



The Quiet Times

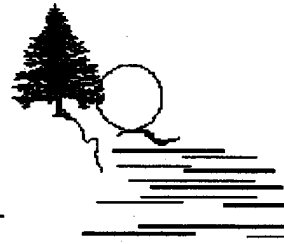
P.O. Box 202592 Anchorage, Alaska 99520
907-566-3524 www.quietrights.org quietrights@yahoo.com

The Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition

During the year 2000 the Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition worked on the following:

- Winter Newsletter
- ANILCA and Your Right to Quiet
~a publication sharing information regarding how ANILCA legislation affects Quiet issues in Alaska.
- Action Alerts regarding quiet issues
- Hosted guest speakers
~at the Coalition's annual meeting we hosted Diedre St. Louis Regional District Ranger for Chugach National Forest regarding the preferred initiative of the Chugach National Forest Management Plan and Mike Travel Denali National Park Ranger
- Participated in the Chugach National Forest Management Plan public process
- Submitted an alternative plan for managing the Chugach National Forest
- Collected data from the First Annual Days of Listening (July 2000/March 2001.)

- Backed litigation supporting the closure banning motorized vehicles in old Denali National Park.
- Attended hearings and wrote letters concerning the first phase of the DOT study regarding snowmachines on highway right-of-ways.
- Actively supported BLM's continued administration of Campbell Tract
- Donated to support the ban on personal watercraft in Kachemak Bay
- Donated to support the Peace and Quiet Initiative in Juneau.



Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition Board Members

Jim Adams, Michael Allwright,
Barbara Parker, Cliff Eames,
Dan Elliott, Elizabeth Hatton,
Trisha Herminghaus,
Heather Ireland,
Tamea Isham, Tom Meacham,
Susan Olsen, Lenore Morford
Bob Randall

Believe It or Not!

OK. Here's a question for you. Should, or shouldn't, the State of Alaska manage commercial helicopter skiing on state-owned public lands, or the transportation by small plane of up to 200 tourists per summer day to a glacial lake for a ride in large motorized canoes? (The latter is occurring at Glacier Point near Haines.) The answer ought to be "Yes, of course it should," but in fact Alaska State Department of Natural Resources ("DNR") does not require a permit--and therefore effectively does not manage--these commercial tourism/recreation activities on general state land, as opposed to parks, refuges, etc. This is in spite of the significant effect of these noisy overflights on local residents, other recreationists, and wildlife (such as mountain goats). The rationale for the absence of a permit requirement is that the activities are day-use only, not overnight, and that no facilities are constructed. Unfortunately, day use activities, as these examples amply demonstrate, can have adverse effects at least as significant as activities requiring an overnight stay or facilities (DNR said there is no limit to the level of helicopter landings on state land).

Both of these activities were taking place near Haines although of course heli-skiing, flightseeing, etc. are taking place in many other Alaskan locations as well. This creates an exceptionally noisy air space above both people and wildlife--for not just one season, but two.

Unlike the typical tourist town, where many people are pleased to receive the

economic benefits of summer tourism but are also happy to see things quiet down in the winter, for many Haines residents (and wildlife) there seemed to be almost no relief from the irritating noise of large numbers of small planes and helicopters.

Fortunately, as a result of the substantial controversy that was generated by his trips, the Glacier Point operator apparently intends to transport his clients by boat rather than air this coming season. However, the potential is still there, in a number of Alaskan communities, for both summer flightseeing and winter heli-skiing.

Several months ago, based on the problems at Glacier Point, a lawsuit was filed seeking to force DNR to require a permit for all significant commercial tourism activities on state land, including day use. DNR would be required to begin to manage them including obtaining a reasonable financial return for the commercial use of public land. The increase in heli-skiing at Haines and elsewhere is just one more reason why this reform is urgently needed, and why this lawsuit is so timely.

Cliff Eames

If you are no longer interested in receiving the Alaska Quiet Rights Newsletter please complete the enclosed membership application and mark the box indicating you want us to take you off our mailing list.

Thanks.

Chugach National Forest Plan Revision

The Jury's Still Out

Stiiiiiiii waiting... Although the Chugach National Forest supervisor might have made his final plan revision decisions by now, those decisions have to be reviewed at the regional level in Juneau, and then in D.C. Since we are rapidly learning that the Bush administration favors noise and habitat destruction over natural quiet, natural sounds, and resource protection, it's not at all clear what will emerge from the Beltway. Consequently, it's premature to offer any conclusive judgments on the process until we see the final management plan and environmental impact statement, which aren't expected until early fall.

What we think we know at this stage is that we (AQRC and many other organizations and individuals) have had a very significant impact on the plan. Restoring natural quiet, and the opportunity to hear and enjoy natural sounds, to the Forest have become issues that not only cannot be ignored--they are among the most important issues addressed by the plan. The Forest, at least in places, WILL be quieter, and there WILL be a number of new areas where motorized vehicles will not be allowed for all or a portion of the winter season, Winter has been stolen from us--but we're getting at least some of it back.

We also think we know that we will be dealt a major disappointment when it comes to new quiet recreation opportunities in the largest, most

spectacular, wildest, and most popular areas. But if this turns out to be the case, we will not let the Forest Service off easily, and one way or another we will achieve balanced recreation management on the Forest. Fairness, and environmental protection, will prevail in the long term.

Thanks to everyone for their eloquent comments in support of a quiet, peaceful, beautiful, and wildlife rich national forest.

Cliff Eames

Enforcement

The Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition has started planning for an enforcement campaign aimed at snowmobiles, ORVs and jetskis. We will be researching the existing regulations and will publicize what we find through various newsletters and on our web site. While the long range effort is to achieve official enforcement by the responsible local, state or federal entity, our immediate effort is to develop a citizen complaint form to be used by the public to report to the respective agencies.

If you would like to nominate a site that is in need of enforcement and could benefit from more involved local reporting, please contact me.

If you would like to volunteer to help with this campaign, in developing the website, or on other AQRC activities, contact Lenore at kmorford@alaska.net.

Lenore Morford

Jetskis Banned in Kachemak Bay

On May 3, 2001, new regulations by the Department of Fish & Game and the Department of Natural Resources will prohibit the use of jetskis in Kachemak Bay and Fox River Flats Critical Habitat Areas and Kachemak Bay State Park. The ban was strongly supported by locals and residents around the state.

"The Kachemak Bay Critical Habitat Area is a highly productive marine ecosystem supporting a rich population of whales, seals, otters and other small mammals, shorebirds, ducks and waterfowl enjoyed by a broad range of recreational users," said Frank Rue, Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Fish & Game. "Restrictions minimizing harmful disturbances in this critical habitat area are part of responsible management, and consistent with the statutory mandate." The statutory purpose of a designated critical habitat is "to protect and preserve habitat areas especially crucial to the perpetuation of fish and wildlife, and to restrict all other uses."

The Department of Natural Resources conducted an extensive public process. Petitions both supporting and opposing the regulations were received along with comments from 1,850 individuals and organizations. Approximately 70% of the public testimony received supported a total ban on jetski use within Kachemak Bay. In addition, the Homer City Council passed a resolution requesting that the State of Alaska consider prohibition or restriction on the use of jetskis in Kachemak Bay.

Conventional motorized vessels in Kachemak Bay are generally used as a means of transportation to fish, hunt, or view wildlife while jetskis, marketed and used as "thrill craft", have use patterns that are more disruptive to wildlife and people. These include high noise levels, high speeds, erratic movements, activity in shallow water, and the tendency to be operated in groups. These fundamental differences make jetskis incompatible with the traditional uses, the wildlife, and the habitat of Kachemak Bay.

The jetski ban in Kachemak Bay is a victory for the local values, wildlife, and habitat that make Kachemak Bay so special. This "Jetski-Free Zone" is worthy of celebration, but vigilance is necessary since the Legislature could try to overturn the ban. "We must not be complacent about this victory for Kachemak Bay," said Kachemak Bay Coalition President, Roberta Highland. "Jetskiers and the personal watercraft industry have vowed to overturn the ban."

To find out what Alaska's jetskiers are saying about the Kachemak Bay jetski ban, visit the Personal Watercraft Club of Alaska's website at www.pwcalaska.org and go to their Legislative News page.

Now we all need is to thank our public officials and show them our support! The Kachemak Bay jetski ban is a victory for the values, wildlife, and habitat that make Kachemak Bay special.

It is important to let our public officials know just how much support there is for this new regulation. Please send letters of thank you and support to:

Governor Tony Knowles
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001
Phone: 907-465-3500
Office_of_the_governor@gov.state.ak.us

Commissioner Frank Rue
Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game
P.O. Box 25526
Juneau, AK 99802-5526
Phone: 907-465-6141
Frank_rue@dnr.state.ak.us

Director Jim Stratton
AK Div. of Parks and Outdoor Rec.
550 W. 7th Avenue Suite 1380
Anch., AK 99501-3561
Jim_Stratton@dnr.state.ak.us

Send copies to your legislators:
Legislator's Name
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol (MS 3100)
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Nina Faust

Fairbanks Snowmachine Initiative

An attempt is brewing in the north to ban snowmachines from the main residential and business districts of Fairbanks. As currently drafted the closed area is bounded on the North by the ridge dividing Fairbanks bowl from Goldstream Valley, on the East by the Steese Expressway and Fort Wainwright, on the South by the Mitchell Expressway, and on the West by University Avenue, Chena River, Chena Small Tracts, Chena Pump, Parks Hwy, and Sheep Creek Rd. Exceptions are included for the Chena River, private property, gov't agencies and emergency. Every attempt has been made to craft a reasonable proposal to go before the conservative Fairbanks voters. The next step is to collect signatures from 2700 Fairbanks voters by mid-August so the initiative can appear on the October 2 ballot. To help with this effort contact Stan Justice at 479-5017 or via email ffsrj@uaf.edu. Stan Justice

3rd Annual AQRC Cacophony Awards!

SOUND BARRIER AWARD

To Governor Tony Knowles, Director Jim Stratton, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation and Commissioner Frank Rue, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, for their efforts to ban the "whine" of jet skis from Kachemak Bay FOREVER.

PERFECT PITCH AWARD

To Juneau Peace and Quiet Coalition which tried to assert the rights of Juneau citizens to have quiet in their homes against the all-encompassing canopy of noise created by industrial tourism.

VROOM VROOM AWARD

To the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA) which jumped into the Denali litigation to protect their members' financial interests. They claim that if the ban stands, some potential buyers will decide not to purchase at all while current owners won't replace their machines because, having less use, the snowmachines will last longer.

TIN EAR AWARD

To the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport managers and supporters who tout growth on-site, but fail to take responsibility for the ever-expanding wave of air noise off-site.

STONE DEAF (or hear no evil) AWARD

To the Fairbanks Office of the State Department of Transportation & Public Facilities for failing to hear the screams of the skiers, snowshoers and pedestrians as the snowmachines bear down on them on Fairbanks bike paths.

NATURAL QUIET AWARD

To Steve Martin, Superintendent, Denali National Park and Preserve, for taking the heat, staying the course and finally getting regulations enacted, to permanently ban snowmachine access to "old Denali".

Susan Olsen

Day of Listening Winter 2001

The Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition asked members and supporters to listen to their surroundings for at least one hour on March 18, 2001. People recorded both natural and motorized sounds heard at home or at a favorite place on public lands. This is a summary of the results received from listeners.

Thirty-eight people responded to the survey: 4 from Southeast, 8 from the Kenai peninsula, 10 from Anchorage-Eagle River area – including Chugach State Park, 12 from locations through out the Mat-Su Valley, and 4 from other locations in Alaska. The majority of participants reported hearing natural sounds, primarily birds, wind, and water.

Unfortunately, almost constant machine noise (either cars, snow machines, or both) was heard in:

- Downtown Anchorage
- Turnagain Pass
- Ptarmigan Valley Trail
- Talkeetna
- Bird Point on the Seward Hwy
- Trails near Haines
- Peter's Creek

Some participants in the Day of Listening were surprised by the quiet, or absence of man-made noise. People commented that the quiet was "magical" and "peaceful". In some locations the quiet was "noticeable" because it is uncommon.



Quiet places included:

- Arctic to Indian Trail
- Spencer Loop
- Snow River
- Chilkat State Park
- Kachemak Bay State Park
- North of Palmer
- X & Y Lakes
- Questions Lakes

There was some speculation about the surprising silence. A few respondents noted the unusual warm weather this year caused open rivers that prohibit snow machine traffic. Also, it was mentioned that the windy day may have limited air traffic. The wind also carried some noise away making it quiet.

One participant noted that increased development in the area will bring increased snow machine use. This listener hopes that the concerns will be addressed before things get worse. Another individual contrasted recreational snow machine use and practical uses such as transportation and shipping supplies on an established trail. This listener would like to see more regulations for recreational use including reasonable speed maintenance established trails use only.

Many participants commented that they appreciated the opportunity to consciously listen to their environment. There is always plenty of work to be done to preserve natural quiet. If you would like to become more involved, please contact AQRC.

Heather Ireland

*t's the great, big, broad land way up yonder,
It's the forests where silence has lease;
It's the beauty that thrills me with wonder,
It's the stillness that fills me with peace."
Robert Service*

Let's keep it that way!

Please fill out this **membership form** and mail with your check to:

AQRC, P.O. Box 202592, Anchorage, AK 99520
Please make checks payable to Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition.

I want to be a member of AQRC_____

I have enclosed:

Student/Senior \$15___ Annual dues \$20___ Family Membership \$35___
Quiet Benefactor \$100___ Silent Friend \$250___ Naturally Quiet Patron \$500___
Other \$___

Membership and donations are tax-deductible.

Please, Please, PLEASE print clearly! (Many thanks!)

Name_____ Home Phone_____

Address_____ Work Phone_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

email_____ Fax _____

I want to help, please contact me. ___I am interested in being on the board._____

Send me alerts._____

I am too busy to read newsletters, please remove me from your mailing list._____

Questions? Suggestions? Ideas? Call AQRC at 907-566-3524