

Tuttut tumai
(Inupiaq)

bedzeyh tene
(Koyukon Athabaskan)

tuntut tumait
(Yup'ik)



Photo by Heather Jay Huson

Caribou Trails

issue 8 winter 2006-07

News from The Western Arctic Caribou Herd working group

Your 2007
Caribou Working Group
Representatives:

Wainwright
vacant

Point Hope
vacant

Nuiqsut & Anaktuvuk
Isaac Kaigelak, Nuiqsut

Noatak & Kivalina
Raymond Hawley, Kivalina

Kotzebue
Attamuk Shiedt, Sr., Kotzebue

Lower Kobuk River
Raymond Stoney, Kiana

Upper Kobuk River
Sally Custer, Shungnak

Koyukuk River
Pollock Simon, Sr., Allakaket

Middle Yukon River
Benedict Jones, Koyukuk

Buckland, Deering,
Selawik
Ron Moto, Deering

Northern Seward
Peninsula
Elmer Seetot, Brevig Mission

Nome
Roy Ashenfelter, Nome

Elim, Golovin, White
Mtn.
Charles Saccheus, Elim

Southern Norton Sound
Frank Kavairlook, Koyuk

Reindeer Herders Assn.
Tom Gray, White Mountain

Conservationists
**John Schoen
Audubon Alaska, Anchorage**

Hunting Guides
Phil Driver, Anchorage

Transporters
vacant

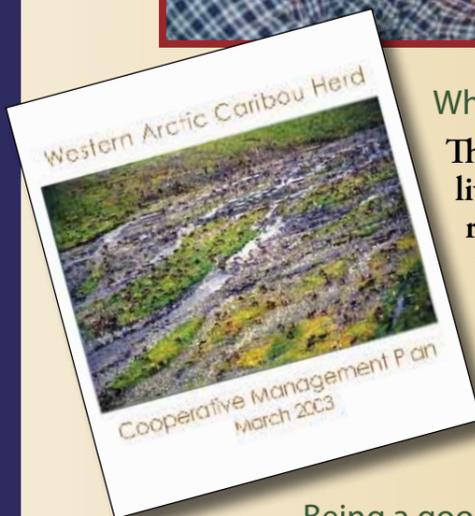
Anchorage
Advisory Committee
Don Frederick, Anchorage

Non-local Resident
Hunters
vacant

Do you know any of these people?



They are **your**
representatives
on the
caribou
working group!

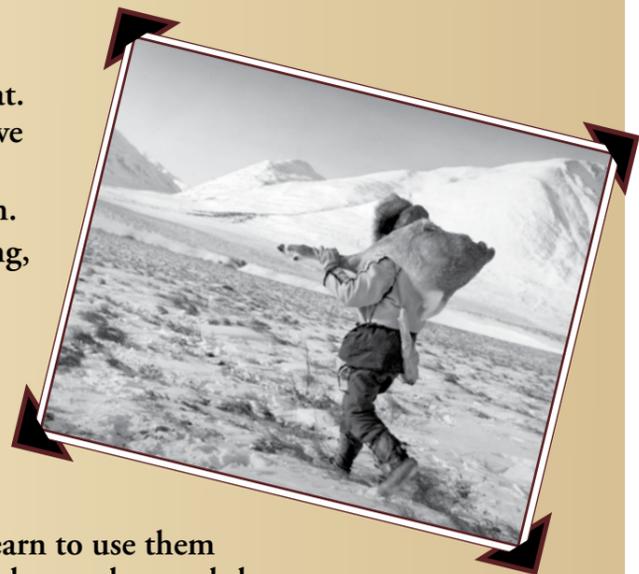


What is the Caribou Working Group?

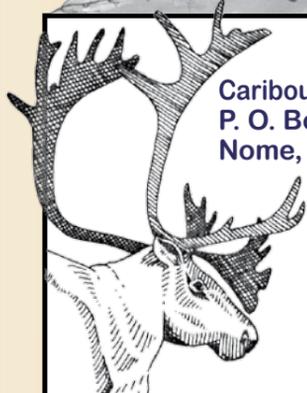
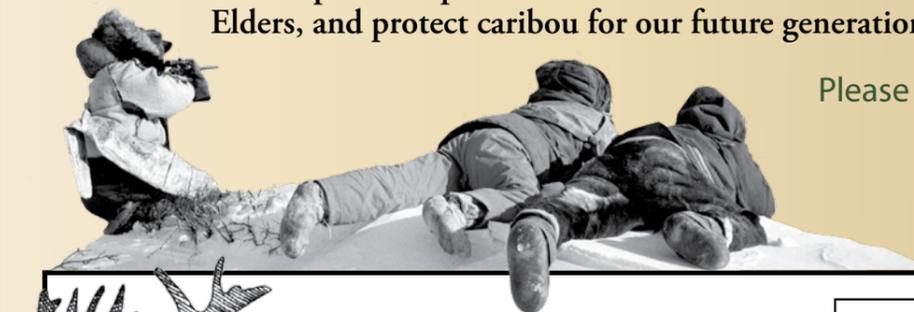
The Caribou Working Group includes subsistence hunters living within the range of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd, reindeer herders, other Alaskan hunters, hunting guides, transporters, and conservationists. Together we have created a plan where we agree, *“to work together to ensure the longterm conservation of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd and the ecosystem on which it depends, and to maintain traditional and other uses for the benefit of all people now and in the future.”*

Being a good hunter is no longer just about bringing home meat. If there is to be game to hunt in the future we also have to pay attention to developments planned for the land our wildlife depends on. **Being a good hunter now also means reading, listening and talking about things we never used to have to think about. Sometimes it means going to meetings, and speaking before a group of people even when it feels uncomfortable.**

Knowledge and involvement are now critical hunting tools. We need to learn to use them wisely in order to protect the future. We need to understand the needs of wildlife, and see that they are taken into consideration when development is planned. We need to listen to the wisdom of Elders, and protect caribou for our future generations.



Please get involved!



Caribou Working Group
P. O. Box 175
Nome, AK 99762

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This newsletter represents the views and concerns of the Caribou Working Group, and are not necessarily those of the state and federal agencies that support the work of the group.



our elders speak

“What is given in the right way cannot be forgotten.”

—David Greist, Selawik Elder

A continuing series of interviews with Selawik Elders

Ruby Ayaqin Foster

Around my time there were no caribou. We just ate fish, ptarmigan and rabbit. That is all. There were no caribou around during that time—absolutely none. There was no moose and not much bear during that time too. I even used to go pick berries by myself or nasriqsruuraaq. I was not afraid. There was nothing to fear from black bears or brown bears - there were none of these.

Maybe around 1954-55, and I am guessing, the caribou started coming here. I followed my husband up to Kuugruaq area in the 1950s. It is way out from Ambler. We went by dog team. I would lead with snowshoes. I was carrying at that time. When we get tired, someone else leads (sivulliqsruq). It is long ways, and Ambler is quite a distance from here (Selawik).

“One wonders about those who lived in other places and time before us, and how they did it.”

They get as much caribou as a person is able to—and they don't leave anything like right now. They brought home the skins, feet parts, and head. Today, the head or caribou feet are not taken home. The heart, liver, tunusrisaq, and kivviq were taken home. The only thing they left was the stomach contents, and

we used the stomach as bag to put the innards in.

I think we were gone for a month up there. We had no groceries or naluagmiutaq (white people's food) then. We had to share when we get anything like moose, caribou or rabbit. The ones who had hunters share with the widows like me (presently). It wasn't easy—qaganangitchuq—to hunt for caribou then.

We spent the winter upriver in sod houses. We and old women used to set snares. I used to check traps and snares above Niliq with a dog team. One wonders about those who lived in other places and time before us, and how they did it. The ones before us starved when they had no food.

Ruby Foster,
Roy Smith
& Johnny
Norton

Johnny mikiana Norton

We also hunted at Arguurangani or below Salliagutchiich hills, or around Angmanauraq (a pass in the Rabbit Mountains). It was one days worth of traveling from Selawik to Rabbit Mountain by dog team when it uvluqtusri—or had more day light in spring. If you went to Kiana, you spent the night in Kiana. And then spent another night and then go again.

We used heavy rifles in those days; 30-30 and 25-35. They also used 303 Remington with no scope. Sometime one would not take any caribou home. Most of the time one can take a sledload home.

You had to use somebody else to go move the herd, and someone would hide while the other person drove them to them. The people hiding would shoot them. That was how they hunted a long time ago.

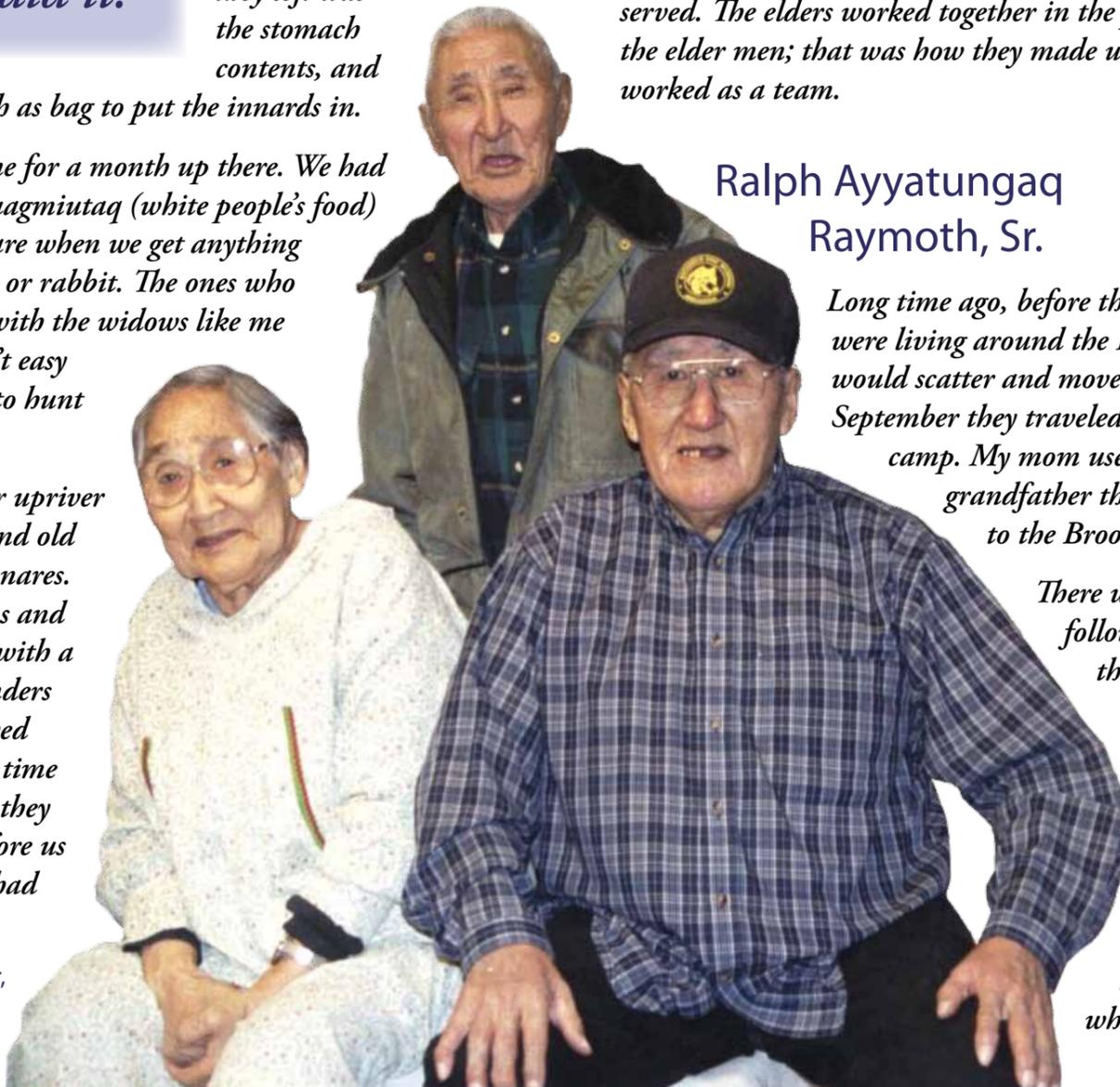
Today, our young people don't do that now. It is first come, first served. The elders worked together in the past. When we followed the elder men; that was how they made us hunt. Together, they worked as a team.

“The elders worked together in the past. When we followed the elder men; that was how they made us hunt.”

Ralph Ayyatungaq Raymoth, Sr.

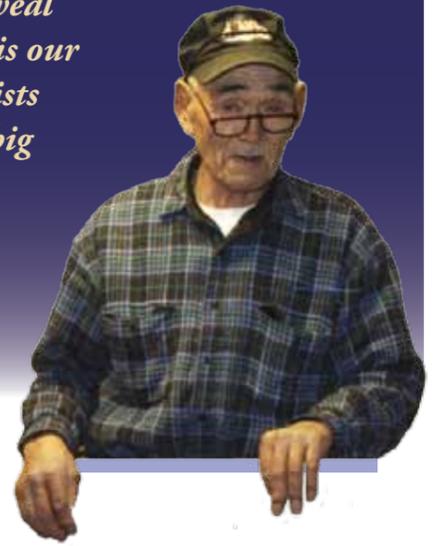
Long time ago, before the white man, some tribes were living around the Kobuk River area. They would scatter and move seasonally. In August or September they traveled north to hunt for caribou camp. My mom used to talk about our grandfather that he used to go hunt out to the Brooks Range.

There was a ridge the caribou followed. The people piled up the rocks to make them look like humans. Some people were behind the caribou and drove them down that ridge to the lake. The people would be waiting there with their canoes. They killed the caribou with spears while they were crossing the



The life experiences of Selawik's Elders and their customary caribou hunting practices reveal valuable ecological knowledge about caribou not available from conventional means. It is our hope that when their knowledge and insights are combined with data collected by biologists studying the herd we will gain a more complete picture of this valuable resource. A very big thanks to the Selawik Elders who shared their experiences and knowledge. Quyanna!

—Hannah Paniyavluk Loon and the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge



Delbert Qignak Mitchell

When I was a boy, I used to go upriver in Tagragvik and all over with my father. We are always gone for several weeks primarily to hunt for caribou. We were gone for two weeks with dogs. We have to travel by dog team taking tents, etc. You have to walk to the caribou and try to get close.

At that time in Selawik the people were trapping in winter. They were hunting for muskrats. In these activities, I followed and learned from my father while I was a young boy. People were also gathering wood, grass and ducks—the whole works. In winter it was the only way—to hunt and gather wood.

“I followed and learned from my father while I was a young boy.”

When caribou first came, people hunted mostly towards Shungnak. It was around the 1950s. They also go to north of Kiana, and by Uumaq (behind and close to Purcell Mountain) in winter, and towards Rabbit Mountain or Ukallit. We used to hunt there, and camped

in Nullagvik. They only hunt in winter then because in fall—no caribou. In spring—none. In summer—none, because we have to walk and it's quite a ways.

The caribou would return only to the Shungnak area then, in the 1950s. Not to around Selawik. They just started coming later. Long time ago, people also hunted in the Noatak area before the caribou started coming around here.

Please note: These interviews have been edited slightly from the original recordings to make them easier to read.



lake. These are true stories that I heard about the caribou.

It was in the 1950s when I first started going out to hunt caribou, about 80-100 miles from here—from Selawik to the headwaters of Selawik River and around Ambler area. Later on in the years, the caribou start going south—more and more south until they start grazing around the upper Selawik area. That's when a lot of people started to caribou hunt around there.

Dog teams were the only transportation we have before the snowmachine time. We used dogs for gathering wood and to hunt for caribou. There's lot of people didn't have any dog food at all—there were no commercial dog foods or anything like that at that time. They had to go where the caribou were to keep their dogs healthy during the winter. When the fishing season ended in fall time, why

“We're used to sharing, and everybody knows that. By the time you get caribou, you share with others that didn't get enough.”

you had to go up to where the caribou were and start feeding the dogs caribou in order to keep them healthy.

We traveled in groups. You just keep on going until you start running out of dog food. Once you start running out of dog food, you must share with the others. We're used to sharing, and everybody knows that. And by the time you get the caribou, then you share with the others that didn't get enough.

Laura Iguaqpak Smith

Before caribou came to Selawik the people walked and backpacked over to the Noatak area, to the head waters. They would leave in the early fall while the hides are thin and could be used for clothing. The term used was 'qakirut' meaning that they went up and over to the upper land. The hunters also took dogs to help pack. They traveled one day at a time, and relayed their possessions to and fro.

They also went up towards Kuugruak area and also close to Rabbit Mountain. The caribou never came here but they would go near Ambler,

about 40 miles out. Sometimes, when my husband wanted me to follow, I would go. I sure enjoyed it when we set up camp out in the country and the hunters came back with their caribou harvest. It was so good.

The caribou came through Ambler one time, when people were at church. While preaching, their pastor, Mr. Melton, remarked, “There's caribou!” and his congregation made for the windows to look!

It is different today. Now, they come right through our fish camp.

Teshekpuk Lake caribou & subsistence hunters win one in court ...for now

“We’re not opposed to well-thought-out, environmentally safe development. But the waterfowl and caribou habitat north of Teshekpuk Lake is one-of-a-kind. It’s too bad that legal action was the only way to make BLM take a closer look at possible consequences of developing around the lake.”

—Edward S. Itta
North Slope Borough Mayor

The Teshekpuk Lake
Caribou Herd
2006 © Jeff Schultz/AlaskaStock.com



Photo courtesy of Geoff Carroll

North Slope residents have attended more than their fair share of public meetings over the issue of protecting wildlife-rich Teshekpuk Lake from oil drilling and development. But it looks like they are in for more.

Judge halts BLM lease sale - more opportunity for comment

In September 2006 BLM had planned to auction off nearly 400,000 acres of critical waterfowl and caribou habitat around Teshekpuk Lake to oil and gas developers—land previously protected from development—until a federal judge temporarily halted the lease sales. This came as a huge relief to the many Inupiat subsistence hunters who rely heavily on this prime subsistence hunting area midway between Barrow and Nuiqsut.

For many years North Slope residents have attended meetings and consistently requested BLM to protect this unique and abundant pocket of wildlife around Teshekpuk Lake within the northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A). Their voices were heard in 1998, and the lands were given special protection. But in January 2006, BLM announced plans to conduct oil and gas lease sales in the protected area—until the September court decision stopped them.

BLM now plans to analyze more thoroughly how oil and gas development in *other parts* of the National Petroleum Reserve may impact wildlife in the Teshekpuk Lake area. These are called cumulative impacts. North Slope Borough Mayor, Edward S. Itta explains,

“Oil development happens one well at a time, and each individual well may not have a big impact on an area. But sooner or later, you’ve got 40 or 60 wells and the question of cumulative impacts becomes very real.”

BLM will re-write their plan, and re-submit it for public review and comments. It is a tiring process but it does work! The Caribou Working Group will be making comments, but we urge everyone who cares about subsistence hunting of caribou and waterfowl to make their voices heard!

this is the proposed schedule
for how BLM plans to proceed.

Please speak up for caribou whenever you can!

blm
contact
person

Jim Ducker, BLM
222 W. 7th Ave., #13
Anchorage, AK 99513-7599
TEL 907-271-3130

Spring 2007

BLM will develop a draft supplement to the current version of their plan (called the NE NPR-A IAP/EIS).

Summer 2007

BLM will release the draft supplement for public review and comment. They anticipate holding public meetings in North Slope communities.

Please plan to attend and comment!
Please also submit comments in writing. This is your opportunity to influence how your subsistence lands are treated.

Fall 2007

BLM will review comments and write the final version of their supplement.

Early 2008

BLM will release their final version of the supplement.

One month later:

The plan becomes final and is called a ‘Record of Decision,’ and will guide development in the Teshekpuk Lake area for the next 20 years.

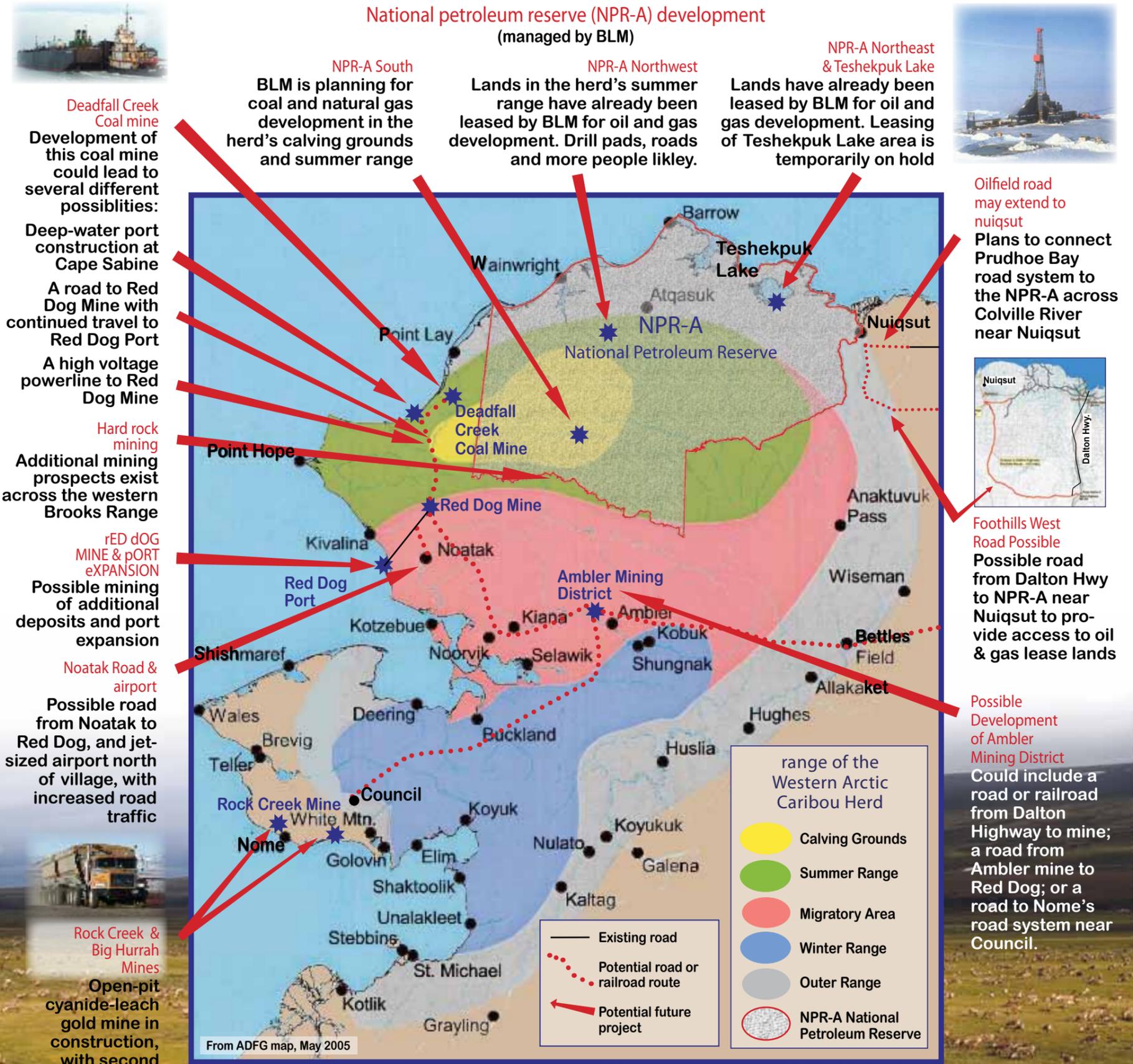
understanding Caribou & cumulative impacts

Generally, one development project alone would not disrupt the health of the entire Western Arctic Caribou Herd. But the combined impacts of several projects—called **cumulative impacts**—within the range of the herd could seriously affect the herd and future subsistence uses. Below are potential projects that need to be studied in combination with other possible projects in order to protect the future of our caribou.



2006 © Chris Flowers/AlaskaStock.com

National petroleum reserve (NPR-A) development (managed by BLM)



The Western Arctic Caribou Herd near Cape Lisburne
2006 © Joel Bennett/AlaskaStock.com

Wasting meat offends everyone and it's against the law!

- Alaska Law requires that all moose and caribou meat must be salvaged for human consumption.
- In Unit 23 (prior to Oct 1) you are also required to leave the meat on the ribs, front quarters and hindquarters until it is brought out of the field. Meat may be de-boned once it has been transported to a state-maintained airport.
- Antlers may not be removed from the kill site until all the meat has been packed out.
- Meat must be transported out of the field in edible condition before or at the same time as the antlers.
- Failure to salvage meat carries a minimum fine of \$2,000 and seven days in jail.



Most of the meat from these animals was salvaged and given to villagers—but it had begun to spoil. While no one was cited, the loss of meat angered everyone in the community. Similar instances in the future may be legally challenged.



Legal
in and out of the field. Properly salvaged.

Legal
out of the field only. Properly de-boned.

Illegal
in or out of the field. Inadequate salvage.

Trophy antlers require trophy meat

- Don't shoot it if you can't pack it all out.
- Don't shoot early into a long hunt or float, or in warm weather.
- Plan carefully with your guide or transporter... a delayed pick-up is not an excuse for letting meat spoil.
- Bad weather is not an excuse for bad meat—care for it properly.
- Don't give questionable meat away—nobody wants it.
- There are no freezers or meat storage facilities in Kotzebue.

- Keep your meat clean. Keep your meat dry. Keep your meat cool.
- Keep your meat on the bone. Keep your meat in breathable cloth game bags - **not plastic bags!**

Your 'wilderness' is somebody else's backyard

Alaska Natives have been hunting, fishing and living here for thousands of years. Today federal and state managed lands provide opportunities for anyone to hunt, camp, fish and recreate—but you are still expected to do so legally and respectfully.

Leave a clean camp. Remove all garbage. Burn toilet paper.

Diamond fire rings and all site modifications. Don't trespass on private lands or subsistence camps. Don't interfere with someone else's hunting.

Respecting 10,000 years of knowledge

Alaska Native hunting traditions have evolved to allow for harvest of caribou without displacing their historic migration routes. Following these local practices is good for the caribou and good for hunter relations.

Allow the first groups of caribou to pass undisturbed. There will be more following these leaders.

If hunting along the Kobuk River, hunt only on the south side to allow the caribou to cross undisturbed.

Do not place hunting camps so that they block the caribou trails or redirect the migration routes.

To report violations please call the Alaska State Troopers: Kotzebue 442-3212; Galena 636-1634 or toll free 1-800-478-3377

This message supported by: Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game 907-442-1711, Selkirk National Wildlife Refuge 907-442-3799, Northwest Arctic Borough, Western Arctic National Parklands, Bureau of Land Management

Hunting conflicts in the nana region are tackled by The Caribou Working Group, Northwest Arctic Borough, Alaska state troopers, Alaska Board of Game, ADFG, USFWS, NPS and BLM

A frequent topic at Caribou Working Group meetings has been the increasing pressure from non-local hunters coming into the Kotzebue-Kobuk-Noatak area (Unit 23) each fall.

The number of hunters and the small planes ferrying them in and out has frustrated many locals, and raised concerns about the disruption of traditional caribou migration routes. Other concerns include competition for choice hunting spots, increasing amounts of trash, and the amount of meat wasted by hunters primarily interested in antlers.

Conflicts among sport hunters, subsistence users and commercial operators is a large and complex problem.

A non-local hunter education program was launched in August 2006, with the above poster displayed throughout the region. It will be followed with an online Unit 23 non-local hunter education program. The Board of Game has reduced the non-resident bag limit in Unit 23 to one caribou per year beginning in fall 2007, and will require rib meat from moose and caribou to be left on the bone.

The Caribou Working Group also passed a resolution (right) calling for a cooperative planning process to find ways to reduce hunter conflicts.

Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group

Goal: To work together to ensure the long-term conservation of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd and the ecosystem on which it depends, and to maintain traditional and other uses for the benefit of all people now and in the future.

Chair: Raymond Stoney Vice-Chair: Roy Ashenfelter

RESOLUTION 2006-01

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group recommends and supports a broad cooperative planning process to resolve user conflicts related to caribou hunting in Unit 23; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group requests all state and federal resource management agencies; regional, local, and tribal governments; guides and transporters; local subsistence hunters; non-local and non-resident hunters; and other recreational users of the herd participate in the cooperative planning process to find solutions to the user conflicts during the fall hunting season in Unit 23; and

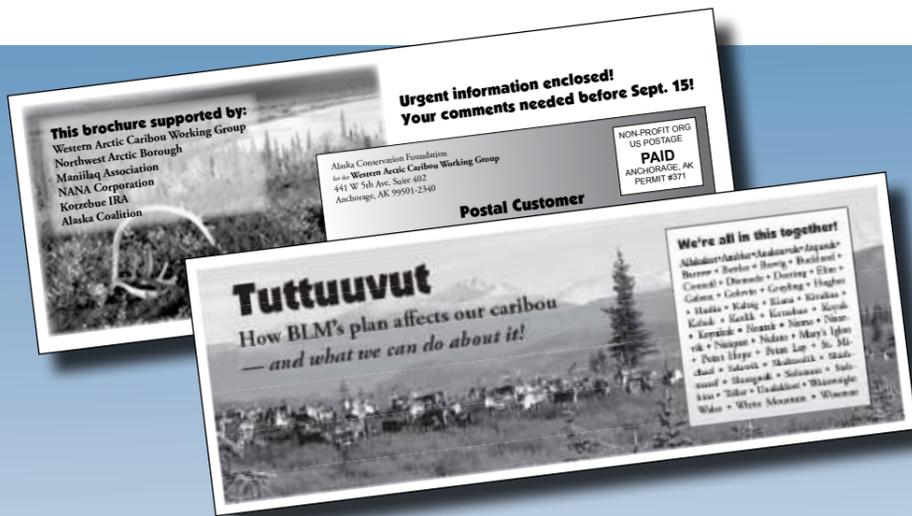
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group requests that the Bureau of Land Management refer to the Unit 23 Recreation Management section of the the Unit 23 Resource Management Plan that includes:

- expanding the Squirrel River conflict area to include other areas of conflicts in Unit 23,
- using interim measures to limit recreational users at current levels while a Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) is developed for areas of conflict,
- using the Unit 23 cooperative planning process to develop a RAMP that reduces conflicts in Unit 23; and
- allowing options for long-term cooperative planning processes to alleviate future conflicts that may arise in Unit 23.

Raymond Stoney
Raymond Stoney, Chairman
Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group
September 14, 2006

Look familiar?

This brochure was mailed to over 9,000 people in northwest Alaska this summer, urging them to ask BLM to protect caribou and caribou habitat in their Resource Management Plan for the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula area.



Here's what people said

During the comment period, BLM received approximately 4,000 comment letters or e-mails. Of these 3,840 were form letters or variations of form letters received by e-mail, and 55 were reply cards from the above mailer.

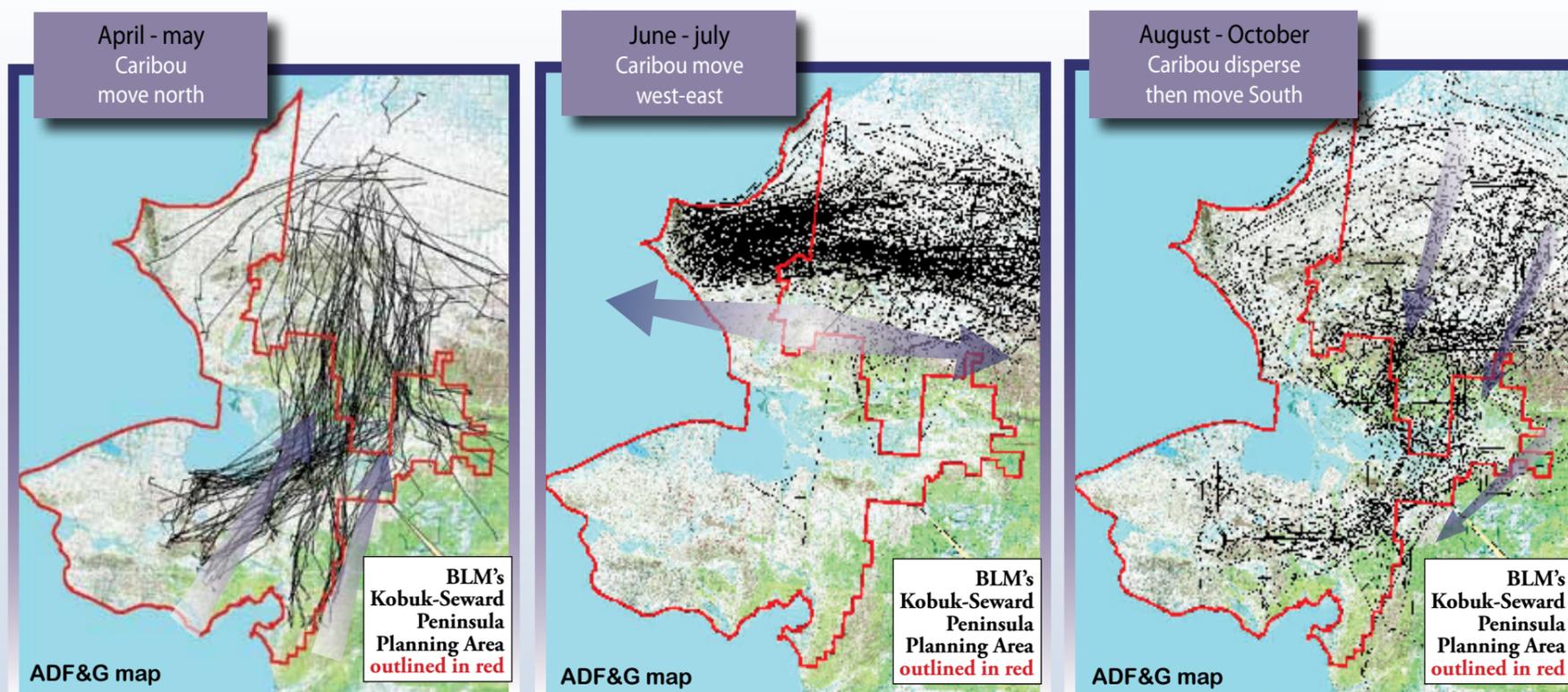
More than half of the wildlife comments were about caribou, and focused on protection of habitats important to the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. There was strong support for closing caribou habitats to mineral entry, and providing additional protective measures. Many people expressed concern for protection of caribou migration routes and the need to avoid disruptive activities in these areas.

...and here's what happens next

- Jan 2007 **BLM completes revisions to plan**
- Feb-March 2007 **Plan reviewed by State & Northwest Arctic Borough**
- April-May 2007 **BLM prepares proposed Final Resource Management Plan & Environmental Impact Statement**
- May-June 2007 **Protest period**
- Aug-Sept 2007 **Plan becomes final (called the Record of Decision)**

collared caribou aid comments from working group

The Caribou Working Group provided comments to BLM. Using information from collared caribou we could identify critical areas of the herd's range, and requested increased protection for caribou.



Each black line on these maps shows the movement of a caribou wearing a satellite collar, from 1987 to 2004. Although based on a very small proportion of the herd, these lines show us the general seasonal movements and the areas used most heavily by the Western Arctic Caribou Herd.

The red line marks the boundary of BLM planning area. The plan addresses opening BLM lands within this area to oil, gas and mineral development; regulation of hunting guides and recreation; control of wildfire; and other issues concerning caribou, habitat and people.

Here is a brief summary of the recommendations the Caribou Working Group gave BLM.

We don't know what BLM's final decisions will be—but we will be watching and hoping they heeded our requests to protect caribou habitat.

Protect habitat & subsistence

Habitat protection is essential to the future of the herd. The group strongly recommended that migration corridors and all seasonal core habitats be permanently protected to ensure subsistence opportunities for the 40 Native villages that depend on the herd.

The group also recommended increased vegetation and lichen studies; caribou health and population monitoring; fire suppression for important winter range lichen areas; and that all management decisions consider the effects of climate change on caribou.

Exclude mineral, oil & gas development

The group recommended that BLM provide permanent protection for the entire range of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd, and close the area to mineral exploration and development.

The group also requested that the herd's insect relief and calving areas be closed to all mineral exploration and development activities. They felt that seasonal restrictions are not sufficient, as activities during other times of the year could impact caribou habitat year-round.

Reduce hunting pressure in Kotzebue area

For areas where conflicts are occurring the group recommended that BLM: regulate transporter activities through the use of permits; cap the number of guides at the current levels; require recreation permits for visitors; and involve the Caribou Working Group in their recreation management decisions.

The group also requested that BLM designate camping and no-camping areas for commercial operators; limit the number of commercial camps and clients; and require commercial operators to file yearly reports.

Global warming: Is it real? How will it affect us? What can

What Native People across the Arctic are observing

- More persistent clouds
- More warm weather
- Warmer winters
- More extreme weather
- Less snow
- Snow melting earlier
- Less sea ice in winter
- Thinner sea ice in winter
- Later ice freeze-up
- Earlier ice break-up
- Lower water levels in lakes and rivers
- Treeline moving north
- Willows and shrubs getting larger

What Alaska Scientists have documented

Average Yearly temperatures are rising in Alaska, and rising more in spring and winter

From 1949 – 2004 average *yearly* temperatures

- rose in Barrow by 4°F
- rose in Kotzebue by 2°F
- rose in Nome by 2°F
- rose in Bettles by 4°F

From 1949 – 2004 average *spring* temperatures

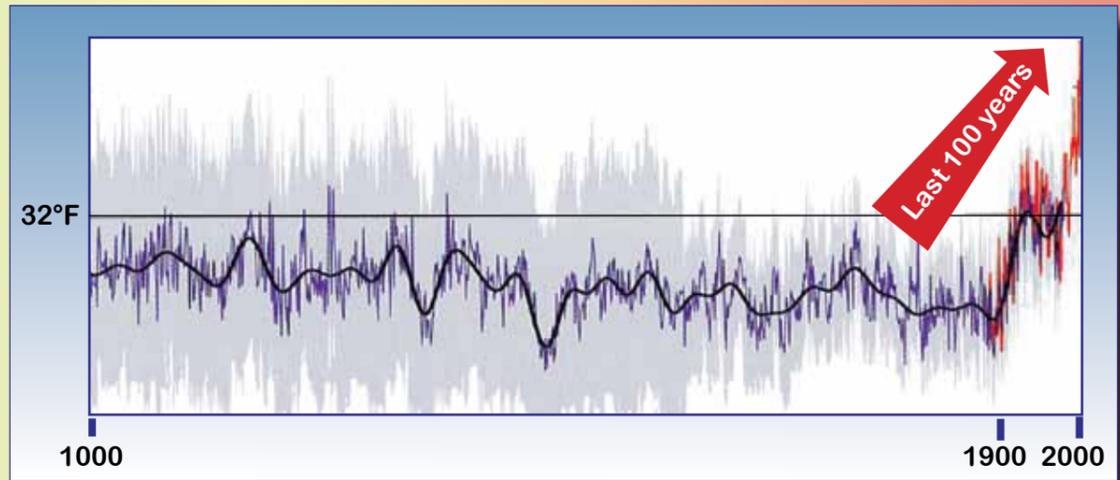
- rose in Barrow by 7°F
- rose in Kotzebue by 4°F
- rose in Nome by 6°F
- rose in Bettles by 5°F

Spring snow-ending dates for Barrow:

1950: approx. June 18
2000: approx. May 22

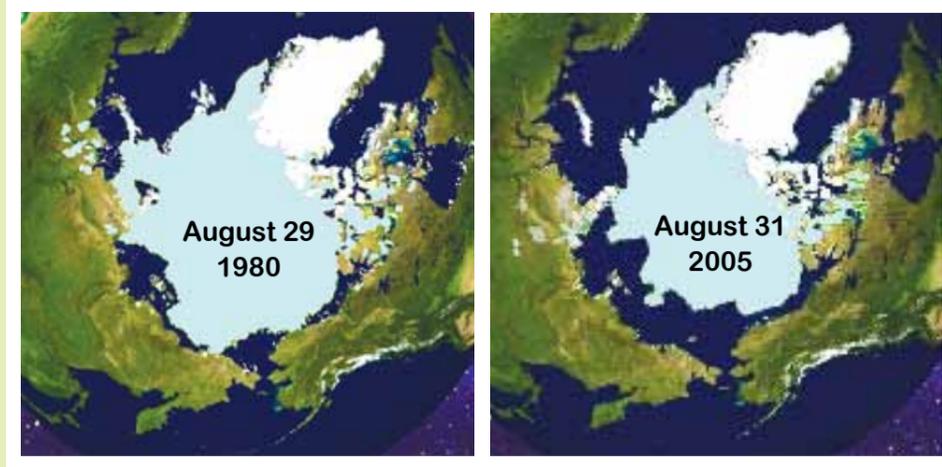
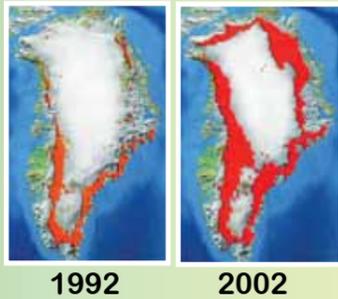
Entire Northern Hemisphere has warmed in the last 100 years

By drilling ice cores in glaciers and the Greenland Ice Cap scientists can determine temperatures for the last 1,000 years, and compare them with today's temperatures. There has been a dramatic increase in the last 100 years.

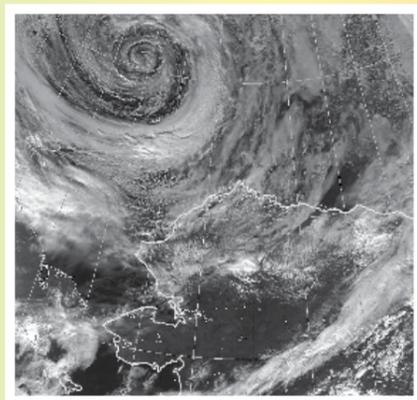


arctic ice pack is shrinking

The polar ice cap in the Arctic is shrinking. The red below shows how much of Greenland's ice cap has melted.



Alaska Storm patterns changing and increasing in severity
More storms are originating in Russia's northern seas, rather than coming up from the Pacific Ocean. These storms are often more severe, and Alaska's coastline is less protected because of the shrinking ice pack.



in the next 100 years we can expect:

- Warmer winters & wetter summers
- More extreme weather events
- Less sea ice
- More wildfires
- Melting permafrost
- Earlier break-ups & later freeze-ups
- Rising sea levels

Graphics modified from a 2006 presentation to the Caribou Working group by John Walsh, International Arctic Research center, University of Alaska Fairbanks

It's not too late to make a difference!

Watch the movie 'An inconvenient truth'

Watch it and share it with others. Ask teachers to share it with students. Ask your IRA or City to make it available in your village. Go to www.climatecrisis.net to learn more.

Switch to florescent light bulbs

You'll save 60% off your light bill. To mail-order contact www.energyfederation.org or call 1-800-379-4121. Also, purchase energy efficient appliances.

Insulate and weatherize your home and windows

Properly insulating your walls and ceilings can save 25% of your yearly heat bill. Caulking and weather-stripping can save you more. Go to www.energyefficient.org for more information on how to better insulate your home.

Unplug electronics w not in use

Unplugging y player, stereo when you're n saves more en turning them

we do about it?

Our future at risk

All quotes by Caleb Pungowiyi

"We will continue to be Inupiaqs and Yupiks in the years to come but when we are unable to harvest Bowhead whales, it will be a sad chapter in our cultural history."

Photo by Marlene Ahkinga, Diomedes



Photo from USFWS



Thin & Shrinking Ice

Polar bears, seals, walrus, whales and the people who hunt them all depend on sea ice. Thin ice can't hold a whale for butchering. Hunters can't travel safely on thin ice. A shrinking ice pack will alter marine mammal migration routes. Less ice means less protection from storms.

Photo from Caleb Pungowiyi



"Eskimos and seal oil – there is no separation between the two."

Photo from USFWS Selawik NWR



A changing landscape

land slides, changing treeline, and more insects come with thawing permafrost. We also expect more insects and diseases affecting trees, shrubs and plants.

Photo from USFWS



Increased wildfires

Climate change is causing an increase in the number, size and severity of wildfires—the most important predators for caribou—are very slow to recover after a fire.

Caribou will likely have more difficulty finding food in the winter which can impact the herd's ability to feed in ice.



Photo by Geoff Carroll

"There are some things you can't measure in dollars & cents: when hunters come home empty handed—when people have to buy food to eat instead of harvested food—when hunters spend days waiting for caribou who do not show up."



Photo from USFWS

Delayed freeze-up & early break-up

The timing of a subsistence activities like ice-fishing will be altered or eliminated.

Salmon spawning and health of all fish will be impacted by increased ocean temperatures and siltation from melting glaciers.



From AK Center for Environment

Rising sea levels

Look what happens to Barrow if the sea level rises by 12 feet—everything in red goes underwater. As polar ice caps and glaciers melt, sea level will rise, putting Alaskan coastal villages at extreme risk.

"Ice is a supporter of life."

melting permafrost

As frozen ground thaws many existing buildings, roads, pipelines, airports and industrial facilities will likely be de-stabilized, posing potential threats to the environment and wildlife.

Structures will require expensive rebuilding and maintenance.



Photo from John Walsh, UAF

"Some of our traditions will vanish from changing climate. Some of our words will be lost when the activity associated with them does not exist anymore. No doubt there will be extreme hardship in some of our communities, but as Inupiaq, Yupik, Athabaskan, and other indigenous people, we will continue to maintain our identity and our cultures."

—Caleb Pungowiyi

when

our TV, DVD and computer are not using them more energy than just off.

Turn down the heat at home

Wear a sweater when you're home, and keep it cooler when you're asleep or away from home.

Speak up! Make sure your voice is heard!

Write, call or email—but make sure local, state & US politicians hear you! Your concerns about global warming are urgent. They can do something about it if we make them!

contact info:

Senator Lisa Murkowski
alaskaoffice@murkowski.senate.gov
Tel 1-877-829-6030

Senator Ted Stevens
www.stevens.senate.gov/contact.cfm
Tel (202) 224-3004

Governor Sarah Palin
www.gov.state.ak.us/govmailSP.php
Tel 907-465-3500

White Mountain Elder shares caribou memories

Jacob Ahwinona of Nome and White Mountain shared stories of early caribou hunting with the Caribou Working Group

Jacob Ahwinona's grandparents predicted that the caribou would come back to the Seward Peninsula. *"Someday they'll come back—back to the Seward Peninsula area. When we're gone, in your time they will come back,"* he remembers them telling him. And Jacob is grateful that he has been able to see their prediction come true. *"I got to see that day. They knew what they were talking about."* Jacob, who remembers caribou hunting in western Alaska as a younger man, was 'Guest Elder' at the February 2006 meeting of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group in Anchorage.

Born in Death Valley, northeast of White Mountain, Jacob told listeners of the time he first hunted caribou by dog team, with the guidance of an elder.

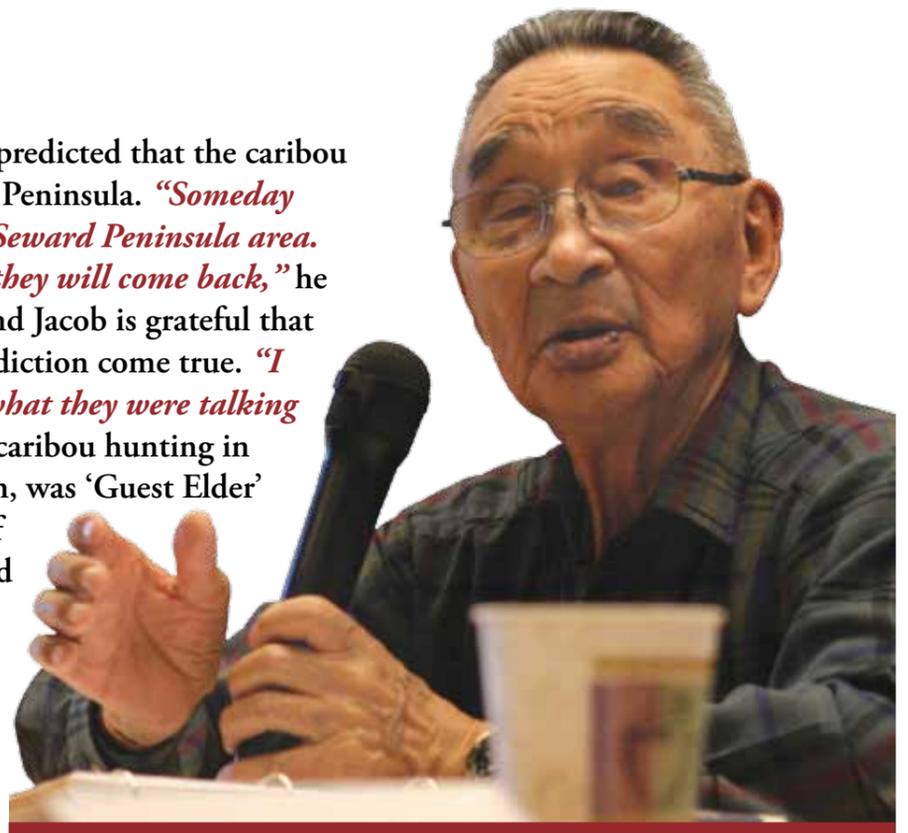
"There were no snowmachines," he said. *"I had a good dog team—a basket sled and 11 dogs."* He recalled camping in the snow, stalking caribou by snowshoe and learning to "shoot downhill." The elder, a guide for the group, told them where to hunt, which caribou to shoot, and when to shoot it.

Jacob also recalled the stories his parents and grandparents told of earlier times when they would follow the caribou from their wintering grounds on the Seward Peninsula all the way to their calving area near Point Hope. *"They walked with packs on their dogs. My grandparents had 13 dogs. And my grandparents said they would see gold in the creeks along the way,"*

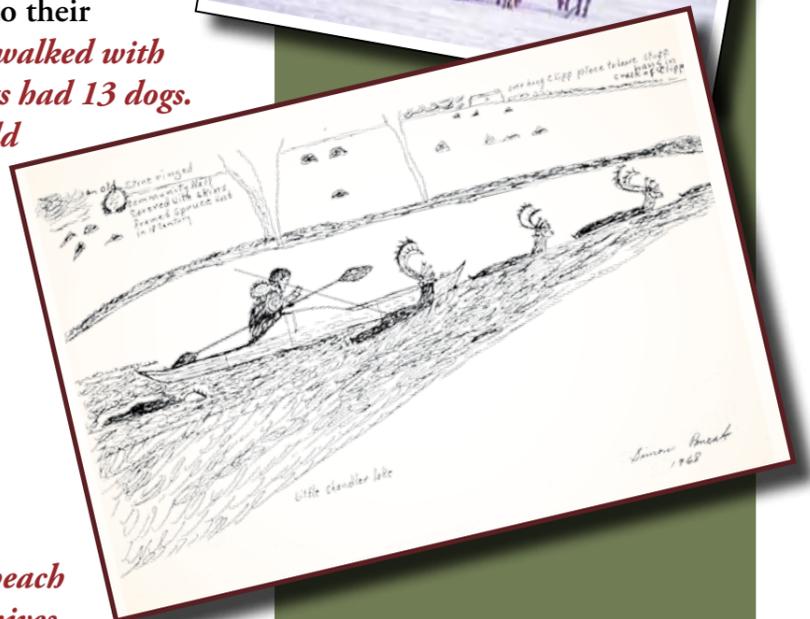
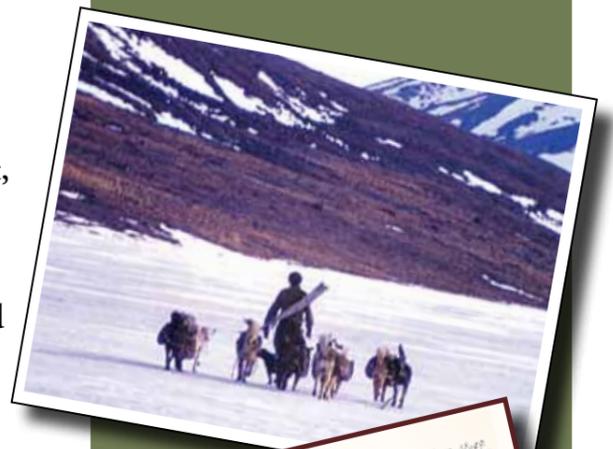
His grandparents also told Jacob how they hunted caribou from kayaks before they had guns. Jacob's grandfather, Tookoona, was a fast runner, and when the caribou would arrive at Salmon Lake he would drive them over a low pass and into Safety Lagoon. *"Hunters in kayaks on the beach would be waiting with spears and knives. When the caribou started swimming out they would kayak out and spear them,"* Jacob told the group. Others would butcher the animals on shore. Jacob stressed how in the days before they had guns, a successful hunt required the cooperation of the entire village.

Jacob's parents and grandparents also taught him to utilize everything from the caribou. *"We were brought up to respect the land and subsistence living, and our natural resources. You don't kill unless you are going to eat the animal. We listened to our elders, and you didn't waste caribou. When I go out and see animals wasted it hurts me in here,"* Jacob said as he pointed to his heart. *"It hurts you, and it also hurts the future of the caribou."*

—Original story by Randall Howell, The Arctic Sounder



Above photo by Randall Howell, Arctic Sounder



Top Photo:

An Anaktuvuk hunter puts his dogs to work carry gear in caribou hide packs.

Photo taken in 1956 by John Martin Campbell.

Drawing Above:

The late Simon Paneak of Anaktuvuk drew this illustration of how they hunted caribou from kayaks.

"We were brought up to respect the land and subsistence living, and our natural resources.

We listened to our elders, and you didn't waste caribou. When I go out and see animals wasted it hurts me, it hurts you, and it also hurts the future of the caribou."



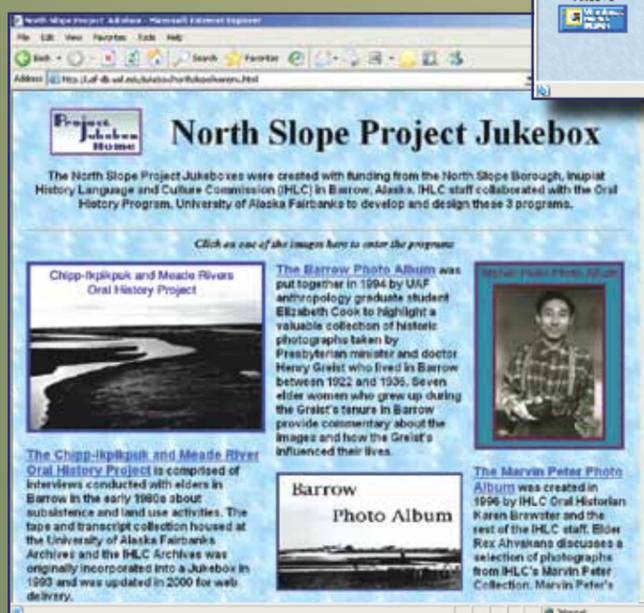
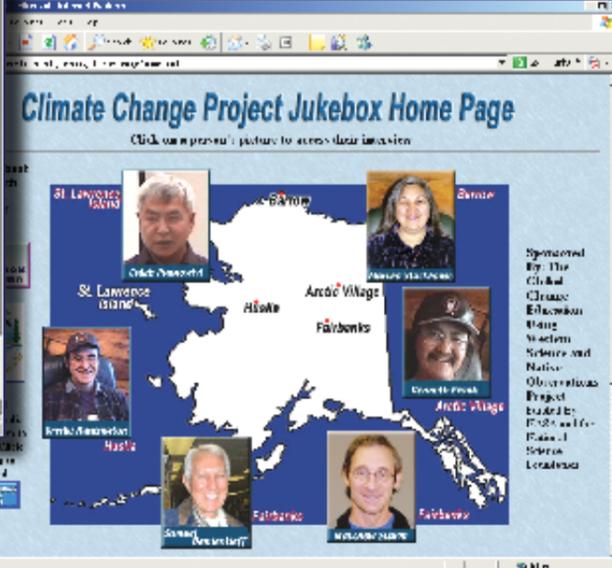
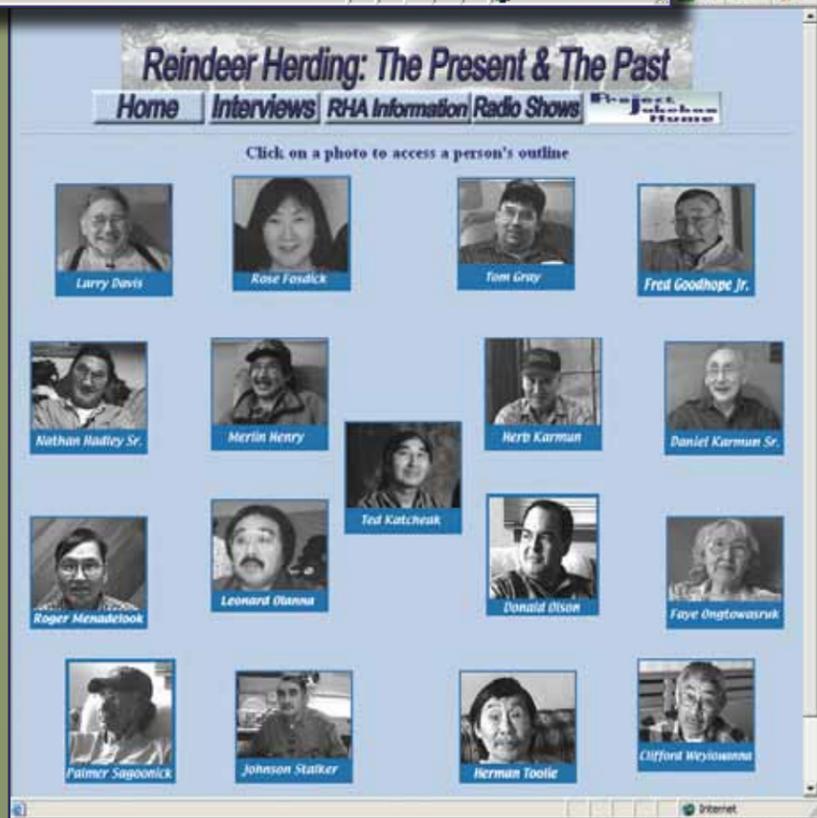
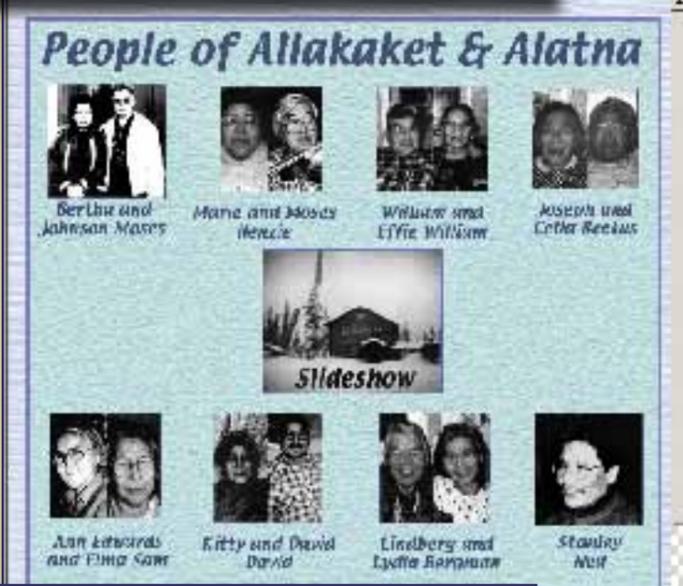
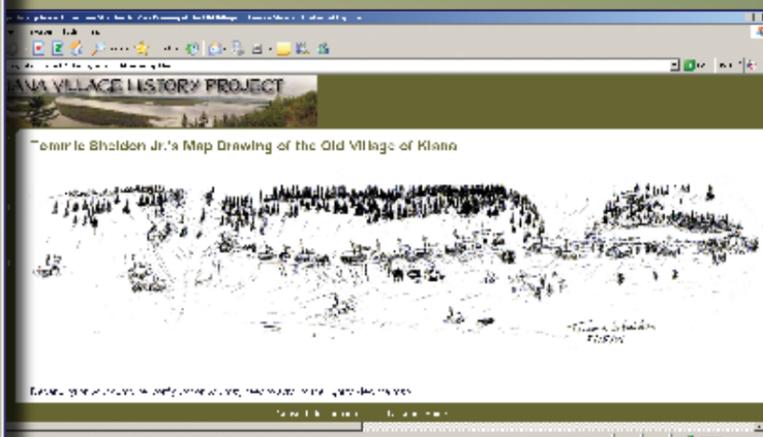
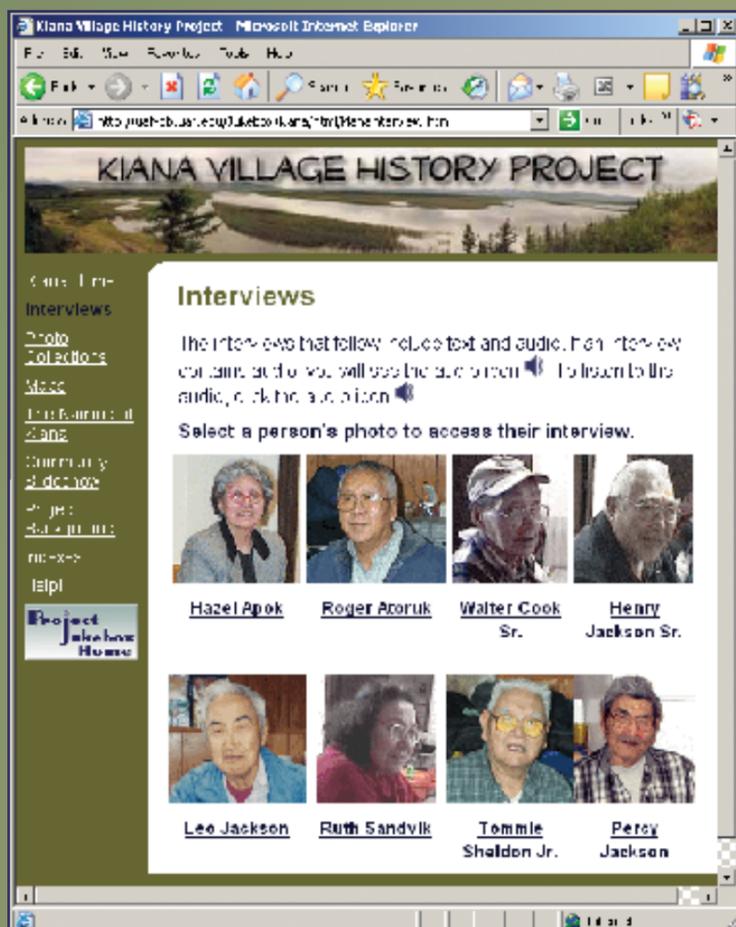
Cultural Knowledge at your fingertips!

www.uaf.edu/library/jukebox

Alaska Native history comes alive through audio recordings with Elders, historic photos, place-name maps and more, all available over the internet through the University of Alaska's 'Project Jukebox.'

Just as you used to put a coin in the jukebox and listen to the song of your choice, now you can go to the internet to see and listen to the program of your choice—for free!

Here's just a sample.



If you would like to know more about Project Jukebox, or if your community would be interested in creating their own Project Jukebox site, please contact:

Bill Schneider
 Curator of Oral History
 University of Alaska Fairbanks
 (907) 474-5355, ffwss@uaf.edu

Looking at Lichens ...Again!

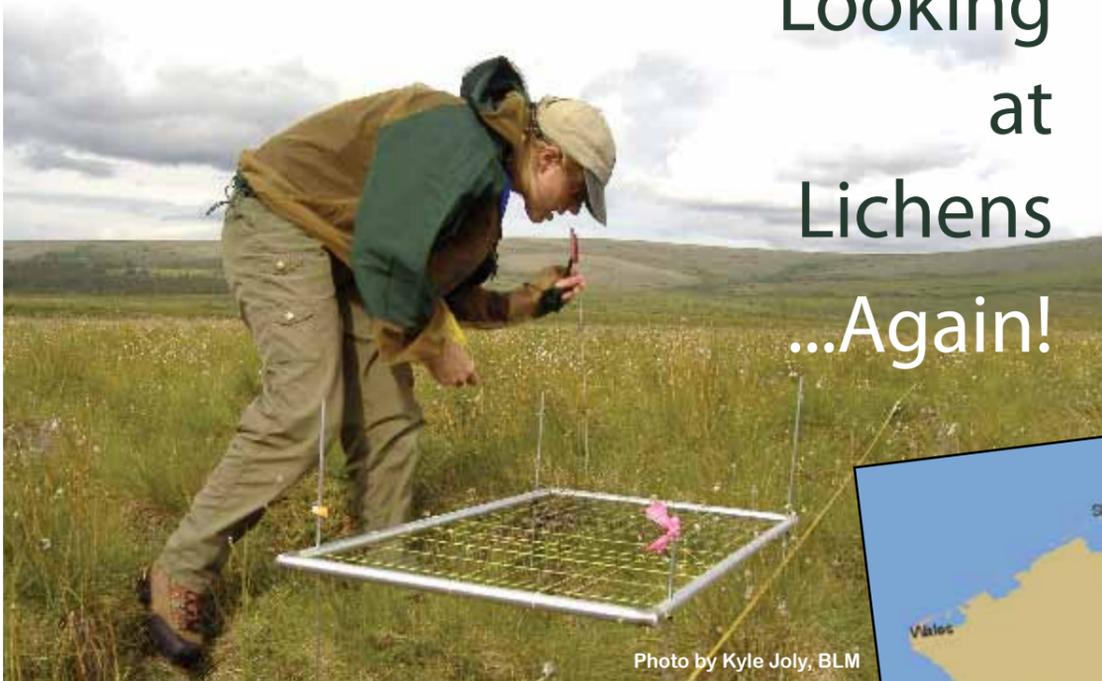
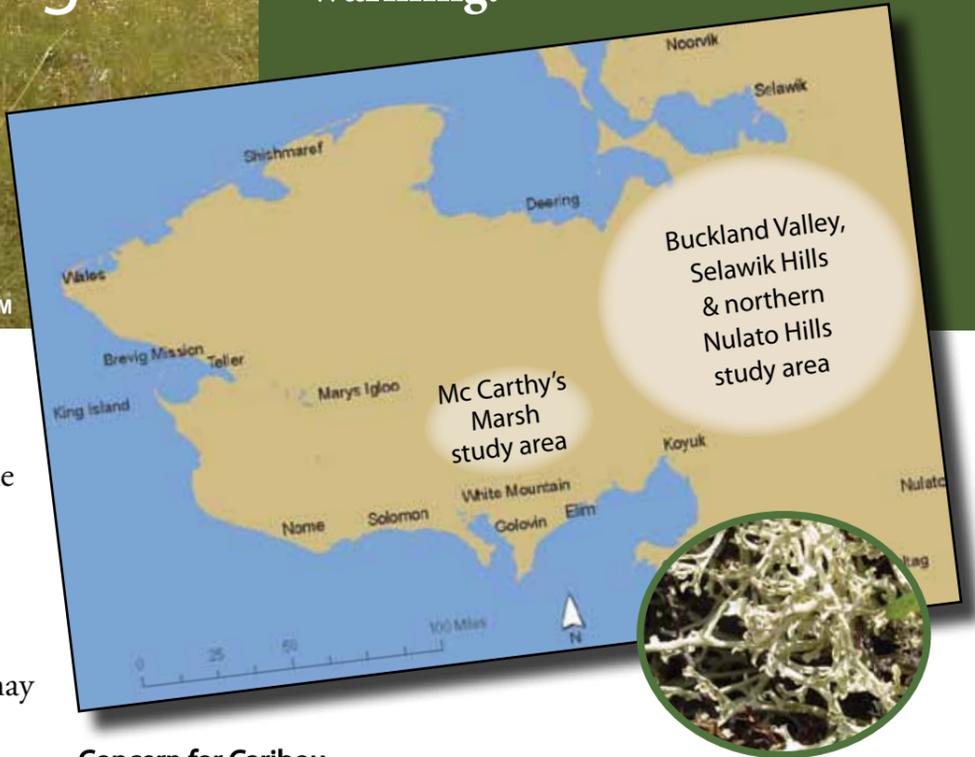


Photo by Kyle Joly, BLM

A long-term BLM study shows lichens decreasing in the winter range of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. The decline may be due to repeated grazing by caribou combined with global warming.



Buckland Valley, Selawik Hills & northern Nulato Hills

BLM botanists and wildlife biologists have studied lichens in the Buckland Valley, Selawik Hills and northern Nulato Hills since 1981. By measuring the same way in the same location every several years they have documented that shrubs and leafy green plants are increasing, and lichens—especially those preferred by caribou—are declining. This is an indication that overgrazing may be occurring in the herd's winter range.

McCarthy's Marsh

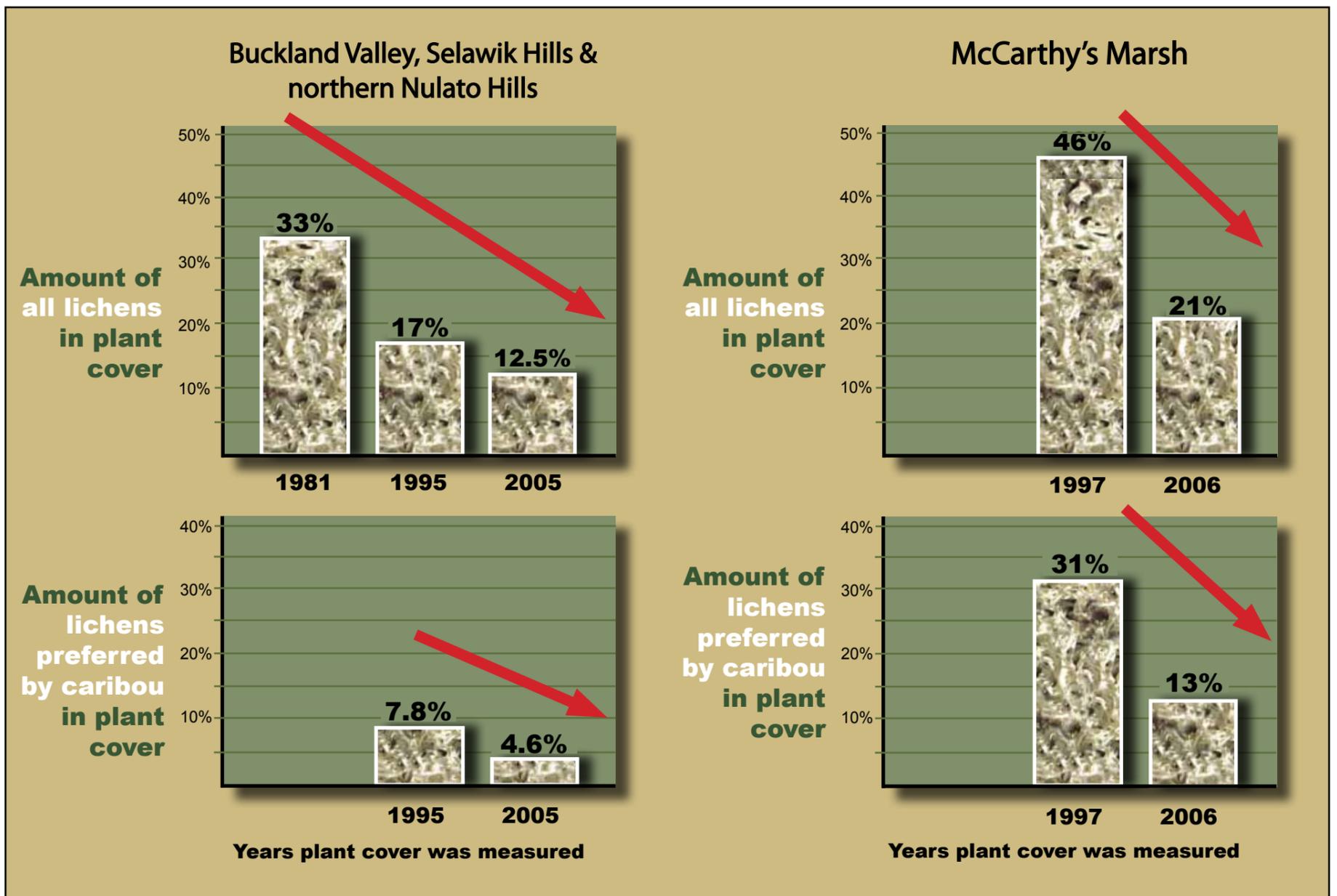
BLM began similar studies in the McCarthy's Marsh area of the Seward Peninsula in 1997. This region has more lichens because it has not been grazed as much by caribou or reindeer, but there was still a similar decline in the overall amount of lichens, and an increase in shrubs and leafy green plants. This means that there may be factors other than grazing—such as global warming—involved in the decline of lichens.

Concern for Caribou

Regardless of the cause for the decline, wildlife biologists, subsistence hunters and reindeer herders are concerned about the decline because lichens are the primary winter food source for caribou and reindeer. The lichen studies will be continued.

For more info

Contact Kyle Joly, BLM - Fairbanks at 1-800-437-7021, (907) 474-2203, or e-mail: Kyle_Joly@blm.gov

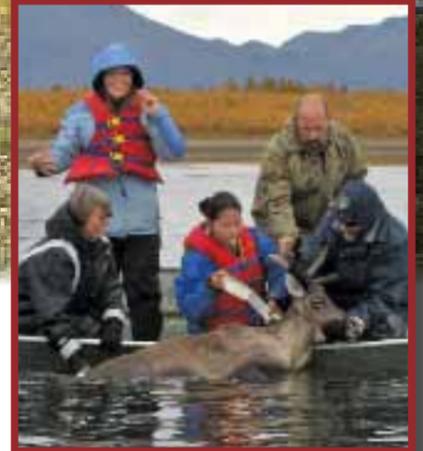


Shungnak group gets the job done at onion portage in 2006

Dion Ticket &
Peter Douglas



Maurine Wilson
& Fallon Johnson



Fallon Johnson
Processing caribou blood samples

Onion Portage 2005

With help from Barrow &
Selawik students...

We put collars on 44 caribou:

- 29 radio-transmitting collars
4 on bulls, 25 on cows
- 15 satellite-transmitting collars
6 on bulls, 9 on cows

We took blood samples from 66 caribou:

30 from bulls, 36 from cows

Caribou body weight was average.

Health of the herd update

Lab results from 2005

17% of the caribou we sampled had some type of inflammation. The inflammation could be caused by a bacterial infection, a viral infection or physical trauma—but *not* starvation.

Only 2% of the caribou sampled had been exposed to brucellosis, a bacterial disease that is common in caribou and causes swollen joints and reproductive problems.

migration delayed in 2005 & 2006

For the past 4 - 5 years, the herd has been 2-4 weeks late beginning their fall migration.

Darvin Douglas
& William Sheldon (right)



Onion Portage 2006

With help from shungnak
students...

We put collars on 33 caribou:

- 17 radio-transmitting collars
6 on bulls, 11 on cows
- 16 satellite-transmitting collars
2 on bulls, 14 on cows

We took blood samples from 45 caribou:

14 from bulls, 31 from cows

Caribou body weight was average.

Higher adult caribou death rate in 2005-2006

More adult caribou died between October 2005 and September 2006, than had died between the same months since the 1970s. It was likely due to warm conditions in December 2005, which partially melted the snow and brought rain as well. When temperatures cooled again, a 1/2 inch layer of ice encased the ground. This was then covered by snow so it wasn't eroded by sun and wind. Their food was locked in ice, and walking was slippery—disastrous conditions for caribou.

Calf birth rate up slightly

Using a small plane we observed 74 collared cows from the air. We estimated that 65 calves were born for every 100 cows during the June calving period. Calf production has very slowly increased since the late 1990s.

The herd returned to their normal calving grounds in the southwest portion of the National Petroleum Reserve.

Calf survival dropping

While the birth rate was up, the number of calves that survived through their first winter

declined, and has been slowly declining since the early 1980's. The survival rate of calves is more important than birth rate because it's the number that live to reproduce that's important.

Slight shift in winter areas

During the winter of 2004-2005, roughly half the herd wintered in the Nulato Hills between Unalakleet and Koyuk. During the winter of 2005-2006, roughly half the herd wintered in the Kobuk River area below Selby Lake, and in the Selawik and Buckland drainages. During each of these winters, caribou were more concentrated than is typical. In the winter of 2006-2007 it appears that much of the herd will winter in the eastern Seward Peninsula and northern Nulato Hills.

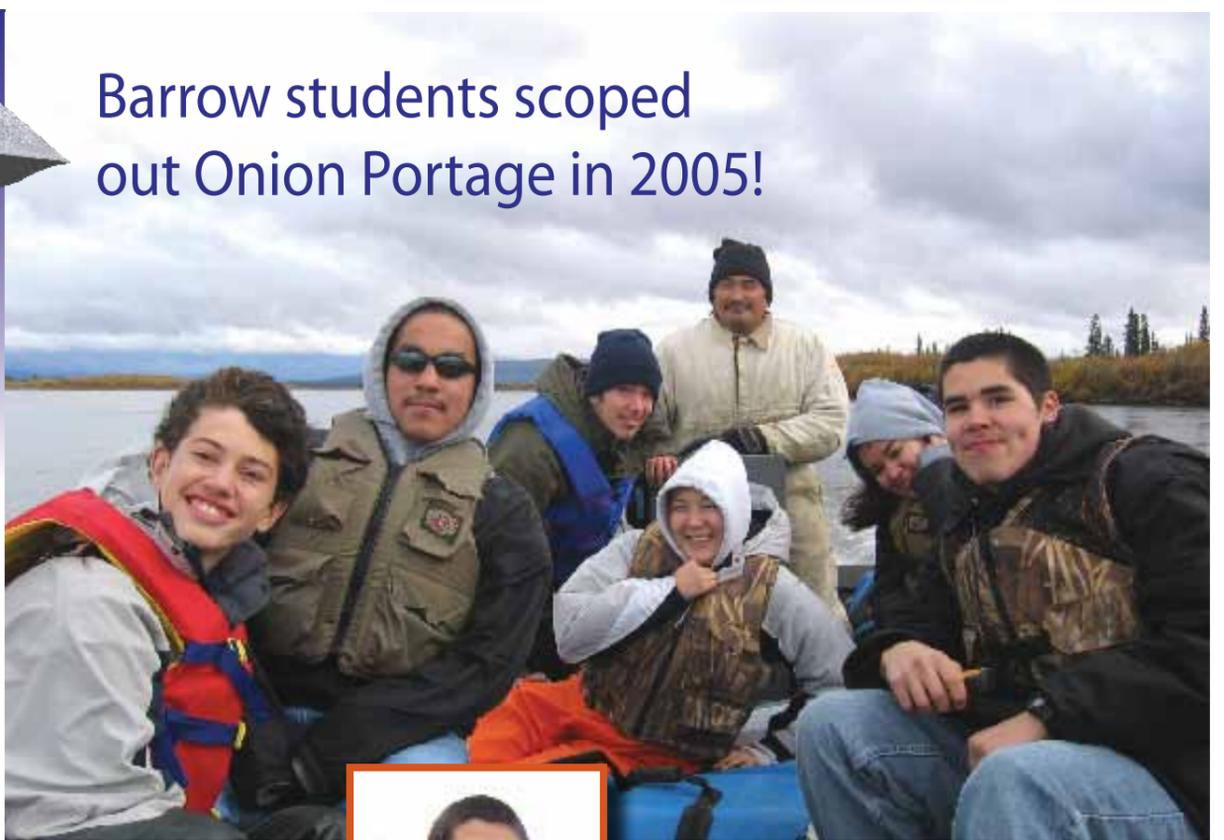
Aretha Lee &
Maurine Wilson (below)



Barrow students scoped out Onion Portage in 2005!



In September 2005 Barrow High School students assisted biologists with the annual caribou Collaring project at Onion Portage on the Kobuk River



Priscilla Ahsoak (left)

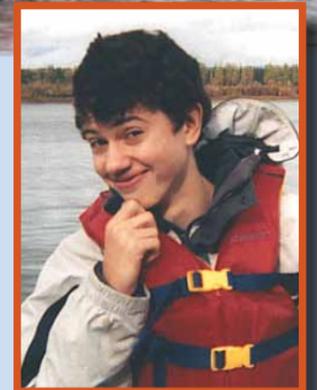
“First I was in the calf boat. We would catch the calf so it doesn’t run off without its mom, cause it may still need the mom. The first time I got into the capture boat I collared a cow—a female caribou. It was fun. I thought I did it pretty quick. I’m pretty proud of myself.”

Crystal Martin (right)

“I handled three or four calves while I’ve been here. It’s been fun. You gotta have a good grip on them. I hold onto the tail—really hold onto the tail—because if you lose the tail the person holding the neck could lose their grip and you’d have to chase the calf again.”

Jeremiah Lambrecht (above center)

“To collar a caribou we wait for a small herd to cross the river. For a female caribou we only use one boat, pull up alongside it and grab it by the antlers and the tail. Jim take’s a syringe and gets some blood samples, and then we put a radio or satellite tracking collar on the caribou.”



Jordan Jeffrey (above)

“I also held one of the calves. That was actually pretty hard because there’s no horns to hang on to when you’re holding a calf, and they’re just fidgety little guys—they just wanna escape!”

Chad Nesteby (left)

“I almost didn’t make it because I wasn’t sure I’d be able to catch up in my classes afterward but one of my teachers talked to me and I figured out it would be a once-in-a-lifetime thing. We learned about caribou; ways to collar them, and that they’re pretty strong—pretty big up close. I’ve done pretty much all parts of the collaring. I’m glad I came.”

Ernest Nageak (far left)

“I hunt a lot of caribou in Barrow. This is a new experience ‘cause there’s a lot of trees. Where we come from it’s flat—you could see caribou for miles and miles. We never catch them in the water. I collared a couple big bulls and a cow. The bulls are fun to handle—they get kinda wild. It’s been a good experience.”



Selawik students Checked out
Onion Portage in 2005, too!



Selawik High school students also joined biologists in september 2005, and helped catch and collar caribou At onion portage on the kobuk river below ambler



Angela Foxglove



Esther Dexter



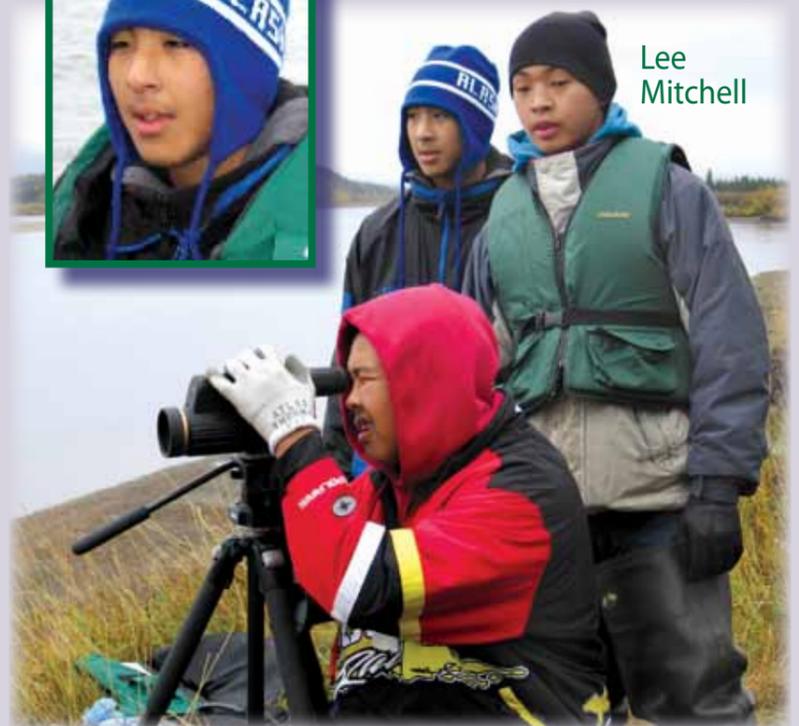
Sam ballot
dorcac ballot



ron
davis



Lee
Mitchell



Caribou bits

Learning by doing

At the 2005 Selawik Science-Culture Camp kids learned how to butcher and prepare caribou by watching and practicing under the guidance of Carrie Kolhok and other skilled adults.



Photos by Susan Georgette



Leave 'em laughing!

At Kawerak's 2006 Regional Conference, Edgar and Helen Jackson of Shaktoolik, their daughter, Rita, and Beverly Taxac of Koyuk, shared a few caribou stories. This one by Helen and Edgar left us all laughing!

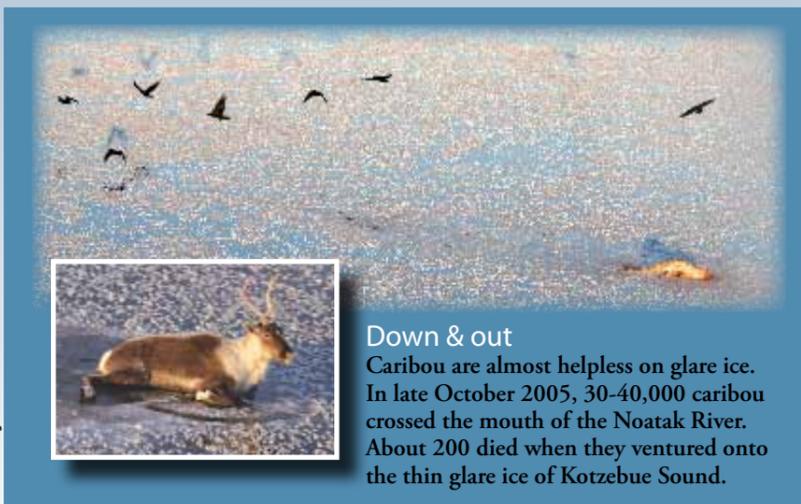
Edgar: "We got a caribou with a collar one time. We cut off all the wires cause we were kinda afraid. The boys were gonna bury it in the snow, but I said, 'No I'll bring it home and keep it for souvenir.'"

Helen: "We were having a big church gathering at Easter get-together, and we had lots of company. And this little plane kept flying around above our house. 'What's going on?' we keep asking. And then pretty soon that little plane land on the river outside of our house. We didn't pay too much attention because we had lots of visitors. Then someone knocks... Two Fish and Game guys! They say they keep getting a beep or buzz

or something from our house. We try to get away with it because we wanted that collar for souvenir. Anyway, they kept talking, talking. Finally Edgar gave in and he gave it to them. Here I had hidden it under the blankets, so nobody will see it, cause I thought that was a neat thing— to have caribou collar for souvenir!"

Edgar: "They wanted to give us twenty bucks reward for the radio, but I said no, you guys found it on your own!"

All laughing aside - returning collars to the nearest Fish & Game office helps biologists better monitor our caribou - and there's a \$50 reward!



Photos by James Mason

Down & out

Caribou are almost helpless on glare ice. In late October 2005, 30-40,000 caribou crossed the mouth of the Noatak River. About 200 died when they ventured onto the thin glare ice of Kotzebue Sound.

share your caribou concerns with us - Consider joining us!

Wainwright
Point Hope
Nuiqsut & Anaktuvuk
Noatak & Kivalina
Kotzebue
Lower Kobuk
Upper Kobuk
Koyukuk River
Middle Yukon River
Buckland, Deering & Selawik
Northern Seward Peninsula
Nome
Elim, Golovin, White Mountain
Southern Norton Sound
Reindeer Herders Association
Conservationists
Hunting Guides
Transporters
Anchorage Advisory Committee
Non-local Resident Hunters

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vacant
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Steven MacLean, 276-3133 ext 115
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Steve Flory
vacant

Please share any questions or concerns you have about caribou with any of the representatives on the Caribou Working Group, or with:

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(907) 442-7691, caleb.pungowiyi@maniilaq.org

