



FIELDREPORT

Alaska Region | Summer 2016



Where Water Is Gold



Life and Livelihood in Alaska's

Bristol Bay explores the history, culture, economy and science of a water-rich region that supplies half of the world's wild sockeye salmon supply and is home to Katmai and Lake Clark National Parks and Preserves.

Based upon five years of fieldwork by Anchorage photographer Carl Johnson, it explores Bristol Bay's incredible scenery and abundant wildlife, its residents' traditional subsistence ways of life, the economic powerhouse that is the commercial fishing industry, and diverse recreational opportunities from fly fishing to bear viewing. It also includes a history of mineral exploration in the area and the grassroots opposition to development of the Pebble Mine.

This beautiful 176-page, full-color photography book includes a foreword by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and essays by Alaskan authors Bill Sherwonit, David Atcheson, Steve Kahn, Anne Coray, Nick Jans and Erin McKittrick.

AVAILABLE NOW! Order today at:
www.arcticlight-ak.com/product-detail/book

Denali Accepts the Zero Landfill Challenge

Our national parks are models of America's commitment to preservation and sustainability. In the midst of another busy summer tourism season, the National Park Service (NPS) is celebrating its 100th anniversary of protecting resources. It continues to share America's historic, cultural, natural and scenic treasures and to engage park visitors as stewards of our environment.

Denali National Park and Preserve is one of three pilot parks that have pledged to be at the forefront of making our parks zero landfill during their next 100 years. Partnering with Subaru of America, National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), park concessioners and gateway community members, Denali, Yosemite and Grand Teton National Parks have each set waste reduction goals and committed to improve recycling, composting and repurposing waste generated at the parks.

In 2015, visitors to Denali National Park generated over 514 tons of trash.

Zero landfill goals aim to divert waste from landfills by reducing it at the source, creative reuse, recycling and composting. Zero landfill success involves cultural and behavioral change; it requires guiding people to live their lives in ways that have less impact on

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the environment, and to change how they deal with both the beginning and end of the life of a product.

Leading by example, our national parks are poised to educate millions of visitors each year about sustainable waste management practices that they can adopt at home. National parks received more than 307 million visitors in 2015, a record likely to be broken this centennial year. Through this innovative partnership, the Park Service is uniquely poised to engage a wide diversity of park visitors in joining the zero landfill challenge and making responsible changes in our own lives.

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Alaska Corner by AK Regional Director Jim Adams



I'm the new director of the Alaska region of National Parks Conservation Association. I feel lucky. National parks are some of America and Alaska's greatest places, and they commemorate some of our nation's finest moments. They have been an important part of my life.

I grew up in Iowa—there was not a lot of wilderness. But every summer, we would pack the station wagon and head west to Yellowstone, Grand Teton, Glacier and a host of other national parks to camp. Those trips were some of my favorite times, and they led me to Alaska 23 years ago.

In my short time with NPCA, I have been deeply impressed with the commitment of our staff, members and volunteers, who have taken action on many important Alaskan issues. As one example, several Alaska NPCA volunteers—Fran Ulmer, the former lieutenant governor of Alaska and current Chair of NPCA's Board of Directors; Jerryne and Wallace Cole, the past owners of Camp Denali and long-time park advocates; and Alejandro Soto, a member of NPCA's Next Generation Council—recently visited Congress to talk about how important national parks are to Alaskans and the Alaska economy. More than 2.6 million

people visited our parks in 2015, spending \$1.19 billion in the state and supporting over 17,000 jobs. We urged our delegation to make sure the Park Service gets the funding it needs to provide critical visitor services and ensure resource protection.

Also, NPCA was the lead organization in an amicus or "friend of the court" brief before the U.S. Supreme Court when the court considered a case that challenges the National Park Service's long-standing authority to manage activities on navigable waters within the boundaries of national parks and preserves. The Supreme Court justices acknowledged that additional legal work is needed and the case is now back in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals where we will continue to monitor developments and engage, as appropriate.

I'm really proud to be a part of the NPCA team working hard to protect our national parks, and I hope you will consider supporting NPCA. If you make a donation by June 30, our board members will double your gift in a one-to-one challenge match! You can also support us anytime at: www.npca.org/give.

Thank you for helping us protect our national parks!

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK! What do you like about this newsletter? What other topics or features would you like to see? Would you prefer to receive this newsletter electronically? Please contact our office with your feedback at akro@npca.org

To learn more about exciting volunteer opportunities with NPCA, go to npca.org/events or email akro@npca.org

Ambler Mining Road Threatens Gates of the Arctic



By Joan Frankevich

“Come look!” my husband whispered urgently. We were backpacking in Gates of the Arctic National Park—my first trip north of the Arctic Circle—but I never expected this. I stepped outside to find myself surrounded by hundreds of caribou migrating past either side of our small tent. I treasure this memory and hope the great caribou herds of the Arctic survive intact for generations of park visitors to experience. These caribou are even more important to the local subsistence hunters who rely on predictable migration patterns to feed their families in this remote region. Now the subsistence lifestyles, wilderness recreation, fish and wildlife of the southern Brooks Range are threatened by a 220-mile industrial road, 20 miles of which would

cross the southwest corner of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve.

When Congress created Gates of the Arctic in 1980, they also allowed for access across the preserve to the copper resources of the Ambler Mining District. Now a foreign mining company is interested in mining, and the state is proposing construction of an expensive private road for transporting ore. While legally permissible, the question remains: Is this road in the best interest of Alaskans and our nation’s premier wilderness park?

A recent study of the nearby Red Dog Mine Road showed that this road frequently impedes caribou migration. On average, 25 percent of caribou that approached the Red Dog Road reversed direction, wandering hundreds of extra miles and delaying

migration for over 30 days. The Ambler Mining Road is four times as long and bisects prime caribou habitat. Other concerns related to the proposed road include damage to wetlands and fish habitat, the introduction of invasive weeds, the spread of fugitive dust (blown off ore trucks) that’s laden with toxic heavy metals, and the release of asbestos, which is commonly found in local gravel needed for road construction. NPCA believes the potential harm to Gates of the Arctic and the lifestyle of local residents who depend on the region’s natural resources, as well as the cost to our financially-strapped state, all make the road a bad idea that the state legislature should permanently halt.

For more information and a short video visit www.npca.org/ambler

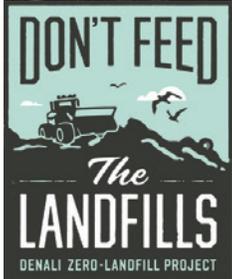
Below: Caribou in Alaska ©Cecoffman | Dreamstime



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Denali Accepts the Zero Landfill Challenge

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Subaru of Indiana Automotive (SIA) is the first automotive assembly plant in America to be designated zero landfill. Through the National Park Zero Landfill Initiative, Subaru

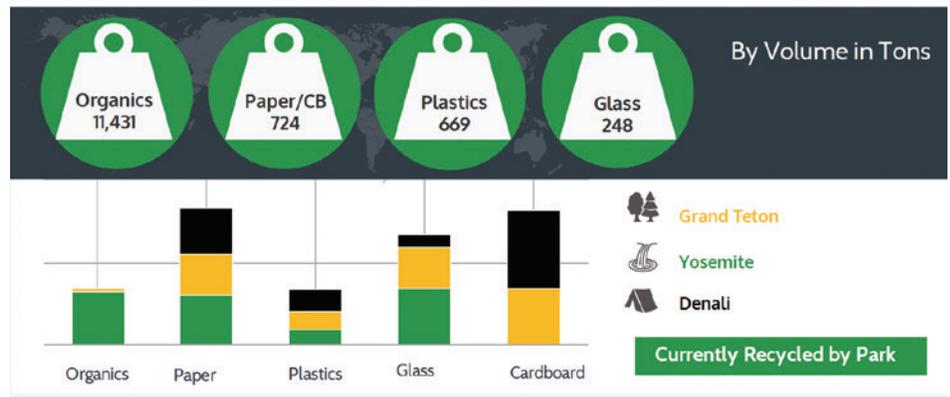
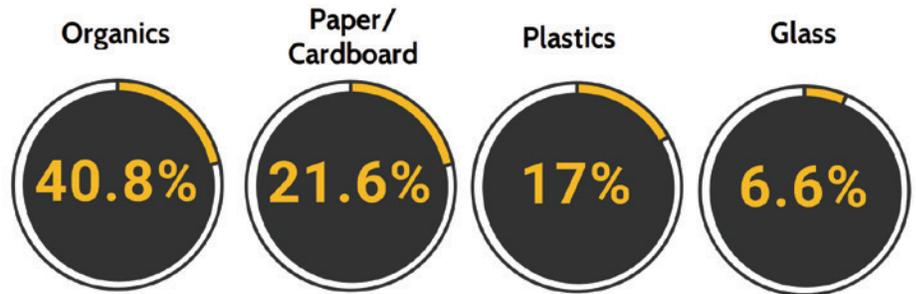
is bringing manufacturing and zero landfill expertise to the Park Service's waste management practices. To help reach this goal, NPCA is bringing national park operations expertise, methodology and on-the-ground resources to the partnership.

At Denali, key partners in our zero landfill initiative include park concessioner Doyon/Aramark Joint Venture, Denali Education Center, local stakeholders, and technical experts in recycling, composting, infrastructure, outreach and education. Denali National Park is remote, there's a limited amount of infrastructure in the state of Alaska for recycling and composting in cold climates presents challenges. Thankfully, the Denali community's enthusiasm for this project is driving an innovative path toward success.

Join us! #DontFeedTheLandfills and learn more at www.subaru.com/environment



Percent of the Total Waste Composition



National Parks Conservation Association has launched Find Your Voice—an initiative to encourage people to be both national park visitors and national park advocates. Through community service events, speaker series and advocacy trainings, NPCA is working to educate, engage and empower people to speak up for America's favorite places so they can thrive well into their next century.

For more info about the initiative and activities near you, please visit FindYourVoice.camp.

Left and Middle: FYV, Gateway National Recreation Area, New York. ©Ed Lefkowitz Right: FYV, El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, CA ©TBC

Protections for Bears and Wolves in Preserves!

Watching brown bears teach their cubs to catch sockeye salmon and dig for clams at Katmai National Park and Preserve or witnessing pack behavior among wolves in Denali are some of the remarkable experiences that draw wildlife lovers to Alaska each year.

Fortunately, stronger rules are now in place to protect the bears, wolves and coyotes living in national preserves from predator control strategies instituted by the Alaska Legislature in 1994. Aiming to boost populations of prey species, such as moose and caribou, by removing predators, the state Board of Game progressively increased bag limits and lengthened hunting seasons, allowing wolves and coyotes to be hunted and trapped in the spring when their pelts are less valuable as furs. The Board also allowed bear baiting and the killing of sows with cubs and hibernating bears in their dens.

As you can see, cartoonist Drew Litton helped us illustrate some of these #UnBearable predator control tactics. Manipulating the natural diversity of predator and prey species in units of the National Park System is simply not okay.

Before pursuing regulations to ban the state's predator control strategies from Park Service-managed lands, the agency



repeatedly asked the Board of Game to exempt national preserves. NPCA documented more than 60 instances since 2001 where NPS' requests were ignored. In late 2015, NPS finalized its regulations package, and new protections went into effect this January.

In June, an amendment to the House of Representatives' Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement Act (HR 2406) by Congressman Don Young that would overturn these long sought-after NPS regulations was being considered for conference with the Senate. NPCA has worked for more than a decade to advocate for the successful adoption of these rules. Now we're in defense mode because protecting these regulations will help ensure that millions of visitors and our children and grandchildren can experience natural and healthy populations of wildlife in our national parks and preserves.

Learn more and take action at www.npca.org/unbearable

Top: Cartoon by Drew Litton **Left:** Wild Alaskan Brown Bears ©Christiannafzger | Dreamstime

Caribou Creek Trail — Almost Finished!

For almost a decade, NPCA's Alaska office has supported improving the trail system on the north side of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. This summer, we're excited to again partner with the National Park Service and the Student Conservation Association (SCA) to finish fixing the Caribou Creek Trail.

This trail leads to a public-use cabin as well as recreation, subsistence and sport opportunities in the national preserve. It's a popular destination for park visitors and local residents. In 2014, NPCA partnered with the Park Service and SCA to repair about 900 feet of the trail that had been damaged by legal, yet poorly managed, off-road vehicle use. Our sincere thanks to the Rasmuson Foundation for providing purchasing power for the Geoblock and gravel we're installing to create a durable and sustainable Caribou Creek Trail.



Above: Working to repair Caribou Creek Trail in 2014 ©Melissa Blair



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An Evening
WITH Ken Burns
Celebrating the
Centennial Anniversary of
the National Park System

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

Thursday, August 4
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm
Bear Tooth Theatrepub
Anchorage, Alaska

Tickets go on sale
July 19 at 10:30 am
www.beartooththeatre.net
Admission is \$20

Join us this summer to celebrate the 100th birthday of the National Park Service with legendary filmmaker Ken Burns. Returning to Anchorage for one night only, Burns will share an hour of clips from his Emmy Award winning documentary film series *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*.

Looking back at the individuals who were inspired and driven to create the National Park Service, we'll celebrate their remarkable legacy. Looking forward to the next 100 years, Ken Burns will remind us that our majestic national parks always have and always will need champions willing to speak up about protecting these wild landscapes and precious resources for future generations to explore and enjoy.

Hosted by Alaska Geographic and National Parks Conservation Association, with special guest, former Alaska governor Tony Knowles

