



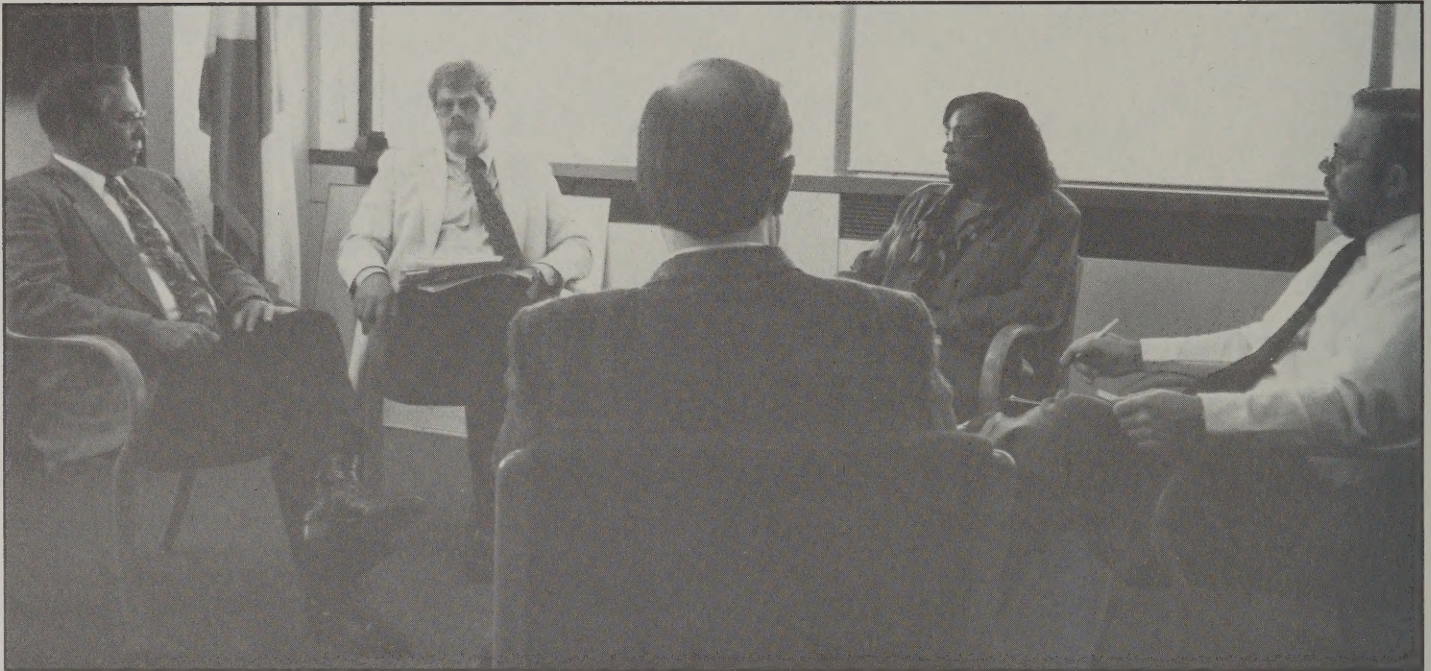
ALASKA PEOPLE

July 1993 Vol. 14, No. 7



OEER

Taking a hard look at where we are,
where we're going, & how we'll get
there



Rob McWhorter

State Director Ed Spang and Associate State Director Bill Calkins receive an update of OEER actions to date.

by Teresa McPherson

Change is a normal part of any organization. This process is due to many factors: changing administrations, public opinion, social demands, or the people within the organization.

As a result, organizations need an occasional "tune-up." This provides a chance to pause, step back, and examine what's working, what needs improvement, and where to proceed from here.

The Organization Effectiveness and Efficiency Review (OEER) initiated by State Director Ed Spang in 1991 provides BLM Alaska the vehicle to do just that.

"The objective of the OEER was to assess and evaluate the BLM Alaska organization," explains SD Spang. "To find ways to improve the processes, workflow,

communications, productivity, and teamwork of our organization."

The review called for project teams to examine specific areas of BLM Alaska. Each team produced a report detailing options for improving the way we do business, with the focus on our customers and their needs. The reports were consolidated and, incorporating TQM principles, management team members asked employees to provide comments and feedback. The State Director then appointed steering committees to develop implementation plans for the approved options.

The implementation schedule provided for immediate, short- and long-term actions. Many of these have already begun, or are in progress. The table at right

highlights the numerous areas where enhanced efficiency has already begun to pay big dividends. And while some organizational restructuring became necessary as a result of the review, these were reached as a result, rather than the objective. From improving the budget process to enhancing fire management to expanding automation, the OEER has had a profound impact on the way we do business at BLM Alaska.

So where are we now with OEER? A tracking system is being finalized to help us see where we are in carrying out the actions identified in the review. This system will be completed and sent out for review later this month. SD Spang explains: "The

management team will share this information with employees, initiate open discussion, and encourage feedback from all employees. Everyone will have access to the review system.”

“The success of the OEER is ultimately in the hands of employees,” says SD Spang. “I encourage employees to talk to their supervisors, get involved and provide feedback, so that together we can move forward with the changing times.”

Major areas targeted by the OEER:

- Statewide budget process revamped to establish and clarify funding priorities. SD to issue guidance on annual basis to update priorities.
- State Office program leaders to increase visits to districts, and district program leads to visit their State Office counterparts more frequently.
- Improved coordination between District Offices and State Office on land conveyance activities.
- Organizational modifications, to include moving Planning function to Resources, splitting Support Services into separate Operations and Administration divisions, regrouping Cadastral Survey functions, modifying structure of Joint Pipeline Office, and placing Fairbanks support elements under AFS Manager.
- Enhanced fire management, to include expanded fire investigation, using AFS aircraft for resource management work, cross-utilization of fire personnel, and improved fire qualification system.
- Enhanced effectiveness of personnel management with focus on better position management, expanding seasonal workforce, better management of scarce skills, and incorporating affirmative action.
- Increased use of local and wide-area networks, electronic mail and fax to speed up flow of information.

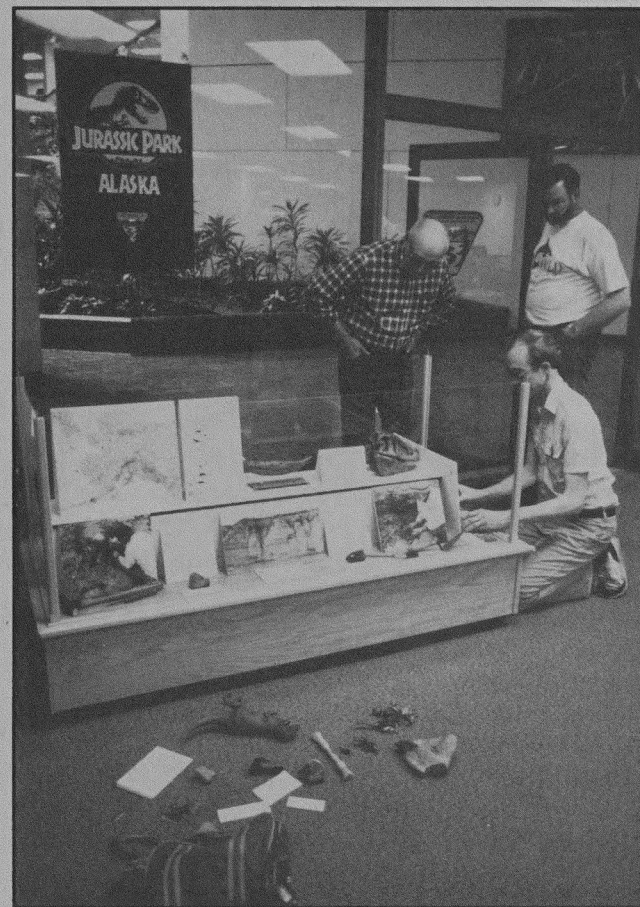


BLM unveils new dinosaur exhibit

In June BLM State Archaeologist Dr. Robert King opened a new paleontology exhibit called “Jurassic Park—Alaska” in the Public Room at the Anchorage Federal Building. Before King was able to complete the exhibit, visitors were already stopping to take a peek. The exhibit features casts of a

Tyrannosaurus rex tooth and skull (1/10 actual size), as well as photos and other fossils from a paleontology excavation along the Colville River on Alaska’s North Slope.

In late June, Dr. Marilyn Nickels, Chief of the W.O. Branch of Cultural Heritage, visited BLM Alaska. Below Nickels discusses the new paleo exhibit with King. They later visited the Tangle Lakes Archaeological District near Glennallen, before heading up to the Mesa Site archaeological find in the Brooks Range.



Ed Bovy

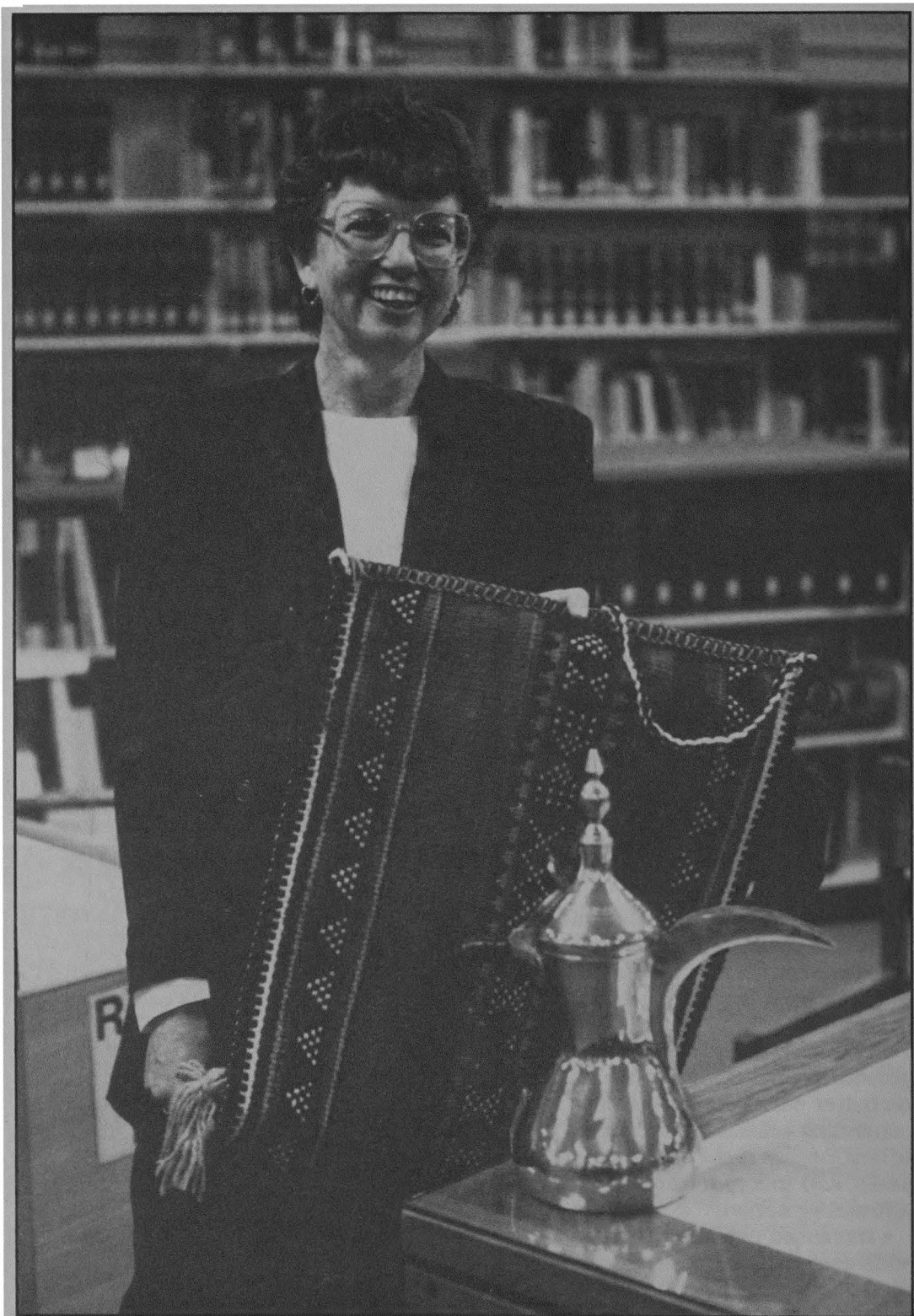


Betsy Vaneck

Librarian returns with tales of Mideast adventure

"I was out on the beach one day when about 100 Bangladesh soldiers came and began poking around us with sticks, looking for mines left by the Iraqis. They came back and showed us one."

—Martha Shepard



No lamp, no flying carpet and no genie. Librarian Martha Shepard with an Arabian coffee pot and a woven camel wool rug from Kuwait.

As reported in the Sept. 1992 issue of Alaska People, Martha Shepard of the Alaska Resources Library took advantage of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to assist in the rebuilding of the library collections and services of the Kuwait National Scientific and Technical Information Center following the invasion by the Iraqis. She was sponsored by the American Library Association and the U.S. Information Agency, and was selected from hundreds of applicants. Martha returned to Alaska in June. —Ed Boy

By the time I got to Kuwait in September, much of the surface debris had been cleaned up and most of the mines had been cleared from the city. Life had started to return to normal as best it could.

The library, however, was a bombed and burned out hulk. Virtually all the contents were gone, although we managed to find a few things on microfilm. We set up temporary quarters in a Quonset hut. The library originally had a staff of 44, and about 20 of these people had returned to work.

There was so much to do. I set up filing and tracking systems, and a budget to begin ordering replacement reference books and renewing journal subscriptions. We set up a small computer system to track what we bought. The library, by the way, has a budget of more than a million dollars a year!

While all this was going on, there was an immediate and continual demand for our services—providing information to help in the rebuilding of a country. Even though the people knew that we had virtually nothing, they came in hoping we'd be able to find the one bit of information they were looking for. One of the most

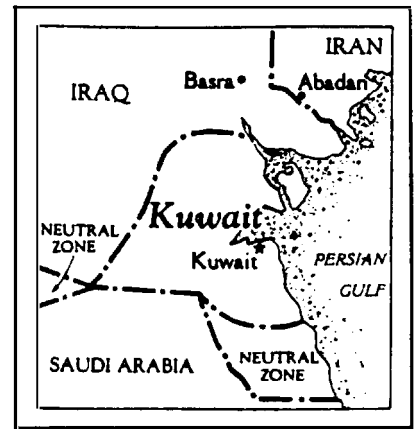
requested topics was bioremediation and, interestingly enough, I found that much of the material available was related to the Exxon Valdez oil spill. People also needed to know about building construction standards.

Almost everyone we met had tales of the invasion and hostage stories. Most were quite harrowing experiences. Many people who were there at the time of the invasion lost everything—cars, homes, possessions, even family.

Although the war was over, I have my own stories, too. I was out on the beach one day when about 100 Bangladesh soldiers came and began poking around us with sticks, looking for some of the one million mines left by the Iraqis. They came back and showed us one. Even though they had swept the beach four times, they said they usually found something every time they came. The sea would wash things up, and the wind would blow the sand around, covering and uncovering the deadly explosives.

The hardest thing to adjust to was the heat. It was often 115 degrees, and you just didn't go out during the day unless you could ride in an air-conditioned car. I did a lot of shopping late at night and went to the beach early in the morning. There wasn't much to do away from work—no performing arts or entertainment as such. People generally entertain at home.

I never saw a woman on a bicycle there, but I rode mine. Women usually stay at home. Marriages are arranged with the first cousin being the preferred mate. Having more than one wife



is permitted. One day a matchmaker came to town. All the women wanted to be the "first wife."

There are thousands of Kuwaiti males aged 17-25, racing their Mercedes and Porsches. Caprice Classics also are popular. I asked why, and was told the air conditioners work best! Gas, by the way, is about 50 cents a gallon, and there is a law that no car can be more than five years old.

The veneer of civilization in Kuwait is very thin, but it's definitely a western veneer. Hotels are five-star. Foods are predominantly Lebanese and Iranian dishes.

In Kuwait, your status is based on nationality and years of education. Right now Americans are at the top of the list. But the society and values are completely different from what we're used to. Most marriages are arranged. And the government bureaucracy makes anything in the U.S. seem sane and rational.

Overall, it was a great experience. I made a lot of friends, and it was hard to leave. By this April we had moved into a new (and air-conditioned!) library building. The subscriptions began arriving, and we had about 4,000 books on the shelves. They wanted me to stay longer, but that would have made it even harder to leave.



Photointerpreters trained to see what others can't

by E. Fransson

Photointerpreters function as an integral unit in the Branch of Mapping Sciences, and as with many BLM Alaska jobs, the focus is on the land transfer process.

Scott Guyer is one of three photointerpreters employed by the BLM in Alaska. But just exactly what does a photointerpreter, often called "PI" in mapping circles, do? "We identify bodies of water on aerial photography and map them on plats, and insure that the meanders (the survey points that delineate the water boundaries) on the survey plats are correct," says Guyer.

The photointerpreters' acreage calculations are crucial to Alaska Native and state land selections. At BLM the photointerpreter positions are interdisciplinary in the fields of geography, geology, biology and cartography.

Guyer gained his experience as a BLM Nevada range conservationist, mapping vegetation using aerial and orthophotography. Orthophotos are aerial photographs that have been corrected through complex procedures to become as accurate in scale as a map. Guyer's background in wildlife and vegetation, coupled with practice and field investigation, help him interpret color infrared

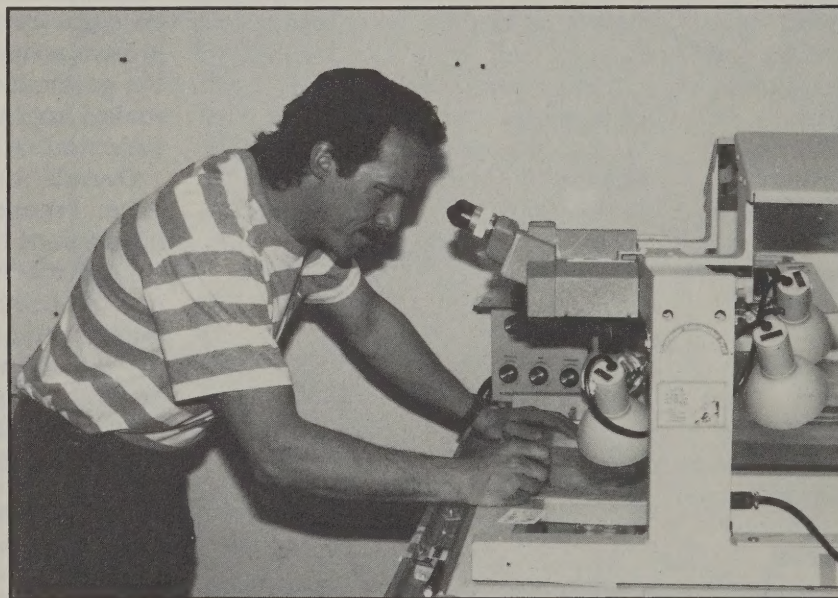
aerials in those unfamiliar colors of red, dark red, brown, blue, gray, and black. He then carefully draws intricate, fine lines denoting boundaries between land and water.

"Having the right background helps you understand what you're actually looking at when you get back to the office," Guyer explained.

What Guyer likes best about his job is the variety of projects he's assigned to. "It balances the down side of the job," he says, "like spending a lot of time on the zoom transfer scope and light tables." He savored three memorable eight-day floats down the Gulkana River last summer, mapping soils and vegetation with the Soil Conservation Service. This summer he looks forward to Fort Yukon and Kotzebue field studies.

Much of a photointerpreters' field work involves water, so swift water rescue and other survival and emergency medical training is mandatory. "I think I have the survival skills to make the best of any emergency situation," Guyer stated.

Federal agencies, the state, and private contractors frequently consult the photointerpreters. "On a recent contract we trained employees at Aeromap U.S.



Teresa McPherson

Guyer says the variety of his job, especially getting out to do field work, "helps balance the down side of the job—like spending a lot of time on the zoom transfer scope and light tables."



and quality checked their photointerpretation work for a state contract," Guyer explained. And the BLM relies heavily on the photointerpreters' expertise, according to navigability specialist Dot Tideman.

"They can tell you a lot about the physical characteristics of a stream from aerial photos taken at 60,000 feet—whether it has waterfalls, beaver dams, vegetation—without even having to go out there. They can definitely see more than I can!"

Greg Bolen



Identifying upland and aquatic vegetation is critical to determining water boundaries. At top, Guyer pinpoints his location using color infrared photographs and topographic maps.

"PROFILES" is a new periodic feature of *Alaska People* that focuses on jobs within BLM Alaska through interviews with employees working in those fields. We hope this feature will be helpful to employees who would like to know what educational background or work experience could help them qualify for other series.

On the job with BLM Ranger Ed Lee



Dan Gullickson

BLM Ranger Ed Lee straps his four-wheeler down in preparation for a trip to the Fortymile country.

by Sharon Durgan Wilson

Suntanned and serious, BLM Ranger Ed Lee goes about his business quietly. "I spend most of my summer in the Fortymile area, about 200 miles southeast of Fairbanks," Lee said. "But from October to May, when the road into the area is closed, I monitor public use of BLM cabins in the White Mountains National Recreation Area, traveling by four-wheeler or snowmachine."

Lee has a quiet, unassuming personality, and projects a sincerity that is readily apparent to co-workers and the public.

Last May was Lee's first anniversary of active duty with BLM's Steese/White Mountains District. "The time has passed quickly," he said. "One of the things I like about this job is the variety of duties."

The variety in his job contributes to Lee's suntan, a result of

long hours in the field and on the water. Lee patrols the Fortymile River by boat, providing a much-needed BLM presence on the river. "While I'm on my rounds, I help out the Tok Field Office staff where I can. I accompany realty specialists on compliance checks of miners' campsites, and if they have a problem, I assist them any way I can."

Lee says a problem may be as simple as a miner failing to submit proper paperwork. But when camp sites are vacated in unsatisfactory condition, he assists the staff in locating and contacting the permittee.

"Sometimes a telephone call will resolve the situation," Lee says. "Or, it can be as extreme as a mandatory court appearance and issuing a citation. The largest percentage of people by far want to cooperate, and most will."

Relatively few people, about 250, live in the Fortymile Area year-round. In the summer, placer miners and suction dredgers work along the Taylor Highway and in the Fortymile River. Lee has met many of the people, letting them know they can count on him in an emergency. Lee also monitors public use of three roadside campgrounds, and visits the BLM-managed Fort Egbert National Historic Site in Eagle.

Born in Stockton, Calif., and raised in the San Joaquin Valley, Lee earned an associate of arts degree with an emphasis in administration of justice from Merced Community College. His bachelor of science degree is in human relations and organizational behavior.

"I started as a park ranger in Mariposa County, California, in 1974," Lee said. "Several years later I switched to being an investigator for the Federal Highway Administration in Sacramento." Lee monitored drug testing programs for truck drivers, checked driving hours to make sure they didn't exceed the limits, conducted accident investigations and regulated the interstate transportation of hazardous materials.

"After a couple of years, I realized I missed the outdoors," he said. "I knew I had to get back outside. So I sent my application to Alaska. I saw it as an opportunity for an adventure. The rest, as they say, is history."

Lee says his job duties at BLM are more diverse than his previous work. "This job combines the best of both careers. The duties and the extreme changes in the weather challenge me. It's a totally different climatic environment than what I was used to, and I've learned a lot about the differences, and how to survive."

Native youth workshop features visit to AFS

by Andy Williams

The Alaska Fire Service played host to 50 Native youths from around the state who participated in the Alaska Inter-Tribal Youth Practicum in Fairbanks June 13-19.

The youths ages 14-19 gathered from Ketchikan, Barrow and places in between for the practicum, which was sponsored by the Tanana Chiefs Conference and the U.S. Forest Service. The theme of the conference was "Tribal Government and Natural Resources Management."

Twenty of the 50 students who participated in the practicum were RAPS students. BLM also provided two VISTA volunteers to serve as chaperones for the event.

Janet Allen-Nelson of Tanana Chiefs said the program gives the students an understanding of tribal government and how it functions, and exposes them to natural resource management activities, disciplines and career opportunities. Juniors and seniors received a college credit for the program from the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

The youths were based at Chena Hot Springs, where they attended workshops on natural resource management activities designed to develop leadership, communications and problem solving skills.

On June 16, they visited the BLM Alaska Fire Service. Many of the youths were from villages that maintain emergency firefighter crews. EFF crews work with AFS and the State Division of Forestry to fight wildfires. The minimum age for EFF crew members is 18, but people can qualify for EFF

training at 16.

The youths visited AFS in three separate groups. Dave Jandt, Hotshot program manager, welcomed them and discussed the mission and functions of AFS. Peter Solomon and Calvin Moses described how they began with AFS and became fire suppression specialists.

The next stop on the tour was the Alaska Interagency Fire Coordination Center, the nerve center for fire suppression activities in Alaska. Here, fires are reported and plotted on a map. The Initial Attack Section dispatches smokejumpers and retardant aircraft to the fire. The Logistics Section dispatches personnel and equipment. The Intelligence Section keeps track of the fires overall.

The youths saw the warehouse, where material handler Ben Robinson described how AFS keeps firefighters supplied in the field. With a \$6 million inventory in fire stores, the warehouse can supply more than 2,500 persons in the field.

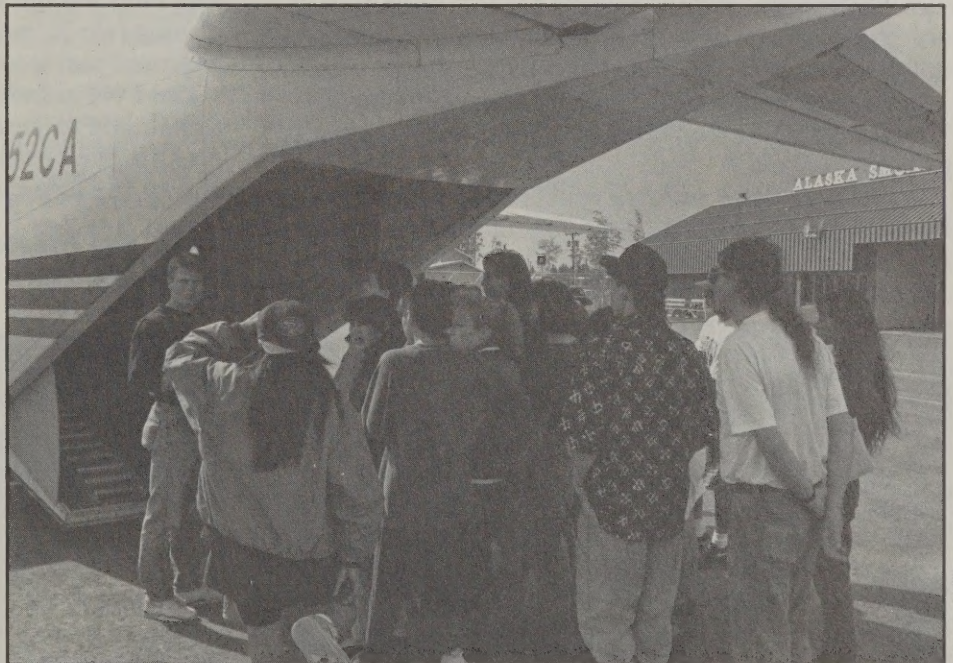
The final stop on the tour was the AFS Operations Building, where the Alaska Smokejumpers,

fire suppression specialists and Hotshot crews are located. AFS has about 65 smokejumpers, all experienced firefighters. Smokejumpers are an initial attack force who respond to fires while they are still small to catch them before they get out of hand.

Gene Stone, a smokejumper with 14 years firefighting experience, led the students through the building. He showed them how jumpsuits and other equipment are used and the facilities where paracargo is readied and parachutes are inspected, mended and packed.

Stone, urged the youths to consider AFS as a place to work. Firefighting is a good way to earn money during college, and fire management offers a growing number of careers after college, he said.

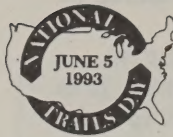
Tanana Chiefs coordinator Allen-Nelson said the youth practicum was patterned after one developed by the Forest Service and Native groups in Montana 14 years ago. This was the second year the program has been held in Alaska, and the Tanana Chiefs Conference expects to host it again next year, she said.



AFS smokejumper Gene Stone shows students the Casa 212, which flies smokejumpers to wildfires where they parachute down to provide initial attack efforts.

Andy Williams

Iditarod Trail gets new signs on National Trails Day



On National Trails Day, June 5, Anchorage District Manager Dick Vernimen and Iditarod National Historic Trail Coordinator Mike Zaidlicz unveiled a sign marking the start of the historic trail at Seward. National Trails Day commemorated the 25th anniversary of the National Trails Act.

At the other end of the trail, BLM Nome Manager Norm Messenger and Iditarod Trail Advisory Council Chairperson Leo Rasmussen unveiled a second sign marking the end of the trail at Mile 938 in Nome.

Meanwhile in Anchorage, environmental education specialist Jeff Brune and six volunteers brushed and redirected one-half-mile of dogsledding trail at the BLM's Campbell Tract. Redirecting the trail will decrease the potential for car-dog collisions when the planned education center is completed.

National Trails Day events were sponsored by a variety of agencies and organizations throughout the U.S. The events were targeted to bring increased awareness and appreciation for the nation's thousands of miles of open trail. —Danielle Allen



Danielle Allen

Dan Seavey directs the installation of the new Iditarod National Historic Trail sign at Mile 0 in Seward, AK. Trail managers Duane Harp (USFS) and BLM Anchorage District Manager Dick Vernimen look on during this National Trails Day event on June 5.



And the winner is...

In June two Anchorage BLMers saw their educational goals get a boost from the Federal Women's Program.

Land law assistant Jackie Bowens and carto tech Jim Adair, both of Title & Land Status, were two of seven Anchorage area federal employees to receive \$500 scholarships for the 1993-94 academic year.

"I couldn't believe it!" said an exuberant Bowens. "This was the fourth time I applied, I wasn't going to give up!"

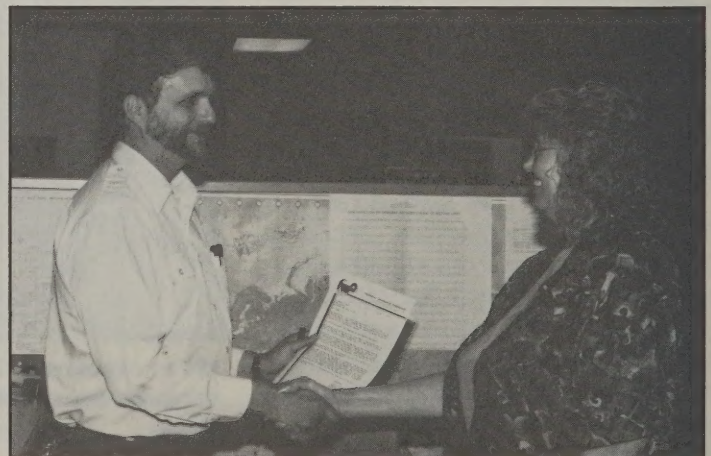
Bowens plans to use her scholarship toward a business degree at the University of Alaska-Anchorage. She's already begun to develop leadership qualities as chair of the newly-formed Federal

Women's Program Council, and hopes to earn a degree in business administration.

Scholarship recipient Jim Adair is currently enrolled in UAA's surveying program. He's a full-time carto tech for BLM, and a sophomore at UAA who recently made the Chancellor's List. Adair says he enjoys cartography, but would like to eventually get into field survey with BLM. He's also a single parent raising two teenagers. "So any tuition help is pretty welcome just now!" he says.

The FWP scholarship program provides financial assistance to permanent employees in GS grades 1-7 seeking the education necessary for advancement within the federal work force.

Below: BLM FWP Manager Barbara Wiley presents scholarships to two very happy BLMers, Jackie Bowens and Jim Adair.

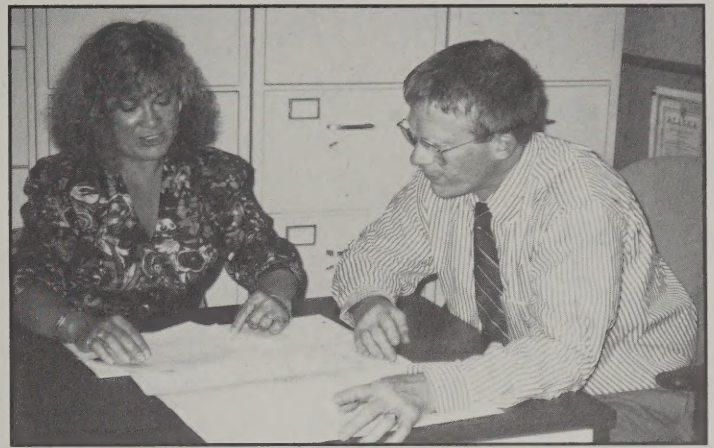


New Townsite Trustee named

Former Anchorage District realty specialist Martin Hansen is the newly appointed Townsite Trustee. As trustee for the historic Townsite program, Hansen will work to resolve conflicts standing in the way of the approximately 20 open villages yet to receive deed to their lands under the program.

While he admits he will miss the outdoors at Campbell Tract, Hansen says he looks forward to the change of pace the new position will provide. And what does he see as the biggest challenge of his new job? "Closing it out, or as nearly as possible," he says.

The Townsite process started in Alaska in 1891, and is expected to be completed in the next year or so.



Betsy Vanek

The Townsite staff—Hansen and land law assistant Shirley Spurlock—are now located in BLM's Public Room in the Anchorage Federal Office Building. The telephone number is (907) 271-3795.

Applause!

Sustained Superior Performance Award

Judy Kramer, Land Law Examiner, Conveyance Management
Mary Bonin, Land Law Examiner, Conveyance Management
Linda Resseguie, Land Law Examiner, Conveyance Management
Nancy Larsen, Land Law Examiner, Conveyance Management
Elizabeth Carew, Land Law Examiner, Conveyance Management
Georgia Taylor, Computer Assistant, Information Resources Management

On-the-Spot Cash Award

Kimberly Mincer, Photolithographer, Cadastral Survey
Dwayne Richardson, Lead Photolithographer, Cadastral Survey
Melvin Williams, Personnel Staffing Specialist, Administration
Patricia Kelly, Computer Specialist, Information Resources Management
Joan Steltenpohl, Computer Assistant, Information Resources Management

Length of Service Award

10-Year Service Award
Robert Einarsen, Surveying Technician, Cadastral Survey
Georgina White, Cartographic Technician, Cadastral Survey

20-Year Service Award

Thomas Boyd, Fish and Wildlife Manager, Lands & Renewable Resources

Welcome Aboard

Randall Girouard, Student Trainee (Land Surveyor), Cadastral Survey
Gary Johnson, Aviation Operations Manager, Alaska Fire Service
Christine Nobletts, Cartographic Technician, Operations
Justin Rousseau, Student Trainee (Land Surveyor), Cadastral Survey
Roger Stilipec, Forestry Technician, Alaska Fire Service
Lori Stivener, Student Trainee (Wildlife Biologist), Lands & Renewable Resources
William Tackman, Student Trainee (Land Surveyor), Lands & Renewable Resources
Michael Theisen, Forestry Technician, Alaska Fire Service
Ross Wilmore, Forestry Technician, Alaska Fire Service
James Witt, Fuel Distribution Systems Worker, Alaska Fire Service

Moving On

John Manning, Support Services Clerk, Administration
Todd Shelly, Student Trainee (Land Surveyor), Cadastral Survey
Rodger Vorce, Supervisory Forestry Technician, Alaska Fire Service
Frederick Walter, General Engineer, Operations



Teresa McPherson

BLM fire/forest management specialist Russ Hanson retired in June. Russ' federal career spanned 37 years, and included service with the BLM, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and active duty military service. Russ was honored (and roasted!) by his co-workers at a retirement reception at the State Office in early June. Hanson has since moved to Seaside, Oregon, where he plans to "kick back and fish awhile!"

Creamer's Field isn't just for the birds...



Don Gullickson

Sandy Westcott shares a light moment with a visitor at the Creamer's Field Open House. Dave Yokel (left), Randi Jandt, Ruth Gronquist, Herb Brownell, and Anne Morkill helped staff the BLM booth at the interagency event.

The three northern districts collaborated on a display for the annual Creamer's Field Open House in Fairbanks May 1. The Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge, managed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, is a popular viewing area for Canada geese, sandhill cranes and other migratory birds when they return each spring.

The BLM booth featured displays on bird migration and adaptation for the children, and maps and brochures about BLM programs for adults. A game designed by Randi Jandt of the Kobuk District had children match cutout pictures of migratory birds with suitcases located where they spent the winter, from Alaska to Antarctica.

ALASKA PEOPLE is published monthly for the employees of the Bureau of Land Management and is distributed statewide. It is produced by the Public Affairs Staff, Alaska State Office, 222 W. 7th Avenue, #13, Anchorage, Alaska, 99513-7599. Phone 271-5555.

Chief - David Vickery
Editor/writer/design -
Teresa McPherson
Graphics/pasteup -
Jim Mroczek



On the Cover:

Where DO birds go in winter? Randi Jandt and Anne Morkill helped Fairbanks youngsters answer this question at a special BLM display that featured a unique game to help the youngsters learn about birds and their annual migrations. See story at left.

Photos by Dan Gullickson.



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222 West 7th Avenue, #13
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BLM-AK-GI-017-1120-912