

ALASKA PEOPLE

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In the
spotlight

Reporter tours BLM survey camp

Alaska hosts NPLAC

21-member National Public Lands Advisory Council gets close-up look at BLM land management issues in Alaska



Ed Boyy

NPLAC Chairman Mark Murphy and State Director Ed Spang at the council's July 27 public meeting in Anchorage.

by Rob McWhorter

Alaska is both a jewel to be admired and a treasure chest to be opened. Some of the difficulties facing BLM in achieving the right balance in this apparent dichotomy were highlighted for the National Public Lands Advisory Council (NPLAC) the week of July 27.

The NPLAC advises the Director and the Secretary of the Interior on public lands issues. The council regularly visits BLM field locations to view resource issues up close and in person.

Starting with a public meeting in Anchorage on Monday, the council was welcomed by representatives from Senator Murkowski's Anchorage office and the office of Governor Walter Hickel, and by Mayor Tom Fink of Anchorage. Together with state director Ed Spang, they set the stage for the group's look at Alaska.

In the following four days, the council visited Nome, Red Dog mine, NPR-A (a perfect example of the jewel and the treasure chest), Prudhoe Bay, Kaktovik, Fairbanks and back to Anchorage. On a whirlwind trip through some of Alaska's most remote areas, only the high points can be touched upon. District managers Dick Vernimen, Helen Hankins and Dee Ritchie provided most of these, with support from Nolan Heath of the Joint Pipeline Office and BLM geologist Art Banet.

Topics covered were a variety of renewable, non-renewable and lands issues. The BLM briefers skillfully tied the topics into the BLM's balanced, multiple-use approach to public demand for resource management.

At the end of the trip, council members were brimming with admiration for the marvelous State of Alaska and with respect for the job BLM is doing here. Summing up the trip, state director Spang said, "I believe we succeeded in providing a clear picture to the council of our challenges here. In BLM Alaska, we feel we have the mandate to manage and the opportunity to do it right."

Burn areas yield delicacies

by Sharon Durgan Wilson

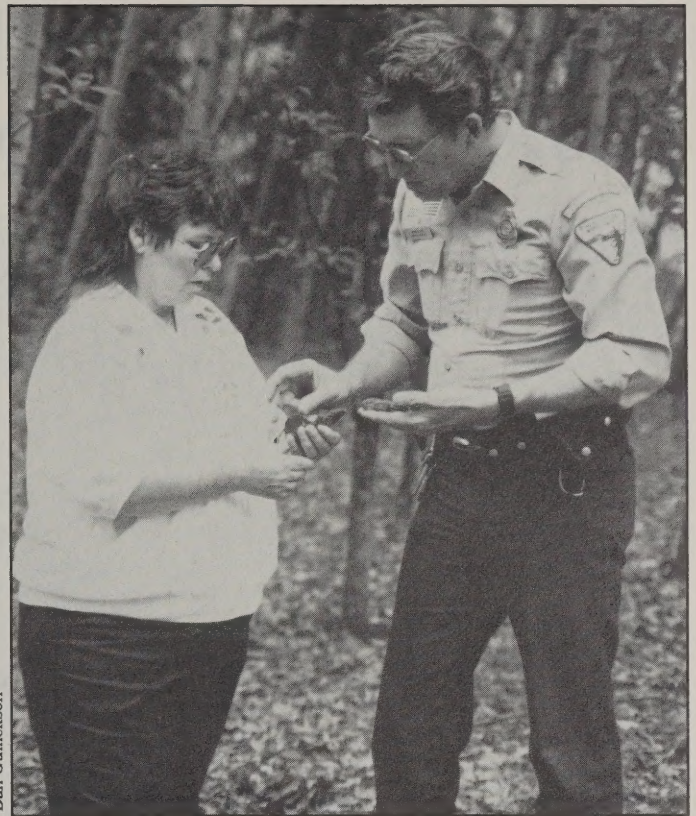
In Alaska, where wild fires rage over thousands of acres at a time, a delectable byproduct of the fires—the morel mushroom—has created a new industry.

Morels are considered delicacies and are often used in French cooking. The pine-cone shaped mushroom comes in many colors—blonde, smokey gray-to-black, and brown.

In early June, commercial vendors predicted a bumper crop of between 200,000 and 250,000 pounds of morel mushrooms at the Hess Creek burn area, about 100 miles north of Fairbanks.

Commercial buyers entered into a negotiated sale contract with the Kobuk District Office to pick up to 400 pounds of mushrooms at 25 cents a pound. The authorized vendors buy direct from mushroom pickers and report to the district the number of pounds purchased. Because the land has been state-selected under the Statehood Act, BLM deposited the money into an escrow account which will be transferred to the state at the time of conveyance.

Just as the vendors were ready to quit, the long, hot Fourth of July weekend brought out a bumper crop. This was the last gasp for the harvest, and by the first of August, the employees of the major buyer had packed their tents and drying equipment and headed south. They reported buying 1,230 pounds of mushrooms, which amounted to \$307.50 due BLM, less than the amount of their deposit. The other two contracting agents had also left, but had



Dan Gullickson

Kobuk District Ranger Mike Billbe shows Jeanne Hart the much-sought-after morel mushrooms found in the Hess Creek burn.

not yet filed their reports with BLM.

Access was a primary concern when Kobuk District issued permits. The hills, marshes and steep slopes of the Hess Creek burn complicates transportation. Off-road vehicles would leave water-filled ruts that would erode. And the burn area, crisscrossed with fallen trees, looks like a child's pick-up sticks game.

After assessing the situation, the district agreed to allow off-road vehicles weighing less than 1,500 pounds onto an existing trail. "If repetitive use of the trail had caused serious damage, access would have been curtailed," said District Manager Helen Hankins. "We recommended that people reach the area by riverboat, airboat, pack animal or by foot."



Mike Billbe

Shepard lends skills in rebuilding Kuwaiti information center



Ed Bory

Martha Shepard smiles as her co-workers present her with a gag gift—a black veil—for her year-long trip to Kuwait.

by Jane Mangus

For a life of thrills and adventure, you should become a librarian—right?

Don't laugh. Martha Shepard, long-time director of the Alaska Resources Library, is about to take off for a year in Kuwait.

With the State Director's approval, she's taking a year's leave of absence to lend her efforts in rebuilding the war-ravaged library collections and services of the National Scientific and Technical Information Center in Kuwait City.

Shepard was chosen from more than a thousand applicants to receive a fellowship under a program operated jointly by the American Library Association and the U.S. Information Agency. The program places U.S. library specialists in overseas institutions for up to a year. Shepard is one of just 19 people chosen this year for fellowships.

Shepard says, "Am I nervous? Yes. The information center where I'll be working was totally wiped out. Looted. They essentially destroyed everything."

Some of Shepard's friends rigged up a veil as a gag gift for her, but it turns out she won't really need one. "People keep asking me what I'll wear. The answer is, conservative western dress," she said. "Skirts well below the knees, and so forth. It ought to be easy for a librarian!

"As far as I can tell, Arab countries vary from place to place in how conservative they are, and Kuwait falls somewhere in the middle. Women can drive. You don't need a veil. If you're married, you can go to a family beach with your husband."

But there's one big hitch with going to the beach, says Shepard. "The problem is that mines float up on the beach regularly."

On August 1 Shepard married Rodney Jackson, formerly with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He will accompany her to Kuwait.

Shepard says the foreign intrigue part of the trip has already started. "Probably the most exciting thing was when our passports were stolen. They were coming back from the Kuwait embassy in D.C. after being stamped with our visa entrance. They were in an overnight Express Mail envelope. It was delivered with a slit in the bottom—empty. So we now have new passports and are hand-carrying them to D.C. to be stamped with our visa."

People kid her they're going to start hanging yellow ribbons on trees for her. "I told one friend, if anything happens, please plan to march on Washington."

Shepard's old, comfortable job will be waiting for her when her adventure ends.

Associated Press visits BLM survey camp

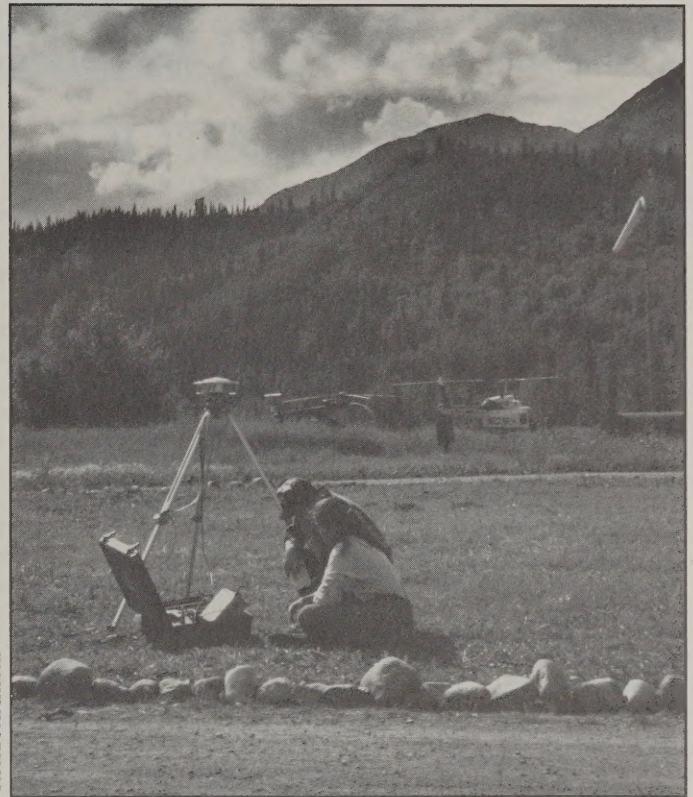
by Teresa McPherson

Monday, August 10, was a day much like any other at BLM's survey camp #14 at Tonsina, with one exception: Associated Press reporter Terry Badger joined surveyors for the day to research an article on historical versus modern land survey methods in Alaska.

Earlier Badger had interviewed retired BLM land surveyor Hobart Hyatt of Anchorage to get a historical perspective of Alaska survey methods. He then contacted BLM for an on-the-ground look at rectangular survey systems in use today.

Cadastral Survey DSD George Oviatt selected Mary Hartel's survey camp at Tonsina for Badger's visit. Hartel is a land surveyor and BLM's chief of survey parties at Tonsina. "Mary's group is our official lead in the state in the use of GPS {Global Positioning System} survey technology," said Oviatt. "Mary's also an outstanding survey chief, and I felt she could do a good job of translating technical survey jargon into lay terms."

Branch chiefs Larry Evans and Dan Johnson and Joe Burns of Field Survey Section #1 accompanied Badger to the camp. Hartel met the group, and gave Badger a general overview of the camp's function and mission. She then explained how her group uses GPS survey receivers to record data received from satellites to enable surveyors to compute positions on the ground. "With a GPS receiver, one surveyor can do the work of a whole



Teresa McPherson

BLM survey chief Mary Hartel explains the use of the GPS survey receiver for AP reporter Terry Badger.

team in a fraction of the time required by conventional survey techniques," explained Hartel.

Badger had a close-up look at the inertial navigation system used in conjunction with GPS to ensure accuracy within cadastral survey standards. Inertial navigation systems have been used by BLM Alaska since the mid-1970s, but will be gradually phased out as GPS technology is refined for specific applications in Alaska.

Later in the day the group boarded a helicopter and visited a survey party on the ground. Badger photographed BLM land surveyors at work using conventional total station survey instruments as Hartel explained how land surveyors often blend various survey technologies.

Badger plans to use the information he gathered in an upcoming article on how advances in land survey technology will help to speed up the land conveyance process. "I'd like to show what this technology means to future landholders under ANCSA," he says. "Sort of a Dark Ages vs. today look at the technology, how far we've come, and what this means to Native Corporations who are waiting for their entitlements."

Badger anticipates the article will be broadcast over the Associated Press wire service in early September.

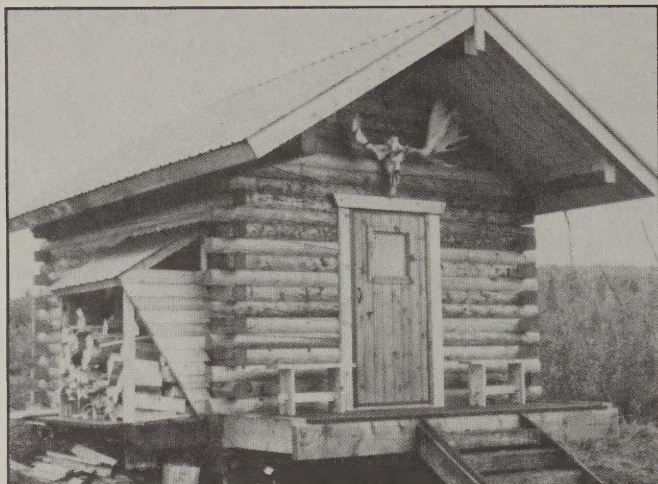


Teresa McPherson

Land surveyor Dan Wiesner (right) describes the inertial navigation system for Badger.

ADO constructs second Iditarod shelter cabin

Danielle Allen



by Danielle Allen

There will be less gritting of teeth for those traveling the Iditarod National Historic Trail between Skwentna and McGrath since the construction of a new shelter cabin in July.

The new Bear Creek shelter cabin, named after a nearby tributary, is located just east of McGrath. This stretch of the trail is known for strong winds and frequent winter storms.

BLM carpenters Ken Higgins and Bill Baker joined Iditarod Trail coordinator Mike Zaidlicz and outdoor recreation specialists Jake Schlapfer and Eric Yeager on the six-day project. "The biggest challenge was finding a dry spot to construct the cabin," said Schlapfer. Wading through boggy tundra, the crew found an ideal location on a hill about a mile from the trail.

The new shelter cabin sleeps ten, has a dog team hookup and nearby outhouse, and is well stocked with firewood. "It should be real popular with dog mushers and bison hunters," said Zaidlicz.

The shelter cabin is located within the Farewell Burn, an area devastated by a multi-million-acre fire in 1977. It's the second shelter cabin the Anchorage District has constructed on the Iditarod Trail. The Tripod Flats shelter cabin was built outside the Native village of Unalakleet in 1989.



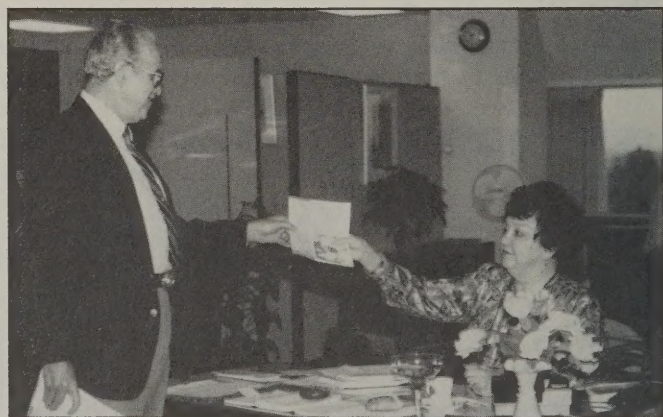
Workwise or Otherwise



Teresa McPherson

Burdena Pasenelli, Special Agent-in-Charge for the FBI, visits with BLM employees after speaking at an August 26 brown bag luncheon commemorating Women's Equality Day. Pasenelli is the highest-ranking woman in the FBI, and the only female Special Agent-in-Charge of a field office.

Pasenelli's presentation stressed the importance of mentors and teamwork. "Mentoring is about listening, offering advice," she said. "It's not about favoritism—that violates equality." Asked if she ever felt she had to work harder because she was a woman, she responded: "Don't work harder; work smarter. Find out what your agency is all about, and learn to excel at what that agency does. And don't be upset if you sometimes feel you're treated unfairly. Just go out and prove them wrong!"



Teresa McPherson

Security specialist J.N. Sturrup of the Federal Protective Service gives SD Secretary Elaine Barankiewicz a pamphlet on **security guidelines for government employees**. Sturrup recently visited several BLM offices in the Anchorage Federal Office Building to provide information to employees concerning federal security and crime prevention.

Applause

Awards

Supervisors can help to expedite award processing by checking award packets for accuracy, appropriateness of award, and proper forms. If you have questions, call Nancy Brainerd at 271-3187.

Special Act Service Award

Lynda Hummel, Administrative Services Clerk, Division of Support Services

On-the-Spot Cash Award

Kelly Mahoney, Secretary, Division of Lands and Renewable Resources

Rodney Everett, Realty Specialist, Steese/White Mountains District Office

Charles Jensen, Program Analyst, Division of Conveyance Management

Connie Lewis, Land Law Examiner, Division of Lands and Renewable Resources

Length of Service

10-Year Service Award

Alice Chavez, Land Law Examiner, Division of Conveyance Management

Juana Fisher, Miscellaneous Documents Examiner, Division of Support Services

John Sroufe, Supervisory Land Surveyor, Division of Cadastral Survey

20-Year Service Award

Paul Sulinski, Forestry Technician, Alaska Fire Service

Eve Heavner, Land Law Examiner, Division of Conveyance Management

Donald Erickson, Supply Technician, Division of Support Services

Craig Schumacher, Materials Handling Leader, Alaska Fire Service

Timothy Godfrey, Employee Relations Specialist, Division of Support Services

Retirement

John R. Barnes, Supervisory Realty Specialist, Kobuk District Office

Welcome Aboard

Gayle Bishop, Secretary, Division of Cadastral Survey

Pamela Eldridge, Office Automation Assistant, Division of Conveyance Management

Patricia Green, Student Trainee (Land Law Examiner), Division of Conveyance Management

Lisa H. Armstrong, Forestry Technician, Alaska Fire Service

Gary I. Goldberg, Procurement Clerk (OA), Division of Support Services

Michael R. Powell, Forestry Technician, Alaska Fire Service

Moving On

Aden Seidlitz, Petroleum Engineer, Division of Mineral Resources

Rosemarie Cunningham, Computer Specialist, Division of Information Resources Management



After more than 30 years of federal service, supervisory natural resource specialist **Bob Barnes** has retired from BLM. While in Alaska, Barnes served as chief of the Division of Resources until the 1986 reorganization. He then became chief of Kobuk District's resources management staff for three years and chief of the lands and minerals staff for the last three and a half years. An avid fisherman, he'll be keeping that line wet in the rushing waters of central Oregon, in the area of Bend.

The 1992 **Combined Federal Campaign** starts this month. The campaign kick-off will be held on Wednesday, September 16, at 12:30 p.m. in the atrium of the Anchorage Federal Office Building. A CFC representative will be canvassing each division and district to give everyone the opportunity to make a difference in this year's campaign.

In conjunction with CFC, a presentation by representatives from local charitable organizations is planned for September 29 and 30 at 2:30 in the Denali Room. Refreshments will be offered. Plan to drop by and learn why your contribution is so vital. Don't miss this opportunity to be a true "Point of Light" by giving in the 1992 Combined Federal Campaign.





K.J. Mushovic

SWIFTWATER RESCUE TRAINING PAYS OFF. On July 15 four Glennallen District employees got a real life chance to put their swiftwater rescue training into practice. During a routine patrol of the Delta National Wild and Scenic River, outdoor recreation planners Chris Bunyard and Jack Bennett and SCA volunteers Steve Thomas and Paul Fiedler rescued two persons who were stranded after their canoe overturned on a rock. Supervisor and swiftwater rescue instructor Janelle Eklund said, "I'm very proud of this crew and their ability to handle a difficult situation without any problems." Eklund is now one of two certified instructors in the Glennallen District.

Standing: Bunyard and Fiedler. Seated: Bennett and Thomas, with supervisor Janelle Eklund (center).

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On the Cover:

Associated Press reporter Terry Badger (left) listens as BLM land surveyor Dan Wiesner describes the inertial navigation system aboard a contract helicopter. Badger visited BLM's survey camp 14 at Tonsina in August to research an article on rectangular survey systems used in Alaska. Story on page 5.

Photo by Teresa McPherson.



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