



TOM COLLOPY

### Ready, Set, Go...Alaska's Conservation Leaders Head to the Environmental Leadership Institute

ACF understands that investing in promising and proven leaders is the first step in a larger effort to enhance the impact of Alaska's conservation movement. In recent years political and economic landscapes have shifted, threatening the continued viability of many of Alaska's conservation organizations—and leaders. Last year, ACF launched the Community Capacity initiative to aid Alaska's conservation organizations in achieving revolutionary, collaborative successes by cultivating strong leaders, organizations and diverse networks.

Recognizing that leadership is critical to success, one of the first actions for the Community Capacity initiative was to assess the needs of today's conservation leaders. The findings revealed substantial turnover in senior

positions, and a deficit in grassroots advocacy and political strategy training. Veteran leaders referenced the Environmental Leadership Institute (ELI®) as the most valuable conservation training in the U.S. for these skills. The ELI is a rigorous program led by the League of Conservation Voters Education Fund (LCVEF) for strengthening individual advocacy campaign skills.



ELI Graduates in Alaska, 2001.

### ACF Co-Sponsors Alaska's Most Extensive Leadership Training Program in a Decade

### Coaching Leaders in a Changing Environment

A change in leadership creates a range of issues for an organization, but have you ever considered the cost? As a national average, the cost of changing executive leadership is estimated between 150% and 400% of that person's salary. In Alaska, that amount can be even higher, given the challenges of finding experienced managers available to take the helm. When a leader leaves an organization any gained momentum is often lost—at both the organizational and community level.

The transition of executives and senior staff in the nonprofit sector is nothing

new, yet years of economic challenges and unsustainable work practices have left some organizations with unplanned leadership transitions. According to the Bridgespan Group, a leading nonprofit strategy consultant, **investing in leadership and management capacity is the most critical need of grassroots nonprofits**, one that most foundations overlook. When many of Alaska's regional groups lost their leadership in 2008, it was evident that ACF needed to dramatically increase the level of support for the next generation of Alaska conservation leaders. Fortunately ACF was able to raise the critical funding and partnerships necessary to launch the Community Capacity initiative to address this critical need.

In February, ACF partnered with nonprofit Training Resources for the Environmental Community (TREC) to pilot an executive coaching program de-

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## Letter from our Executive Director

### Your \$ at Work

Through your generous support ACF has made over 150 grants to Alaska conservation organizations in the last year!

### Questions?

Have questions about an issue or ACF? Contact us!

**Arctic National Wildlife Refuge**  
Nick Hardigg, Executive Director  
nhardigg@alaskaconservation.org

**Bristol Bay**  
Ann Rothe, Deputy Director  
arothe@alaskaconservation.org

**Community Capacity**  
Polly Carr, Program Officer  
pcarr@alaskaconservation.org

**Conservation Internship Program**  
Danielle Williams, Program Associate  
dswilliams@alaskaconservation.org

**Energy & Coal**  
Matt Rafferty, Program Officer  
mrafferty@alaskaconservation.org

**Tongass Permanent Protection**  
Brian McNitt, Program Officer  
bmcnitt@alaskaconservation.org

**ACF Communications**  
Jenni Pollard, Communications Director  
jpollard@alaskaconservation.org

For a list of ACF's Staff & Board of Trustees please visit the ACF website:  
[www.alaskaconservation.org](http://www.alaskaconservation.org)

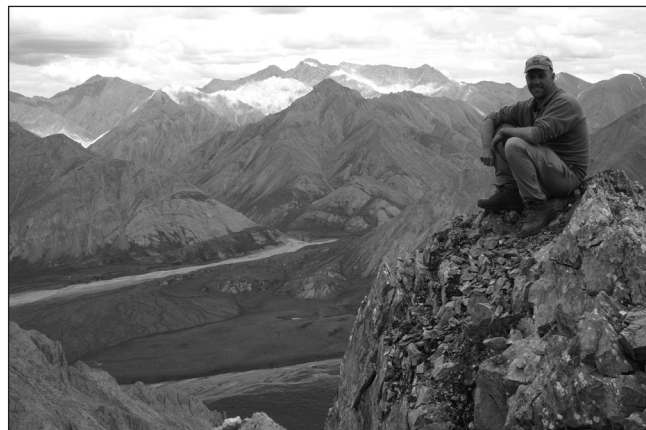
Alaska Conservation Foundation  
441 West Fifth Avenue  
Suite 402  
Anchorage, AK 99501-2340  
(907) 276-1917

Dear Friend of Alaska,

People are at the heart of the conservation movement in Alaska. Our conservation organizations are comprised of passionate people, who are working hard to ensure Alaska remains "Alaska"—healthy and wild. They are striving to protect the integrity of our natural, sustainable ecosystems that support lives and economies.

Every day global demand for Alaska's non-renewable resources rises, and so does the amount of money being spent to launch new development projects. While media coverage of Alaska conservation issues—like protection of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge—may have faded, the number of threats to Alaska's resources is burgeoning. In order for Alaska's conservation organizations to sustain themselves over the long haul, we must invest in the movement—beginning with its leaders. With great leadership we can move the needle by fostering innovation and strong management to address Alaska's greatest environmental threats.

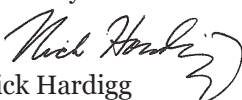
In this issue of the *Dispatch*, we focus on leaders. One of ACF's key initiatives, the Community Capacity Program, is investing in leadership—from supporting current leaders at the helm of conservation campaigns and organizations to emerging leaders participating in the ACF Conservation Internship Program.



ACF Executive Director Nick Hardigg admires the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Our vision is a strong, vibrant conservation movement marked by cultivated leadership, effective organizations and diverse networks addressing the most pressing issues in Alaska. From the Arctic Refuge to stopping the Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay, to creating a durable solution in the Tongass, our vision means that every dollar invested in Alaska will go farther and have lasting significance. Truly great leaders influence and bring people together. When people connect and come together, great things happen.

Sincerely

  
Nick Hardigg

*Alaska Conservation Foundation builds strategic leadership and support for Alaskan efforts to take care of wildlands, waters and wildlife, which sustain diverse cultures, healthy communities and prosperous economies.*

## ACF Interns: Strategic Investment, Broad Impact

While training today's leaders is crucial, it is equally important to cultivate emerging leaders, like the young activists participating in ACF's Conservation Internship Program (CIP). The CIP allows a new generation of leaders to be immersed in a meaningful learning opportunity while enabling a host conservation organization to (temporarily) increase its working capacity.

For the last several months, ACF has been preparing for the 2010 summer program. In March, 26 interns were selected from a group of 250 highly qualified undergraduate and graduate students from around the world. For 12 weeks this summer, the interns will work for a conservation organization, state agency or another organization that complements the ACF mission. The program is designed to provide inspiration and exposure to a pool of educated and energetic young leaders. In addition to gaining hands-on experience, the interns will participate in an orientation and weekly brown bag luncheons.

The impact on host organizations, interns, and ultimately Alaska, cannot be understated. Last summer, 20 talented individuals were placed at 20 different organizations around Alaska. Their projects spanned ecosystem conservation, environmental education and environmental justice.



2009 ACF Interns.

In ACF's final program evaluation, host organizations universally agreed that the interns increased their capacity to address conservation issues through research, communications, education and outreach. Interns reported an equally positive experience, with a majority answering a definitive "yes" when asked if they would work for Alaska conservation in the future. In fact, five of last summer's 20 interns remained or returned to Alaska to continue their work—four in the conservation field and one in social services. Read about one life changing internship in the accompanying article by Julia Beatty: *Mapping the Bering Sea: My Experience as an AMCC Intern.*

As last year's interns land full-time conservation jobs, ACF's veteran interns are rising to leadership positions within Alaska.

**"I can't imagine pursuing a career in any other field than climate change. The ACF intern experience has been invaluable. I am more focused and feel lucky to have worked with passionate people who 'fight the fight.'"**

— 2009 Intern

Those individuals include: Kelly Harrell, Executive Director of AMCC; Karen Hardigg, Forest Program Manager for the Wilderness Society; and Jonathan Teeters, Alaska Director for Organizing for America. **"The ACF internship program is leaving a lasting imprint upon the conservation community.** It's exciting that interns we'll welcome this summer may turn out to be life-long colleagues," said ACF Executive Director Nick Hardigg, who came to Alaska in 1988 on an NPCA-sponsored internship.

ACF will welcome the 2010 interns to Alaska in June. You can follow their progress throughout the summer on the ACF website. To sponsor the CIP, please contact Danielle Williams at [dswilliams@alaskaconservation.org](mailto:dswilliams@alaskaconservation.org).



Book cover for "Salmon in the Trees." © Amy Gulick

### Beautiful New Book Depicts An Age-Old Rainforest

**S***almon in the Trees* tells the remarkable story of the Tongass rainforest, where trees grow salmon, and salmon grow trees. Fringing the coastal panhandle of Alaska and covering thousands of islands in the Alexander Archipelago, the Tongass is one of the rarest ecosystems on Earth. Humpback whales, orcas and sea lions cruise the forested shorelines. Millions of wild salmon swim upstream into the forest, feeding an abundance of bears and bald eagles. Native cultures and local communities benefit from the gifts of both the forest and sea. But the global demands of our modern world may threaten this great forest's biological riches. With camera in hand, photographer Amy Gulick paddled among the bears, misty islands and salmon streams to document the intricate connections within the Tongass. She tells a hopeful story of a national treasure worth preserving. "It's astounding that in the 21st century, the beautiful web of life in the Tongass rainforest is still intact," says Gulick. "We have an incredible opportunity to ensure it stays that way." For more information and to buy the book, visit: [www.salmoninthetrees.org](http://www.salmoninthetrees.org). Or go to the ACF website to learn more about the Tongass efforts.

*Amy Gulick is a Fellow with the International League of Conservation Photographers, and recipient of the Daniel Housberg Wilderness Image Award presented by ACF.*



## Mapping the Bering Sea: My Experience as an AMCC Intern

By Julia Beatty

When Julia Beatty landed in Anchorage in June 2009, little did she know that nine months later she would be working on a conservation and human rights issue of critical importance. Julia's contribution to the Alaska Marine Conservation Council (AMCC) and the Bering Sea Elders Advisory Group project has resulted in scientific data and mapping of critical subsistence fishing areas in the Bering Sea. This project has profound implications on conservation of the prolific Bering Sea marine ecosystem and on the people who rely on its health for their cultural survival. The groups anticipate this vital research will be utilized in a proposal to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to advocate for protecting the northern Bering Sea from bottom trawling as warming waters, due to climate change, drive commercially valuable fish farther north.

*I was drawn to Alaska for many reasons, not the least of which was adventure. Alaska was this great faraway place that I knew very little about. My family kept telling me that I would be "eaten by a bear," but I think they didn't want me to move so far away from New England.*

*Less than two weeks after graduating from Smith College with a bachelor's degree in Biology, and a strong interest in marine science and conservation, I moved to Alaska for the ACF intern position. I was thrilled about my summer placement with the Alaska Marine Conservation Council (AMCC) because of their unique focus on people. AMCC is made up of and supported by commercial, sports and subsistence fishermen and women, and residents of coastal communities. The organization plays an important—and necessary—role in the conservation community, operating at the intersection of human needs and the environment. These people have a strong need for effective conservation because their livelihoods depend so heavily on intact marine ecosystems.*

*Since joining AMCC last June, I have worked mainly with our Bering Sea program. Our goal is to help the Bering Sea Elders Group establish protection from destructive fishing practices that threaten traditional ways of life and survival. I had the opportunity to learn GIS skills, and have been creating maps of important subsistence hunting and fishing areas in the northern Bering Sea.*

*Thanks to the generous support of ACF, I was able to extend my internship with AMCC through the fall, and now I am a full-time employee.*

*I'm still not quite sure in what direction I will eventually steer my career, but my time with AMCC has helped me to further develop my strong interest in working with communities that depend on the marine environment. I believe that the needs of people must be taken into account in order for conservation solutions to be successful. With AMCC I am gaining first hand experience in how this sort of conservation can be successfully achieved.*

*I am incredibly grateful to ACF and AMCC for the opportunity to gain such valuable experience at such an early point in my career, which would not have been possible without the help of ACF.*

You can learn more about Julia's work and that of ACF grantee, AMCC, by visiting their website at [www.akmarine.org](http://www.akmarine.org).



Former ACF Intern Julia Beatty in the field.

*Coaching Leaders,  
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livered by them. “TREC shares ACF’s desire to see leadership of the Alaskan conservation movement thrive. ACF is to be commended for their investment in leadership. It is key to making things happen,” said Dyan Oldenburg, TREC’s executive director.

For the pilot, ACF is sponsoring a small number of new and veteran executives on the forefront of the conservation movement. ACF is also engaging with senior level staff to develop executive mentoring among peers, with the goal of inspiring shared learning and fostering innovation. Executive Director of Alaska Community Action on Toxics, Pam Miller, is participating in the pilot. **“I have been doing this work for many years now, and I value the opportunity to have a focused dialogue with someone who can offer a fresh perspective and new ideas about ways that I can become a more effective leader. It also helps me explore ways that I can sustain my creativity and energy over the long haul for the benefit of the community.”**

Another pilot participant is Kelly Harrell. Earlier this year, ACF reported on Kelly’s promotion to Executive Director of the Alaska Marine Conservation Council. She recently shared her insights about her experience. “ACF’s internship program placed my career on a fast-track. Now, ACF continues to invest in me as a leader through the Community Capacity program. I am grateful to ACF for allowing me to realize my dream of becoming a leader in the marine conservation field in Alaska.”

Through the success of individuals like Pam Miller and Kelly Harrell, ACF is helping to ensure that Alaska’s conservation leaders and organizations remain resilient and able to move the needle. The ACF executive coaching pilot will continue until the end of 2010, and future direction will be determined at that time.

## Q&A with Peg Tileston

### Leadership, Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow



**Q: How important is leadership in Alaska’s conservation movement?**

**A:** Alaska’s conservation movement has always been blessed with remarkable leadership through the years, people who have had the vision to see the challenges and opportunities and the ability to galvanize others to devote their time and resource. This teamwork of inspired leaders and dedicated followers has accomplished amazing and far reaching activities, such as the passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, establishing a system of state parks and trails and currently encouraging the legislature to pass a comprehensive alternative energy package.

**Q: How has leadership in the conservation movement changed over the years?**

**A:** Over the years, the number of Alaska conservation organizations has grown from a mere handful to more than 140 today. This expansion coincided with the increasing number and complexity of issues from the affects of oil spills to persistent pollutants to climate change. These organizations are fortunate to have talented, energetic leaders at the helm; however, there is an increasing demand on them. Leaders today must not only be on top of critical environmental issues, but also be administrative and fundraising wizards.

**Q: How can today’s leaders address these growing challenges to ensure their organizations remain viable and able to advance the movement?**

**A:** The Alaska Conservation Foundation has recognized these overwhelming challenges and has instigated the Community Capacity initiative to help identify ways the movement can be more efficient and effective.

An integral part of building capacity is leadership development not only for staff but also for volunteers. The future of Alaska’s conservation movement relies on strong and expanding leadership that encourages the involvement of an expanding cadre of supporters who express their concern for the magnificent Alaska that will be handed on to future generations.

*Peg Tileston has been a leader of Alaska’s conservation community for many years. In addition to serving on numerous boards (including ACF from 1980-1986 and 1990-1999, and currently as an advisor), she helped to found the Alaska Conservation Foundation, as well as Alaska Center for the Environment and Trustees for Alaska. Peg is also the editor-in-chief of the weekly “What’s Up” e-newsletter, a summary of conservation news, events and jobs. Her enthusiasm for conservation work in Alaska inspires many of today’s conservation leaders.*



Joel Bradshaw, ELI trainer and mentor, leads a discussion of campaign strategy.

*Alaskans Head to ELI, continued from page 1*

Now a new generation of leaders is benefiting from this top-notch training. In April, 30 conservation leaders took part in the week-long ELI training in Alaska, due to a collaboration between ACF (as the major funder), the League of Conservation Voters and Alaska Conservation Alliance (ACA). This year's cohort is at the helm of critical conservation campaigns addressing offshore oil and gas development, coal and energy development, and mining issues throughout the state.

Attendees participated in hands-on training focused on campaign experience in messaging, new media, negotiating, earned media and use of polling data, as well as skills in strategic planning, decision-making, meeting facilitation and group dynamics.

In 1999, a contingent of Alaskans graduated from the first ELI in Lake Louise, Alaska. Subsequent trainings over several years turned out skilled leaders who are now executive directors of nonprofit organizations, campaign managers and even elected officials! Jonathan Teeters, former ACF Conservation Intern and current Alaska Director for Organizing for America, explains: **"ELI took me out**

**of my comfort zone and challenged me to grow as a strong organizer. I learned from the best and I immediately put my new skills to work organizing a two year campaign!"** Jessie Peterson, a former legislative organizer and current Statewide Energy Coordinator at the Northern Alaska Environmental Center, recently traveled to Maryland to take part in ELI. She says, "during the training week I built invaluable tools that improved my professional effectiveness, and learned approaches that have been helpful to our campaign."

Since completing the training, she has been applying her ELI skills to engage local ratepayers and provide economic arguments to support a healthier future for

Alaska. For example, she is demonstrating how energy efficiency is a more cost effective solution to Interior Alaska's energy needs than investing \$95 million into a defunct coal plant near Denali National Park.

The Community Capacity initiative will continue to seek out targeted training that helps Alaska's conservation leaders adapt and thrive in an ever-changing political and economic landscape. To support ACF's Community Capacity initiative, please contact Polly Carr at [pcarr@alaskaconservation.org](mailto:pcarr@alaskaconservation.org).

**"Attending ELI was both daunting and rewarding. I learned a set of skills I never imagined needing, but am using in all aspects of my work with a statewide campaign focused on revealing the true costs of coal and the value of shifting to renewable energy sources. I strongly recommend this invaluable training!"**

- Russ Maddox, Energy Organizer  
Resurrection Bay Conservation Alliance

## ACF Grantees Assist in Groundbreaking Legislation

On April 18th, the Alaska legislature unanimously passed visionary legislation to increase renewable energy production and energy efficiency in Alaska. ACF grantees Alaska Conservation Alliance (ACA) and the Renewable Energy Alaska Project (REAP) were instrumental in driving this agenda as both organizations joined the House Special Committee on Energy along with a diverse group of stakeholders in drafting the new legislation.

While ACA and REAP were helping to write the legislation, ACF's Strategies for Alaska's Future (SAF) program provided funding to conservation groups in Fairbanks, Matanuska-Susitna Valley, Anchorage, Sitka and Juneau to hire grassroots organizers. SAF is the sole program funding statewide conservation advocacy for legislative issues. This statewide team ensured local citizens and elected officials were educated on coal and energy issues, and worked with community activists on grassroots organizing to move priority legislation forward.

The SAF team also recruited 40 citizens to travel to Juneau to participate in ACA's Legislative Fly-In, where they met with their elected officials to discuss energy issues. The Fly-In was timed to coincide with the release of the Railbelt Electrical Efficiency



Alaskans rally for energy efficiency legislation.



## Have You Heard? Alaska Leads the Way towards Energy Efficiency

As the world demands more and more energy, several of ACF's grantees are leading the way in finding innovative solutions to this pressing issue. The Alaska Conservation Alliance (ACA), with funding from ACF, recently produced the Railbelt Electrical Efficiency Landscape (REEL) Roadmap in Alaska. This visionary report shows how an entire region can achieve 50% energy efficiency gains over 2000 levels by 2025, and in the process save money and create jobs. The report is having a direct impact on moving the energy discussion forward at a local and state-wide level. View the report online at <http://akvoice.org/policy-positions/reel-in-alaska-roadmap>.

Landscape Roadmap (see inset above), to help bolster awareness of the report. **“Through coalition building, targeted constituent and legislator interaction, the SAF program provided the right testimony when it was needed,”** explained Russell Stigall, Legislative Director for ACA.

The collaboration between conservation organizations, business interests, local citizenry and government resulted in a final bill that explicitly states the goal of Alaska becoming a leader in renewable energy development. Details of the bill include:

- 50% increase of renewable energy production by 2025;
- 15% energy efficiency gains per capita by 2020;
- retrofitting 25% of state buildings for energy efficiency by 2020;
- reducing energy usage in public buildings via a \$250 million revolving loan fund; and
- creating the Emerging Energy Technology Fund to focus Alaska on clean energy technologies and high tech jobs.

The bill is now awaiting approval from Alaska's Governor, Sean Parnell.

ACF is committed to ensuring conservation organizations continue to have the capacity needed to address legislative priorities and build coalitions around the major issues facing Alaska. For more information about SAF, visit ACF online.

## Leadership by the People: You Have a Say in the Future of the Arctic Refuge!

As the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge turns 50, it has weathered many changes and potential threats of resource development. Although it is still the most promising unexplored petroleum region in the U.S., resource development is no longer the only long-term risk to the Arctic Refuge. Tourism, hunting and over flights have emerged as additional threats to this wilderness. To ensure the Arctic Refuge exists beyond the next 50 years, it is essential that we now plan to defend the Refuge's integrity as one of the world's last, great remaining wild places.

ACF Executive Director Nick Hardigg recently spoke with Fran Mauer of the Alaska Chapter of Wilderness

Watch. Mr. Mauer is the recipient of the ACF Olaus Murie Award honoring professional contributions to conservation for his achievements as a biologist working with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS). He explained that the USFWS is undertaking a revision of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) to address the broad risks still facing the Arctic Refuge. Us-



ing a grant from ACF, Mr. Mauer and Wilderness Watch convened a number of planning and Arctic Refuge experts to discuss optimal provisions for protecting the future of the Arctic Refuge. Their recommendations are available online at [www.wildernesswatch.org](http://www.wildernesswatch.org). A potential outcome of a new plan is that additional coastal plains be designated as wilderness to prohibit development.

According to USFWS Alaska Regional Director Geoffrey Haskett, “The Refuge's current CCP is more than 20 years old, and much has changed since then. New laws and policies have been enacted, climate change has emerged as a concern, the Dalton Highway has opened to the public and visitor use patterns have changed. If any lands are recommended for wilderness designation, they would be identified and vetted through extensive public review as part of the plan revision process and ultimately require congressional approval.”

No decision has yet been made about the status of any lands in the Refuge not currently designated as wilderness. The planning process that is underway gives all U.S. citizens an opportunity to influence the future use and protections of one of our nation's most precious places.

**Let your voice be heard! Participate in the discussion by visiting the Arctic Refuge Planning website:**

<http://arctic.fws.gov/ccp.htm>. Download the planning booklet and use the form to submit your comments.





**Alaska  
Conservation  
Foundation**

441 West Fifth Avenue, Suite 402  
Anchorage, AK 99501-2340



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## **Together, We Are Advancing the Movement**

**Your investment keeps the conservation movement strong by...**

- **Providing targeted training for leaders at the helm of critical conservation issues**
- **Offering funding & resources to foster innovation and problem-solving**
- **Advancing coordination and collaboration among Alaska's organizations and networks!**

**For more information or to support ACF's Community Capacity initiative, visit [www.alaskaconservation.org](http://www.alaskaconservation.org)!**