

EVENTS/SPEECHES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR-ALASKA
2006-2007

Bureau of Land Management

2006

- February 14-15, Resource Advisory Council Meeting in Fairbanks.
- March 25, East Alaska Resource Management Plan Final EIS release.
- Late April, Draft EIS for Kobuk/Seward Resource Management Plan.
- May, Final EIS for Ring of Fire Resource Management Plan release.
- May 10-11, Resource Advisory Council meeting in Juneau.
- June 15, East Alaska ROD. Nominations under Mineral Leasing Act – 486,000 acres.
- July, Record of Decision for Ring-of-Fire, Nominations under Mineral Leasing Act – 1,570,000 acres.
- July, Comment Period Ends on Draft Kobuk/Seward Resource Management Plan.
- August 2-4, Resource Advisory Council Field Trip to South NPR-A.
- September 27, NPR-A Oil & Gas Lease, NE and NW lands above Teshekpuk.
- September 29, Draft EIS for Bay Resource Management Plan.
- October 26-27, Resource Advisory Council meeting in Anchorage.
- December, Final EIS for Kobuk/Seward Resource Management Plan.
- December 28, Comment Period Ends on Bay Resource Management Plan.

2007

- January, Record of Decision on Kobuk/Seward Peninsula, Nominations under the Mineral Leasing Act – 4,977,000 acres.
- June 22, Final EIS for Bay Resource Management Plan release.
- September, Record of Decision for Bay Resource Management Plan.

2009

- September, South NPR-A Integrated Activity Plan/EIS ROD - First Lease Sale - 2010/South NPR-A.

2012

- Area wide NPR-A Lease Sale.

Fish and Wildlife Service

2006

- Leadership changes.
- February, Alaska Peninsula/Becharof NWR CCP ROD ready.
- April, Kodiak NWR Final CCP completed.
- April 3 and 4, public scoping meetings for the Doyon/Yukon Flats Proposed Land Exchange EIS will be held in Fairbanks and Anchorage, respectively.
- May or June, Togiak NWR Draft CCP available for public review.
- September, Tetlin NWR Draft CCP available for public review.
- September, Selawik CCP Scoping begins.
- September, Innoko CCP Scoping begins.
- October, Togiak NWR Draft CCP public comment completed.
- October or November, Kanuti NWR Draft CCP available for public review.
- December, Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Draft CCP available for public review.

2007

- January, Kenai NWR Draft CCP available for public review.
- February, Izembek NWR Draft CCP public comment period completed.
- April, Tetlin NWR CCP Final ready.
- April, Kenai NWR Draft CCP public comment period completed.

Minerals Management Service

2006

- February (or March), MMS and Native Village of Kaktovik MOA signing ceremony.
- February 10, Draft OCS 2007 – 2112 Program
 - Draft program published in the FR beginning 60-day comment period.
 - Summer 2006 – Release of the Proposed 5-Year Program and DEIS.
- May, Cook Inlet Sale 199 is scheduled to be held.
- March, Beaufort Sea - Sale 202
 - EA/Late Summer 2006
 - Proposed Notice of Sale/Fall 2006

2007

- November, Chuchi Sea - Sale 193
 - Pending final decision made within the 2007-12 “5 Year Plan”
 - Summer 2006 – DEIS

National Park Service

2006

- February 18, end of public comment period on proposed update to Draft Management Policies.
- March, Denali South Side Implementation Plan. The plan calls for construction of a visitor center, trails, and campground near mile 134 on the Parks Highway. The visitor center would be constructed on Curry Ridge. Total cost is estimated to be between \$25 and \$30 million. The project is supported by the tourist and travel industry.
- April, NPS Access Guide, released for public review and comment.
- May, Denali National Park, new Eielson Visitor Center, construction begins.
- May, Northwest Parks, Kotzebue Visitor Center, pilings will be placed. Construction of the center will begin in 2007. Estimate cost \$8 to \$9 million.

Office of the Secretary--Alaska

2006

- Leadership changes.
- March 9-12, Energy Council Federal Energy and Environmental Matters Conference in Washington, D.C. Drue Pearce is scheduled to speak.
- April 26, Alaska Federal Executive Association Employee of the Year Awards Luncheon to be held at the Anchorage Hilton Hotel.
- June 22-26, Energy Council State and Provincial Trends in Energy and the Environment Conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia.
- September 21-26, Energy Council Annual Meeting at The Peabody Little Rock in Little Rock, Arkansas.

All Bureaus

2006

- May 4, FEMA COOP Tabletop Exercise to be held in Anchorage.

2007

- International Polar Year.

Native

2006

- February 23, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's Convention in Reno, Nevada. The Afognak and partnership will be commemorated on the opening evening with a photo op.
- August, Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) will hold its annual conference in Anchorage.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR-ALASKA
2005-2006

- **BLM – Alaska Land Conveyance Update:** Decisions to approve 203, 520.73 acres of ANCSA selections for conveyance have been issued and sent to the Federal Register this fiscal year. This acreage represents 30 separate actions involving the surface and subsurface estates to ANCSA villages and regions.
- **BLM - Iditarod National Historic Trail Partnership Efforts:** The BLM Anchorage Field Office, Chugach National Forest, and nonprofit Iditarod National Historic Trail (NHT), Inc., cooperatively produced and will soon install interpretive panels in the rural communities of Knik, McGrath, Galena, Unalakleet and Nome. The project is a partnership with other federal, state and local agencies and groups to update the Interpretive Plan for the trail. BLM and Iditarod NHT, Inc., are also pursuing a partnership with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources to dedicate legal public access to currently unreserved sections of the trail that cross state lands. While BLM is lead administrator for the Iditarod, the trail system crosses other jurisdictions and is managed under a cooperative management plan with those entities.
- **BLM -- North Slope Science Initiative (NSSI) Science Technical Group:** In February, Secretary Norton appointed the members of the NSSI Science Technical Group. This group will advise the NSSI Oversight Group. The NSSI was established to provide advice and recommendations regarding priority needs for management decisions across the North Slope of Alaska. These priority needs may include recommendations on inventory, monitoring and research activities that lead to informed land management decisions. NSSI is currently discussing hosting a potential workshop in Spring of 2006 with the Science Technical Group to introduce NSSI and identify priority issues.
- **BLM – Gas Storage Agreement Executed:** On November 4, 2005, BLM-Alaska executed the Kenai Gas Storage Agreement No. 3 with Union Oil Company of California (Unocal). The gas storage operations will occur on the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge in the Swanson River Field, a producing oil and gas field since the late 50s. The terms of the agreement were developed in coordination with the Kenai Refuge Manager and are such that the gas storage operations will not require any additional surface disturbance and will not prolong the life of the field. The terms of Kenai Gas Storage Agreement No. 1, also in the Swanson River Field, were also amended to align with Agreement No. 3. These gas storage operations will allow Unocal to better meet seasonal swings in gas demand and lessen the chances that Southcentral Alaska will experience natural gas.

- **BLM – Recordable Disclaimers of Interest:** BLM-Alaska has established the Public Access and Assertion Defense Unit (PAAD). The PAAD, along with the Alaska Departments of Fish and Game, and Natural Resources are primarily responsible for submission of RDI applications. Due to the addition of new State employees who were not involved in the development of the RDI process agreement, BLM took the opportunity to meet with the State to discuss the RDI Process, along with the following topics: Application Status, State’s Proposed Applications, Interconnecting Sloughs, Cost Recovery, and the Assistance Agreement. Significant progress is being made in the RDI arena.
 - **Completed Applications**
 1. *Black River*. Decision (Assistant Secretary) – Oct. 23, 2003. RDI – Oct. 24, 2003.
 2. *Klutina River & Lake*. Decision (State Director) – Sept. 3, 2004. RDI – Nov. 9, 2004.
 3. *Kvichak River & Iliamna Lake*. Decision (State Director) – Sept. 17, 2004. RDI – Nov. 9, 2004.
 4. *Porcupine River*. Decision (Deputy Assistant Secretary) – May 6, 2005. RDI – May 9, 2005.
 5. *Kasilof River*. Decision (State Director) – June 21, 2005. RDI – Aug. 15, 2005.
 6. *Tazlina River & Lake*. Decision (State Director) – June 28, 2005. RDI – Aug. 15, 2005.
 7. *Wood River & Lakes System*. Decision (State Director) – Aug. 9, 2005. RDI – Sept. 26, 2005.
 8. *Salcha River*. Decision (State Director) – Sept. 30, 2005. RDI – Nov. 15, 2005.
 9. *Chilkoot River & Lake*. Decision (State Director) – Dec. 16, 2005. RDI – Feb. 1, 2006.

- **BLM – Alaska Fire Season: Third Largest Fire Season:** The 2005 Alaska Fire Season was the third largest fire season on record for acres burned since reports were first kept in the 1950s. The top five Alaska fire seasons are as follows:

Standing	Year	Acres Burned
1	2004	6.59 million
2	1957	5.06 million
3	2005	4,345,571 (so far)
4	1969	4.01 million
5	1990	3.18 million

During the year, the Alaska Interagency Coordination Center reported 600 fires statewide.

- **BLM – First Annual Funding Agreement Nearing Completion:** The BLM-Alaska, Alaska Fire Service (AFS) has been working closely with the representatives of the Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (CATG) located in Fort Yukon, Alaska, to implement an Annual Funding Agreement (AFA). The agreement will provide preseason fireline refresher training and pack testing for emergency firefighters in many of the villages served by CATG. This will be the first AFA in the bureau. Formal discussions began in May 2005 and have progressed in an environment of cooperation. The outcome of developing the AFA will be beneficial to AFS and the member tribes of CATG living in the Yukon Flats.
- **FWS – Renewal of the Annual Funding Agreement (AFA) Between the FWS and The Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (CATG):** In 2004 the Secretary signed the first AFA between the FWS and CATG. The project was a success and the FWS has decided to renew the AFA. The successor AFA is for the same dollar amount as 2004, \$59,000.
- **FWS – Afognak Land Purchase Recognized:** On February 23, the Afognak and partnership will be commemorated on the opening evening of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation’s Convention in Reno, NV with a photo op. Secretary Norton was invited by the Elk Foundation to attend. She is unable to go and will be represented by JO Ratliff from the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management’s office. Afognak is also home to the largest elk population in Alaska -- about 900 animals that grew from a small herd introduced in 1929. In recent years, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation has teamed with state and federal wildlife agencies and the AJV to study elk on the island. In 2000, the Elk Foundation partnered with American Land Conservancy and the Kodiak Brown Bear Trust to undertake the conservation project in Perenosa Bay. Three conservation organizations helped assemble the federal and private grants to make the purchase possible. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service awarded \$2 million in federal coastal wetland grants to the project.
- **FWS -- Polar bear:** A petition to list the polar bear as threatened under the Endangered Species Act presents substantial scientific and commercial information indicating that listing the polar bear may be warranted. As a result, the Fish and Wildlife Service is initiating a status review of the polar bear to determine if the species should be proposed for listing, and opening a 60-day public comment period to allow all interested parties an opportunity to provide information on the status of the polar bear throughout its range.
- **FWS -- Tribal Grants:** The application period for submitting applications for the Tribal Wildlife and Tribal Landowner Incentive grant programs closed January 31. These two grant programs are available to Federal recognized tribes who wish to carry out projects benefiting fish and wildlife resources important to the tribes. Approximately \$8.2 million is available to tribes

nationwide, and the funding is allocated competitively. The Alaska Region has received 20 proposals requesting a total of \$4.264 million in tribal grants, with commitments for a total of \$6.58 million in matching funding from partners. Last year Alaska tribes received \$763,000 in tribal grants. Projects funded in previous years include a fish passage restoration project on Moose Creek (Chickaloon Village Traditional Council), coordination of Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group activities (Native Village of Noatak), and development of a tribal management plan for protecting against invasive species (Pribilof Aleut Community of St. George). Tribal grants are an effective tool for enhancing tribal capacity and fostering tribal collaboration in fish and wildlife management.

- **FWS -- Rat eradication:** Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge continues to define the extent of rodent (Norway rat) infestations on islands within the refuge. Using volunteers, they are initiating an island assessment in the Aleutians, where a crew can land and spend minimal time on an island determining if rats are present. Once the inventory is completed decisions can be made as to how to conduct island restorations. The restorations will include eradication of rats (can includes a variety of means, such as bait stations, trapping, rodenticide application) and introductions of flora and fauna that have been eliminated by rats. This can be natural re-establishment (such as black oystercatchers, gulls) or use of scientific methods such as introductions (ptarmigan) or luring techniques using voice calls and decoys (puffins, murre). Other rodent studies include the effectiveness of rodenticide by Norway rats in the Aleutian Island area. The refuge will continue to work with communities to maintain rat free islands through their prevention program such as those on St. Paul and St. George, and to respond to potential rat introductions due to ship grounding or wrecks.
- **FWS -- Doyon Proposed Land Exchange:** Scoping meetings to kick off the EIS process will be held from late February through the end of March, 2006. The locations range from Arctic Village to Anchorage. Public hearings to gather input on the DEIS will take place in the spring of 2007.
- **FWS -- State of Alaska Proposal for Land Exchange to Enable Development of King Cove-Cold Bay Road:** The State of Alaska has proposed a land exchange to allow road construction through Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. The State would trade 4402 acre Kinzarof Lagoon, immediately south of the proposed road, in exchange for 206 acres of refuge lands to build a 14.3 mile long road through Izembek NWR. 8.9 miles of the road would traverse through designated Wilderness in Izembek NWR. The proposed road would complete the road link between King Cove and Cold Bay. FWS officials are evaluating the proposal.

- FWS - Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center:** In FY2005, the FWS received remaining federal funds for an \$8 million Kodiak Refuge Visitor Center to be built in downtown Kodiak near the ferry terminal where the Service purchased a nearly half-acre site for \$715,000. It is planned that the new Kodiak Visitor Center will have its grand opening on July 4, 2007. Since 1980, Kodiak Refuge staff have operated from a small, out-of-the-way headquarters/visitor contact station on Coast Guard property 5 miles from town. The new Visitor Center will be accessible to residents and tourists alike. The current headquarters will be remodeled to add offices for new staff since 1980. FWS is working with Senator Stevens on the proposed facilities' and necessary budget.
- FWS - Togiak National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Contact Station:** In FY2005, the FWS received \$300,000 for planning and design of a new Togiak Refuge Visitor Contact Station to be located adjacent to the Dillingham Airport like a similar facility near the King Salmon Airport. Whereas the King Salmon Visitor Contact Station is jointly operated by Alaska Peninsula Refuge and Katmai National Park, the Dillingham facility will be shared by the Togiak Refuge and Wood-Tikchik State Park. A site for the new facility was recently selected adjacent to the PenAir Terminal, ensuring ease of access to all airport visitors.
- FWS - Kenai National Wildlife Refuge Environmental Education Center:** On October 1, 2005, Kenai Refuge dedicated its new Environmental Education Center in Soldotna adjacent to the Refuge Headquarters. After three years construction by Refuge staff, the rustic log building will be the nucleus of the Refuge's environmental education program joining its residential Outdoor Education Center on Swan Lake Road in providing diverse environmental education opportunities for 3,000 Kenai Peninsula students annually. Kenai is one of two Alaska national wildlife refuges (Tetlin the other) where environmental education is a legal purpose under ANILCA. The Kenai Refuge Environmental Education Team of Refuge staff and local teachers have developed seven curricula aligned with Kenai Peninsula Borough School District standards. In addition to this building, the Refuge is designing a \$2.5 million conversion from its 1970s septic system that has failed repeatedly to hook it up to Soldotna sewer and water. This funding from FY2005-2006, is a prelude to an estimated \$8 million appropriation in the near future for a new Kenai Refuge Visitor Center adjacent to the current inadequate HQ/Visitor Center. As with Kodiak, if Kenai gets funding for a new Visitor Center, the original building will be remodeled to house existing staff now scattered in several buildings.
- FWS/NPS - Cooper Lake Hydropower Project Re-licensing Settlement Agreement:** A landmark settlement agreement for re-licensing of an existing hydropower plant at Cooper Lake, Alaska, was signed the end of August 2005. Chugach Electric Association, Inc., (Chugach) began the process of re-

licensing the project in early 2002. The existing federal license for the project expires at the end of April 2007. The project includes a 19 MW power plant, dam and 2,900-acre reservoir, and 96 miles of power lines.

The proposed settlement agreement, approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, will result in 10-15% increase in power and a 50-year license for Chugach, increased salmon and trout habitat in Cooper Creek, improved winter recreational access to the area, funding for the Kenaitze Indian Tribe for cultural resources and education, reduced visual impacts from the project, and a right-of-way management plan for the power line.

The settlement agreement is the result of several months work by Chugach and the following organizations, whose representatives signed the agreement:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
 - U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
 - U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service
 - U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service
 - Kenaitze Indian Tribe
 - Alaska Department of Fish and Game
 - Alaska Department of Natural Resources
 - The Fish for Cooper Creek Coalition
 - Alaska Flyfishers Association
 - Alaska Center for the Environment
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- **FWS - Southwest Alaska Sea Otters Listed as “Threatened” Under Endangered Species Act:** The Fish and Wildlife Service listed the southwest Alaska Distinct Population Segment of the northern sea otter (*Enhydra lutris kenyoni*) as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. A Proposed Rule regarding the listing was published August 3, 2005 in the Federal Register.

 - **FWS/USGS Working with USDA and State of Alaska on Avian Flu Early Warning Program:** DOI is working closely with the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game to design an avian influenza "early warning program" to sample wild migratory birds for the virus. Over the past four months, a group of nearly 30 scientists, managers, and public health officials have assembled a plan to expand avian disease surveillance efforts in time for the return of migratory birds to Alaska in 2006.

There are no known cases of Avian Influenza in the United States or North America. Representatives of the Center for Disease Control and other

participants emphasized the need for temperance in conveying potential risks to the public. It was recommended that information bulletins make clear what is known about Avian Influenza.

- **MMS – MOA Signing:** MMS Alaska will be signing an MOA with the Native Village of Kaktovik in the next few weeks. The MOA will guide MMS OCS activities in the Beaufort Sea and the Village. The MOA signing is the culmination of a desire by the Department to work together with local residents in the vicinity of lease sales. It is the cornerstone of the Secretary's 4'Cs initiative. It is the goal of this MOA to maintain effective communications, consultation, and coordination to ensure that the consultation process on OCS matters which may potentially affect the Native Village of Kaktovik is conducted in a culturally sensitive manner respectful of tribal sovereignty.
- **MMS – Alaska Staff Is Conducting Chukchi Sea Scoping Meetings:** MMS Alaska Region staff will meet with the Native Village of Point Hope, the general public, Point Lay, Wainwright, and Barrow to discuss the proposed Chukchi Sea Sale 193 and upcoming seismic activity in the Chukchi Sea that may occur in summer 2006.
- **NPS – 9th Circuit Court Ruling Requires “Pilgrim Family” To Seek Access Permit:** The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals rejected the Pilgrim family's efforts to drive a bulldozer to an inholding located inside the Wrangell-St Elias National Park without going through a permit process and environmental review. Robert Hale, known as Papa Pilgrim, used an old mining road to access his property inside the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. Hale drove a bulldozer over the old road to bring supplies to his property after a cabin had burned down without a permit.

Represented by the non-profit Pacific Legal Foundation, Hale sued the NPS over its permit requirements, but lost in the U.S. District Court and 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. In March, 2004, the 9th Circuit agreed to reconsider its initial terse dismissal. The State of Alaska filed a brief on the Hales' side, while several environmental groups joined the Park Service. Two years later, after weighing full briefs and hearing oral arguments, a three-judge panel again rejected the lawsuit last week, reaching conclusions similar to District Judge Ralph Beistline's in 2003.

- **NPS – Glacier Bay National Park Cruise Ship Increase:** On January 19, the NPS published its proposed decision in the *Federal Register* which would allow a 10 percent increase in the number of cruise ships in Glacier Bay National Park in the summer of 2007.

The number of seasonal cruise ship entries into Glacier Bay is controlled by regulations found at 36 CFR 13.65(b)(2)(v) and the Vessel Quota and

Operating Requirements Environmental Impact Statement Record of Decision dated November 21, 2003. Those regulations require the superintendent to determine, with the Director's approval, the number of cruise ship entries for the following season based upon available science and other information and applicable authorities. The superintendent announced her determination in October; public comment on the decision document and proposed action will be taken through February 21, 2006.

Under the newly published proposal, the quota for the 92-day summer season (June-August) would increase from 139 to 153 cruise ships. The number of ships will remain at 139 for the summer of 2006 -- the same level which has been in place since 1997. The daily maximum of two ships per day remains in effect for 2006 and 2007.

- **NPS – Denali Backcountry Plan:** In January, the NPS published a *Federal Register* Notice announcing availability of the Final Backcountry Management Plan, General Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement for Denali National Park and Preserve. The document describes and analyzes the environmental impacts of a preferred alternative and three action alternatives for managing the Park and Preserve's backcountry. A no action alternative also is evaluated.
- **NPS -- Glacier Bay NP - Falls Creek/Chilkoot Trail Exchange--
Congressional Notice:** In February, the NPS notified the House and Senate Appropriations Committees that they are doing the Falls Creek/Chilkoot Trail exchange. In order to meet the needs of Gustavus Electric Co., the NPS and State of AK-DNR are working hard to get the exchange completed by April 1, 2006. Dick Levitt of Gustavus Electric asks that it be done by then so that he can cut trees in the Falls Creek area in April, before the marbled murrelets begin nesting in the trees.
- **NPS – Denali National Park Dedicates New Visitor Facilities:** On August 18, the NPS and its partners, the Alaska Railroad Corporation, Alaska Natural History Association and Doyon/ARAMARK Joint Venture, hosted a special celebration of the new Visitor Facilities at the entrance of the park. The new facilities include the Denali Visitor Center, Morino Grill, Denali Bookstore, upgrades to the Alaska Railroad Depot, and the Murie Science and Learning Center.
- **NPS – Mt. McKinley Record Breaking Climbing Season:** A record-breaking 1,339 mountaineers from 37 countries came to Denali National Park and Preserve last spring to attempt climbs of Mt. McKinley, North America's highest peak. Favorable weather and climbing conditions allowed a record 774 climbers to reach its 20,320-foot summit during the mid-April to mid-July climbing season, for a higher than average summit success rate of 58%. The previous record had been set in 2001, when 1,305 climbers attempted

the peak, 772 of whom reached the summit. The average summit success rate is 52%, which is calculated since 1903, the year of the first attempt on Mt. McKinley.

- **NPS - Lake Camp Road Completed:** Funded by Congress through the Public Lands Discretionary Road Program in 2004, the Lake Camp Road project was intended to make road improvements from King Salmon to the Naknek Lake/Katmai National Park boundary. The project is virtually complete except for minor punch list inspection items. The road improvements enhance passenger safety, providing residents and visitors to the Katmai National Park improved access to the Park. Positive economic impacts including 15 local-hire jobs, 8 locally-owned small businesses directly utilized, 104,000 total yards of gravel purchased from local and regional Native corporations, and \$3 million in economic activity contributed to local economy throughout the entire design and construction process.
- **OEPC – Revised DOI Disaster Response Plan for Alaska Completed:**
On November 7, the Alaska Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) obtained the final DOI Bureau Regional Directors' signatures on the revised DOI Disaster Response Plan for Alaska. This plan is the keystone of the Alaska-based DOI disaster response preparedness and response program. The program focuses on immediate response activities for earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, and terrorism incidents affecting Alaska to help minimize loss of life and property for the approximately 2,900 DOI employees located in 30 locations in the state.
- **USGS – Mount Augustine and Cleveland:** Both Volcanoes are currently at level Orange. The Alaska Volcano Observatory (AVO) has reported, on an almost continuous basis, eruptions and seismicity activity on Mount Augustine and more recently Cleveland. Low-level ash plumes and occasional pyroclastic flows on the volcanoes are continuing. Further explosive activity producing ash clouds to altitudes over 25,000 feet may still occur with little or no warning. However, AVO has an excellent track record on predicting eruptions. AVO is monitoring the situation closely and the observatory is staffed 24/7.

Miscellaneous Notes:

FWS

Pribilof Islands Collaborative meeting, February 21-22, Alaska Maritime NWR.

Fairbanks Refuges Ice Sculpture and Family Fun Day, March 16: Tour the Kid's Park during Family Fun Day and meet the Blue Goose and Refuge staff while taking in the whimsical and dramatic Refuges Ice Sculpture.

Earth Day, Apr 22, King Salmon VC and Alaska Maritime NWR:

The King Salmon Visitor Center will provide information and displays on recycling, water & nutrient cycles, and a live bird presentation. Alaska Maritime NWR staff are planning a day of hands-on activities, guided walks, learning opportunities, and displays by local groups dedicated to celebrating Earth Day.

Birding Festival, May 4-7, Alaska Maritime NWR: 14th Annual Kachemak Bay Shorebird Festival May 4, 5, 6 & 7, 2006 Homer, Alaska Keynote Speaker Dr. Bernd Heinrich lives in Hinesburg, Vermont and is the author of numerous scientific publications and several books on birds, including Ravens in Winter, Mind of the Raven, The Winter World and The Geese of Beaver Bog. Dr. Heinrich will share his insight in to the lives of ravens in his Keynote Presentation: "The behavioral biology of ravens, the wolf-birds".

International Migratory Bird Day, May 13:

King Salmon VC will host a temporary display on migration, a film festival, face painting, and games (all teaching about local migrating birds.) Activities will be available for several age groups.

Far North Conservation Film Festival, November 3-4, Fairbanks FWS: Non-profit film festival during National Wildlife Refuge Week sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Fairbanks Arts Association and the University of Alaska Fairbanks Student Activities Office. The festival presents a diverse group of outstanding films about the sustaining wildlife, wild places, and cultures around the world.

Science Camps:

Becharof NWR, Sept 7: 9th Annual Becharof Lake Science Camp. Each year this camp provides a critical opportunity for local students to lean hands on about refuge lands, land management issues and the Becharof Lake ecosystem. Learning modules included bears, birds, aquatic biology, caribou, tundra plants, orienteering and stewardship. Sessions also included the western and traditional philosophies relating to land/resource issues. This camp is made possible by the partnerships and contributions from Lake & Peninsula and Bristol Bay School Districts, U.S. Fish & Wildlife, Alaska Natural History Association, University of Alaska Fairbanks and Audubon Alaska.

Alaska Natives Traditional Knowledge and Western Science Camp, Summer 2006:

Arctic Village and surrounding area; Educational camp where Athabascan elders, refuge biologists, and biologists from the Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments will share their knowledge with youth from Arctic Village.

Ferry tours: Izembek Refuge staff will double the refuge tours done in conjunction with the summer Alaska Ferry Tustumena with two trips per month.

Migratory Bird Calendar: The 2007 Alaska Migratory Bird Calendar contest judging

will take place at refuges from mid-February through early March. Artwork from more than 50 villages throughout Alaska will be judged. The calendar will be printed and distributed in November 2006.

Girl Scout Traditional Shelter Construction Camp, Summer, 2006: Arctic Village and surrounding area; Educational camp where the Arctic Village Girl Scout Troop will reconstruct a traditional shelter and trail from the village to the shelter. They will draw on the wisdom of Athabascan elders and community members as they celebrate the event.

National Wildlife Refuge Week begins Oct 13.

NPS

Alaska Travel Industry Association: NPS and the Alaska Travel Industry Association are working to promote Alaska. \$740,000 for the program were secured through the efforts of Senator Lisa Murkowski. The goal of the program is to familiarize travel and tourism managers, small business, national media, marketing and advertising outlets on Alaska.

Park Visitations are estimated to be over 2 million for calendar year 2006.

SIO/FWS

DOI Leadership Changes