

Annual Report 2012

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve



National Park Service
Department of the Interior





*“Oh, it was wild and weird and wan, and ever in camp o’ nights
We would watch and watch the silver dance of the mystic Northern Lights.
And soft they danced from the Polar sky and swept in primrose haze;
And swift they pranced with their silver feet, and pierced with a blinding blaze.
They danced a cotillion in the sky; they were rose and silver shod;
It was not good for the eyes of man—’twas a sight for the eyes of God.
It made us mad and strange and sad, and the gold whereof we dreamed
Was all forgot, and our only thought was of the lights that gleamed.”*

from The Ballad of the Northern Lights, by Robert Service

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by the National Park Service,
unless noted otherwise



Cover photo: Circa 1936, George Beck poses with wolf, lynx, and marten pelts in front of the cabin at Ed Biederman’s camp within what would become Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. Today these furbearers remain an important source of income for trappers living in and around the Preserve. UAF Archives, George Beck Collection (1977-204-18).



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Purpose and Significance

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve protects 115 miles of the 1,800-mile Yukon River and the entire Charley River basin. Rustic cabins and historic sites are reminders of the importance of the Yukon River during the 1898 gold rush. Paleontological and archeological sites add much to our knowledge of the environment thousands of years ago. Peregrine falcons nest in high bluffs overlooking the river, while rolling hills that make up the Preserve are home to an abundant array of wildlife. The Charley, a 100-mile wild river, is considered to be one of the most spectacular rivers in Alaska.



Purpose of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve

- ✦ Maintain environmental integrity of entire Charley River basin, including streams, lakes, and other natural features, in undeveloped natural condition for public benefit and scientific study;
- ✦ Protect habitat for and populations of fish and wildlife, including but not limited to peregrine falcons and other raptorial birds, caribou, moose, Dall sheep, grizzly bears, and wolves;
- ✦ And in a manner consistent with foregoing, protect and interpret historical sites and events associated with the Yukon River gold rush, and geological and paleontological history, and cultural prehistory of area; and
- ✦ Protect, conserve, and interpret natural and cultural resources of the Preserve while allowing for appropriate human uses in a manner that provides for similar opportunities for future use and enjoyment.

Significance of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve

- ✦ An internationally significant assemblage of diverse geological and paleontological resources—unusually complete—provide at least a 600-million-year record stretching nearly back to the Precambrian era.
- ✦ The area between Nation, Kandik, and Yukon rivers is postulated to be a portion of the North American plate that has escaped deformation from geological forces, remaining geologically and paleontologically intact. Some of the oldest known microfossils have been found in this area.
- ✦ The entire Charley River watershed is protected in its undeveloped natural condition.
- ✦ The Preserve hosts one of the highest density populations of nesting American peregrine falcons in the United States.
- ✦ Portions of the Han and Kutchin Athabaskan traditional homelands lie within the Preserve.
- ✦ Sites preserving activities and events of regional significance associated with the gold rush era are present and exemplified by bucket dredges, mail trails, trapper's cabins, boats, roadhouses, water ditches, and machinery.
- ✦ The Yukon River is the largest natural, free-flowing river in the National Park System.
- ✦ Large areas within the Preserve may represent an unglaciated refugium for endemic floral and faunal communities.

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve lies in eastern interior Alaska, bordering Yukon Territory, Canada. The Taylor Highway will take visitors as far as Eagle, where the preserve's field office and Visitor Center are located. Travellers into the preserve typically float the Yukon River, or charter an airplane to fly into the upper Charley River. Visitors are encouraged to check in at the office in Eagle to file a travel plan prior to their trip.

Within the preserve, NPS staff maintain facilities, including a public use cabin at Coal Creek Camp, which also serves as a base for many resource projects. At Slaven's Roadhouse on the Yukon River, visitors may enjoy learning about the area's rich mining history.



A cog in the wheel: Ranger Nick Thompson sets up the solar panel that powers the camera trained on an American Peregrine Falcon nest on Eagle Village Bluff above the Yukon River. Thompson was one of several involved in the establishment of the web cam, which went live in time for local school children and others around the world to witness eggs hatching and the growth of two nestlings into strong fledglings at the eyrie.



Managing a National Preserve takes a team effort, and the staff at Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve are expert at it. As an example, people from many disciplines—resources, fire, aviation, interpretation, rangers, maintenance, information technology, administration, and inventory and monitoring networks, as well as private partners—pitched in to install a web cam on Eagle Bluff so that, via the internet, the whole world could witness the everyday lives of American Peregrine Falcons above the Yukon River. In this report, you can read about this and many other resource projects, educational programs, and “support activities” that Preserve staff accomplished in 2012 in our continuing effort to preserve and protect our nation’s heritage and to pass along what we are learning to the public.

Preserve Resources

Natural and cultural resources and associated values at Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve are protected, restored and maintained in good condition and managed within their broader ecosystem and cultural context.



Goal Ia8: By September 30, 2012, 272 (47% of 582) of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve's archaeological sites are in good condition.

GOAL ACHIEVED

The Prehistory of Slaven's Roadhouse

By Chris Ciancibelli

Slaven's Roadhouse and the Coal Creek district are likely the best known historic sites in the Preserve. In 2008, a crew of 4 archeologists (2 professors and 2 students) from Central Washington University travelled down the Yukon River from Eagle to the bluff at Slaven's Roadhouse. The goal was not to research the history of the site, but rather to test for prehistoric archeological deposits. What they found was archeological material in

a stratified context, which is surprisingly rare along the upper Yukon River. The layer contained a single flaked stone knife or projectile point and was radiocarbon dated to 4,450 years ago.

This past summer a crew of 2 NPS archeologists (including one of the original students), assisted by the park curator and an interpretive ranger stationed at Slaven's Roadhouse, returned to the bluff to expand on the previous excavations. As often happens at stratified sights, permafrost prevented excavation into deeper, older deposits. However, additional lithic material associated with the stone tool was discovered along with some interesting artifacts



This stone knife or projectile point, found at the bluff at Slaven's Roadhouse, was dated to 4,450 years ago.

related to the roadhouse. An article authored by Ian Buvit and Jeff Rasic on the topic of this site is forthcoming in the *Alaska Journal of Anthropology*.

What they found was archeological material in a stratified context, which is surprisingly rare along the upper Yukon River.

Below, an archaeologist works at a test excavation at the Slaven's Roadhouse site. This is the oldest radiocarbon dated site in the Preserve.



Goal 1a6: By September 30, 2012, 66 (90% of 73) applicable preservation and protection standards for Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve's museum collections are met.

Museum Program Update

By Chris Houlette

2012 saw the continuation and completion of historic and archaeological collections efforts in Yukon-Charley. The collection itself grew by over 2,300 individual items with the final inclusion of the Snare Creek assemblage, collected during the 2009 and 2010 excavation of the Juneby cabin in the Coal Creek

Historic Mining District. As Yukon-Charley's curator, through analysis of the Snare Creek and Charley's Village collections, combined with historic and archi-

val research, I examined the history of Han Athabascan adaptations to the various gold mining activities in the upper Yukon River region. I recently presented my research at the Alaskan Anthropology Association annual meeting.

I also accompanied the preserve's historian and archaeologists on a Yukon River trip to conduct site assessments. Numerous public use cabins were visited as well as the Washington creek steam traction engine. Limited archeological testing was also conducted around Slaven's Roadhouse resulting in a few additional objects to be added to the collections.

The most ambitious development, however, is the initiation of the complete, holistic reorganization and processing of the Yukon-Charley Rivers archives. The end result will be a more accessible and systematically organized archival collection encompassing all of the previously cataloged records and approximately 20 linear feet of backlogged materials.

The collection... grew by over 2,300 individual items with the final inclusion of the Snare Creek assemblage, collected during the 2009 and 2010 excavation of the Juneby cabin in the Coal Creek Historic Mining District.



Meat cleaver recovered from subsurface testing at Slaven's Roadhouse.

Goal 1b0: By September 30, 2012, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve's ethnographic and historic programs will continue to be effective.
GOAL ACHIEVED

Historic Photos Discovered

By Chris Allan

Historian Chris Allan this year discovered photographs in the Stanton Patty Family Collection at the University of Alaska Fairbanks taken at Coal Creek and Woodchopper Creek. The images have been hidden in the archives for decades, and include scenes from the earliest days of gold dredging in the mid-1930s and color slides from 1953. A few of the slides depict "sponge gold" from the Woodchopper dredge and the pioneer bush pilot Noel Wein with his airplane at the Woodchopper Creek airstrip. The collection also includes a picture of Willie Juneby, who was a "catskinner" for the dredge operations, and another photo of his sons Charlie and Isaac Juneby. Isaac Juneby died tragically on July 1, 2012 in an automobile accident. He was an NPS employee, community leader, and friend to many. He will be missed.

Charlie Juneby (age 14) and Isaac Juneby (12) on the Woodchopper Creek airstrip, 1953. Isaac later worked as a "grease monkey" on both the Coal Creek and Woodchopper Creek dredges.



In photo above, Willie Jim Juneby works as a "catskinner" to prepare ground for dredging in 1953. At right, a pan full of "sponge gold" worth \$25,000 after the mercury was removed during the retorting process lies atop the crucible used to heat the mercury-gold amalgam.



Yukon-Charley's Connection with the Klondike

By Chris Allan

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, which protects and interprets gold rush history along the Yukon River, has historical ties to the land within Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, known for its overland routes through the Coast Mountains that delivered stampedees to the Klondike goldfields in Canada. Historian Chris Allan traveled to Skagway in April to meet with Klondike historian Karl Gurcke in an effort to establish stronger ties between our two parks.

Although a great deal of attention

is paid to the famous "Golden Staircase" at Chilkoot Pass and the White Pass & Yukon Railroad, the Klondike was not the only destination for stampedees suffering from gold fever. Gold-seekers who either never reached the Klondike or found they were too late to locate paying gold claims spilled into Alaska, establishing mining camps on the American side of the border. In this way the Klondike rush became a regional phenomenon.



Klondike Gold Rush historian Karl Gurcke and a friend inspect at low tide the wreckage of the bark *Canada*, which sank in Smuggler's Cove near Skagway in a storm on February 19, 1898.

The National Park Service contributes to knowledge about natural and cultural resources and associated values; management decisions about resources and visitors are based on adequate scholarly and scientific information.



Photo by U.S Fish & Wildlife Serv.

Goal 1a2B: By September 30, 2012, 5 populations (50% of 10) of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve's species of management concern are managed to desired condition.

GOAL ACHIEVED

American Peregrine Falcon Monitoring on Upper Yukon River

By Melanie Flamme

In 2012, we surveyed 265 km of the upper Yukon River between Circle, Alaska, and the Canadian border for nesting American peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus anatum*). In May, we conducted occupancy surveys to determine which territories were being used for nesting. In July, we returned to count total number of nestlings produced. Fifty-eight territories were occupied by peregrine falcons (52 pairs and 6 single adults on territories). Of these, 27 of the 52 pairs (51.9%) were successful, producing 58 nestlings. Productivity was 1.12 nestlings per total pair and 2.15 nestlings per successful pair (at least one nestling observed). Three pairs of peregrines utilized new nesting ledges on commonly used territories.

This year marks the 37th continuous year of monitoring this population. Since 1975, the number of total and successful pairs nesting along the upper Yukon River has steadily increased, while the percentage of total pairs nesting successfully has been stabilizing. The number of single birds on territories was higher this year than most years. This may be due to increased competition for resources caused by increased peregrine population density in the area.

Four eggs were collected for con-

“...the number of... pairs nesting along the upper Yukon River has steadily increased, while the percentage of total pairs nesting successfully has been stabilizing.”

taminants analyses in collaboration with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Environmental Contaminants Program. We also collected adult feathers, egg DNA swabs, buccal swabs from nestlings and egg-shell fragments, all of which can be used as genetics samples to assess parental and nestling genotypes present in this population.



Peregrine nestlings and one adult egg at an eyrie above the Yukon. The egg was collected for contaminants testing.

A United Effort Successfully Installs Webcam at American Peregrine Falcon Eyrie on Upper Yukon River

By Melanie Flamme

In June 2012, we installed a web camera at a wild and remote American peregrine falcon nest along the upper Yukon River on a bluff across from Eagle Village, Alaska, on Hungwitchin Corporation members' land. This project, which took many years in the making, entailed the collaboration of every division of the Yukon-Charley National Preserve staff: natural resources, fire, aviation, education/outreach, rangers, maintenance, information technology/administration, as well as support of both the Central Alaska and Arctic monitoring networks. Also, the assistance of Joe Kloss of ABS Alaska (Fairbanks), Richard "Oly" Olson of Bethel, the Hungwitchin Corporation, and Roger Thiel of Eagle, was indispensable. Recognition and heart-felt thanks must be given to these four outstanding partners, without whom this project would not have come to fruition.

Richard Olson developed the web camera system to watch local ravens near his home in Bethel. He volunteered his time and expertise to help us develop our system. Joe Kloss at ABS Alaska

puzzled through power and repeater site challenges borne from working in a remote setting with solar power. The members of Hungwitchin Corporation kindly permitted us to install the camera system on their lands. Local Eagle resident, Roger Thiel, graciously allowed us to install a necessary repeater site on his house so we could bump the signal all the way to the Eagle Visitor Center. Our NPS staff demonstrated outstanding teamwork and commitment to bring this project to completion.

This year, local school children and residents of Eagle and viewers on the web watched as 4 eggs hatched in the eyrie and two of these grew into strong fledglings that left the nest. Anyone with internet access can view the result of this collaborative effort at: <http://www.nps.gov/yuch/photosmultimedia/webcams.htm>.

Power to the web cam will be lost when the visitors center in Eagle shuts down for the winter, but will resume again in spring when the office reopens.



American Peregrine nestlings await their parents' return at their eyrie. Through the efforts of many, a webcam was placed at the eyrie to broadcast to the world the amazing every-day lives of these magnificent birds.

2012 Eagle Breeding Bird Survey Results

By Melanie Flamme

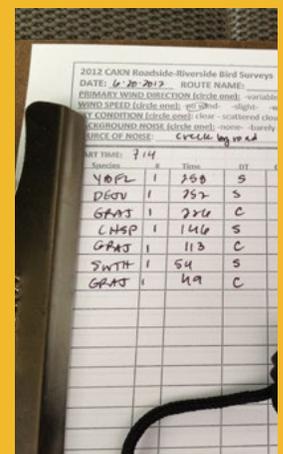
The annual bird survey along the Taylor Highway began at sunrise (2:30 a.m.) on June 20. A total of 569 individual birds of 31 species were detected. The most commonly detected species included:

- Swainson's Thrush (65)
- Dark-eyed Junco (99)
- Yellow-rumped Warbler (31)
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet (26)
- American Robin (38)

White-crowned Sparrow (84)
 Alder Flycatcher (39)
 Orange-crowned Warbler (19)
 Lincoln's Sparrow (19)

Species of note included:

- Chipping Sparrow (8)
- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (7)
- Townsend's Warbler (5)
- Townsend's Solitaire (6)
- Olive-sided Flycatcher (9)
- Western Wood-Pewee (1)



“...lynx, marten, otter, and wolverine appeared common once again.”



Lynx track

Furbearer Track Count Brings Results, Despite Mechanical Trouble

By John Burch

In late February, 2012, NPS conducted the fourth year of the furbearer monitoring program in Yukon-Charley Rivers. The method involves travel by snowmachine while counting furbearer tracks in the snow in major drainages of the Preserve. Biologist John Burch and Ranger Seth McMillan traveled over 350 miles by snowmachine from Circle up the Charley River to Hanna Creek, and up the Kandik River, counting and mapping all furbearer tracks seen.

We had excellent traveling and snow conditions, and enjoyed another visit with Mark Richards, a subsistence user who has lived in the upper Kandik for many years. We were unable to ground truth any snow markers, however, due to the survey being cut short by the entire back axle of one snow-

photo below) near the mouth of Hanna Creek. We were able to patch it back together and limp home, but the track survey was cut short as a result.

Conditions were excellent in the Charley and Kandik rivers with good soft snow, but were wind blown on most of the Yukon. Results are still preliminary, but lynx, marten, otter, and wolverine appeared common once again. No fox or coyote tracks were seen, although we saw a few mink tracks on the Kandik. Many Forty-Mile caribou were present in the mid-Charley again this year. The hope is for this survey to continue annually and perhaps expand in the future to include other major drainages in the Preserve, particularly the Nation River.

NPS Biologist John Burch holds the rear axel that broke off Ranger Seth MacMillan's snowmachine. The two were able to return to base safely, but the furbearer track count survey was cut short. About 1/3 of the planned route was surveyed.



Wolf Population Remains Above Average Due to 40-Mile Caribou

By John Burch

The winter of 2011–2012 was another good one for the Yukon-Charley wolves. Even though all the wolf packs that utilize Preserve lands routinely travel outside the Preserve boundary, there was very little travel of collared wolves, and based on the GPS data, there were no large forays by any collared packs beyond their typical home ranges. Staying within their home range all winter is somewhat unprecedented, being only the second time we have seen this (the other time being the winter of 2010–2011). For the past two winters, a large percentage of the Fortymile caribou herd wintered in the Charley River drainage, giving Preserve wolves plenty to eat and no reason to go on long distance forays to find enough to eat. The result is reduced dispersal, reduced mortality and a smaller drop in wolf numbers from fall to spring, which

was 24% this past winter, despite eight wolves from the Lost Creek pack being shot from helicopters during Alaska Department of Fish and Game's wolf control program. Overall, there was a fall mean pack size of 7.9 wolves (19-year average = 7.2) and a spring mean pack size of 5.5 wolves (19-year average = 5.0).

In spring (May – June), most packs localized at a wolf den, indicating the births of litters of pups. However, it appears that at least 3 packs may have lost their pups later in the summer. At this time, we do not know the cause of this apparent loss. Attempts this fall to count pups by radio telemetry have been severely hampered due to poor flying weather. We hope that by October and November we should have some idea of total numbers of wolves in each pack.

For the past two winters, a large percentage of the Fortymile caribou herd wintered in the Preserve, giving wolves plenty to eat and no reason to go on long distance forays outside Yukon-Charley...

Fall 2011 Pack Counts:

1. Copper Mtn. = 1
2. Lost Creek = 13
3. Yukon Fork = 5
4. Woodchopper = 6
5. Lower Charley = 8
6. 70-Mile = 18
7. Step Mtn. = 9
8. Nation River = 6
9. Tatonduk = 5
- A, B, C. Uncollared packs = ?

Total wolves = 71

Mean pack size = 7.9 (n = 9)

Add 8% lone wolves = 77

Population area = 16,005 km²

Density wolf count = 71

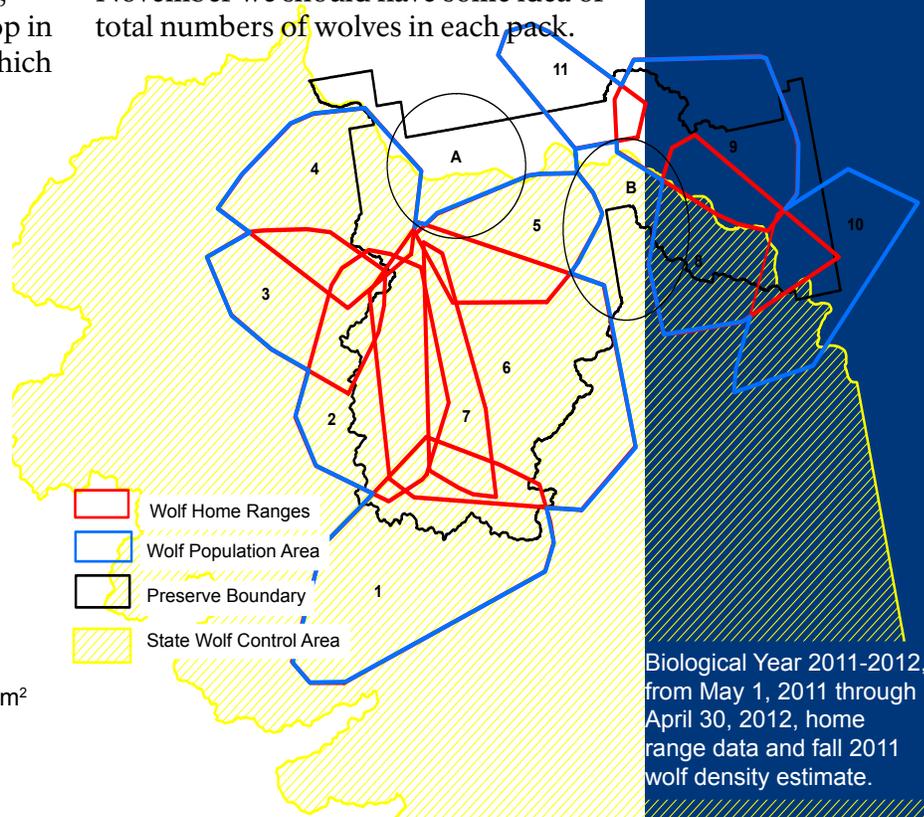
Density = 4.4 wolves/1,000 km²

Add 8% lone wolves = 4.81 wolves/1,000 km²

Preserve size = 10,198 km²

Preserve extrapolation = 45 wolves

Add 8% lone wolves = 49 wolves



Biological Year 2011-2012, from May 1, 2011 through April 30, 2012, home range data and fall 2011 wolf density estimate.

One of the most notable characteristics of lakes in Yukon-Charley is the very high specific conductivity compared to other parks in the region... (which) can be largely attributed to the limestone outcrops in the mountains surrounding the preserve.

Shallow Lake Sampling Ramps Up in Yukon-Charley

By Amy Larsen

In June, a small team of NPS employees conducted shallow lake monitoring in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. This is a program that samples lakes every five years; the last intensive sampling occurred in 2007. This season, crews sampled 67 lakes throughout the preserve. This intensive sampling effort complements the continuous monitoring of three lakes that occurs every year in the preserve. The intensive sampling provides the opportunity to see how variable lakes are from one another across the preserve. Data from this study are used to track changes in water chemistry, permafrost (thaw depth), and vegetation. This program is conducted in five other parks throughout northern Alaska. To date, the program has sampled 80 lakes in Yukon-Charley Rivers and 542 lakes throughout Alaska.

Water chemistry throughout the state is highly variable, and that is true in Yukon-Charley as well. One of the most notable characteristics of lakes in Yukon-Charley is the very high specific

conductivity compared to other parks in the region. These high values can be largely attributed to the limestone outcrops in the mountains surrounding the preserve. Weathered material originating in the mountains is transported into the valleys by water and wind activity.

In small regions of the park, ice-rich permafrost persists from the Pleistocene era. This ancient permafrost, often referred to as yedoma, is melting throughout Alaska. When this ice-rich permafrost degrades around lakes, large quantities of sediment can be dumped into the water column. Depending on the amount and composition of the sediment, the material can dramatically affect water chemistry. In Yukon-Charley, approximately 35 of the 80 lakes sampled are undergoing some amount of permafrost degradation, known as thermokarst, and 10 of these lakes are undergoing extensive degradation. Lakes with extensive thermokarst activity often have elevated specific conductivity, and Yukon-Charley is no exception; the lakes in the Preserve with the highest thermokarst activity also have the highest measurements of specific conductivity.

Large sediment influxes from thermokarst activity can also import high concentrations of nutrients into the water column. Wildlife appears to be taking advantage of these fertilization events. Large algal blooms and invertebrate hatches were observed this season, and one particularly green lake was occupied by hundreds of molting northern shovellers.



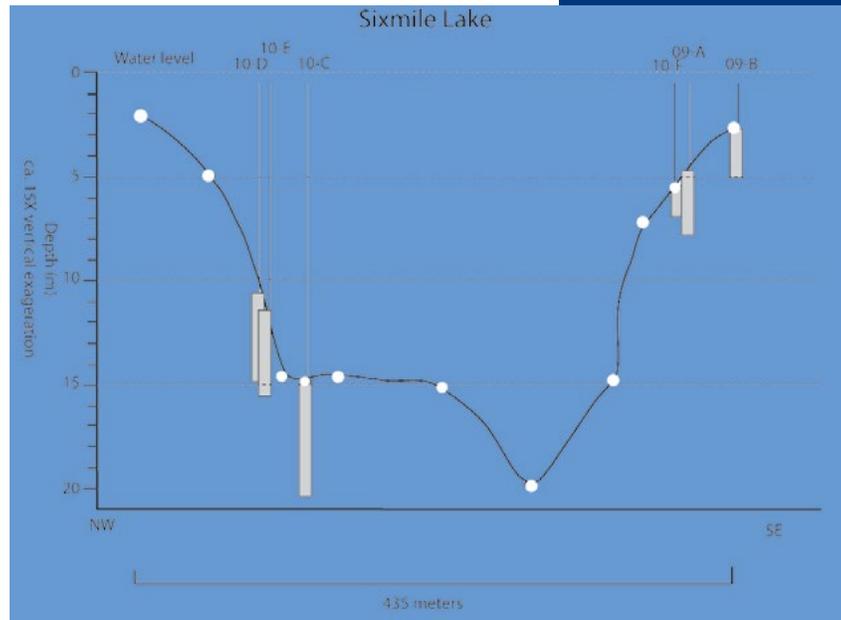
Sediment Cores Track Environmental Change in Six-Mile Lake

By Amy Larsen

In March 2009, six cores were collected from various depths at Six-Mile Lake (informal name) to help the park understand long-term fluctuations in lake levels. The lake lies in a relict channel of the Yukon River approximately 20m above the current river. As a result, the lake is surprisingly deep for such a small lake. The maximum depth is nearly 20m, with a shelf at the north-western end at about 15m.

The core analysis at Six-Mile Lake indicates the lake was partially filled as early as 9,800 years ago. Data from nearby lakes in interior Alaska suggest that other lakes in the region began filling approximately 12,000 years ago, following a prolonged drying period that ended 12,500 years ago. Carbonate layers and shells deposited in the lake sediments suggest the lake remained shallow for 3,000-5,000 years, and by 8,100 yr BP, the lake basin was mostly filled. Approximately 5,500 years ago, the lake began accumulating organic-rich lake mud (known as gyttja), indicating increased productivity and possibly lake level stabilization.

In 2012, more analyses are planned to add detail to the reconstruction. Additional radiocarbon dates will be acquired to build an accurate chronology, carbon and nitrogen isotopes will be determined to assess changes in lake productivity and to document the source of the lake's organic matter, and plant macrofossil analyses will determine terrestrial and aquatic plants growing in and around the lake. Together these data will help the park better understand the long-term changes in lakes throughout the region.



At top, a schematic basin bathymetry along the long axis of Six-MileLake. White circles mark depth datum points. Above, UAF cooperater Nancy Bigelow and NPS Ranger Bob Maurer insert the casing for the core.

The lake is surprisingly deep for such a small lake. The maximum depth is nearly 20m.



An aerial view of the fall foliage on the hills surrounding the Yukon River near Woodchopper Creek in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. Inset: Ken Hill completes annual maintenance at the Coal Creek climate monitoring station, one of two such stations within the Preserve.

Central Alaska Network Continues Climate & Snow Monitoring

by Ken Hill

The stations record air temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and direction, solar radiation, snow depth, rainfall, and soil temperature.

The Central Alaska network continued monitoring climate and snow in Yukon-Charley Rivers for the 7th year since the stations were installed in 2005. Aerial snow surveys were conducted approximately the first day of each month in December, February, March, April, and May. Network investigators completed annual site maintenance at two climate stations in September. Upper Charley (near Three Fingers air strip) and Coal Creek stations were visited to calibrate and replace sensors and download data. The stations record air

temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and direction, solar radiation, snow depth, rainfall, and soil temperature. The sites are fully automated and are powered through a battery and solar panel system.

Real-time and archived data are publicly available through the Western Regional Climate Center at: <http://www.raws.drill.edu/wraws/akF.html> and Mesowest Real-time Observation Monitor and Analysis Network (ROMAN) at: http://raws.wrh.noaa.gov/cgi-bin/roman/raws_ca_monitor.



NPS Photo/Yasunori Matsui

Little Fire Activity in Yukon-Charley Rivers during 2012

By James Sullivan

With only four fires this year, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve experienced a below normal fire year. Three of the four fires were ignited by lightning June 7th. The largest, the Marie Creek Fire, grew to 9,899 acres. The Bonanza Creek Fire grew to 15 acres and the Edwards Creek Fire grew to 1.5 acres. The fourth fire in the Preserve was the Charley River Fire, which was discovered September 15th. The cause of the fire was never determined, and it burned only a quarter of an acre. All four fires were located within limited fire management zones; thus, no suppression action

was taken. They were placed in monitor status by Alaska Eastern Area Fire Management NPS and Alaska Fire Service BLM. All fires were extinguished by natural causes.

The Yukon-Charley Rivers hazard fuels reduction program in 2012 consisted of a one-acre prescribed pile burn at Gelvin's Cabin on the Charley River. Also, the Eastern Area Fire Management crew thinned woody debris and brush from around three historical cabins, making the cabins less susceptible to wild fires.

The Marie Creek fire, a lightning strike that burned 9,899 acres, was the largest of only four fires that burned in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve during 2012.

Provide for the Public Enjoyment and Visitor Experience

Park visitors and the general public understand and appreciate the preservation of parks and their resources for this and future generations.

Goal IIb1: By September 30, 2012, 92% of visitors to Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve understand the significance of the preserve.

GOAL EXCEEDED

Informal meet-and-greets were held in Eagle, Circle and Central in June to introduce park staff to local residents

Park Service Reaches Out to Local Communities

By Marcy Okada

Public meetings in Central and Circle in April discussed ways to improve relations between the National Park Service and each community, and the steps that needed to be taken prior to the summer field season in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve.

As was decided during the April meetings, a meet-and-greet BBQ with NPS staff and community residents was

held in Central on June 6 with informal introductions of Yukon-Charley ranger staff and the new Alaska Deputy Regional Director, Joel Hard. Similarly, meet-and-greets were held in Circle on June 7 and Eagle on June 9. Overall, the gatherings went well and provided a chance for NPS staff to listen to local residents' concerns.

Eagle, one of three communities where the National Park Service held public meetings last summer, shows community spirit and camaraderie at a town potluck.



Piece by Piece, Abandoned Truck Removed from River

By Nick Thompson

In spring 2012, Yukon-Charley Rivers rangers successfully removed an International pick-up truck that had been swept into the middle of a river in the Preserve. The truck had apparently been pushed by high water into the Tatonduk River during the 2011 spring break-up, coming to rest in the middle of the river channel, obstructing river traffic and leaking operating fluids.

Resource protection rangers and facilities staff worked together to winch the truck onto a nearby river bar. The truck was cribbed using available downed trees to keep it from freezing to the ground that winter, thus preparing it for removal the following spring before the river thawed again. The vehicle

It took 11 loads to haul the truck the 30 miles back to Eagle via snowmachine sled.

was disavowed by all possible owners, thereby becoming the concern of the National Park Service to remove it from the Preserve.

After attempts at all other methods to remove the truck had been exhausted, the impending river break-up forced us to systematically cut the vehicle into pieces and haul it, piece by piece, out of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. It took 11 loads to haul the truck the 30 miles back to Eagle via snowmobile sled. Transporting the larger items like the engine and chassis was particularly difficult, but with perseverance and a team effort by all involved, the mission proved successful.



NPS Maintenance Worker Ed Christensen takes a turn at winching an abandoned pick-up truck out of the Tatonduk River in 2011. In spring, 2012, the truck was dismantled and hauled out of the Preserve piece by piece.



To remove an abandoned pick-up truck from the Preserve, rangers and maintenance staff had to cut the truck into manageable pieces in order to haul them by snowmobile. In this photo, part of the truck's bed is secured onto a sled in preparation for the 30-mile trip back to Eagle.

A Proud Partnership Reduces Plastic

By Pat Sanders

Sometimes, all it takes is a little idea rolling around in your head for awhile until you come up with what can be realistic. This was the case with the interpretive staff at Yukon-Charley this summer.

After approaching the Eagle Village Tribal Council, we decided to form a partnership to reduce the amount of plastic bags in the local landfill. Al Ashley, the Environmental Educator for Eagle Village, and Yukon-Charley staff began by designing a logo and researching reusable shopping bag purchases. The local store decided it was such a good idea that they would no longer hand out plastic bags; instead, they joined the effort by handing out the



NPS lead interpreter Pat Sanders, left, is joined by Tribal Environmental Educator Al Ashley to kick off the “Allied Against Plastic” campaign in Eagle and Eagle Village, Alaska.

*“Did you get the bags?”
“I’ll get them!”*



Hunter Dudgeon helps finish the 4th of July parade entry displaying the importance of re-using durable bags to reduce plastic in the local landfill.

reusable bags to consumers. Thus began “Allied Against Plastic.”

The theory that community members in Eagle and Eagle Village would actually keep a supply of bags in their vehicles and another supply at home soon became the new mantra, “Did you get the bags?” “I’ll get them!” During

the course of the summer, it was not unusual to see customers who had forgotten their bags hauling groceries out item by item to their car after refusing to get another reusable bag as they already had plenty and were thus punishing themselves for forgetting them.

During the 4th of July celebration, the interpretive program, with help from the Eagle Village Environmental Education program, designed and built a float entry in the traditional parade. Bags were handed to the assembled crowd, and the superintendent and the deputy regional director joined in the festivities.

It is now estimated that there has been a reduction of approximately 60% of plastic shopping bags being deposited in the local landfill. The community has gotten behind the program and it is considered to be a most successful partnership effort. The city, the village, the preserve staff, and the environment are grateful.

From an Artist's Point-of-View

By Pat Sanders

In mid July, Coal Creek Camp became all abuzz with the sounds of a UAF art class settling in to surround themselves with nature at its finest. The class of 10 students, the instructor and a masterful cook enjoyed the camp and the natural beauty of the area and the Yukon River.

Many of the artists focused on landscapes utilizing different mediums to create their works. From pencil and ink to acrylic, oil, and watercolor, the artists spent three full days under the instruction of renowned artist David Mollett. The NPS staff was fortunate enough to host these amazing students and, as visitors and scholars, they were treated to the talents of the preserve Historian who presented two nights of amaz-

ing programs, park interpreters who told stories and related historic perspectives and re-created the industrialized mining era and other staff members who insured their safety and comfort. We were also fortunate to have a preserve subsistence fisherperson at Slaven's Roadhouse that treated the students to fresh smoked salmon and taught them about subsistence lifestyles.

Thanks to the efforts of the preserve Superintendent and the Chief of Interpretation, this inaugural venture proved to be a huge success. Despite a few rain filled days, every single student reported that they de-

parted Coal Creek with new inspiration and vitality for engaging themselves in artistic endeavors based on what they had learned and the memories that filled them.

In January, the artists gathered at the Morris Thompson Center where they displayed their final works and explained the class to visitors at the center. The interpretive program has already heard from several of the artists who are showing an interest in taking future classes at Coal Creek, and as one was recently quoted, "if you allow repeat offenders to come!" We welcome one and all and look to the future of Coal Creek Camp hosting many and varied programs and classes.



Aspiring artists from University of Alaska Fairbanks learn new methods of putting ideas onto canvas at a 3-day camp hosted by the National Park Service within Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve at Coal Creek Camp July 2012.

This inaugural venture proved to be a huge success.

Visitors safely enjoy and are satisfied with the availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of preserve facilities, services, and appropriate recreational opportunities.

Goal IIa1A: By September 30, 2012, 95% of visitors to Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.

GOAL EXCEEDED



Musher Kyla Durham greets her lead dogs during a rest stop at Slaven's Roadhouse in the heart of Yukon-Charley National Preserve during the 2012 Yukon Quest international sled dog race.

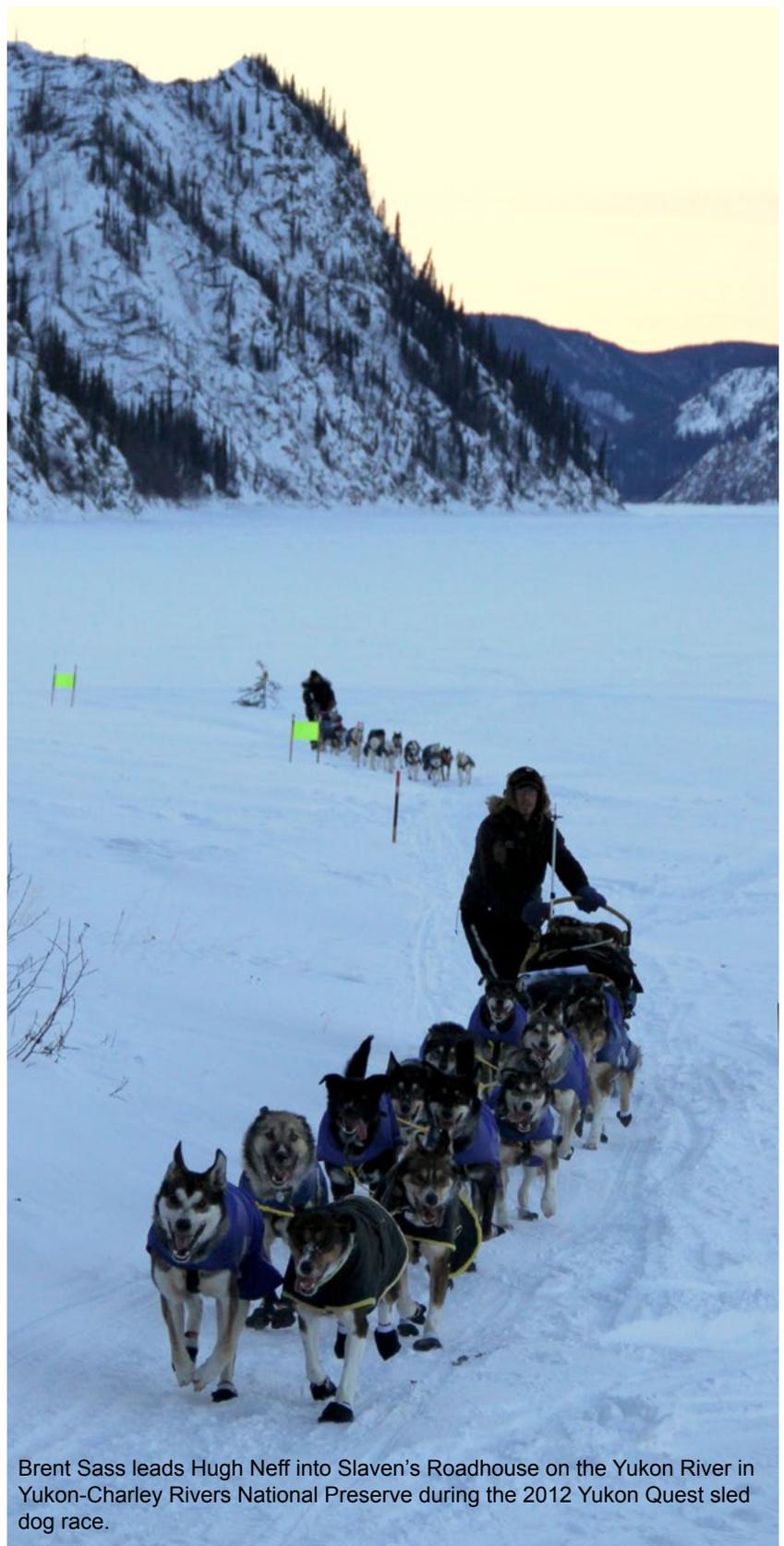
Hospitality, Slaven's Style

By Pat Sanders

The 2012 Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race encountered problems with the “Quest Air Force” this year; thus, Slaven's Roadhouse in Yukon-Charley Rivers became a hospitality stop for mushers rather than an official dog drop station. This did not reduce the enthusiasm or dedication of the staff to ensure a safe race for all. The racers arrived at Slaven's, spent time tending their dogs and then filling their own tummies with food from the made-to-order menu. Then after some much needed rest for their dogs and themselves, mushers headed down the trail to the next official stop in Eagle.

A larger than usual staff was on hand to provide assistance to the mushers as trainees who will officially be in charge of the stop were there to obtain a sense of the day-to-day duties during the Quest. The volunteers from Denali Kennels, in partnership with Yukon-Charley, were on site to see the action and assist with duties as was an ADF&G employee/volunteer. The Eagle and Fairbanks staff was only able to successfully manage the stop through the efforts of Scott Sample and Ed Christensen providing trail-breaking and packing down airstrips at both Coal Creek and on the frozen Yukon River.

After receiving an alert from a “SPOT” unit, the incident command system was initiated and a musher in need of assistance was located. While this musher spoke some English, his running partner, upon arriving at Slaven's, enjoyed an impromptu game of charades while staff tried to explain that his partner was fine and pointed on the map his location. We all learned some valuable lessons, including how to say “food” in Russian!



Brent Sass leads Hugh Neff into Slaven's Roadhouse on the Yukon River in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve during the 2012 Yukon Quest sled dog race.

Ensure Organizational Effectiveness

The National Park Service uses current management practices, systems, and technologies to accomplish its mission.



National Park Service employees from all divisions chipped in to help clean up our one-mile stretch of the Parks Highway near the Fairbanks Administrative Center. Plastic, glass and aluminum were sorted out from amongst the other trash for recycling.

On the Sustainability Front

By Julia Youngblood

On the YUGA recycling front, all the programs have shown an increase in volume through better weighing and reporting. Overall totals for recycling in the 3 park units (Yukon-Charley Rivers, Gates of the Arctic and the Fairbanks Administrative Center) was 3,557 pounds of mixed paper, cardboard, plastic, aluminum and tin. Also as a part of our recycling and solid waste management program we began working on Integrated Solid Waste Management Plans (ISWAPs) for all 3 park sites. Each individual plan defines the current solid waste process present in the unit and then looks at activities that might enhance that program.

We were involved in more than trash

this year. As part of our effort to get the word out on all the good things that are going on in the park units, DaleLynn Gardner, Jeremiah LaFleur (JR) and Julia are working on a script and production for a 2013 submission to the Green Parks Film contest sponsored by the Sustainable Operations and Climate Change Branch of NPS. The films are 2-3 minutes in length and highlight sustainability projects in National Parks. Red carpet, here we come!

In July, all park units participated in an environmental audit. The auditors spent several days in the field looking at compliance issues, training, and our environmental management plan. While we have areas to work on it, appears that our Environmental Management Plan would be issued its “certification of compliance by a 3rd party.” This mandatory compliance certification for all NPS park units is due by December 31, 2012. Corrected findings are reported to a WASO based Audit website and can become the basis for some of our 2013 Goals and Targets in our Environmental Management Planning document that serves our 3 park units.

Maintenance Cleans Up in Yukon-Charley

By Arch Thompson

The Park Facilities Management Division was very busy in Yukon-Charley this year. Among the top accomplishments was having a crew to maintain the eight public use cabins in the Preserve. Every cabin was cleaned, fully inspected, stock-piled with at least two cords of firewood. Additional maintenance needs at each cabin were either completed or noted to be completed next year. Another big accomplishment in 2012 included revitalizing the Eagle visitor center with new paint and stain, and reconstructing the porch and walks to improve accessibility. At Coal Creek Camp we replaced the generator shed roof, which was leaking and exposing the generator to water related damage. But that is not all! The following lists some of the many additional accomplishments by park facilities staff at Eagle, Coal Creek Camp, Slaven's Roadhouse, the public use cabins, and for the general operations of the Preserve:

Eagle

- ✧ Installed power outlets and finished trimming the fire shack in Eagle;
- ✧ Installed a fuel tank and hooked up the boiler system for the maintenance warehouse/shop;
- ✧ Assisted Interpretive Division in bringing the peregrine falcon camera on-line;
- ✧ Replaced the back steps to the aviation shop.

Coal Creek Camp

- ✧ Assisted with the upgrade of the fuel systems at Coal Creek Camp and Eagle to get them in compliance with regulations;
- ✧ Expanded camp staff with a full time/seasonal camp manager;
- ✧ Assisted with VIP programs;
- ✧ Cleaned and organized the shop;
- ✧ Separated and properly stored flammable materials;
- ✧ Replaced a propane refrigerator;
- ✧ Began rebuilding the greenhouse;
- ✧ Modified and improved the water tank system, which now functions better but is due for replacement.

Slaven's Roadhouse

- ✧ Assisted with an environment assessment-- more assessment is needed;
- ✧ Assisted Interpretive Division in bringing the greenhouse into operation;
- ✧ Trimmed the doors on the garage and cache so that the doors open and close properly;
- ✧ Conducted road maintenance on the trail between Coal Creek Camp and the roadhouse;
- ✧ Assisted Resource Division with projects.

Public Use Cabins

- ✧ Repaired the Smith cabin wall (about to collapse) and replaced the outhouse;
- ✧ Replaced the privy at the Kandik cabin;
- ✧ Replaced 6 bunk mattresses at various cabins.

Vehicles and Equipment

- ✧ Pulled out 2 ATVs for rebuilds;
- ✧ Replaced the engine in 1 UTV;
- ✧ Repaired the D3 bulldozer at CCC and got it working and back in service;
- ✧ Repaired the camo pickup at CCC and placed it back in service;
- ✧ Returned the dump truck to service in CCC after being out of service for 4 years.

All Facilities

- ✧ In conjunction with the Region, assisted with an environmental audit of Yukon-Charley Rivers facilities;
- ✧ Assisted with the development of the Spill Prevention, Control and Counter-measures Plan for fueling facilities in the Preserve;
- ✧ Drafted and submitted PMIS project requests to effect repairs to a number of systems and structures;
- ✧ Completed a high, 90th percentile, of all assigned work orders throughout the Preserve.

Among the top accomplishments was having a crew to maintain the eight public use cabins in the Preserve.



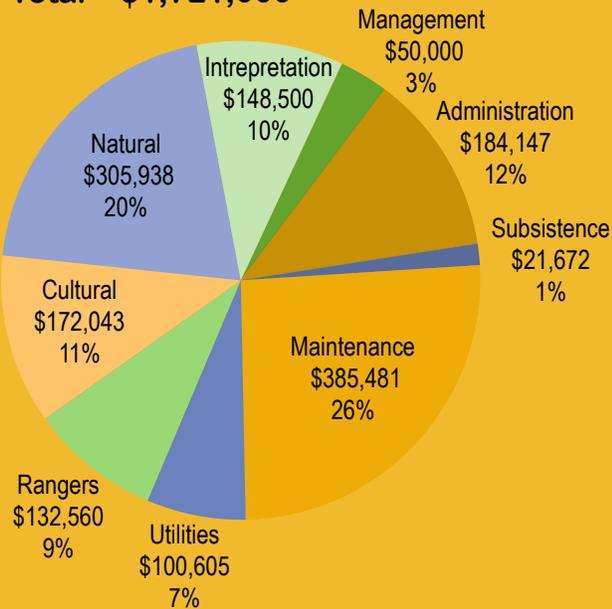
Ranger Seth McMillan leads the transfer of fuel, hauled down the Yukon from Eagle, to a tank at Slaven's Roadhouse in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve.

Financial Summary

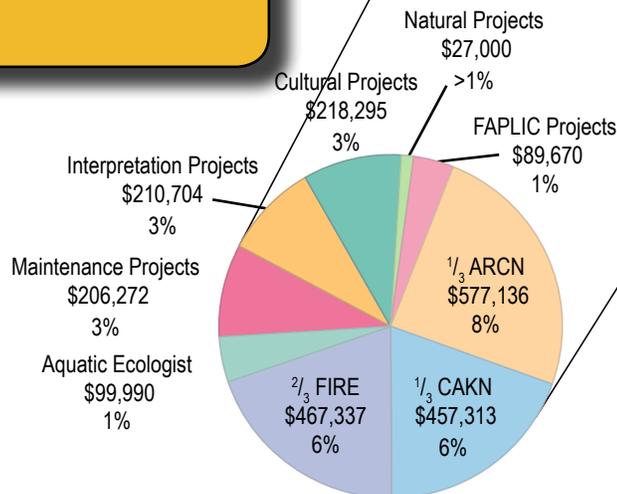
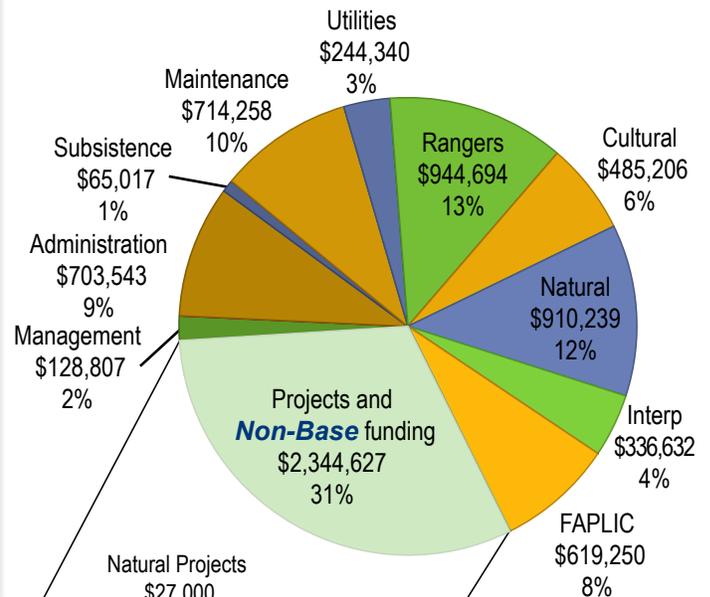
Operating Budget Base Allocation (ONPS) by Division:

- ❖ Research & Studies: \$499,653
- ❖ Resource Protection & Visitor Services: \$281,060
- ❖ Maintenance & Utilities: \$486,086
- ❖ Management & Administration: \$234,147

Yukon-Charley Rivers Operating Budget Base Allocations (ONPS)
Total = \$1,721,000



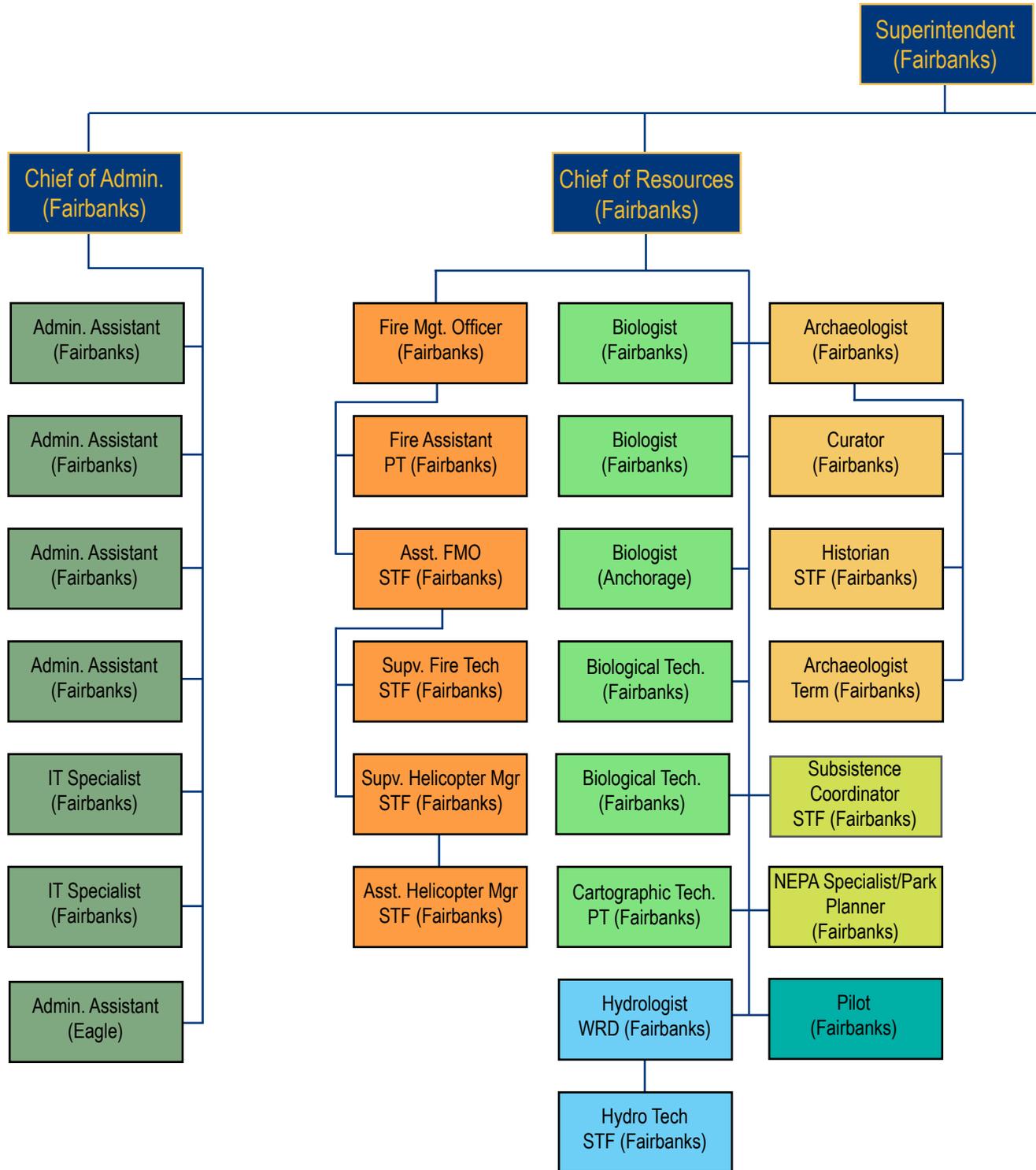
YUGA All Funding Sources
Total = \$7,397,064

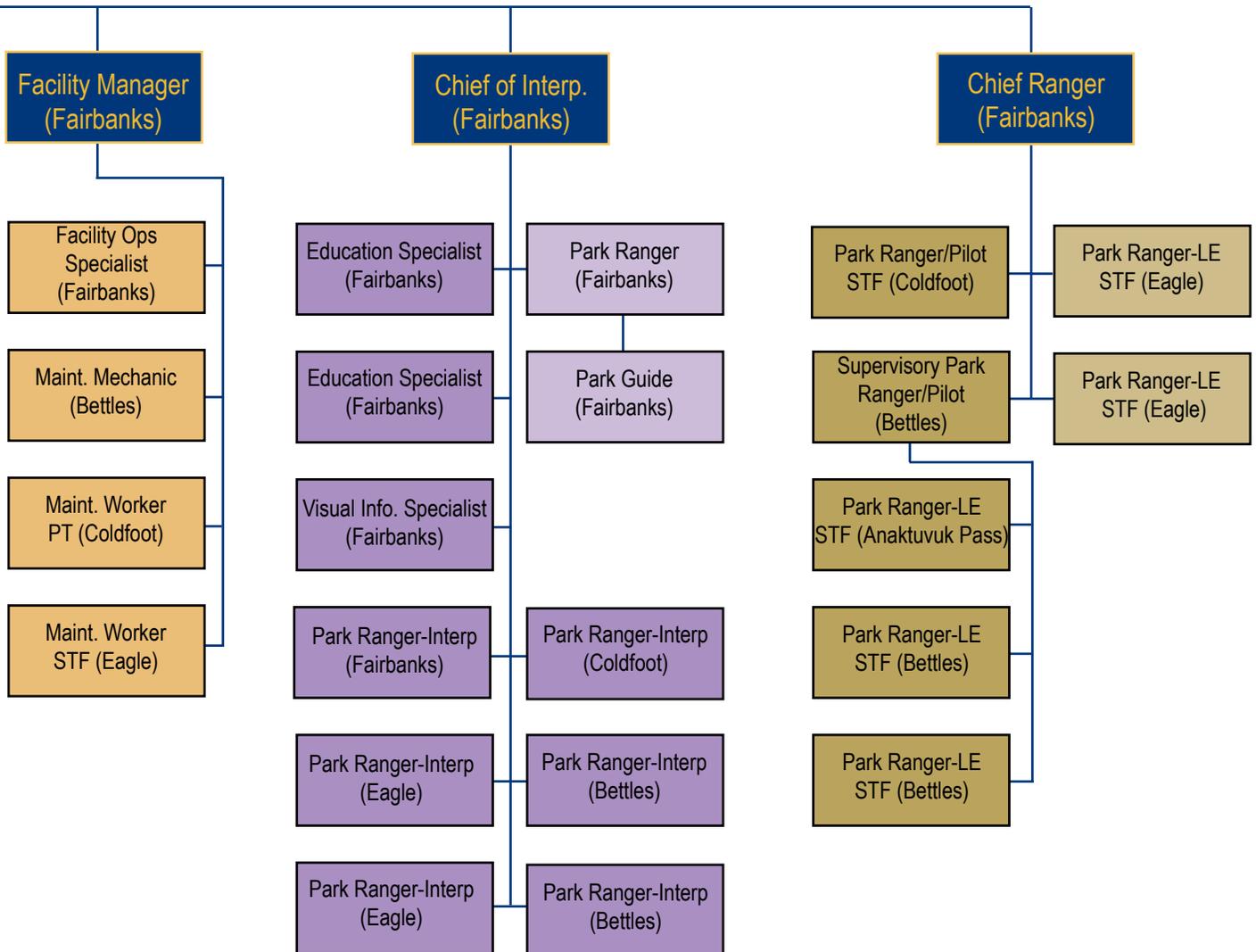




Where are we? A block of ice resembles a polar bear on the shore of the Yukon River in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve.

Yukon-Charley Rivers, Gates of the Arctic, Alaska Public Lands Information Center Organization







Team work: The National Park Service annually forms a multi-division team to man the station at Slaven's Roadhouse during the Yukon Quest international sled dog race in support of the mushers and their dogs. Pictured on the cover (standing, from left) are Yukon Quest Volunteer Travis Booms (an Alaska Department of Fish & Game biologist), IT Specialist Paul Atkinson, Administrative Assistant Susan Holly, LE Ranger Scott Sample, Denali Kennels Volunteer Matt King, and Interpretive Ranger Josh Spice. Kneeling in front are Archaeologist Phoebe Gilbert, Interpretive Ranger Pat Sanders and Denali Mushing Ranger Jason Reppert. (Photo by Josh Spice.)

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people
so that all may experience our heritage.



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