

Copper Basin Land and Resource Managers Meeting

April 4, 2018

Next Meeting – October 3, 2018

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Glennallen Field Office – Brenda Becker, Realty Specialist & Robben Taylor, Partnership & Outreach Coordinator

- A Federal spending budget was signed with an increase to funding for the Department of the Interior. We have not learned if our office will see any of that increase.
- Staffing/job opportunities:
 - Glennallen Field Office Manager position is currently filled by Marnie Graham who is on an internal detail until a permanent manager is brought on board. A recommendation on an applicant has been made to the Washington DC office and we are waiting to hear back, hopefully within the month. Once a selection has been made, it could be another 60+ days before the manager will be here.
 - Nick Weber, a BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner has moved. We currently have a plan to temporarily fill this position internally (detail) this summer but there may be an opportunity for the public in the future.
 - Environmental Protection Specialist – local hire. GS – 7-9-11. Announcement is currently out. Applications must be to the office by 4:30 pm on April 10th.
 - Eventually, we will be announcing a GS-7-9 Resource Tech position as a local hire. (No timeline)
 - Seasonal Positions:
 - GS-05 and GS-07 Archaeology Techs (announcing SOON)
 - GS-02 and GS-03 Fisheries Techs (Fish Tower) local hire. (announcing SOON)
 - You may be hearing about a nationwide reorganization. Alaska is its own region so boundaries will not change but we are the pilot program for what it may look like in other states. For hiring, any GS 11 and below positions are at the discretion of the State Director. GS 11 and above must go to the Washington DC office.
 - Campground Hosts needed at Sourdough and Paxson Lake CGs due to last minute cancellations! Quick turnaround needed on this.
- Federal Subsistence:
 - Permits Issued this season
 - Moose: 1,399 issued - 90 harvested – 97% reported!
 - Caribou: 3,069 issued – 344 harvested - 53% reported
 - Season closed March 31st. Reports due by April 15th.
 - New maps being developed for upcoming subsistence season. Working on making maps more available online and downloadable onto a smart phone or GPS.
 - BLM is also working with the Office of Subsistence Management to make online reporting more efficient. They are trying to have one link where subsistence

hunters can view and report on ALL of their federal permits rather than searching for them one at a time.

- Proposed Actions:
 - Alphabet Hills Trail Stream Bank Restoration – reconstructing a stream crossing where an OHV trail crosses an unnamed tributary of the Middle Fork Gulkana River. During break up of 2014 the crossing site eroded and partially failed allowing some water to escape the natural stream channel. The project will reestablish the crossing in its traditional location while stabilizing the surrounding streambank.
 - Information only: (No BLM action required) There will be Army Helicopter Surveys along Copper River through Slana this summer. They will be following Lt. Henry Allen’s 1885 expedition route to try to better understand the seasonal conditions Lt. Allen may have faced on his expedition.
 - Sheep Hunting Guide permit application
 - Received special recreation permit application from Alaska Adventure Services to provide for guided hunting of Dall sheep in the upper Suslota Creek and upper Little Tok River drainages. Access would be through either walk in, ATV, or bush plane. Application requests up to three 10 day hunts per year within SOA sheep season (Aug 10-Sep 20). The requested maximum group size is 6 and minimum group size is 2.
 - Water Rights Reservations.
 - There has been some misinformation about this process. The water rights reservation process is a State process. BLM submitted applications for water reservations in the 90s and has been recording water gauge data for a portion of the Gulkana and Delta Rivers for close to 20 years. In the past two years, the State reached out to our office and requested new applications because they would like to adjudicate. If there are more questions on the process and what this means, please contact the state.
- Recreation/Cultural: Both the recreation program and the cultural program will be working together to inventory trails in the Tangle Lakes Archaeological District this summer. They are trying to establish ways to allow for more public access in the TLAD without disturbing cultural and historical resources.
- Lands Program: BLM is continuing discussions with Ahtna about 17b easements. We are on the verge of completing a trail head sign for the 17b easement at Sailor’s Pit. We are also aware that some of our other 17b easement signs are fading and are in need of replacement and/or repair and will be working on that.
- Forestry/Fuels
 - Harvested 12 tons of biomass this year in the Tiekel Area. (Beatle Killed Spruce) DOUBLE from last year!
 - Issued 48 personal use fire wood permits this year
 - Looking for partnership opportunities to do fuel reduction projects. If you have an idea of a possible fuels reduction project with a BLM component, we’d like to look at the opportunity for collaboration. Contact is Tim Skiba.

- Partnerships: BLM is continuing to work with partners to achieve many goals. Big thanks to ALL of our partners and your work to make the projects successful.
 - ADF&G - Wildlife Population Monitoring.
 - Currently obligated \$73,000 (since 2016)
 - Funds annual wildlife survey that provides cooperation and monitoring of subsistence resource populations migrating between BLM lands and State of AK lands within GMU 13.
 - Agreement supports collaborative tracking of parturition rates, population composition, population size, and movement data.
 - ADF&G – Fish Population Monitoring & Inventory
 - Currently obligated \$123,000 (since 2015)
 - Improves knowledge of the grayling populations in the Gulkana and Delta Wild and Scenic Rivers and their tributaries for sport fishing.
 - Past two years a telemetry study was done in support of increasing the public’s knowledge on grayling location and to document distribution, identify habitat utilization, and develop life history periodicity data.
 - Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service – Conducting Soil surveys in Copper Basin area and statewide. BLM Provides funding, staffing, and logistical support.
 - Copper River Watershed Project – partnering to improve fish passage and address trail and access issues for Gulkana River.
 - Prince William Sound College. Continuing a great partnership with PWSC to provide internship opportunities for college students. This summer we are bringing on three summer interns from the college to work in Outdoor Youth Education, Lands and Realty, and Outdoor Recreation. We also established a new internship opportunity for a Media Intern whose main focus will be on videography.
 - Copper Basin 300: Great teamwork between BLM and Ahtna to help with a checkpoint this year at Sourdough. And thanks to the volunteers from the CRNA check point who came and lent their support as well.
 - Upcoming Events:
 - April 7 - BLM-WISE Family Ice Fishing Day, at Silver Lake.
 - April 9-13 - NPS Chosen Frozen Winter Camp for all CRSD 7 &8 Grade students at Sourdough Campground.
 - May 15 – Earth Discovery Day hosted by WISE at NPS.
 - May 29-31- Youth Environmental Summit with the Native Village of Gakona will be in Chistochina at the Cheesh-Na Tribal Hall.
 - June 21-24 – Project Healing Waters @ Tangle Lake’s Campground
 - July 20-30 – Copper River Stewardship Program in partnership with WISE, CRWP, NPS, and Prince William Sound Science Center. Students entering grades 9-12 are eligible and can receive HS credit. Will be sailing across Prince William Sound this year!
 - BLM-WISE hikes all summer (most Thursdays), WISE will put out a schedule.
 - National Public Lands Day (NPLD) – This year is the 50th Anniversary of the National Wild and Scenic River Act. We will be hosting NPLD this year and are considering basing it at our Sourdough Campground along the

Gulkana WSR with volunteer opportunities in the morning and WSR themed activities in the afternoon. Stay tuned for more info!

- Southeast Workload
 - GFO has received an increase in workload by 25% with no additional staffing or funding since taking over management of BLM lands in Southeast, AK.
 - Haines Amendment
 - Boundary change added 85+ Lands and Realty cases. Actively working on 5-10.
 - If submitting app to GFO, give us heads up and get to us early!

Copper Country Alliance (CCA) – Ruth McHenry, Executive Director and Cliff Eames, Board of Directors

- Tangle Lakes State Game Refuge:
 - Protecting Tangle Lakes has been a priority of Copper Country Alliance for many years. We were pleased that House Bill 272, to create a Tangle Lakes State Game Refuge, was introduced in the Alaska legislature this year. The primary aim of the bill is to protect the Nelchina Caribou Herd, which would in turn protect hunting opportunities.
 - The bill got through the House Fisheries Committee with a “do pass” recommendation, and then the House Resources Committee with a “do not pass” recommendation. There will be no further action this session. However, it will continue to be one of our priorities.
- Kenny Lake Bird Outing:
 - For a number of years, we have been hosting an opportunity for adults and children to see migrating waterfowl from the shores of Kenny Lake. It is always a “wow!” moment when folks look through scopes and binoculars. Last year we teamed up with WISE for the event, and that brought in a bigger turnout. We plan to do it again this May.
- A big thanks to BLM and WISE for their outdoor hike program and other outings.
- Wrangell-St. Elias Backcountry & Wilderness Stewardship Plan:
 - We’re looking forward to working with NPS again on the plan this summer.
- CCA Annual Meeting:
 - Our annual meeting in November was on climate change, with a presentation by Jeremy Littell, lead research scientist, USGS Alaska Climate Science Center. It was well attended, and drew good audience participation. Some highlights (as reported in a WISE column):
 - Interior Alaska’s temperatures have risen at about double the rate of the global trend since the 1920s.
 - Evidence includes glacier mass, tree line and shrub line elevation, length of growing season, increase in minimum temperatures, ocean and stream temperatures, snowpack variations, and fire season length.
 - All of these changes will have a profound effect on wildlife, including abundance of forage or prey, timing and amounts of water, and habitat.
 - Could see a shift away from coniferous trees to more leafy deciduous trees, increases in fire and insect damage, changes to the water table, and decrease in permafrost. The increase in precipitation would be offset by the longer warm seasons and other changes, leaving us actually dryer than we are now.

Ahtna Incorporated - John Leonhart, Land's Department Manager.

- The Carbon Credits Program will continue. Will be bringing on two carbon credit interns.
- Will be establishing the moose habitat improvement project near the village of Cantwell. Currently have three similar projects near the villages of Gulkana, Tazlina, and Klutui-Kah. The main difference between the already existing projects and the new project near Cantwell is that these logs will be selectively harvested for house logs for villagers. Also will be adding brush piles for small animal habitat.
- Will be working on an erosion protection project for Gulkana Village.
- Ramping up for permitting season. There have been a lot of changes to the system – it is now online to make it more user friendly.
- Working on a bear population density project. Currently in a holding pattern while waiting for the State permit to clear. The project will focus on collecting hair samples to extract DNA and analyze to get population density for the Ahtna region. This is a pilot project and Ahtna will be setting up study areas in each village in the region.
- Continuing to work with BLM and NPS on 17b easements.
- Completed the fuel break project surrounding the Ahtna Inc. buildings.
- Staffing:
 - A GIS specialist and a Forester have been hired to complete the staffing needs at Ahtna, Inc.
 - Two seasonals and the two carbon interns will be brought on for the summer.

The Native Village of Kluti-Kah – Bill Hand, Tribal Administrator

- Working to strengthen government-to-government relationships with BLM, NPS, and others.
- Have applied for BIA fire fuel money. Met with BIA in Juneau and is currently reviewing proposal. Will also be bringing a proposal to BLM (Time Skiba).
- Currently have 5 firefighters and 16 others to attend the DNR Red Card training this summer.
- Trying to combat the village's 60% unemployment rate (500 tribal members).
- Continuing to work on the Cultural and Recreation Center. Work began on this in 2006. Have met with the Governor and was provided positive feedback with moving forward on helping the village get this project completed. The Center will house an Indian Health Services (IHS) clinic as well as some office space and a Bio-Mass system.
- Staffing
 - Will be hiring an Environmental Assistant for the summer (hoping to start advertising next week).
 - Will be hiring a Tribal Court Clerk
- Entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of the Interior (DOI) last year to co-manage game on Federal Lands. Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resource Committee (AITRC) is representing the villages (including Kluti-Kah).

Glenn/Rich Fire Department – Bill Hand

- The Glenn/Rich Fire Department has officially combined with the Kenny Lake Fire department.
- Currently have 10 nationally certified firefighters and a certified Tech-Level Hazardous Waste Instructor.

Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) – Bill Hand, Chairman

- LEPC hosts monthly meetings that all are invited to participate in
- Finished the Glennallen/Tazlina Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST NPS) – Joshua Scott, Chief of Lands and Planning

- Have hired a new Resource Division Chief – Mark Miller.
- Back Country Wilderness Stewardship Plan Update – This project took a technical pause for the last two years to look at the issues and determine the best way to move forward. NPS will be conducting internal scoping to capture thoughts and opinions of all employees as well as holding a series of listening sessions with the public in the near future where they will hope to hear from the public their thoughts on the management in the park in terms of backcountry and wilderness areas.
- NPS is continuing work on the Shushana Caribou Management Plan. 130 Federal subsistence moose permits were issued this year and 14 were harvested under the FM11106 hunt.
- Yakutat Area:
 - Looking at conducting a study on micro plastics on beaches and the potential impacts to wildlife.
 - Will be holding an Elder's and Youth trip in the Icy Bay Area.
 - Will be conducting Harbor Seal Research
- Central Alaska Network – Weather & Climate Summary for WRST (see attachment)
 - Take away: 2017-2018 winter has been the wettest/snowiest on record at Gulkana with a 225% increase.
- Thank you to Ahtna, Inc. for the cooperation on the historical Lake Ahtna project. The preliminary results have been fascinating in terms of prehistoric artifacts. Final report is a couple years away but there is some preliminary data that can be shared for interested parties.
- Will be conducting a study to identify the health of Dall sheep.
- There was a MOVI case reported in GMU 12 by a hunter. Researches at NPS have not reported any findings within the park.
- The Forest Service will be conducting surveys for insect pests and pathogens with WRST campgrounds this summer. This is done on a three-year cycle.
- Kennicott – a report came out indicating that there is some contamination in Kennicott. NPS is looking at dust mitigation measures this summer and will be working with locals and land owners about their concerns.
- Nabesna: NPS has been looking at Nabesna Mine. It has not moved up the National Priority list but they are looking to tap into other funding opportunities. First step will be to create and post signage to notify public that the site is potentially dangerous.
- WRST will be bringing on 50-60 seasonals this summer.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Branch of Pipeline Monitoring – Rhonda Williams, Steve Weeks, and Loch Anderson. AND

The State Pipeline Coordinator's Section (SPCS) of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – Jodi Delgado-Pilkat.

- Projects for this year
 - RHMP 217, PLMP 587 (Castner Creek) – rock sill work
 - RHMP 53, PLMP 749 (North of Sourdough) – cathodic protection (corrosion protection) on below ground pipe. The proposed project includes Horizontal Directional Drilling of the Tiekel River, diverting tributaries of the Tiekel River and dewatering.
- Hogan Hill Area – Road casing project that will involve directional drilling under the highway.
- Tazlina Hill – Project for slope stabilization was permitted last year and has been extended through the end of September.

Copper River Watershed Project (CRWP) – Chantel Adelfio and Kristen Carpenter.

- Will have a table at the Valdez Fly In to educate the public about Invasive Weeds.
- Would like to hear from anyone who may have heard reports or have seen Elodia near Mentasta Lake.
- Working on setting a date in July for the annual Copper Basin Weed Smackdown.
- Will be doing some engineering work on culverts in the Little Tonsia River (mile 74.2 Richardson Hwy) this summer.
- The Wild Food Fest is coming u on April 14th. We’re celebrating our 20th anniversary! Potluck and movie entertainment at the American Legion Hall in Glennallen, bring a dish and get in free or \$10 at the door; Membership and door prizes.
- Trans Alaska Pipeline System Citizen Oversight, working on building our capacity for monitoring pipeline operations and maintenance. Kirsten will be attending a training hosted by the Pipeline Safety Trust in Houston in May.
- Watershed Education – Kate Morse from CRWP is planning a trip to the Upper Copper Basin in May. She is hoping to work with students in the Slana and Mentasta area through CRWP’s rural education agreement with the BLM.

The Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment (WISE) – Robin Mayo, Executive Director.

- WISE/BLM Family Ice Fishing Day is this Saturday, April 4th at Silver Lake on the McCarthy Road.
- WISE will be at the NPS Chosen Frozen youth camp next week and is thankful to WRST for brining on Russ Scribner as their new Education Specialist!
- Copper River Stewardship Project – Applications are closed. We have a great group of students from the Copper Basin area but are still looking for a few teens in the Cordova area.
- New teen program – Outdoor Wilderness Leadership Skills (OWLS). Will focus on outdoor skills and career readiness for outdoor careers. Applications are currently open. High school students can earn credit from the Copper River School District for participating. WISE is looking for some professionals who would be interested in having an OWLS participant job shadow them for a day. Please contact WISE if you are interested.
- Earth Discovery Day is on May 15th at Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve. This program is for 4th-6th grades. Already have a great group of partner’s who will present at this program but if you work in Natural resources in this area and would like to participate, please contact WISE.

- This summer we will have a full schedule of WISE/BLM Youth Hikes. Very close to publishing the schedule which will be set out through the WISE email list (contact WISE to get on this list), Facebook page, flyers, etc.

State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – Candy Snow

- This summer, working on a connector trail for the Maclaren Summit Trail to Glacier Gap to 7 Mile Lake Trail.
- Also a connector trail that takes Maclaren Summit Trail to the Old 7 Mile Lake Trail.
- New kiosks created by the Division of Parks will be installed at Land Mark Gap, Glacier Gap, Maclaren Summit, and Maclaren River Road trailheads.
- See Attached Map for connecting trail work info.