



Alaska Fish & Wildlife News

August 2021

ADF&G's Library: It's always been there but it's always evolving!

By Celia Rozen and Jon Henley



Celia Rozen checking out a fish. Photo by Cody Swanson

In the 62 years since Alaska became a state, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has always had a library and a librarian. For more than half of those years, Celia Rozen has been that librarian. Her retirement in 2021 marks the continuation of this tradition with the hire of Jon Henley as the next ADF&G librarian.

The ADF&G library moved out of its home in the Anchorage office in 1997, later absorbed the fisheries library at the Juneau office, and joined forces with seven other state, federal, and university libraries in Anchorage to form Alaska Resources Library & Information Services (ARLIS). ARLIS has served as ADF&G's library for more than 20 years, providing direct library service and document delivery, building its collection, conducting literature reviews, fulfilling literature requests, and providing a website where staff can find resources they need to do their jobs. With strong dedication to the Department's missions and operations, the ADF&G Librarian also serves an active role on the ARLIS management team.

Celia – a look back in history, and my place in it

The ADF&G Annual Report boasted as far back as 1955 that the newly formed research library “ranks high as a scientific library” and describes it as an “integral part” of the Department and having “primary importance as a source of information.”

As I look back on a long and fulfilling career, I realize how fortunate I have been to continue the tradition of service to ADF&G's research needs and how proud I am to have worked for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the only Alaska state natural resource agency that maintains its own library and for a good reason – the Department relies on scientific sources of the highest integrity to accomplish its work for the citizens of the state.

Back in 1959, ADF&G's first Commissioner, C.L. Anderson, justly prioritized in his first public statement the “realization [of] the importance of reference material to research and management.” He wisely invested in a library and a librarian dedicated to the mission of ADF&G. This throughline of dedicated library service to professionals who rely on scientific research will be a constant into the future.

We are told in 1955 that “After a long period of search the Department gained the services of a Research Librarian ... to organize the research library and to maintain it as one of the most useful tools of the entire organization.”

Just like the original search for a librarian, it took “a long period of search” to find Jon Henley, who began his new career in July 2021. ARLIS and ADF&G needed a librarian with strong IT systems skills to bring ARLIS into the modern world. These specialized librarians are a rare commodity, but ADF&G was lucky to find Jon, who very much wanted to move back to Alaska and his roots, having been born and raised in Fairbanks. I have every confidence in Jon to continue the tradition of service and dedication to the highest scientific standards for ADF&G and to make relevant resources even more accessible to ADF&G through his library systems skills.

Some high points for me:

- 1) Establishing ARLIS in 1997 through an innovative multi-agency partnership that won a “Reinventing Government” award, and that retains its stellar reputation to this day.
- 2) ARLIS winning the National Award for Library Service, including a trip to Washington, D.C. in 2001 and a photo op with First Lady Laura Bush, herself a professional librarian.
- 3) Searching for every ADF&G publication, article, conference paper, and unpublished report ever written by Division of Wildlife Conservation staff member since statehood, resulting in the comprehensive [DWC Publications Database](#) on the ADF&G e-library page.
- 4) Establishing the fur, skull, bird mount, and fish mount collection that is in great demand by members of the public (more on that below).

Jon – and the future of ARLIS



*To Celia M. Rozen
With best wishes,*

Laura Bush

Following in the footsteps of someone with such a storied career is a daunting and humbling task, and I can only hope I will live up to the standards of excellence the ARLIS management team has set over the past three decades. While no one knows for sure what awaits us in the future, I am confident the talent and dedication shown by ARLIS staff will be more than enough to meet the challenges facing us in the coming years.

Technology will continue to be a driving force of change in all libraries, including ARLIS. But despite the radical changes that technology has brought (and will continue to bring), the core mission of libraries remains unchanged - meeting the informational needs of our agency patrons will always be the guiding focus of ARLIS. The increasing switch to digital services and electronic media brings both problems and opportunities in this regard. Having resources available around the clock from anywhere in the world is a tremendous benefit, but the digital divide continues to be a serious concern. This is especially true in Alaska, where Internet access in remote areas may be unusable or even nonexistent.



Jon Henley

With this in mind, there are several goals I hope to pursue throughout my career as the incoming Systems Librarian:

- 1) Modernize ARLIS' I.T. infrastructure to make it more efficient, convenient, and relevant for the foreseeable future.
- 2) Improve access to digital reference materials, particularly for those who may not be totally comfortable with using Internet resources, or who are in areas without reliable Internet access.
- 3) Update the ARLIS website to better match current Internet standards and protocols. Streamline web services for easier public accessibility and reduced demand on ARLIS and Consortium Library staff.
- 4) Expand digital offerings to meet the changing demands of ARLIS agency staff and the general public, while continuing to build the print collection.
- 5) Offer exceptional reference services to fully meet the informational needs of ARLIS patrons.

None of these goals will be easy to achieve, but ARLIS has a long history of providing outstanding library services to its users, and this is a tradition I plan to continue. With some luck and assistance from the rest

of the team, I hope to contribute as much to ARLIS' future as my predecessors have.

Services provided by ARLIS

While ARLIS is a public library whose collection of Alaska natural history and cultural materials is unmatched in the world, it also offer a wide variety of other services to agency patrons, including:

Online Journals: ARLIS is undergoing a conversion to a new journal platform which will greatly expand staff access to journal titles at agency desktops. For the first time, ARLIS will also be able to offer its patrons access to the many thousands of journals to which UAA subscribes. The ability to download PDFs of journal articles was identified by staff as the most valuable service in the last ARLIS survey, and this service will be expanding in the future.

Databases: For those who prefer to do their own literature searches, ARLIS offers databases on its website that focus on fish, wildlife, and resources management. These databases provide citations to articles and other professional literature. ARLIS librarians are always happy to perform mediated searches for agency staff as well.

Interlibrary Loan: For those needing help locating professional literature, an interlibrary loan request may be initiated, whether ARLIS owns the item or not. ARLIS partners with libraries worldwide and has access to the vast network of academic and special libraries to fulfill any professional literature request. In the near future, staff will have the ability to automatically generate an interlibrary loan request without having to retype the citation.

Targeted reference service: ARLIS librarians are here to answer reference questions from the general public as well as professional staff. Calls to 27-ARLIS or e-mails to reference@arlis.org are always monitored and requests by agency staff receive priority attention. Literature searches, legislative histories, and cited reference searches (i.e., who cited this paper after it was written?) are always welcome.

Scanning-on-demand: One goal of ARLIS is to quickly meet the needs of its agency staff by providing requested materials in electronic format. Through the employment of UAA students for scanning tasks, ARLIS is able to efficiently provide digitized resources from its own collection. In addition, ARLIS has performed large funded scanning projects for Alaska resource agencies and for clients in the public and private sectors. No project is too large!

Some featured collections

ADF&G Historic Photos: ARLIS scanned 600 historic photos showcasing the work of ADF&G. The emphasis is on ADF&G staff in action in the field and on-the-job, in pursuit of the management of Alaska's fish and wildlife resources. Another focus is operational facilities, such as hatcheries, weirs, and refuges. Included are many photographic portraits of ADF&G leaders and staff, and photos having historic value. Anyone may search this collection at the Alaska Digital Archives: <https://vilda.alaska.edu/digital/collection/cdmg16>

Amos Burg films: Amos Burg was a world-renowned filmmaker who also worked for ADF&G from 1955 to 1974. These esteemed documentaries are available on ADF&G's Vimeo channel (<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=multimedia.main>). To read



Birds available for checkout from the taxidermy collection.

more about [Amos Burg and his wonderful films](#) that ARLIS converted from 16 mm to digital, see the article written for this magazine.

Newer - Older - Oldest ADF&G reports: ARLIS retains a comprehensive collection of ADF&G reports in its repository, along with every smidgen of information on the Susitna Hydroelectric project; an effort that has been periodically revitalized by state government since the 1950s. The millions spent on research resulted in a plethora of resource information. A special database called the *Susitna Doc Finder* was created for the ARLIS website and features more than 4,000 Susitna reports in full-text:

<https://www.arlis.org/susitnadocfinder>



A snowy owl from the taxidermy collection.

Taxidermy collection: ARLIS is one of the few public libraries in the country which allows the general public to check out a variety of furs, bird and fish mounts, and skulls. This taxidermy collection is a defining feature of the library, frequently being utilized by artists, educators, filmmakers, and even Cub Scouts. Among other items, the taxidermy collection includes many species of Alaska wildlife as well as education kits.

This collection, which originated with ADF&G, has repeatedly received national attention. Numerous specimens were used as props in the basement lair of the serial killer depicted in the 2013 movie *The Frozen Ground* starring Nicholas Cage. A segment of CNN's Great Big Story called *The Library That Checks Out Dead Animals* was professionally produced in 2015 and is archived on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Av98smI5MLw>). Articles were featured in both Smithsonian Magazine and Reader's Digest. In addition, Celia was asked in 2017 to write a chapter in a professional library manual entitled *Audio Records to Zucchini Seeds: Building a Library of Things* in 2017.

For more detailed information about this collection, see the article written for [Alaska Fish and Wildlife News](#) or [peruse the lists](#).

Final Thoughts

ARLIS librarians always look forward to receiving requests from agencies and the public, so please feel free to ask for any items you can't find on your own. Libraries typically have many special and uncatalogued collections, and librarians get a lot of job satisfaction from tracking down obscure references, nuggets of information, and hidden gems. We are here to serve the needs of our patrons, so don't hesitate to call 27-ARLIS or e-mail reference@arlis.org if you ever need help with your research and literature search.

[Article on skull, hide and fur collection from AFWN 2015](#)