mill.

NRDC first asked TPC to meet and discuss its plans for operating the mill but did not receive a response to their request. After six months of waiting, the Alaska Coalition's organizers used

our national network of partners and activists to call TPC's headquarters and ask them to be an environmentally responsible company and to not run the veneer mill until roadless areas of the Tongass are once again protected. Over 1,000 activists from across the country made phone calls to TPC's headquarters. As a result, TPC, requested a meeting to talk about its plans and to listen to the coalition.

Thank you to all coalition partners and activist who helped make this happen! TPC also deserves praise for taking a hard, honest look at the economic and environmental costs associated with this mill and making the right decision.

This fight is far from over however, the Forest Service, and the Murkowski Administration continue to dangle money and old growth from Tongass Roadless areas in front a perspective operators of the veneer plant.

Until the roadless areas of the Tongass are protected the Alaska Coalition and its market campaign allies will continue to educate consumers about where to buy and where not to buy their wood products.

"The Forest Service and the Bush Administration created this problem," says Alaska Coalition Director, Tim Bristol. "Now, it's up to them to fix it by protecting the roadless forests of the Tongass."

brainer. It certainly was for the American public, millions of whom called for the protection of its remaining road free areas during the various Roadless Areas Conservation rule comment periods. But the Bush Administration, at the urging of the pro-timber Alaska Delegation, and former timber lobbyist, Agriculture Secretary Mark Rey, are trying to ramp up logging and road building, ignoring the economic and environmental costs.

Here are the numbers: in 2002 alone, logging the Tongass cost the Forest Service more than \$35 million in taxpayer subsidies. The Forest Service alleges they are using taxpayer subsidies to support an industry vital to the economy of Alaska, yet the timber industry is quickly plummeting into a pattern of economic losses as the demand for timber is decreasing considerably with 30% of the timber sales from 1998-2001 failing to obtain a buyer. Despite the precipitous decline of the timber industry in Alaska, the state boasts a number of other more profitable industries, including recreation, tourism, and fishing. In 2001 recreation and tourism together produced 4,278 jobs for Southeast Alaska, while fishing and seafood created 3,080 jobs. That same year, the timber industry accounted for 782 jobs. One



John Hyde

Bear tracks remind visitors to Berners Bay that others have come before them.

year later that number fell drastically, with the timber industry claiming less than 200 jobs, this represents fewer than 0.6% of all jobs in Southeast Alaska.

The Forest Service has spent nearly one billion dollars in taxpayer subsidies since 1982 on logging activities in the Tongass National Forest. These activities are not only costly to the American taxpayer they can also have potentially negative impact on the success of Alaska's leading industries, including recreation, tourism, and fishing, which rely heavily on the health of the Tongass National Forest. These industries have become the economic backbone of Southeast Alaska, clearly replacing the timber industry. Therefore, it is time for the Forest Service to take heed of this economic change and stop spending taxpayer money to prop up the timber industry. You can take action to protect this national treasure and your wallet by urging your elected officials to end taxpayer subsidies on logging in the Tongass National Forest. Encourage your friends and family to do the same. Together we can end wasteful spending and protect one of our last remaining wild places.

we didn't visit the two big cities, but instead presented in places such as Chadron, Scottsbluff, Grand Island, North Platte, Fremont, and Norfolk.

People dream of seeing Alaska someday, imagining it as America's "Last Frontier" of wilderness. And many take pride in helping the Alaska Coalition preserve and protect Alaska wildness for future generations to enjoy. When Nebraskans found out that their hard-earned tax dollars were being spent to log great swaths of their Tongass, they took action. Nearly 400 people who attended the shows signed letters that were delivered to Nebraska's Congressional delegation, asking them to support protections for Alaska's rainforest while saving taxpayer dollars at the same time.

This is an example of one of many outreach tours the Alaska Coalition coordinated over the past 6 months. The field organizers have been extremely busy with Arctic Refuge slideshow tours traveling through Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, North Dakota, Oregon, Maine, New Hampshire, Nebraska, Ohio, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. As if that isn't enough, the Coalition toured through Texas, Washington, New Jersey and Florida (in addition to Nebraska) to spread the word about the effort to protect America's Rainforest — the Tongass.

Through these tours we were able to reach thousands of activists to educate and activate them on the need to protect Wild Alaska.

Director's Message continued from page 1

Bush Alaska, we will go wherever we need to, talk to anyone who will listen, work as hard and long as we can, to preserve and protect our natural heritage in Alaska.

As you read though the newsletter, you'll notice the challenges we face are as great as ever: logging in the Tongass, overly aggressive oil and gas leasing in America's Arctic, and bridges and roads to nowhere slated throughout the state. But we remain hopeful. All of us working together have withstood numerous legislative threats, our membership continues to grow and diversify, and our staff, while well traveled, are far from road weary.

As I prepare to boot down my computer and as I gulp the last of my coffee before departure, I would like to offer a heartfelt thank you to all the individuals and organizations that have offered support to the Alaska Coalition since we last wrote to you.

I have to admit, there's a real upside to all this travel — the heightened level of appreciation for what you leave behind. I know that when I do land back in Juneau and walk out the airport's sliding glass doors, the smell of spruce, seaweed, and sea on the wind is somehow a little sweeter than when I left. The nearby Tongass a little more lush and a bit deeper green, the mountains even more overwhelming.

Thanks again and remember, working together, we can Keep Alaska Wild.

Tim Bristol/Seattle (heading to Juneau)

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Society for Wild Alaska

The Alaska Coalition has recently formed the "Society for Wild Alaska" which seeks to reach out to important and influential conservation-minded individuals to build a strong base of support for protection of wild places in Alaska. This effort, co-chaired by former Members of the U.S. Congress Tom Evans (R-DE) and John Seiberling (D-OH), strives to work with these Alaska advocates in order for their voice, opinion and influence to be heard in the media, on Capitol hill, and in the public arena by way of ads, opinion editorials, letters to the editor, phone calls or in-person meetings with decision makers.



Society
for
Wild
Alaska

Rainforests in Nebraska?

No. But plenty of Nebraskans care about them, and that number is certainly larger now than it was at the beginning of April.

Scott Hed recently spent nearly three weeks touring Nebraska to spread the word about Alaska's amazing temperate rainforests. It was the most extensive slide show tour he has done in two and a half years working as an organizer for the Alaska Coalition.

Based on past experiences in Nebraska, this tour was a bit different. Instead of visiting Omaha and Lincoln (and ignoring the rest of the state),

Anniversary of Valdez Oil Spill

Once again the Alaska Coalition partnered with Green Corps to bolster our field staff during the critical first quarter of the year — with 8 outstanding organizers we nearly doubled our field presence. Our team worked to expand the membership of the Alaska Coalition and we are nearing 900 members from 46 of the 50 states.

March 24th marked the 15th anniversary of the Exxon Valdez oil spill disaster in Prince William Sound. After all these years the marine and coastal environment of the Sound has yet to recover. The Alaska Coalition and Green Corps worked with activists to urge American's to remember the Exxon Valdez and to keep drilling from the Arctic Refuge.



Interfaith Memorial Service in Seattle remembers the Exxon Valdez Disaster.



CBS Morning Show acknowledges Alaska Coalition's efforts to "protect Alaska's environment."

Many Thanks



The Alaska Coalition would like to thank the following individuals, organizations, and Foundations for their support and efforts in protecting the land and wildlife we all care about.

To former members of Congress Tom Evans (R-DE) and John Seiberling (D-OH) for signing on as co-chairs of the Society for Wild Alaska and working so hard to protect our wild places in Alaska.

To Rachel Hawkey for helping out when our GreenCorps organizer needed it.

To NRDC, Greenpeace, ForestEthics, Dogwood Alliance, American Lands Alliance, Native Forest Network, and the National Forest Protection Alliance for partnership in our Corporate Campaign to protect the Tongass.

To all of the slideshow presenters who traveled far and wide to share their love of wild Alaska. Faith Gemmil, Peter Solomon, Tim Leach, Jillian Morrissey, Jeff Barrie, Bill Mohrwinkel, Andy Keller, Chad Kister, Keith Nyitray, Tim Miles, Cindy Edwards, Leonie, and Brant Brantman.

To John Bowman, Kirk Henderson, Dick Worm, Bob Shimek, Debbie Ortman, The Coffee Hag, Rochester Trout Unlimited, Jerry Nef, Flo Sandok, J. Drake Hamilton, and Katherine Blauvelt who helped our organizers with events.

To Naomi Roth for making it very easy to work with Green Corps.

To Mel and Rosemary Thornton, Linda Deeds, Shirley Barnhart, and Carly Guisinger for their help getting Scott safely and successfully across Nebraska.

Once again John McComb provided invaluable help keeping us all connected to the internet super highway.

To Tony Dean, Mark and Michelle Kaelke at Bear Creek Outfitters and Mike McKimens of the Prince of Wales Conservation League for helping us show off southeast Alaska.

To Irv Nodland and Kathleen Jones for tremendous North Dakota hospitality.

To David and Jennifer van den Berg at Arctic Wild for help in showing off northern Alaska and other support.

To Sue Sprinkle who makes us look good.

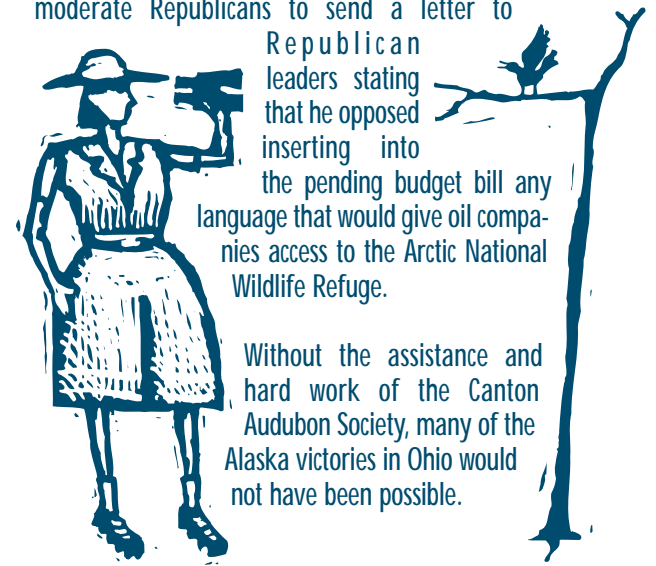
To Steve Rainey and Orca Adventure Lodge in Cordova, Alaska for fantastic accommodations and a beautiful place for a morning run.

The Alaska Coalition would not be able to continue without the support from the Alaska Conservation Foundation, the Surdna Foundation, Wilburforce Foundation, Wyss Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, 444S Foundation and the Moore Foundation.

Building a Bigger Nest *continued on page 4*

program, letters written by Audubon members about the importance of protecting the Arctic Refuge were given to Ohio Congressmen. Many members also a recent training how to save the Arctic Refuge from oil drilling. In addition, the Canton Audubon Society continually updates their members on Alaska issues in their bi-monthly newsletter, Audubon News and Views.

The Canton Audubon Society were vital in helping convince Senator Mike DeWine to vote for the protection of the Arctic Refuge from drilling back in Spring of 2002. In response to Audubon's many phone calls, letters and emails to his office, Senator DeWine listened to the voices of his constituents. Since that monumental vote, the Senator has continually voted to protect the Refuge. He even went one step further during the budget process in 2003 by being one of six moderate Republicans to send a letter to



Republican leaders stating that he opposed inserting into the pending budget bill any language that would give oil companies access to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Without the assistance and hard work of the Canton Audubon Society, many of the Alaska victories in Ohio would not have been possible.

WE WELCOME THESE NEW MEMBERS OF THE ALASKA COALITION:

Mule Deer Foundation, Conservation Leaders Network, Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, Tony Dean Outdoors, Red River Group, Dakota Chapter, SC, OutdoorRelease.com, Minnesotans for an Energy-Efficient Economy, Frontera Audubon Society, Our Small Planet Films, Michigan Nature Association, Sarett Nature Center, American Friends Service, Committee, Seattle, Conservation Biology Institute, South Carolina Wildlife Federation, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Key West, Illinois Native Plant Society, Tennessee Environmental Council, Birds of Vermont Museum, Eau Claire Lakes Conservation Club, Appalachia Science in the Public Interest, Boulder Wolfpack Coalition, Anishinaabe Student Congress, Paul Bunyun Nature Learning Center, Heart of America Fly Fishers, Hoosier Organic Marketing & Education, Bull Valley Hunt Club, McIntire Hunting Club, Inc., Farmworker Association of Florida, Citizens for a Better South Florida, Michigan Ecumenical Consultation on Christianity & Ecology, Citizens for Alternatives to Chemical Contamination, Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary

- please join them...



JOIN THE ALASKA COALITION *Keep Alaska Wild!*

The Alaska Coalition is composed of more than 800 conservation, sporting, and religious groups working together to protect Alaska's public lands. The Coalition needs your help to save the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and hold off attacks on the Tongass and Chugach National Forests and Alaska's other precious wildlands. By joining the Alaska Coalition you send an important message that your members do not want to see these irreplaceable wildlands despoiled.

How do you join the Alaska Coalition? It's simple. Just fill out this form indicating your organization's support for protecting Alaska's national treasures. You don't have to pay any dues, but your membership will go along way.

Of course, as a member of the Coalition you and your organization will receive some important benefits. You'll get regular updates, newsletters, and action alerts on the Arctic Refuge, the Alaska Rainforest and other Alaska conservation issues. You can use these to inform your members about important battles in Washington DC and take credit for your group's important role as a member of the Coalition.

Organization	Focus of Organization
Name/Contact	Comments
Number of Members	
Address	
Phone	Fax
Email	

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Wild Alaska Needs You!

