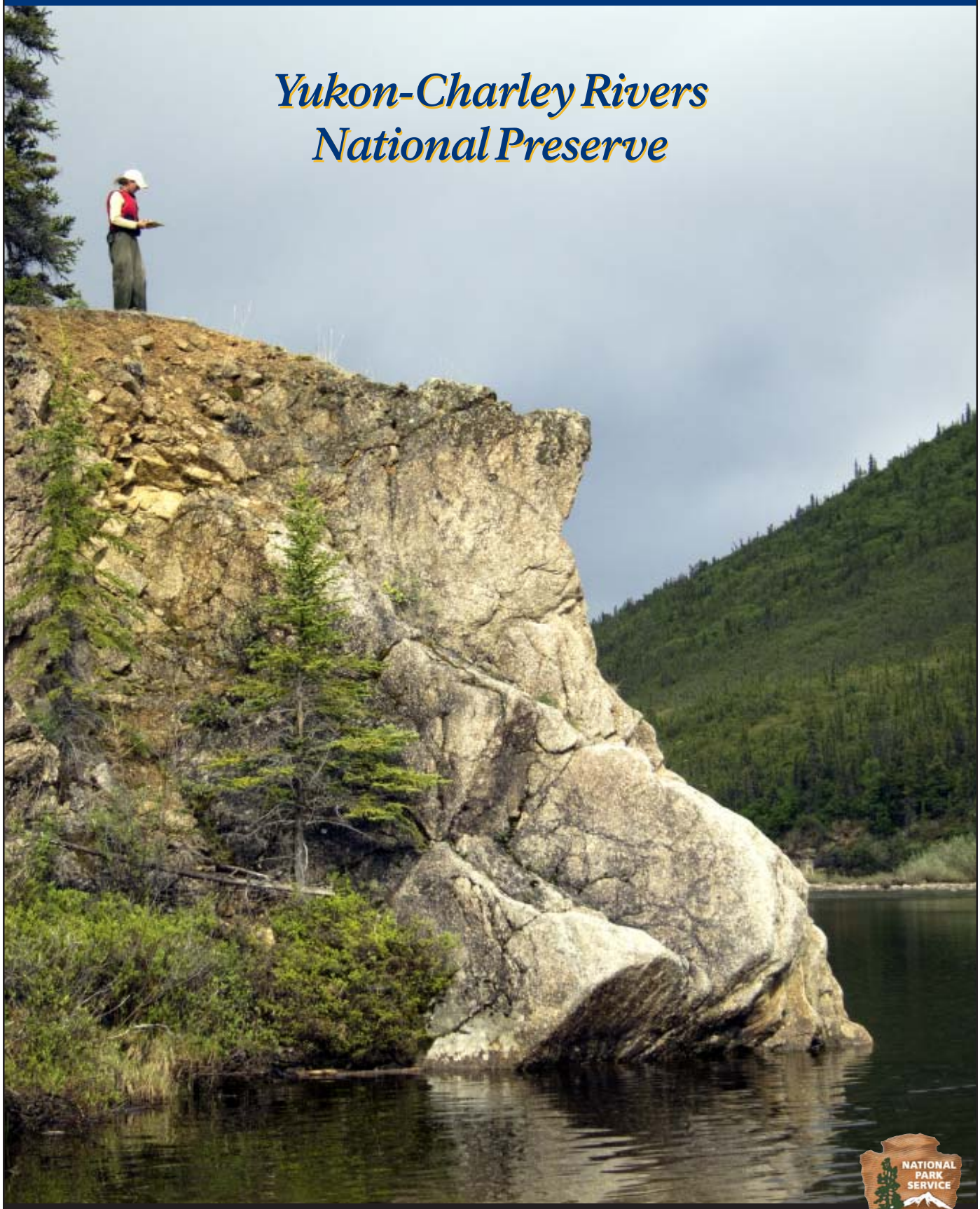
Annual Report 2011

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve



National Park Service
Department of the Interior

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately,
to front only the essential facts of life,
and see if I could not learn what it had to teach,
and not, when I came to die,
discover that I had not lived.

Henry David Thoreau

Table of Contents

Purpose and Significance of Yukon-CharleyRivers National Preserve....4

Map of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve....5

Message from the Superintendent....6

Performance and Results Section....7-20

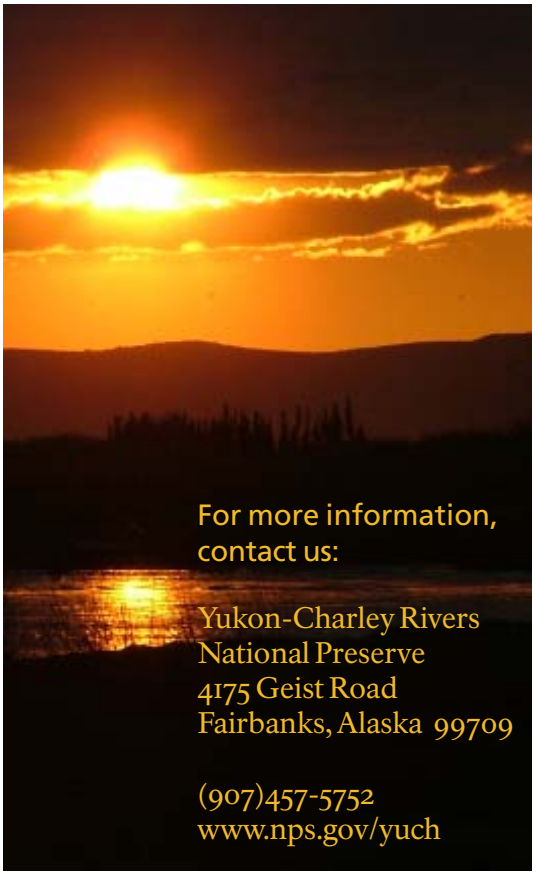
Preserve Resources....7-15

Public Enjoyment and Visitor Experience....15-20

Organizational Effectiveness....21-22

FY 2011 Financial Summary....23

Preserve Organization....24-25



Staff Contributors

Greg Dudgeon, Superintendent
Phoebe Gilbert, Archeologist
Chris Ciancibelli, Archeologist
Chris Houlette, Curator
Chris Allan, Historian
Melanie Flamme, Wildlife Biologist
John Burch, Wildlife Biologist
James Savage, Fire Management Officer
Scott Sample, Park Ranger (LE)
Pat Sanders, Interpretive Ranger
Arch Thompson, Facilities Manager
Monica Cross, Chief of Administration

Editing and Layout

Donna DiFolco, Cartographic Technician

Photos

by the National Park Service, unless noted otherwise

A prehistoric archaeological site was discovered on this low rise above the Charley River in 2011. This prominent landform also contained evidence of a modern campsite impacting the site, underlining the importance of the NPS's mission to identify and protect these resources.

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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.

Message from the Superintendent

"A year from now you will wish you had started today."

I like this quote by Karen Lamb. And it's true; there are a number of things in my personal life I wish I had started doing years ago. I would be further along – and better off! - if I had done so. I'm also thinking that this might likely be true for some of you who are reading the 2011 Annual Report for Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve.

One of those 'things' I wish we – the National Park Service staff in Fairbanks - had started before 2011 are the regularly scheduled meetings now taking place between the residents of Eagle and Eagle Village and Preserve managers. The primary purpose of these meetings is to improve communication and understanding between members of the two communities and Preserve employees.

One of the significant outcomes of the meetings we had in 2011 was a much improved Superintendent's Compendium for 2012. The Superintendent's Compendium provides the public and park employees with a document that lists the special designations, closures, public use limits, permit requirements, and other stipulations under the discretionary authority of the Superintendent of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. The new 2012 Compendium incorporates many of the recommendations from rural subsistence users that make the Preserve's local rules more practical for people living on the land.

We look forward to continuing these important conservations in Eagle and Eagle Village, and had offered to do the same with Preserve stakeholders in the communities of Circle and Central, Alaska. Residents there hosted meetings with "Yukon-Charley" managers in early 2012; we anticipate more discussions – and improvements in our communications and relationships with people living along the upper Yukon River - to come.

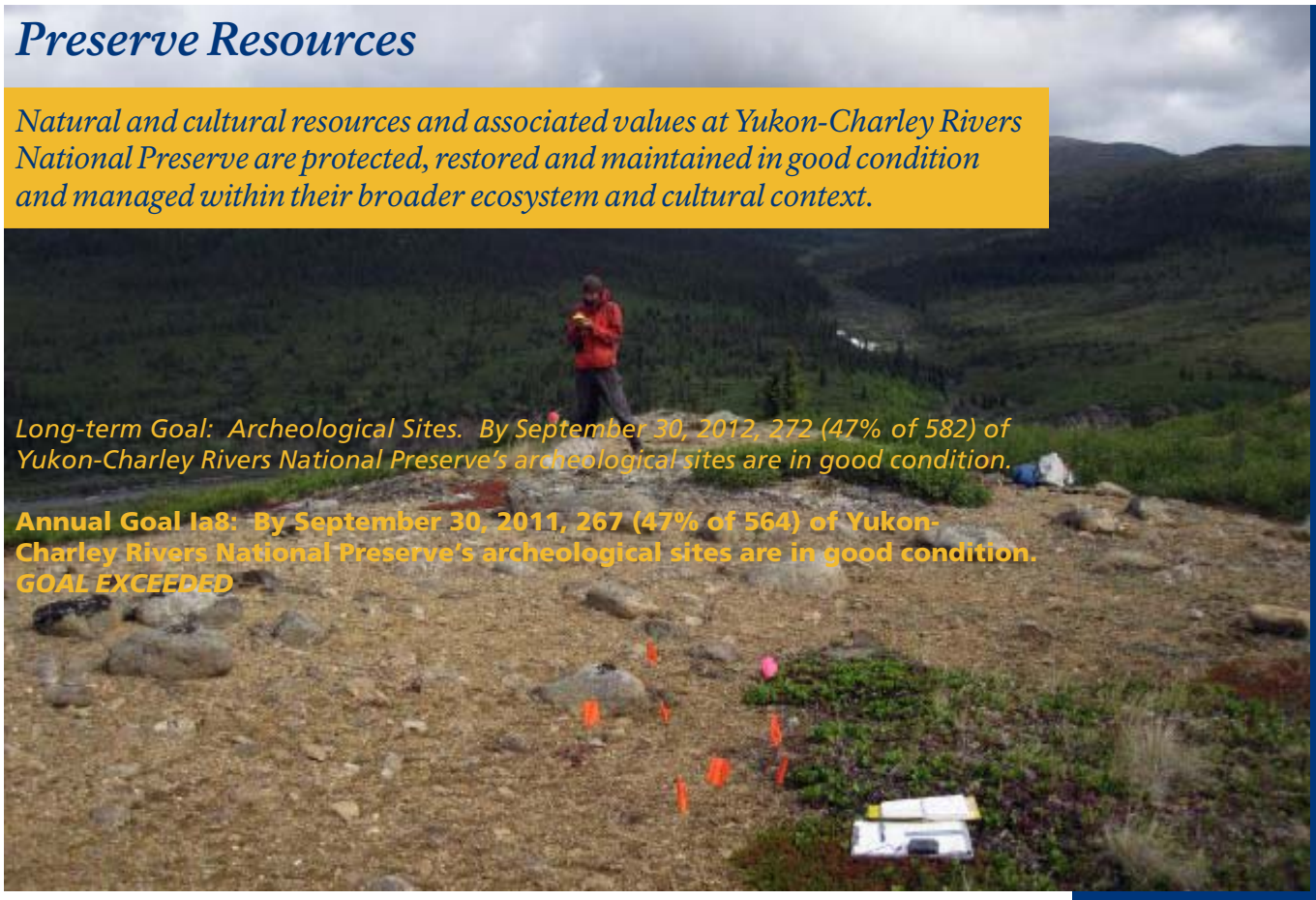
Thank you for your interest in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. We have a knowledgeable, talented staff whose jobs are to protect, research, monitor, and share what we're learning about the Preserve with you. I hope that you enjoy reviewing the accomplishments highlighted in the 2011 Annual Report. As always, I appreciate hearing your questions and suggestions for promoting safe and responsible enjoyment and preservation of the land. By working together, we can provide for the use of the Preserve's renewable resources for people today in a manner that ensures tomorrow's generations the same opportunities.

Mahsi'. Thank you.

Greg Dudgeon
Superintendent

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.



An archeologist documents a prehistoric lithic scatter on the upper Charley River. The flags in the foreground mark where flakes were deposited during the production of a stone tool. Sites like these are common along ridgelines throughout the Preserve.

Charley River Archaeological Inventory

By Phoebe Gilbert & Chris Ciancibelli

Archaeological fieldwork in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve during the summer of 2011 field season was limited to an investigation of the Charley River corridor. The project was undertaken because it was determined that there was inadequate knowledge of the prehistoric archaeological resources along portions of the Charley River and there was a need to build on a baseline research project performed in 2006. In addition to the river corridor itself, survey focused on the upland areas near the headwaters of the Charley River and downstream from the Three-Fingers airstrip.

Two archaeologists spent 14 days surveying approximately 1,200 acres. During this time, 10 new sites were identified and recorded, and 12 previously recorded sites were revisited and condition assessments were performed. The newly discovered sites consist primarily of surface lithic scatters. One new cabin was identified in an unexpected location far from the river. One newly discovered site has been adversely impacted by the presence of a hunting camp, and historic structures continue to degrade, but otherwise no obvious disturbances have occurred.

The information gathered during this survey adds to the growing archaeological knowledge of how people used the uplands of the Yukon and Charley Rivers and furthers the NPS's ability to properly manage the preserve's cultural resources.

Dr. Paul Myrow (Colorado College) and Esther Kennedy (Harvard undergraduate) collect geologic samples from the summit of Jones Ridge.

Layers of time; Field and collections-based research

By Chris Houlette

A number of different pursuits during 2011 have highlighted the exceptional historical depth preserved in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. Two historic investigations are ongoing: the analysis of the Snare Creek archaeological collection representing a late 1940's occupation near Coal Creek, and a re-analysis of the Charley's Village collections representing a late 1890's occupation near the Kandik River. The Snare Creek collection analysis is being undertaken through collaboration with the University of Alaska Museum of the North Archaeology Department. The Charley's Village research is being conducted by the preserve curator and has resulted in a new virtual web exhibit featured on the YUCH web page.

Tobacco tin from Charley's Village.

A Harvard University PhD student is conducting a field investigation of Neoproterozoic and Early Paleozoic stratigraphy near the Tatonduk River. He and his team are investigating some of the oldest known geologic deposits in Alaska. Known as the Tindir group, these rock formations are being investigated to answer questions relating to early events in the Earth's history and potentially the origin of animals. The preserve curator has been working with the investigators to catalog the unique collections resulting from field activities.

Finally, a newly accessioned item represents a time period somewhere in between these different investigations. An isolated mammoth tusk, which was collected from an eroding section of the Yukon River bank, has been dated to 43,500 years before present.

Donation of Historical Photographs Reveals Early Coal Creek Life

By Chris Allan

One of the principal reasons that Congress created Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve was to protect and interpret the history of the Klondike Gold Rush, which spilled into Alaska along the Yukon River corridor and led to decades of gold mining across the Last Frontier. In 2011, Alvin Hendricks, Jr., of Seattle and his wife and son visited the preserve and brought with them 170 family photographs from the late 1930s of the Gold Placers, Inc. camp on Coal Creek and of the Coal Creek gold dredge when the machine was first put into service.

As a child, Mr. Hendricks lived with his family at Coal Creek where his father was the first "winchman" on the newly constructed dredge. The winchman worked in the dredge's pilot-house where he operated the levers that controlled the dredge's gravel-washing apparatus as well as the speed and direction of the bucketline. His mother, Mildred, worked as camp cook providing three meals a day for up to twenty dredge workers. For Alvin Jr., life at the camp was filled with adventure as he explored the area with his pet dog Taku and checked his trapline on snowshoes or by dog team.

Fourth of July music-making at Coal Creek camp, circa 1938. Al, Jr. and his dog, Taku, on left.

Al Hendricks, Jr., with snowshoes and .22 rifle.

The photographs are a treasure trove of historical information about daily life at Coal Creek. They show workers driving steam points into the icy ground to thaw the permafrost; the construction of a penstock to harness the power of creek water for blasting away soil and gravel layers; and the dredge during its earliest years of operation. The photographs also include scenes of dredge workers and family members celebrating the 4th of July, getting haircuts, cutting firewood, and relaxing in their homes. Many thanks to the Hendricks family for their generosity and appreciation of Yukon-Charley's historic past.

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.

Long-term Goal: Species of Management Concern. By September 30, 2012, 5 populations (50% of 10) of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve species of management concern are managed to desired condition.

Annual Goal 1a2B: By September 30, 2011, 5 populations (50% of 10) of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve species of management concern are managed to desired condition (one bird species or vegetation species).
GOAL ACHIEVED

In 2008, 2009 and 2011, new territories were established on bluffs not previously used by peregrines in over 35 years of observations.

36th Year of Peregrine Monitoring along Upper Yukon River

By Melanie Flamme

We completed the 36th year of monitoring of the American peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) population along the upper Yukon River, including Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. In 2011, we surveyed 265 km (165 miles) by boat of the upper Yukon between Circle, Alaska, and Yukon Territory, Canada. Fifty-four territories (the most ever recorded for the second year in a row) were occupied by American peregrine falcons (53 pairs of adults on territories and 1 single adult). We are still waiting to receive productivity data from our collaborators. Between 1973 and 2011, the number of total and successful pairs nesting along the upper Yukon River has been steadily increasing, though the percentage of total pairs nesting successfully has been declining. In 2008, 2009 and 2011, new territories were established on bluffs not previously used by peregrines in over 35 years of observations. This may be attributable to increased competition for resources due to increased density.

We also collected an addled egg for contaminants analyses to assess the levels of persistent organic pollutants (e.g. DDT, and PCBs) and heavy metals (e.g. mercury and cadmium) present on wintering grounds. These were submitted to Dr. Angela Matz, our collaborator at USFWS, who will handle the processing and analyses of the contaminants samples. One egg was swabbed for genetics analyses.

Crewmembers (from left) Emily Magnuson (USFWS), John Burch (NPS) and Julia Brice (NPS) locate peregrine falcon nests along the upper Yukon River using spotting scopes, May 2011.

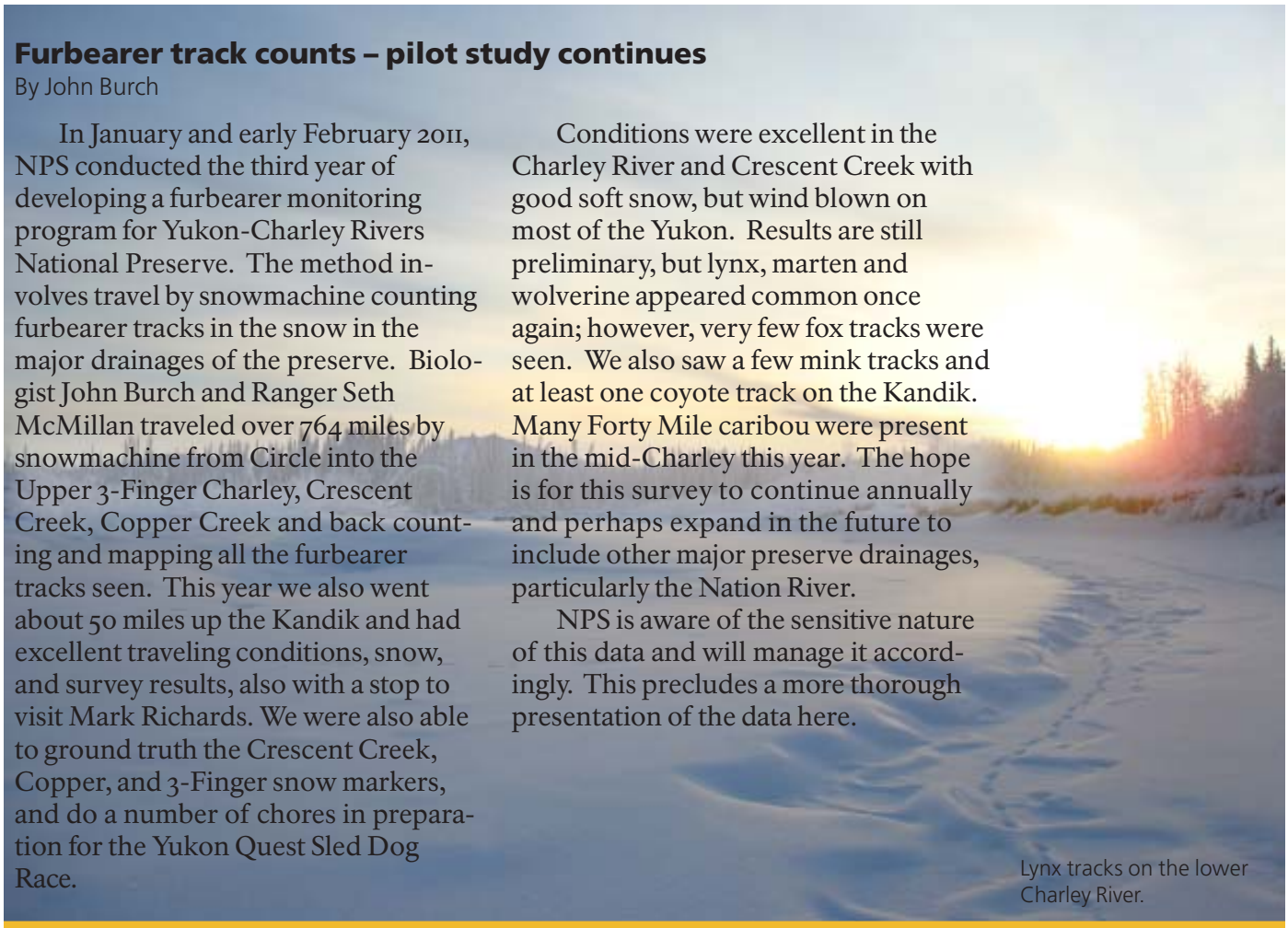
Furbearer track counts – pilot study continues

By John Burch

In January and early February 2011, NPS conducted the third year of developing a furbearer monitoring program for Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. The method involves travel by snowmachine counting furbearer tracks in the snow in the major drainages of the preserve. Biologist John Burch and Ranger Seth McMillan traveled over 764 miles by snowmachine from Circle into the Upper 3-Finger Charley, Crescent Creek, Copper Creek and back counting and mapping all the furbearer tracks seen. This year we also went about 50 miles up the Kandik and had excellent traveling conditions, snow, and survey results, also with a stop to visit Mark Richards. We were also able to ground truth the Crescent Creek, Copper, and 3-Finger snow markers, and do a number of chores in preparation for the Yukon Quest Sled Dog Race.

Conditions were excellent in the Charley River and Crescent Creek with good soft snow, but wind blown on most of the Yukon. Results are still preliminary, but lynx, marten and wolverine appeared common once again; however, very few fox tracks were seen. We also saw a few mink tracks and at least one coyote track on the Kandik. Many Forty Mile caribou were present in the mid-Charley this year. The hope is for this survey to continue annually and perhaps expand in the future to include other major preserve drainages, particularly the Nation River.

NPS is aware of the sensitive nature of this data and will manage it accordingly. This precludes a more thorough presentation of the data here.



Lynx tracks on the lower Charley River.

Taylor Highway Breeding Bird Surveys

By Melanie Flamme

At local sunrise, around 2:30 a.m. in mid-June in interior Alaska, NPS biologists began their surveys along the Taylor Highway for the North American Breeding Bird Survey. Many species common to the area were detected along the route near Eagle, the most-numerous being the Dark-eyed Junco, Swainson's Thrush, White-crowned Sparrow, American Robin, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Alder Flycatcher, and Orange-crowned Warbler. Species of note detected during the Eagle route included the Tennessee Warbler, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Say's Phoebe, Chipping Sparrow, Western Wood-Pewee, Townsend's Warbler and Spotted Sandpiper.

The most frequently detected species on the route near Chicken included Dark-eyed Junco, White-crowned Sparrow, Swainson's Thrush, Alder Flycatcher, Yellow-rumped Warbler, American Robin, and Varied Thrush. Some interesting birds detected on the Chicken route include Northern Shrike, Tennesee Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, Northern Waterthrush and Spotted Sandpiper.

Breeding Bird Surveys start at local sunrise, or about 2:30 a.m., stopping every $^{1}/_{2}$ mile along a 25-mile stretch of the Taylor Highway near Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve.

Currently, we are following 18 collared wolves in 9 packs...

Wolves continue to prove their resiliency as our preliminary counts for fall 2011 show good pup production and survival in several packs, with at least 71 wolves in 9 packs, for a mean pack size of 7.9

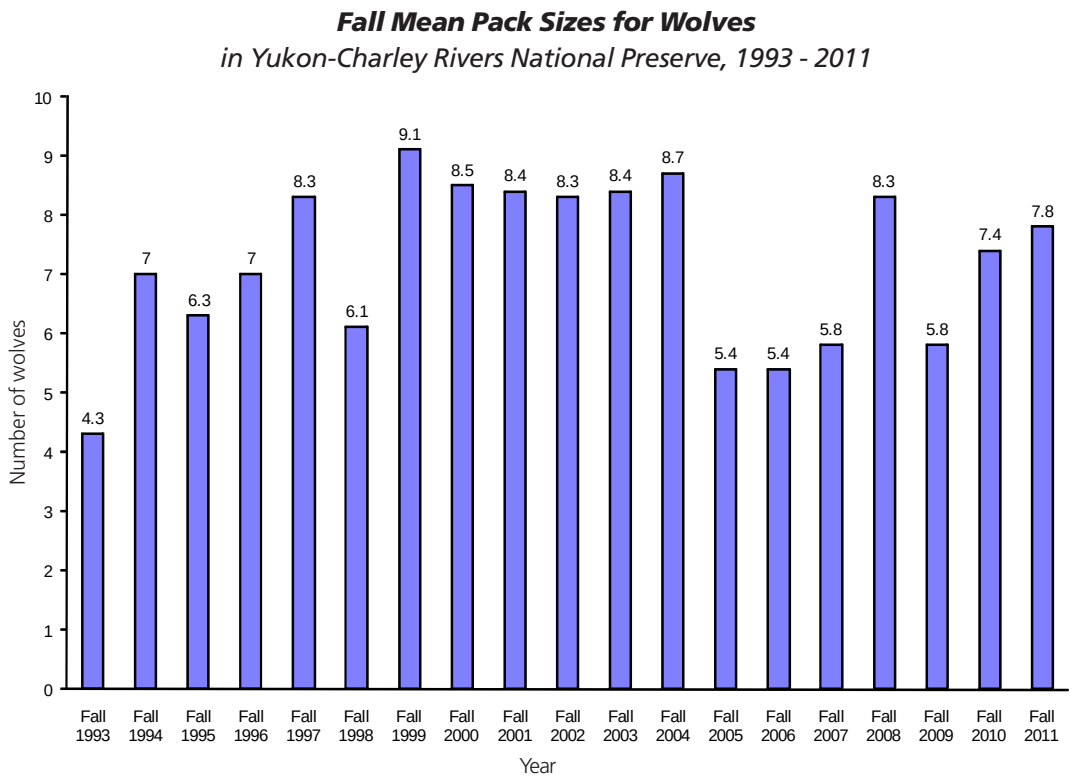
18 Years of Monitoring, Wolf Population Shows Resiliency

By John Burch

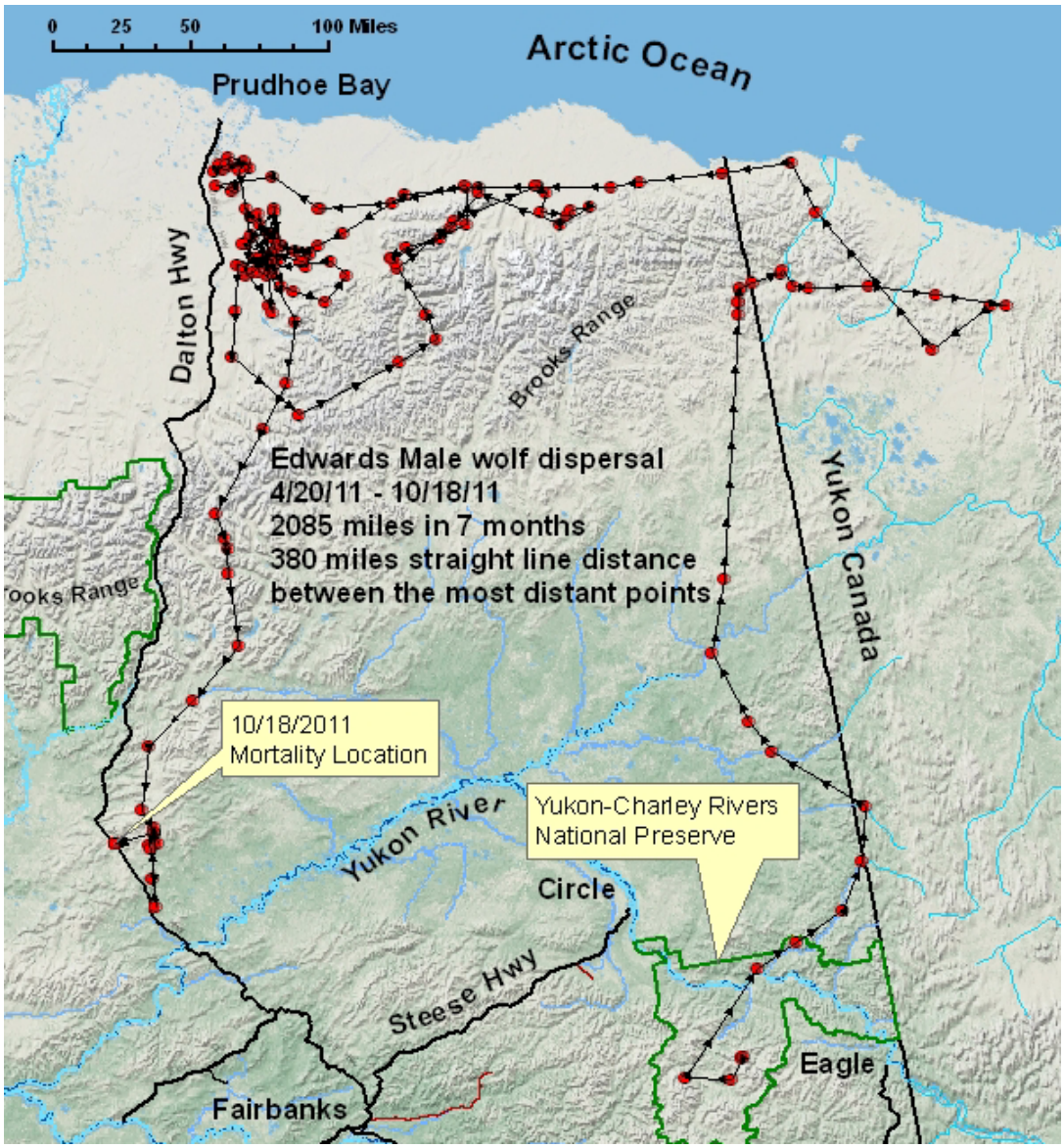
Wolf populations have been monitored in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve from March 1993 to present. During FY2011, wolf captures were conducted in November 2010 and February 2011. Monitoring radio-collared packs via radio telemetry flights occurred throughout the year with concentrated periods of flights in March – April and September – November.

In winter 2010-2011, 15 wolves in 9 packs were captured and collared. Currently, we are following 18 collared wolves in 9 packs in the Preserve as part of the 18-year monitoring program. We had fair to good snow conditions for searching for uncollared packs and 3 new packs were found and 1 or 2 wolves collared in each of them (Yukon Fork, Woodchopper, and Tatonduk packs). Once again no wolves could be found to capture in the Kandik drainage but tracks of at least 5 wolves were seen.

Wolves continue to prove their resiliency as our preliminary counts for fall 2011 show good pup production and survival in several packs, with at least 71 wolves in 9 packs for a mean pack size of 7.9, which is greater than last year's 7.4, and above the 18 year average of 7.1.



Nineteen years of data on the wolves of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve show mean size of radio-marked wolf packs each fall. Pack size in the fall is after spring pup recruitment and before winter when wolves are most likely to disperse or die.



Tracking a Wolf Wanderer

A highlight from this year's wolf telemetry data was from a young male wolf that dispersed from Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve wearing a GPS collar. The Edwards male wolf left the Preserve in April 2011 and traveled at least 2,085 miles to the North Slope and part way back over a 7-month period before starving to death in the upper Kanuti River in mid-October 2011. Wolf dispersals of this nature are fairly common; the unique aspect of this one was that he was wearing a GPS collar and we were able to track his movements almost daily.

GPS Collars Track Wolves via Satellite

By John Burch

Since 2002, we have put GPS collars on wolves, slowly building our inventory of them, so that now we can use them almost exclusively, and rarely need to use the old conventional radio collar. As a result, we have 16 wolves with GPS collars and 3 with conventional collars.

Each GPS collar weighs 880 grams. The collars are programmed to attempt to get a GPS coordinate (location on the earth) once a day and download that data through the ARGOS satellite system once every 6 days. In addition to the hardware for the GPS and satellite communication, the collars also carry a conventional transmitter, which functions the same as the conventional radio collars except they are programmed to transmit for only 9 hours per day to save battery power. With this programming, the batteries in the GPS collars can last about 3 years.

Depending on its programming, this GPS collar can transmit data 3 years before needing battery replacement.

The Eastern Area Fire Management team prescribed controlled burns to reduce hazardous fuels surrounding the Coal Creek Dredge.

No Wild Fires; Fire Personnel Remove Hazardous Fuels

By James Savage

The fire season passed without any wild fires in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve during 2011. The low activity gave the Eastern Area Fire Management crew the opportunity to implement a variety of fuels projects in the Preserve. These projects included backcountry cabin hazard fuels reduction by thinning, piling and burning piles around permitee and historical cabins. In total the EAFM personnel removed a total of 19 acres of hazardous fuels.

Provide for the Public Enjoyment and Visitor Experience

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

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

Annual Goal IIa1A: By September 30, 2011, 95% of visitors to Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.
GOAL ACHIEVED

Digging a new outhouse hole for Slaven's Roadhouse. Archeologist Dael Davenport carefully dug through 6 feet of dirt while ranger Luzmila Valadez and maintenance worker Alejandro Zarate helped by screening the soil for artifacts (none were found). A team effort indeed.

At far left, rangers help with the Eagle Village cleanup. At left, a ranger investigates a failure to salvage edible moose meat.

Eagle-NPS Working Group Created

A series of public meetings were held in Eagle to facilitate a dialog between local residents/preserve users with NPS law enforcement and management staff. Subsequently, the Eagle YUCH Subsistence Working Group (EYSWG) was formed and has met on seven occasions. The group has identified local land management issues and is working collectively towards solving those issues.

Yukon-Charley Rangers Protect Resources

By Scott Sample

The Yukon-Charley Rivers Resource Protection Rangers had another busy year in 2011. Among their many accomplishments, rangers:

- Assisted wildlife biologists with furbearer studies during winter and aerial wolf studies during spring.
- Enhanced boating safety by disseminating boating safety information in Circle, Eagle and Eagle village and passing out life vests. Additionally, the NPS sponsored the construction of a boating safety kiosk at the Eagle Village boat launch.
- Ensured that the "Wild and Scenic" character of the Charley River remained by mitigating human impact sites and removing trash.
- Maintained Public Use Cabins by making sure they were always clean and stocked with firewood and emergency equipment, and by making minor repairs.
- Assisted archeologists and maintenance personnel with installing new outhouses.
- Patrolled the Tatonduk, Nation and Kandik Rivers, contacting visitors, removing human impacts, locating and documenting cabins and cabin ruins, and removing trash.
- Located and stabilized an abandoned vehicle in the Tatonduk River.
- Assisted the US Fish and Wildlife Service with enforcing closures along the upper Yukon River to protect the at-risk Chinook fisheries.
- Photo-documented 23 cabins or cabin ruins in the preserve.
- Successfully prosecuted two hunting violations—an illegal take of wildlife and a failure to salvage edible meat.
- Conducted effective enforcement patrols during hunting season by contacting over 100 hunters within the preserve, resulting in nearly 100% compliance.

We would like to thank hunters for their proper care of meat and all preserve users for their clean camps and stewardship efforts in protecting the preserve's resources.

We would like to thank hunters for their proper care of meat and all preserve users for their clean camps and stewardship efforts in protecting the preserve's resources.

2011 Yukon Quest Sled Dog Race at Slaven's Roadhouse

Clockwise from top: Musher Kelly Griffin returns to the trail after she and her dogs rested at Slaven's Roadhouse on the Yukon River; the thermometer registered a 100-degree difference in temperature between inside and outside the cabin; northern lights illuminate the night sky above Slaven's Roadhouse where weary mushers and their dogs take a much needed break from the trail; NPS archeologist Chris Ciancibelli carries a dropped dog to an airplane that will transport it to the finish line in Fairbanks.

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

Long-term Goal: Visitor Understanding. By September 30, 2012, 92% of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve visitors understand the significance of the Preserve.

Annual Goal IIb1: By September 30, 2011, 92% of visitors to Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve understand the significance of the Preserve.
GOAL EXCEEDED

Students were treated to lessons on alternative energy, animal track identification, edible and poisonous plants in the area, paleontology, Han Athabascan history, wildfire education, as well as a fun and innovative twist to an animal habitat program.

Partnerships Provide Wide-Ranging Environmental Education

By Pat Sanders

Once again, in partnership with the Eagle Village Council, Tanana Chiefs, and the NPS, students gathered at the historic school in Eagle for two days of camp and environmental education.

Students were treated to lessons on alternative energy, animal track identification, edible and poisonous plants in the area, paleontology, Han Athabascan history, wildfire education, as well as a fun and innovative twist to an animal habitat program. YCC student Emma Westphal was given the task to learn to juggle. No explanation was given other than once she learned to juggle, the rest would be explained. Emma did learn to juggle, and then she was given the challenge of teaching the students to juggle while explaining the importance of each element as critical to an animal's success in life. Each element was represented by a ball in the air; if one element failed (fell), the life of the animal would be in danger. The students took away far more from this exercise than just a lesson. Each student was given their own balls to juggle and encouraged to take the lesson home to their siblings and parents.

The Eagle Village Council and Tanana Chiefs, supplied lunches and were tasked with presenting historic programs on lifestyles, salmon escapement and the Han Athabascan dialect. Students left the day camp with a basic concept of several words and sentences, which they were able to pronounce and repeat on the following days.

Of particular note was the overall impression that students were cognizant of Leave No Trace principals from previous outreach programs and were able to explain those principles to the staff. Also, happily, students were far more interested in vegetable and fruit snacks as opposed to the minimal sugar that was offered. This was due, in no small part, to the dedication of the local school urging students to eat and enjoy a healthier lifestyle.

Local resident volunteers added programs on subsistence lifestyles and methods.

Future programs will focus on continuing education and the hope that students can present programs at the local school on appropriate subjects to educate others that may have missed the camp.

Reaching Out to the Gateway Communities

By Pat Sanders

In September, students from Circle School joined with preserve staff for a 3-day environmental education camp at the remote Coal Creek Camp site. Students enjoyed the tour and lectures on industrialized mining and dredge operations, geology, beaver habitat, camp life during the heyday of the camp and, bear safety, behavior and awareness lessons.

Along with four chaperones, three of whom are long-time Circle residents, students were able to experience some of the challenges the miners faced during the 1930's, including caring for historic structures and cleanliness necessity around camp. Many stories were told around the campfire, songs with guitar accompaniment and, of course, s'mores were the order for the evening. The students participated in enjoyable teaching games and exercises as well as hikes to enjoy and learn the area where many of their ancestors lived and worked.

This was the first in what we hope will be a developing environmental education workshop with the intent to involve both gateway communities of Eagle and Circle as well as an eventual inclusion of Central and perhaps home-schooled students. Environmental education camps in remote locations such as Coal Creek come with unique challenges for staff and students alike. Many emails, letters and phone conversations culminated in the success of the camp so that students were appropriately clothed and prepared, and well fed. A strict curriculum was a necessity, and even though days were very full, all topics were not covered, which leaves plenty of room for future camps and topics not yet explored.

Following the camp, the students all sent lovely notes to staff members indicating their willingness and excitement in returning to the camp to learn more and enjoy the bounty available for traditional harvest of cranberries. Although ghost stories kept a few students sleeping with one eye open, each student expressed the desire to include more in future visits and promised to bring along their own stories!

Students from Circle listen intently to Ranger Pat Sanders as she tells them a mining story at Coal Creek Camp during a 3-day environmental education camp.

Continuing Education Includes More than Monitoring in 2011

By Pat Sanders

Eagle School students receive an in-depth safety briefing prior to a boat trip down the Yukon River.

Long-time Yukon River resident Andy Bassich explains the challenges of gardening to eager students.

Each year since the fires of 1999, NPS, in association with Alaska Gateway School District, has been educating students on wildfire and fire succession. The horrific flood of 2009 added a new element to this education for students in Eagle. Belle Isle, which lies directly in front of Eagle, was scoured by the ice. In the years since the flood, fire personnel have joined interpretive staff in presenting a vegetation reclamation program on both Belle Isle and on several vegetation plots not affected by flood waters.

In 2011, in addition to monitoring the vegetation reclamation plots on Belle Isle, students received a boating safety lesson and, with chaperones and staff, went by boat to the residence of Andy Bassich, whose home was critically damaged by the 2009 flood. Students spent time learning of the efforts to rebuild and reclaim areas damaged by the flood. And since Andy is on the state committee to study the salmon and the numbers relating to subsistence catches, students also spent time learning a valuable lesson in appropriate use of this significant resource.

As an added bonus, Andy gave students a tour of the residence, telling themabout the alternative energy he employs and showing them the bountiful garden plots on the grounds. After stuffing their mouths full of tomatoes from the vine, the students played with new puppies at Andy's kennel and learned the appropriate methods to maintain a healthy and working dog team. While several of the students' parents perform much of their winter activities utilizing dog teams, new approaches to the rearing and kenneling of dogs was a major topic of conversation on the trip back to Eagle.

Ensure Organizational Effectiveness

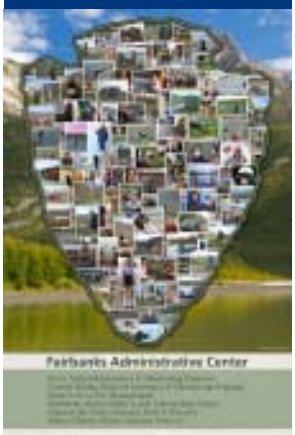
The National Park Service uses current management practices, systems, and technologies to accomplish its mission.

Many Accomplishments by Facilities Management in 2011

By Arch Thompson

- Finished skirting and leveling of Kandik Public Use Cabin.
- Completed rehabilitation and stabilization project at historic Cheese Creek gold mine site.
- Replaced public privy at Slaven's Roadhouse.
- Constructed long-awaited public privy at Coal Creek Dredge site.
- Repaired more than two miles of destroyed road following the spring break-up flood.
- Successfully completed two environmental assessment projects at Coal Creek Camp.
- Identified and properly disposed of asbestos-containing flooring in Coal Creek Camp.
- Constructed Fire Management Program office cabin in Eagle.
- Had US Public Health Service conduct sanitary courtesy inspections of Coal Creek Camp and Eagle.
- Completed the safety upgrades to the fuel tank farms in Coal Creek Camp and Eagle.
- Completed over 96% of repair work orders.
- Significantly reduced deferred maintenance backlog.
- Fairbanks Administrative Center participated in borough's *Don't be Fuelish* campaign, finishing 4th of all agencies and businesses who participated.

The maintenance team re-used some older logs for the new Fire Management office cabin in Eagle.



Admin report

By Monica Cross

The Administrative Team provides support for Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, Fairbanks Alaska Public Lands Information Center, the Inventory and Monitoring programs of the Central Alaska and Arctic Networks, the Eastern Area Fire Management Program, and eight employees from other NPS units whose offices are in the building. The Administrative Team, which consists of the Administrative Officer, two Information Technology specialists, and five administrative assistants (4 in Fairbanks, 1 in Eagle), also receives help from the Arctic Network, Fire Program and Cultural Resources program administrative assistants, plus the interpretive ranger in Bettles. This cooperative approach provides unique and broad training opportunities while still providing the maximum quality support to all programs.

FY2011 was an eventful and challenging year for administration. The Administrative Team successfully navigated through system-wide changes in hiring, procurement, and even payments to vendors, all of which necessitated learning many new programs and processes. At the same time, they met existing deadlines and maintained ongoing operations. The National Park Service lost the ability to pay bills under the micro purchase limit with Third Party Draft checks and there were major changes to the requirements for submittal of bills to the Accounting Operations Center. New hiring process deadlines and the adjustments to the new HROC requirements occurred at exactly the same time the incumbent human resources assistant transferred, leaving everyone with steep learning curves. Despite all the challenges, the Administrative Team managed to successfully close-out the fiscal year within the allocated dollar limits of the six organizational units they serve. They tracked over 200 account codes, processed 230 purchase requests, prepared and processed almost 400 travel vouchers, and processed over 200 personnel action requests, while also answering the phones, processing mail, greeting visitors and providing great support to internal and external customers.

Administrative Technician Ginger Ryan arrived just in time to prepare the office for FY12 operations.

The Information Technology (IT) program was outstanding once again. 2011 marked the 9th consecutive year with no cyber-attacks getting through the IT security defenses. Because of the IT team's proactive planning and purchasing patterns, several hardware failures that could have been catastrophic were simply small annoyances. A telework program was inaugurated with the purchase of a virtual phone license; making telework a seamless and productive option for some employees. The IT specialists have been amazing in their continued efforts to work closely with partner agencies in the shared facilities, and to come up with new and better ways to support employees.

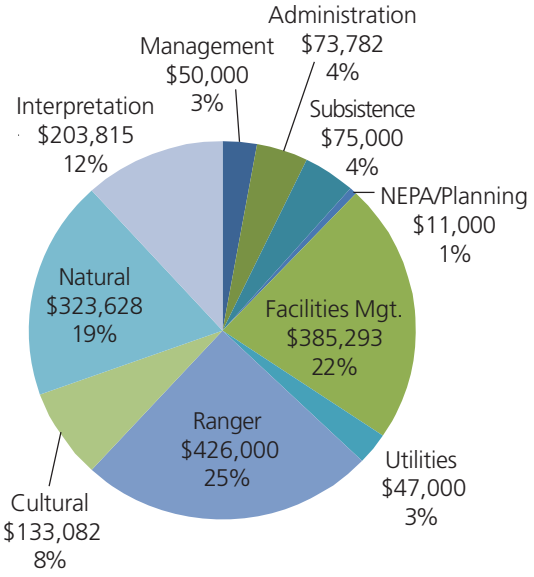
Administrative Team members were engaged and active in many areas outside of administration. They volunteered in support of the Yukon Quest, participated in the Adopt-a-Highway program, managed the CFC effort, participated in snow, small mammal, moose, and sheep surveys, and managed the recycling program. They are not just a crucial and significant part of the Administrative Team, but of the whole National Park Service.

Financial Summary

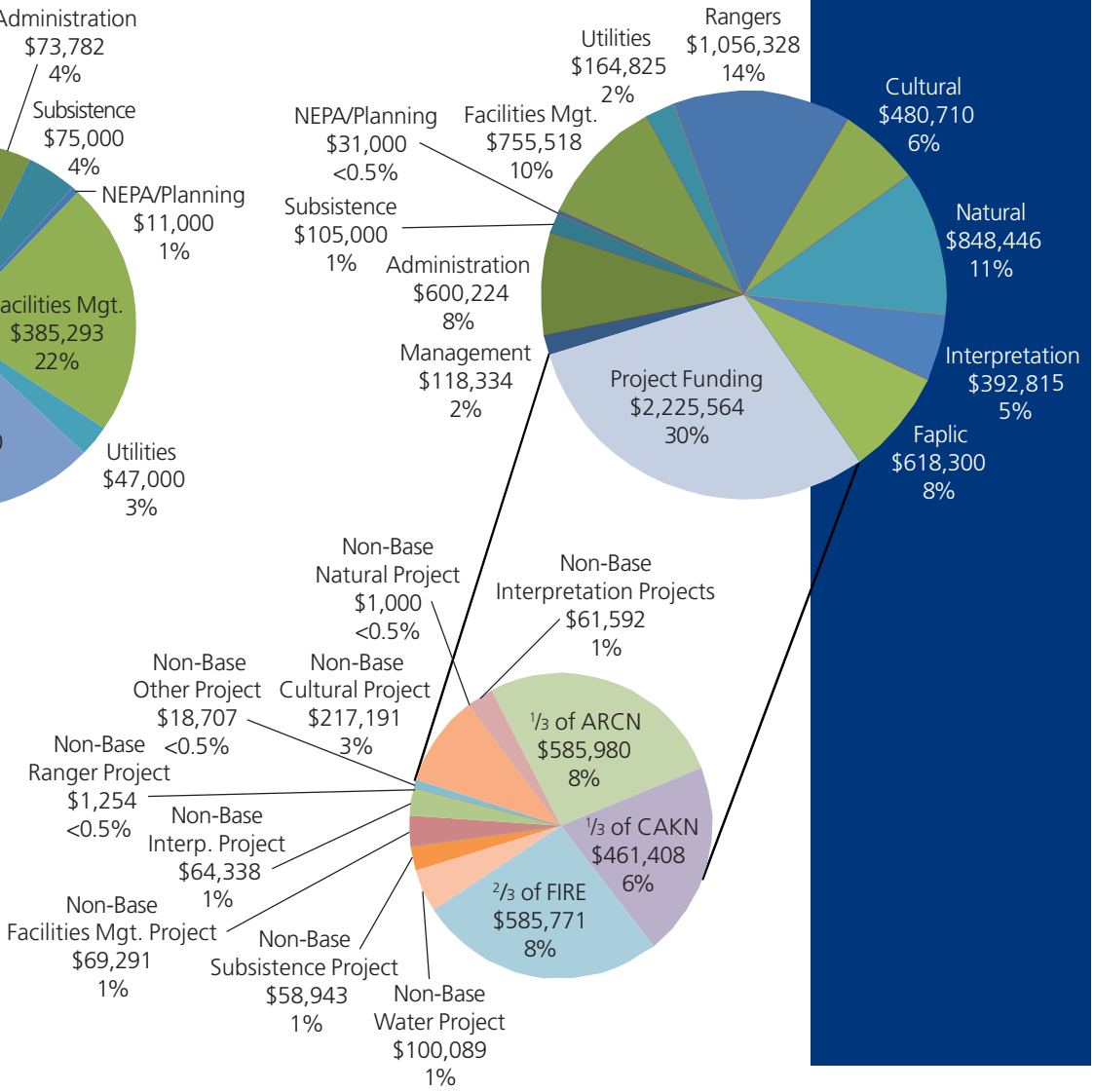
Breakdown of Operating Budget Base Allocations (ONPS) by Division

- Research & Studies: $542,710
- Facilities Operation & Maintenance: $432,293
- Resource Protection & Visitor Services: $629,815
- Management & Administration: $123,782

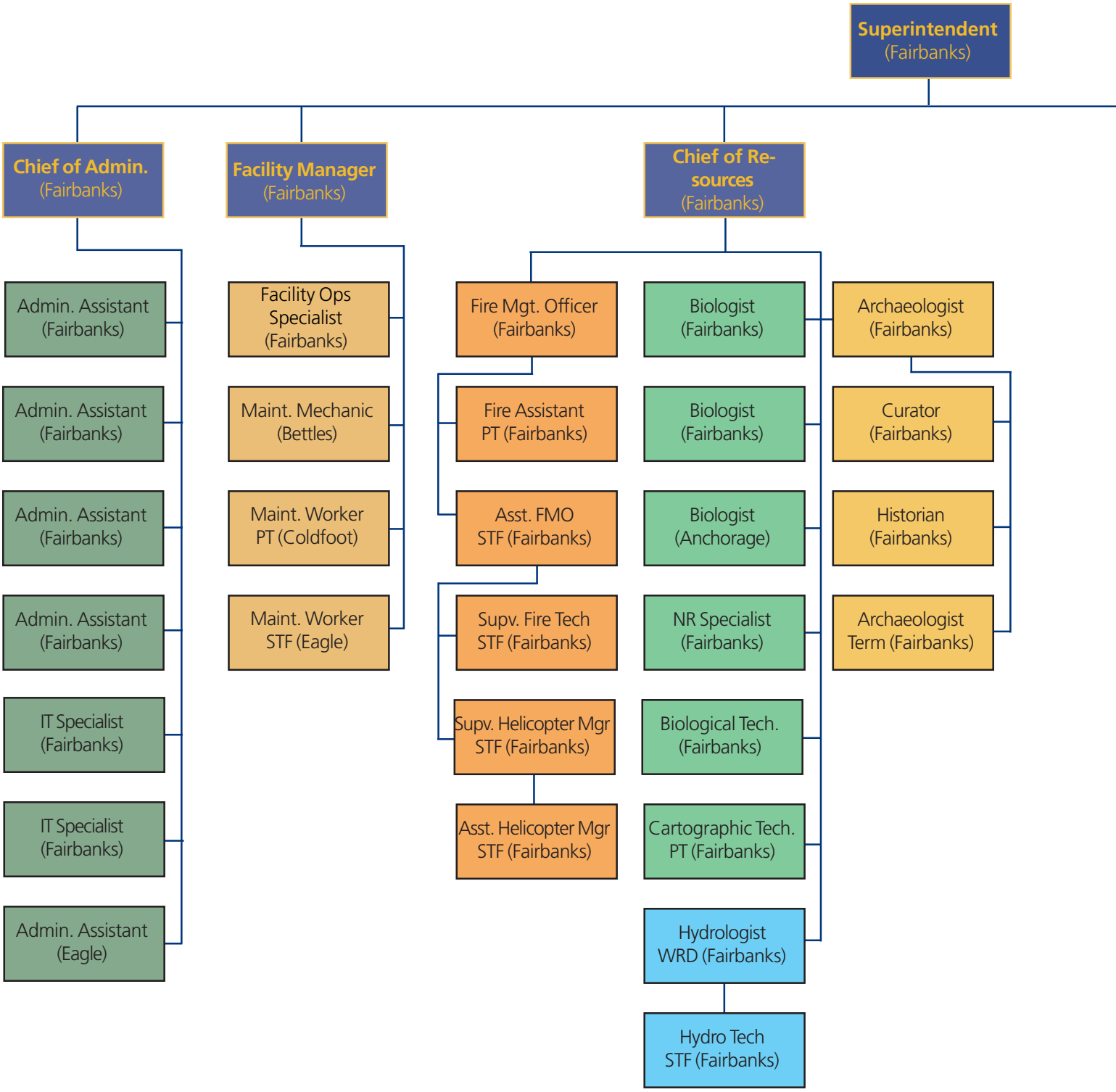
Yukon-Charley Rivers Operating Budget Base Allocations (ONPS)
Total = $1,728,600

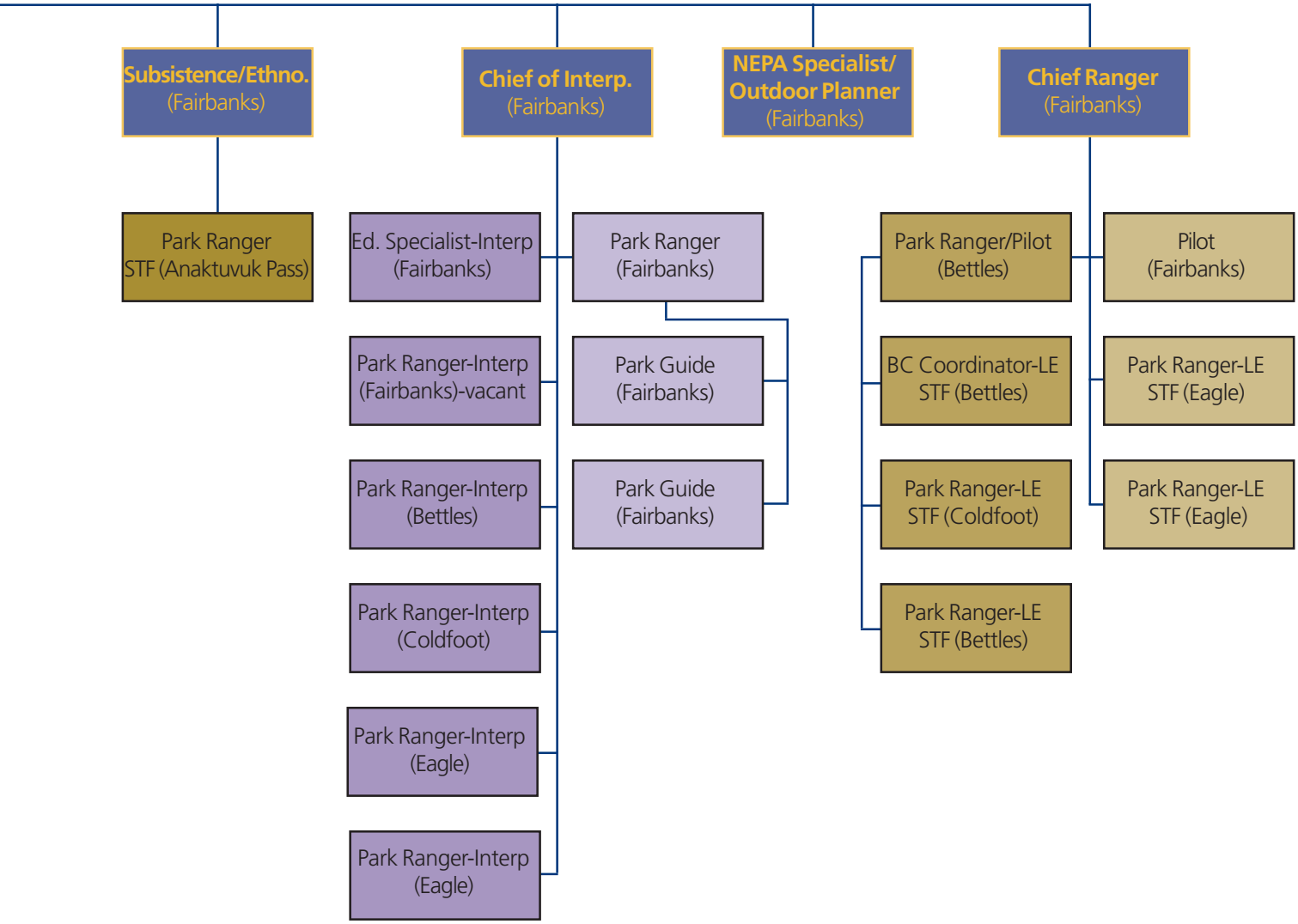


YUGA All Funding Sources Allocations
Total = $7,397,064



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




Subsistence/Ethno.
(Fairbanks)
Chief of Interp.
(Fairbanks)
NEPA Specialist/
Outdoor Planner
(Fairbanks)
Chief Ranger
(Fairbanks)
Park Ranger
STF (Anaktuvuk Pass)
Ed. Specialist-Interp
(Fairbanks)
Park Ranger
(Fairbanks)
Park Ranger-Interp
(Fairbanks)-vacant
Park Guide
(Fairbanks)
Park Ranger-Interp
(Bettles)
Park Guide
(Fairbanks)
Park Ranger-Interp
(Coldfoot)
Park Ranger-Interp
(Eagle)
Park Ranger-Interp
(Eagle)
Park Ranger/Pilot
(Bettles)
Pilot
(Fairbanks)
BC Coordinator-LE
STF (Bettles)
Park Ranger-LE
STF (Eagle)
Park Ranger-LE
STF (Coldfoot)
Park Ranger-LE
STF (Eagle)
Park Ranger-LE
STF (Bettles)

Alvin Hendricks, the first winchman on the Coal Creek gold dredge, at his post in the dredge's wheelhouse, ca. 1938.

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

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