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*Your Land.
Your Voice.*



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Looking Back on Key Wins for Wild Alaska With an Eye on Things to Come

By: Adam Kolton, Executive Director

Standing in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, on the edge of the American continent along the Beaufort Sea coast, the peaks of the Brooks Range look tantalizingly closer than the 25-mile gap separating us. Indeed, the journey south over the rolling tussock-covered tundra to and through the foothills to the snow-capped Brooks Range is arduous. I've been privileged to traverse this great landscape but not the way some of the League's board members have. Kit DesLauriers, a National Geographic Adventurer of the Year, has climbed Alaska's Mt. Isto before skiing across the entirety of the Arctic Refuge coastal plain. Author Debbie Miller has hiked from the mouth of the Okpilak River over the Brooks Range to Arctic Village. And Richard Spener and Toni Armstrong have paddled the rivers of the Arctic Refuge to their ultimate conclusion at the Arctic Ocean.

These are epic feats of adventure and endurance that excite and captivate while also offering insight into the wonders of this cherished landscape. As advocates for Alaska's wild places, we too have been determined to overcome adversity in what is no less an inspirational journey. Even as the Trump administration continues its attempt to clearcut vast tracts of old-growth trees in the Tongass, to sell oil leases in the Arctic Refuge and undo protections for millions

of additional acres of Alaska public lands, we have set our collective sights on scaling these mountains.

Together, you and other Alaska Wilderness League supporters have made 2019 a year of hope and optimism. Here are 10 wins your financial support, advocacy, activism and resolve have helped make possible. There is of course much more to do in 2020 and the journey ahead remains arduous, but each one of these victories represents a step forward, taking us ever closer to our shared goal of protecting Alaska's wild places for generations to come.

1. **Stopping seismic.** When SAE Exploration sought permits to unleash 90,000-pound trucks and crews of hundreds of workers on the fragile Arctic Refuge tundra, we and our partners engaged leading polar bear experts and other scientists whose professional pushback complicated the permitting process. We also generated direct pressure on SAE and its executives, partnering with the Gwich'in who rallied outside SAE's Houston headquarters. In the end, seismic stalled out.
2. **Restoring Refuge protections.** Our team led the charge to pass bipartisan legislation through the U.S. House of Representatives to restore protections for the Arctic

Refuge. We also secured House passage of another measure preventing the Arctic Refuge from being auctioned off for pennies on the dollar.

3. **Chopping down subsidies, not centuries-old trees.** We also advanced a House measure ending taxpayer-subsidized logging roads in the Tongass National Forest, securing the votes of 13 Republicans.
4. **Backing Bristol Bay.** The League supported successful coalition efforts to advance a bill through the House stopping the permitting process for the controversial Pebble Mine. We also helped mobilize thousands in Alaska and across the country in defense of the most important wild salmon spawning habitat left on the planet.
5. **Safeguarding Tongass old-growth.** We and our partners won a huge legal victory, successfully blocking a reckless timber sale that would have clearcut 13.6 million board-feet of old-growth forest on North Kuiu Island, putting at risk black bears and martens as well as the success of local ecotourism businesses.

(continued on page 3)

Alaska Wilderness League is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation founded in 1993 to further the protection of Alaska's incomparable natural endowment. Our mission is to galvanize support to secure vital policies that protect and defend America's last great wild public lands and waters.

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Cover photo: Polar bear leaps from ice-sheet to ice-sheet in the Beaufort Sea. © Florian Schulz/FlorianSchulz.org

A New Toolkit, Just for You

By: Monica Scherer, Director of Outreach

One of our roles here at Alaska Wilderness League is to educate and empower supporters, members and others throughout the country to speak out on behalf of the public lands and waters they are passionate about protecting. To that end, we are very excited to announce the launch of our online resource center that will provide individuals like you with the tools you need to effectively advocate for Alaska lands and waters, both big and small. From the many millions of acres in the Arctic Refuge and Tongass National Forest, to the thousands of acres in the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, we created this online toolkit to provide information and support for anyone looking to engage on our issues. This resource center contains guidance on how to conduct meaningful actions and direct your valuable time where it is needed most, while having easy access to in-depth details across all our campaigns.



Whether you are interested in developing a relationship with a member of Congress or would like to learn more about using social media to educate your networks, you can find tools, best practices, up-to-date information and materials for outreach with friends and the public online at AlaskaWild.org/Grassroots-Toolkit. We hope you can check it out! *

Looking Back on Key Wins... *(continued from page 2)*

6. Arctic Ocean leasing on ice.

We were part of the successful effort to block President Trump's executive order aimed at overturning protections for 125 million acres of the Arctic Ocean and are now fighting the administration's attempt to appeal that important decision. We're also on offense, seeking support for measures that would permanently safeguard this area central to the subsistence culture of the Iñupiat.

7. Preventing the privatization of Tongass National Forest and National Wildlife Refuge System land in Alaska.

We helped prevent hundreds of thousands of acres from within the National Wildlife Refuge System and the Tongass National Forest from being handed over to private interests in Alaska.

8. Big banks and investors balk.

Four major banks including Barclays and more than \$2.5 trillion worth of investors have stated they will not finance any Arctic Refuge leasing or development activity.

9. Elevating the fight for wild Alaska.

The League helped generate coverage on CNN as well as in The New York Times, The Washington Post and Politico and scores of other major outlets. Our coalition efforts have garnered more than 2.2 billion positive media impressions about the Arctic Refuge and a reach of millions of followers on Arctic Refuge social media channels, exemplified by more than six million users reached in September alone and more than two million people submitting comments on

various administration efforts to rollback protections in Alaska.

10. Building a stronger, more diverse Alaska conservation movement. In the fight for wild Alaska we continue to forge new partnerships and alliances with veterans, faith leaders, hunters and anglers, climate justice groups, outdoor industry brands and many more. Of note, a project with The North Face garnered 20 million impressions, 340,000 email opens and a total reach of 60 million. We were also proud to stand with and support our Gwich'in and other Indigenous allies as they took their case to Capitol Hill and across the country. *

Adam Kolton
Executive Director

Advocates Arrive in D.C., for Wild Alaska Protections

By: Monica Scherer, Director of Outreach

Alaska Wilderness League has a slogan of “Your Land. Your Voice.” We constantly work to empower our members, partners and advocates across the country to speak up on behalf of the lands and waters they care passionately about, and to elevate those voices in front of decision makers. These efforts were on full display the week of the House vote. Joining us in Washington, D.C., leaders from the Gwich’in Steering Committee and Gwich’in Steering Committee Youth Council, veterans, youth, faith leaders, outdoor industry partners and athletes advocated for the passage of H.R. 1146, The Arctic Cultural and Coastal Plain Protection Act. The Arctic Refuge encompasses issues from human rights to climate change; public land access to endangered species. Our ability to support and amplify voices representing all of these important aspects of the campaign



Soul River Inc. veterans and youth leaders in front of the Capitol in between lobby meetings.
Alaska Wilderness League



Gwich'in leaders and Representative Debra Haaland (D-NM) gather following a press conference calling for passage of H.R. 1146.
Alaska Wilderness League

allows us to be highly effective in garnering support from Congress.

Leading up to the House vote in September, Gwich'in leaders met with members of Congress to rally support for H.R. 1146, bringing calls to protect the Arctic Refuge coastal plain and sharing how their culture and way of life are under threat from the administration's efforts to advance oil and gas development.

Representing another perspective in favor of protections, veterans from Soul River Inc. and Veterans for Peace also met with members of Congress (largely veterans themselves) and shared their firsthand experiences of time in the Arctic Refuge and the impact it has had on not only them but on other countless retired service members as well. While many congressional members and their were familiar with statistics and potential impacts to caribou and

polar bears, they were more so moved about the personal experiences shared with them, about how protection of the Arctic Refuge has had a direct benefit to numerous veterans and others from across the country.

Other constituencies arriving in Washington, D.C., included a group of young activists and ambassadors from The North Face who had the opportunity to camp in the Arctic Refuge this summer. As that trip served as an introduction for this group to learn about the issues facing the Arctic Refuge and bring greater awareness to the cause, they too used this personal experience to advocate on behalf of protecting this special place directly with decision makers on Capitol Hill.

Across the board, the various advocacy teams featured a wide spectrum of people. Some participants had spent weeks and



The North Face team with Alaska Wilderness League staff.

Alaska Wilderness League

months throughout the Arctic Refuge, and others had never been. Many of these individuals arrived in order to speak out on behalf of others, be it a village or a congregation. The League was thrilled to not only support all of these impassioned advocates, but to use our expertise to connect these voices with the congressional offices where they would have the most impact. The best part: we won!

Your support was with us in every meeting, drop by and celebration that week. Every petition signature, phone call to your member of Congress, letter to the editor and social media post was a critical component to the successful passage of H.R. 1146. This was just the beginning.

Building on this success, the League re-focused its efforts roughly a month following the passage of H.R. 1146, to garner additional support for appropriations legislation that would have direct ramifications for the Arctic Refuge, Tongass National Forest and Bristol Bay. To that end, the League was joined by a group of advocates and supporters from throughout the U.S., who met with decision makers in the House and Senate

to highlight the importance of Alaska public land protections across the state. The fly-in also drew together the League's newly formed Leadership Council to advise on our issues and organizational strategies as we continue to press forward on our issues.

The administration's bullseye is dead set on the Arctic Refuge and we

continue to challenge every move it makes. Ultimately, to secure full and permanent protection for the whole Arctic Refuge we need to repeal the drilling mandate and pass protection legislation. This requires the continued passion and advocacy that the Arctic Refuge has seen for more than 25 years AND the growth and participation by new audiences. Kiran Williams, a youth leader with Soul River Inc. summed it up best when describing her time in Washington, D.C.: "We told our stories, broke the barriers of typical lobbyists and created change."

Watching so many new and passionate partners advocate on behalf of the Arctic Refuge for the first time was inspiring. Alaska Wilderness League remains committed to growing and supporting the voices of all those who care about Alaska's public lands and waters, human rights, climate change and endangered species. *



Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) tweeted this picture with our October fly-in team shortly after their meeting.

Alaska Wilderness League

Elevating Gwich'in Youth Voices on Capitol Hill

By: Emily Sullivan, Conservation Associate

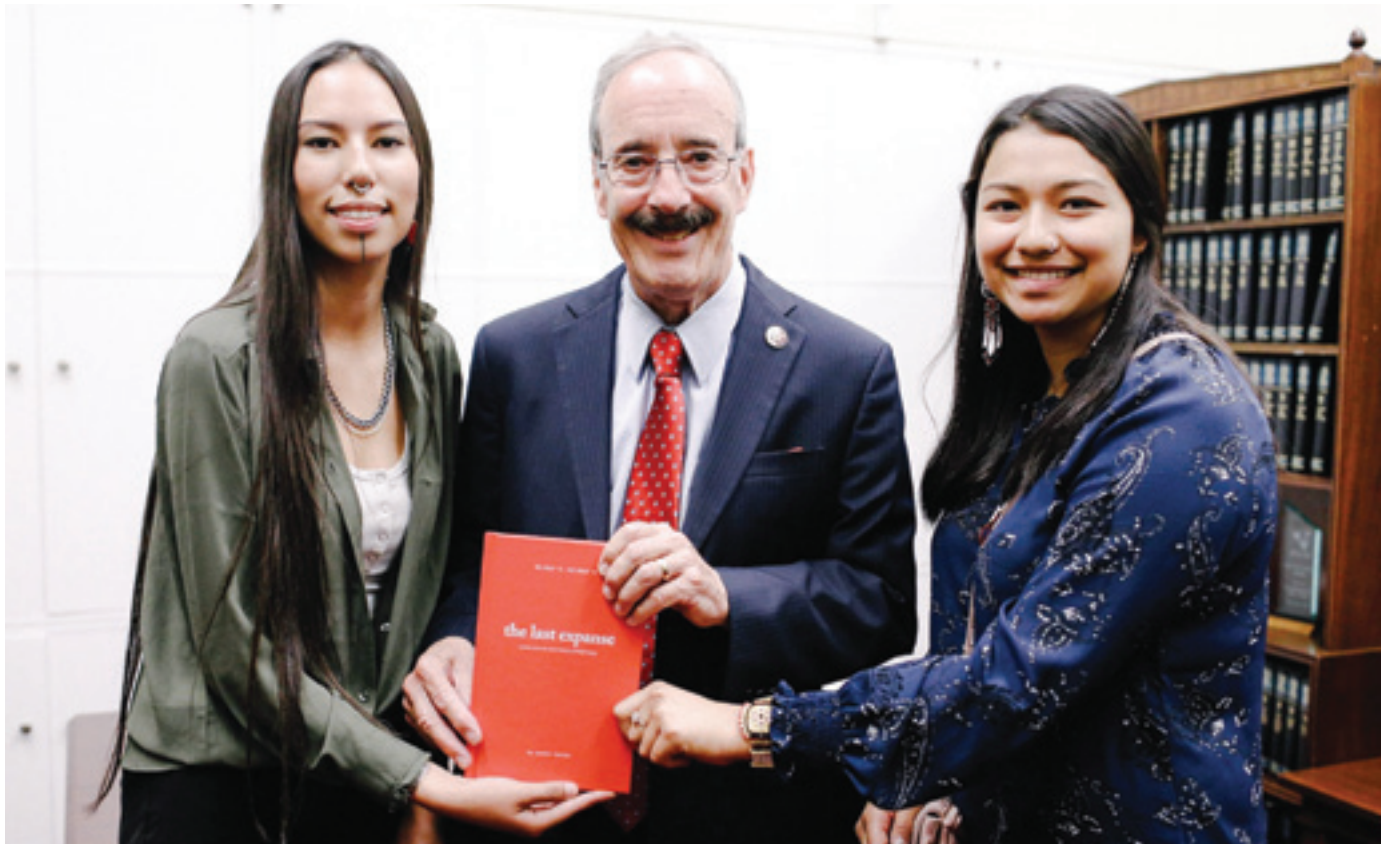
Our team in Alaska has worked hard throughout the year to bring Alaskan voices to the forefront of the fight to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. In the latter half of this year, and in addition to our ongoing local outreach, our continued partnership with the Gwich'in Steering Committee led to an opportunity to meet with and engage with the committee's newly formed International Gwich'in Youth Council, and prepare for a trip to Washington, D.C., in the fall.

That trip ultimately took place during vote week on Capitol Hill, as our Alaska team lobbied with members of the Gwich'in Nation, including Quannah Chasinghorse, a 17-year-old Han Gwich'in youth from Fairbanks, Alaska. After her experience on the Hill, Quannah was inspired and especially encouraged by the passage of H.R. 1146, sharing, "My first experience in Washington, D.C., was beyond what I thought it would be. The most important part was lobbying to protect the Arctic Wildlife Refuge, but also bringing more awareness to how we are hugely impacted by the climate crisis. I went on behalf of the Gwich'in Nation representing my Youth Council to

protect the future generations, lands, waters, animals, plants and our ways of life. It's not just for my people, it's for all of the world."

We were grateful to have Jody Potts, Quannah's mother and a Han Gwich'in activist, joining the Alaska delegation lobbying in D.C., as well. During her trip to the Capitol, she shared her own perspective on the issues: "Our people have fought for three generations to keep oil development out of The Sacred Place Where Life Begins. We now have our youth, the fourth generation, devoting their time to this cause. We hope that in the near future we will achieve permanent protection. We will not compromise when it comes to protecting our way of life."

The elevation of Alaskan voices, including those of our Indigenous partners, has helped showcase in-state opposition to oil and gas drilling in the Arctic Refuge and highlight the range of constituencies that will not stand for a pro-extraction agenda in Alaska. While oil and remains a complicated issues throughout the state, there is still an opportunity to ensure wild areas that are critical to so many, remain untrammelled. ✨



Quannah Chasinghorse (pictured left) and fellow Gwich'in Youth Council member Kaila Druck (right) meet with Representative Elliot Engel (D-NY).

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The Many Ways You Can Invest in a Wild Alaska Future

By: Chris Konish, Director of Development

As you consider your year-end philanthropy, we encourage you to include Alaska Wilderness League in your plans, and to give as generously as you can to hold off the onslaught of attacks on the lands, waters, wildlife and people that are increasingly under threat.

Credit cards and personal checks are certainly the most common ways to give to the causes important to you. Highlighted below is one options that might be useful to you either today, or farther down the road.

You can find more at AlaskaWild.org/Support-Us. *

Roll Call: Wild Alaska Blog!

By: Hilary Stamper, Online Director

Want to know what it's like to lobby in Washington, D.C., during a critical Wilderness vote? Or perhaps better understand how the climate crisis and the Arctic are linked? What about how Roadless Rule protections impact the Tongass National Forest, and all our forests? Alaska Wilderness League's blog shares stories of those on the ground in Alaska and Washington, D.C., and discusses current news and events in relation to their impact on our wild lands and waters in Alaska. You can check out our latest articles at AlaskaWild.org/Blog. *



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A Note From the League's Vice President Pat Pourchot

I remember fondly the birthdays of my youth when I could legally drive, drink and vote! Decades later these hallmark birthdays have been replaced by the year I signed up for Medicare, when I started receiving social security checks, and when I turned 70 and 1/2. What? Yes, the year in which one turns 70 and 1/2 begins "Required Minimum Distributions" under an annual schedule of withdrawals from any tax-deferred savings accounts like IRAs, 401(k)s, 403(b)s and other savings plans for which you haven't paid taxes. And yes, you then have to pay taxes on those annual withdrawals!

But, there is a glimmer of good news. **You can reduce the annual amount on which you must pay**

taxes by making a "Qualified Charitable Distribution" or "QCD" to a recognized charitable organization. Your accountant, the IRS website, or the institution that manages your tax-deferred account can assist you with information and forms for making a direct payment from your tax-deferred account to a charitable organization. This is especially beneficial if you can no longer itemize deductions (like to charities) under the most recent tax "reform" legislation. You can either arrange to send a "QCD" directly from your savings account through your managing institution to a charitable organization – like Alaska Wilderness League – or have it sent directly to yourself and bring it to a League fundraiser! *



Pat Pourchot in Antarctica.

Jennifer Johnson


Your Lasting Legacy for Alaska's Public Lands and Waters



Success for the Next Generation Starts Today

By making plans today, you can leave a positive impact on Alaska's public lands and waters like the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the Tongass National Forest for generations to come.

To learn more about what steps to take for providing long-term and long-lasting resources to defend these iconic national treasures, contact us at 202-266-0415 or email Chris Konish at Chris@AlaskaWild.org. Visit AlaskaWild.org/Planned-Giving for more information.

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