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# alaska report

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## Hold Exxon Accountable for Oil Spill's Toxic Legacy

It was 17 years ago this month, on Good Friday, March 24, that the Exxon-Valdez ran aground on Bligh Reef in Prince William Sound, ripped a hole in its single hull and spilled the oil that devastated a whole ecosystem and horrified Americans who saw dead and injured animals and oil-soaked beaches on television.

This tragic disaster is long past. Should we still harp on it? Here is what Cordova, AK, marine oil expert Riki Ott has to say about the spill's toxic legacy to people and wildlife: (She is author of the award-winning *Sound Truth and Corporate Myths*, Dragonfly Sisters Press 2005.) [[www.soundtruth.info](http://www.soundtruth.info) and reviewed in **alaska report**, March 2005.]

### Hold Exxon Accountable

-- By Riki Ott

There is \$100 million on the table for unanticipated injury to wildlife and wild lands from the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill -- and no one has sought to collect it.

Worse, no one besides a handful of Alaska citizens and environmental groups has even asked the federal government or the State of Alaska to collect it. Yet, this \$100 million could help restore the environment and wildlife affected by the spill—land and wildlife owned by every American.

What is going on?

In 1991, Exxon agreed to pay the federal government and the State \$900 million for natural resource damages caused by the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. This agreement provides a "Reopener for Unknown Injury" requiring Exxon to pay up to an additional \$100 million for populations, habitats, or species suffering injury that "could not reasonably have been known nor... anticipated" at the time of the agreement. *The deadline to demand these funds is June 2, 2006.*

Long-term injuries were not anticipated at the time of the settlement. In 1991, the understanding of oil persistence and toxicity was based on 1970s science, which held that oil caused only short-term injury, mostly by physical oiling, suffocation, and drowning.

The beaches of Prince William Sound became a living laboratory after the spill, and scientists have since learned that oil persists longer and is more toxic [and remains toxic for longer] than previously known. A particularly

deadly fraction of oil, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons or PAHs, causes long-term injury at minute levels of parts per billion. Scientists have linked PAH exposure from lingering oil to long-term injury in a variety of fish, birds, and mammals.

In December 2003, a team of scientists led by Pete Peterson of the University of North Carolina summarized a decade of oil spill studies in *Science*. The team concluded that PAHs are deadly actors linked to long-term injury, including reproductive failure, disruption of cellular function, and death. Unfortunately, the 1970s science, on which the 1991 agreement was based, ignores PAHs and does not recognize that oil causes long-term harm.

It is unsurprising, then, that only seven of the 30 resources and services listed as injured by the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill have recovered, according to the [State and Federal] Trustee Council [established to administer recovery funds.] What is surprising is that neither the United States nor the State of Alaska have stepped forward to fulfill their role as trustees of the injured wildlife and wild lands by asking Exxon to pay for this unanticipated injury.

Oil spills are expensive. If parties responsible for the spill do not account for the full extent of injury to natural resources, then the environment—and every American—must pay the cost of polluted coastlines and diminished wildlife populations.

In Exxon's case, it's not a question of inability to pay. In 2005, the company, now ExxonMobil, posted record after-tax profits of \$33.9 billion. *33.9 billion dollars!* In 12 months. This



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## Hold Exxon Accountable

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staggering sum amounts to \$92.9 million of profit every day. In other words, paying the entire \$100 million Reopener would cost ExxonMobil a little over one day of its profits.

It's time for concerned Americans to urge the United States and the State of Alaska to claim the entire \$100 million for restoration of wildlife and wild lands injured by Exxon.

Go to: <http://www.soundtruth.info/takeaction.htm> to sign the online petition.

photo: Vicky Hoover



Awesome Prince William Sound is an American treasure

## Sierra Club Chronicles highlights Exxon's refusal to pay

The new Sierra Club television series, **Sierra Club Chronicles**, which premiered mid-January, focuses in Episode 2 on the Exxon-Valdez disaster and its aftermath: **The Day the Water Died**. Here is a description:

*March 24, 1989 will forever plague history as one of the worst environmental disasters of our time. Eleven million gallons of oil spilled into Alaska's Prince William Sound killing thousands of wildlife and destroying a complex and delicate ecosystem. Exxon promised they would clean up the spill and promised that those affected would get their lives back. Sixteen years later and the people are still waiting for their lives to become "whole" again.*

In the film, Phil Lian, commercial fisherman and Cordova businessman; Dune Lankard, Eyak tribesman and environmental activist; Riki Ott, marine biologist and former commercial fisherman, are among others who describe the historic spill, the immediate emotional impact it had on them, and how, 16 years later, Exxon has still not paid the court-ordered punitive damages. Our characters go on to tell us that the citizens of Cordova have not recovered from the spill: emotionally, spiritually, economically, and environmentally. This devastation has given them a strong distrust for corporations like Exxon and the government that should be looking out for them.

Exxon's fervent promises in the immediate aftermath of the spill were not kept. The film's characters contrast those gushy assurances with the reality they confronted in court. In a

class-action ruling, a federal court ordered Exxon to pay \$5 billion to 32,000 plaintiffs. But in the years since that ruling, Exxon has pursued endless appeals. The case is now stuck in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals with no hearing date set. Meanwhile, 2,000 plaintiffs have died since the first court ruling.

While Exxon has ducked behind the courts, the economy of Cordova has not recovered. The fishermen say that, at the time of the spill, the salmon and herring markets were the strongest in the history of Cordova's fishing industry.

During the nearly seventeen years since the spill, the environment in Prince William Sound has yet to recover. The strongest evidence is that the herring fishery, Cordova's most profitable fish stock, has been eliminated from the Sound. Cordova's marine biologist Riki Ott tells us how the herring disappearance points to the fact that the Sound is still toxic.

⇒ **What You Can Do: help us spread the word!**

We can all act to hold Exxon-Mobil accountable! In this year of their record profits, it's time they made good on their promises! Get your family, friends and neighbors together and hold a house party on Friday, March 24th (the anniversary of the spill), to screen the episode "The Day the Water Died." After watching the episode, you can host a discussion and take action through the Sierra Club website. You can even call-in toll-free to hear the Sierra Club's Alaska Representative and special guests provide more background on the fight with Exxon. For details on hosting a house party and to order your free DVD of "The Day the Water Died", go to

<http://www.sierraclub.org/tv/episode-exxon.asp>. ♦

**alaska report** is now available on the Sierra Club website. Find this issue at [http://www.sierraclub.org/wildlands/alaska\\_report/0603.pdf](http://www.sierraclub.org/wildlands/alaska_report/0603.pdf).

If you would prefer to have only the electronic version and skip the paper, send email to [vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org](mailto:vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org), and I'll put you on a list for notification of future electronic issues.

We will continue to print and mail two issues out of approximately four a year. If you'd like both email and paper, let me know; that works too.

You can also join our email alert list for updates and action in between newsletters. Just send me your email address and state of residence.

*Your help for Alaska's magnificent public lands is very valuable*

# Bush Calls for Arctic Drilling Revenues in FY 2007 Budget

## Save the Arctic, Keep out of Budget

On Feb. 6,, President Bush released his new proposed budget for fiscal year 2007, which included anticipated revenues to be realized through the sale of leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The president points to \$7 billion in *assumed* revenues from the first lease sales in the Arctic Refuge in 2008.

These anticipated revenue figures, highly speculative as they are, contradict the President's State of the Union address end of January, when he told the nation we must do something about our "addiction to oil".

In any case, the Federal budget is not the appropriate place to advance a controversial issue such as Arctic drilling. Like a broken record, drilling proponents are using the budget process only because it would protect the measure from a certain Senate filibuster.

If the Congressional budget committees do as the Administration requests and include drilling in the Budget Resolution, we will once again call on the support of the moderate Republicans in the House who forced the leadership to strip the drilling proposal from the final budget last December. We'll count on unified opposition against the overall budget on the part of House and Senate Democrats. In the Senate, we need the continued support of those key Republicans who oppose drilling in the Arctic, or have done so in the past.

Americans are ready for an honest and smart energy policy, and it is a shame Congress must again waste its time facing back-door trickery by Big Oil proponents. Let's be positive. Having failed last year after using up so much legislative time on this issue, drilling proponents have, we hope, wearied members of Congress of this fight.

Instead of bending the rules again to help Big Oil and the drilling lobby, Congress should bend over backwards this year to work for clean, forward-looking energy solutions. **With your help, we can blunt an early push for arctic drilling and instead focus on promoting cleaner, cheaper, quicker and smarter energy solutions for our country.**

### The Winter Solstice victory

It was a nail-biter to the last moment. Earlier, the Senate had passed a budget that included Arctic drilling, but the House, spurred on by refusal of 30 key moderate Republicans to go along with the demands of the Majority leadership, forced the Arctic drilling provision out of its budget. With this and many other differences between the two budgets, the budget conference committee could not include drilling.

This was a big slap in the face to Alaska's Ted Stevens, who assumed that with a filibuster-proof budget bill, a Republican majority, and a favorable Administration, he finally held all

the cards to force the nation to do his bidding.

At the same time, Stevens was suffering from major national lampooning in the press (even in Alaska) The concurrent so-called "Bridges to Nowhere" scandal heaped ridicule on his and Rep. Don Young's efforts to secure big federal funding for a couple of unneeded bridges in Alaska.

Ever-determined, but increasingly desperate, Stevens then tried attaching his Arctic oil-drilling provision to the Defense Appropriations bill. Since this was considered a "must-pass" bill, which authorized funding for helping veterans in Iraq, Stevens thought he had a sure-fire weapon: anyone voting against the bill as amended by him could be accused of heartlessly abandoning our soldiers.

Senators did not take kindly to this blatant blackmail.

Just past 10 the morning of Dec. 21, the Senate voted (56-44) to block the Defense spending bill, which included the provision to drill in the Arctic Refuge. Although the defense bill got 56 votes, this was four votes short of the required 60 votes to avoid a filibuster. Led by **Sen. Maria Cantwell** (D-WA), several courageous Senators spoke out on the Senate floor and threatened a filibuster against this abusive attempt to ramrod the unwanted Arctic provision through. Special thanks to Senators John Kerry (D-MA), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Joe Lieberman (D-CT), Harry Reid (D-NV) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) for their leadership, and to Senators Lincoln Chafee (R-RI) and Mike DeWine (R-OH), who went against their party in this courageous vote.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

1. We've got the momentum to stop this budget proposal in its tracks if we express our outrage right away.
2. **Contact** your Congressional Representative and Senators today and urge your friends and family to do the same. Even if you already know your legislators' position on this issue, let them hear from you now that the Administration budget proposal is misguided. **Remind** them how we learned last year that unethical bending of the rules to attach controversial issues, like Arctic drilling, to budget bills is unacceptable.
3. **Write** a letter to the editor of your local paper expressing your disappointment with the Administration's budget proposal and calling upon our federal and our local leaders to embrace smart energy solutions.
4. Keep thanking the heroes of Dec. 21. ♦

### Sample Talking Points for the Arctic Refuge:

\*\* Last year, the American people and a bipartisan coalition in Congress decisively rejected Arctic Refuge drilling.

\*\* It's time for Congress to stop wasting energy and start working on real, clean energy solutions. (The desperate obsession of a few politicians has distracted us long enough from finding energy solutions |

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# Alaska's Western Arctic: National Petroleum Reserve Update

## Northeast Planning Area

Ignoring vocal opposition from Alaska Natives, scientists and sportsmen, as well as environmentalists, in early January, 2006 the Bush Administration opened for leasing 100 percent of the internationally significant Teshekpuk Lake Special Area in the Northeast Planning Area of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPRA). The decision tosses aside long-established wild-life and environmental protections first put in place by Reagan Administration Interior Secretary James Watt. Congress and three Secretaries of the Interior have recognized the ecological importance of the area; however the new plan would fragment the area's critical wildlife habitat.

Since 2002 the Bush Administration has made more than 18 million acres on Alaska's North Slope and in the Federal waters offshore of Alaska available to oil companies for leasing. Alaska's North Slope is our nation's only arctic ecosystem. (See **alaska report**, Mar. '04, Feb. '03, and earlier.) A balanced approach would give wilderness protection to the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and permanent protection for the most biologically and culturally important areas of NPRA while maximizing oil and gas potential in the central Arctic around Prudhoe Bay, where development is already occurring, and elsewhere in the Petroleum Reserve.

Conservation groups will ask DOI to delay the fall lease sale and/or modify the sale not to include the internationally recognized area around Teshekpuk Lake, a world-renowned nesting area for geese and a caribou calving area. About Teshekpuk Lake it is said: *"For sheer volume of wildlife, the network of coastal lagoons, deepwater lakes, wet sedge grass meadows and river deltas of the Teshekpuk Lake area are unsurpassed. ...providing vital habitat for up to 60,000 molting geese...at times in the fall, as the birds congregate prior to embarking on their southward migrations, the air above the wetlands actually shimmers with birds, and the sound can deafen..."*



photo: Vicky Hoover

Overlooking the Utukok River, in remote southern NPRA

## South Planning Area

In June 2005 BLM began planning for 9.2 million acres in the southern part of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, to determine the land-use designations, including oil, gas, and mining, for the area. Scoping was conducted from June to October, 2005, and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the plan is due out in the summer of 2006.

The Southern NPRA contains significant subsistence, recreational, fish and wildlife, and historical and scenic values of the western end of the Brooks Range. Two renowned areas of special concern are the Utukok Uplands Special Area and a portion of the Colville River Special Area. Both of these are critical drainages for wildlife, recreation, and subsistence. The Southern NPRA also contains the calving grounds of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd, the largest caribou herd in Alaska, which at times has numbered around 500,000 animals.

The NPRA also contains about 40 percent of the country's coal reserves, with a large chunk of it in the South Planning Area. The state's Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys used BLM funding to carry out an airborne survey of part of the South Planning Area. Survey results were published in January. The BLM hopes to follow this survey with on-the-ground mapping this summer.

The Sierra Club will engage our members both in Alaska and across the nation during the comment period.

See the website on the NPRA south planning process: [http://www.ak.blm.gov/npraso/so\\_v1jun05.pdf](http://www.ak.blm.gov/npraso/so_v1jun05.pdf) for a map and further information. ◆

--- Betsy Goll

## Arctic Talking Points

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that also let us protect the natural world.)

\*\* Protecting the Arctic Refuge is important ecologically and culturally. The narrow coastal plain, with its spectacular diversity of wildlife, is the biological heart of the Arctic Refuge. The area is the birthing grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd, the basis of the subsistence and culture of the Gwich'in people.

\*\* Congress should give the controversial Arctic Refuge the careful consideration it deserves - not sneak in drilling as a backdoor Budget addition.

\*\* Congress should not open an irreplaceable, trans-boundary world-class wilderness to oil drilling. The speculative revenue gains are too small and the sacrifice too great.

\*\* Drilling in the Arctic Refuge will do nothing to lower the price of gas at the pump, nor put a dent in our dependence on foreign oil, nor do anything to strengthen our national security.

\*\* There is a better way. We need to invest now in energy-efficient technology and develop renewable energy sources like wind and solar power. This will help protect spectacular wild places like the Arctic Refuge.. ◆

# A Vision for the Tongass Forest

## Sierra Club's Letter to US Forest Service Regarding the new Tongass Land Management Plan Revision

(Editor's note: Instead of a regular article updating our readers on what's new in the Tongass National Forest since our last issue, (See **alaska report**, Nov. 2005, "Tongass Plan Fatally Flawed: Time for a Change!"), here is the recent Sierra Club letter to the Forest Service, sent on Feb. 6, 2006.)

To: Mark Rey, Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment, Dept. Of Agriculture, Washington, DC; and

Cherie Shelley, USDA FS Planning Rule Technical Amendment, Juneau AK

The Sierra Club's interest in southeast Alaskan conservation issues spans the entire 20th century and all the Federal Administrations that have come and gone during that period. We will continue to be actively engaged in promoting our conservation goals in southeast Alaska throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century as this and other administrations come and go. The Sierra Club has nation-wide members who use the Tongass National Forest for recreation, aesthetic, scientific and business purposes, and thus stand to be affected by the revision of the Land Management Plan. Additionally, we have members residing in nearly every community in S.E. Alaska who are directly affected by any land management decisions.

On August 5, 2005, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals issued a decision in *Natural Resources Defense Council v. U.S. Forest Service* that found errors in the 1997 Final EIS and Record of Decision for the Tongass Land Management Plan. The court indicated its intent that the Forest Service prepare a new EIS for a plan revision addressing the errors identified by the court. As the 2005 National Forest Management Act does not require the development of an EIS in forest plan revisions, we strongly request that the 1982 planning rule be used in the revision of the Tongass Land Management Plan. We also note that the Sierra Club is a plaintiff in litigation challenging the legality of the 2005 planning rule. The use of this rule by the Forest Service will expose the agency to the risk of having the Tongass Land Management Plan revision invalidated at some point during the planning process.

A Tongass Land Management Plan revision done under the 1982 planning rules would allow the Forest Service to undertake a decision-making process that will involve maximum public participation, both in Alaska and throughout the Nation. At nearly 17 million acres, the Tongass National Forest is the largest reserve of coastal temperate rainforest in the world. This ancient forest, with towering groves of western hemlock, cedar and Sitka spruce trees that grow over 200 feet tall and live as long as 1,000 years, provides clean water and spawning grounds for five types of wild salmon, habitat for grizzlies, black bears, moose, as well as some of the highest concentrations of bald eagles in the country. As a result, southeast Alaska is a destination tourism place of global significance

that continues to draw millions of individuals and billions of dollars from around the world each year. It is critical then, that the Forest Service develop a comprehensive plan that maintains the current land protections under the 1997 Tongass Land Management Plan and expands protection for all the remaining wild roadless places of the Tongass that have both ecological and social significance.



The ruling of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals declared that the U.S. Forest Service misled the public during the development of its logging plan for the Tongass National Forest. The basis of the lawsuit challenged the 1997 Forest Plan and seven timber sales in roadless areas of the Tongass. The challenges centered on the impact of a Forest Service error that doubled its projections of market demand for Tongass timber. Market demand projections were used to determine the maximum logging level allowed in the 1997 Forest Plan. The overall effect of the Forest Service's error was to exaggerate Tongass logging levels, and put much more land in logging designations than the agency's own economists found was necessary to supply local mills. "The Forest Service's error in assessing market demand fatally infected its balance of economic and environmental considerations, rendering the plan for the Tongass arbitrary and capricious ...," the opinion by Judge Ronald Gould says. The court-ordered development of a new plan is an opportunity for the Forest Service to accurately develop a forest plan that reflects the robust and diverse economy of southeast Alaska; it is not a mandate to develop a blueprint for expanding the timber industry in southeast Alaska.

The Sierra Club believes that any forest plan for the Tongass that does not significantly reduce the Allowable Sale Quantity and does not reduce the amount of lands at risk from timber cutting will not fulfill the mandate of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision. Such a forest plan will only produce more conflict, legal and otherwise. The Forest Service must also address the inadequacy of its strategy for protecting viable populations of wildlife; its habitual highgrading of big tree stands of cedar, hemlock, and spruce; its flouting of the intent of Standards and Guidelines; its clearcutting adjacent to Old Growth Reserves on the road system; and the logging of the last stands of big tree karst forests.

A new management plan must reflect the changing

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# Subsistence off-road vehicles in Denali National Park

## NPS to regulate use

In response to off-road vehicle (ORV) abuses that it can no longer ignore, the National Park Service is now proposing to regulate the use of the machines for subsistence in an area of the south addition to Denali National Park.

Some background information is necessary for an understanding of the controversy. Within Denali National Park, customary and traditional subsistence activities—hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering—are authorized in the areas added to “old” Mt. McKinley National Park as part of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA). Subsistence is not authorized everywhere within the additions, just in those areas where subsistence was traditionally practiced prior to ANILCA.

To be eligible for a subsistence permit, an Alaska resident must reside “near” the park and have, or be a member of a family that has, an existing or historic pattern of subsistence prior to ANILCA. Another means of eligibility is to live in the “subsistence resident zone community” of Cantwell near the south addition. All residents of the zone are automatically eligible and do not need a permit, including those arriving any time after ANILCA, but who have no connection whatsoever to

customary and traditional subsistence. (The NPS’s resident zone community program for the parks is deeply flawed, as is its overall subsistence management, but that’s another story).

ANILCA allows motorboats, snowmobiles, and dog teams for subsistence purposes, as these were commonly used prior to its passage. Other means of surface transportation for subsistence are

allowed if they were “traditionally employed” prior to ANILCA. Last year a Denali National Park study concluded that off-road vehicles (ORVs) were traditional for subsistence purposes in a 45,000-acre area of the south addition dubbed a “traditional ORV use area.” This conclusion followed a quarter-century of unrestricted ORV traffic in the area.

In 2004 and 2005, park field studies of the traditional ORV use area documented ORV damage, especially to wetlands and other marshy areas, and a significant expansion of oft-used ORV trails and cross-country incursions since 1980. And in 2004 park ranger on an aerial patrol spotted and subsequently arrested two ORV operators churning up the terrain off the established trail network. In summer of 2005, the park superintendent restricted ORVs to three well-established trails in the traditional ORV subsistence use area for three months during the fall hunting season.

These studies and actions have set the stage for the NPS’s first attempt since 1980 to regulate subsistence ORVs. In July of this year the agency will publish for public comment its environmental assessment of alternative ORV management plans for the traditional ORV use area. This will give **alaska report** readers an opportunity to help persuade the NPS to adopt the most protective plan. As important as the plan is for Denali National Park itself, it could also set the standard for regulating subsistence ORVs in other national park and monument areas open to subsistence. ♦

-- Jack Hession



ORV tracks damage wet trail in Denali's South Addition near Cantwell

photo: Vicky Hoover

## Tongass

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economy of southeast Alaska. The lifeblood of the local economy is the scenic beauty, clean water, abundant fish and wildlife and overall quality of life provided by the wild, roadless places of the Tongass. A Tongass timber program will not sustain or develop the job base or economic strength needed for southeast Alaska. Rather, the Tongass timber program will continue to be costly in federal dollars, personal conflict and damage to the region’s outstanding natural resources. The millions of dollars spent on the Tongass timber program could be used to generate better recreation opportunities, restore damaged streams and rivers, maintain and decommission roads, and provide non-commercial forest products such as fish, game, personal-use wood products, botanicals and clean water.

*Signed/*

*Mark P. Rorick, Chair Juneau Group, Alaska Chapter  
Betsy Goll, Alaska Regional Representative*

### ⇒ WHAT YOU CAN DO:

The release of a Notice of Intent for the Tongass Plan Revision is expected this month, in March, 2006, with a scoping period for comments ending in September, 2006. Keep an eye out this summer for our alerts to help you voice your concerns regarding the future of this magnificent forest that belongs to all Americans. ♦

# Administration announces Alaska off-shore oil plans:

On February 8th, the Minerals Management Service released a five-year offshore drilling plan that anticipates opening areas in Alaska's Bristol Bay and off Virginia's coast that are currently protected by both Congressional moratoria and presidential deferrals as well as open up vast areas of the Lease Sale 181 area in the Gulf of Mexico. The Minerals Management Service's (MMS) Five-year Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) planning document details future offshore leasing and development for the years 2007-2012.

The plan moves to aggressively lease millions of acres in 21 proposed lease sales, nine of which are in Alaska and make up approximately 50 percent of the coastline affected nationally. The document contemplates lifting the current presidential deferrals protecting fisheries-rich Bristol Bay in the Bering Sea (North Aleutian Basin). Bristol Bay is the only area in Alaska that has been closed to oil and gas leasing for the last 15 years.

Bristol Bay is home to large populations of marine mammals, seabirds, crab, and fish, including the world's largest sock-eye salmon run. It also provides habitat for the endangered Steller sea lion, threatened northern sea otters, and the critically endangered North Pacific right whale, of which there may be only 100 left. Because of the deep concerns expressed by Alaska Native villages, local governments, the State of Alaska, the fishing industry and the conservation community, Congress just 10 years ago spent \$95 million buying back previous oil and gas leases. Although the area currently remains closed under a Presidential moratorium, MMS has included Bristol Bay in its five-year plan.

MMS is also continuing its push for oil and gas development in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas, America's only Arctic waters. MMS's proposed plan would open up key migration routes for endangered bowhead whales and beluga whales that are not included in the existing oil and gas program. These Arctic waters also provide important habitat for polar bears, walrus, and three species of seals. Oil and gas development poses serious threats to this environment. The industry has failed at every opportunity to show that it could actually clean up spilled oil in these icy waters. Spilled oil threatens marine wildlife and the coastline areas.

The nine lease sales proposed offshore Alaska include two in the Beaufort Sea, three in the Chukchi Sea, two in Cook Inlet, and two in the North Aleutian Basin (Bristol Bay).

| Sale No. | Area           | Year |
|----------|----------------|------|
| 193      | Chukchi Sea    | 2007 |
| 208      | Beaufort Sea   | 2009 |
| 210      | Cook Inlet     | 2009 |
| 211      | Chukchi Sea    | 2010 |
| 213      | North Aleutian | 2010 |
| 216      | Beaufort Sea   | 2011 |
| 218      | Cook Inlet     | 2011 |
| 221      | Chukchi Sea    | 2012 |
| 223      | North Aleutian | 2012 |

The Sierra Club seeks to generate comments opposing the scope of the proposed development. And, as the debate moves forward, the Sierra Club will advocate for permanent protection for all our coastal waters and also seek to secure revenues to be used to repair coastal damage directly and indirectly caused by oil and gas industry operations in the Gulf of Mexico. These funds are needed for the restoration of natural coastal systems as the first line of defense against future hurricanes. Finally, we will urge Congress to make critical strides on the clean energy front, embracing energy efficiency, clean renewable sources of energy, alternative modes of transport, and making cars go farther on a gallon of gas. We don't need to sacrifice our beaches and coastal waters to meet America's energy needs.

MMS's draft Five-Year Plan can be found at [www.mms.gov/5-year/2007-2012main.html](http://www.mms.gov/5-year/2007-2012main.html)

-- Betsy Goll

## ⇒ WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Write a letter to MMS before the comment deadline of **April 10**. In your letter, urge MMS to:

1. Remove Bristol Bay from the five-year plan.
2. Prohibit any more lease sales or further exploration or development until industry demonstrates definitely that it can clean up spilled oil in icy conditions.
3. Not schedule any more lease sales or allow further exploration until you study adequately the effects that oil and gas activities, including powerful seismic air gun surveys, have on whales, fish, and other marine wildlife in America's Arctic waters. *Write to:*

Minerals Management Service  
5-year Program Manager  
381 Elden Street, MS 4010  
Herndon, VA 20170

To submit or view comments electronically, the MMS Public Connect system must be used. Comments are not accepted by e-mail. Access the internet comment site by going to:

<http://www.mms.gov/5%20year/2007-2012main.htm#Commenting>

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## ALASKA WOLVES, ACTION NEEDED:

⇒ Alaska Wolves need your help: *please send letters of concern to local newspapers and contact:*

Mr. Mike Fleagle, Chairman, Alaska Board of Game  
3821 W. 67<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Anchorage, Alaska 99502-2014

Mr. Wayne Regelin, Deputy Commissioner of Wildlife  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
P. O. Box 25526  
Juneau, Alaska 99802-5526  
Fax: 907-465-2332

# Alaska's War on Wildlife – Predator Control 2006

After only the briefest of pauses, the state of Alaska's war against wildlife, particularly wolves, and brown and black bears, is resuming.

In January 2006, the legality of aerial killing of wolves was challenged by Friends of Animals and the Board of Game's regulations declared invalid by an Anchorage judge. To get around this court order, a Board of Game meeting called in late January drafted new, emergency regulations to legalize extreme predator control.

The 50,000 square miles authorized for extreme predator control may now increase, if the Board of Game approves new proposals now before them. These will mandate more grave reductions in wolf and in brown and black bear populations over further areas of the state without any scientific rationale. One proposal for a five year (2006-1011) lethal wolf control program over an expanded area would legalize airborne shooting with no limit on wolf killing, over several game unit boundaries.

Predator control in Alaska (to increase moose and caribou populations for hunters) has always been controversial. Alaskans have voted to ban same-day aerial wolf hunting twice, in 1996 and again in 2000. However, following each vote the

Board of Game disregarded public opinion and re-authorized aerial wolf killing.

Following a 1997 National Academy of Sciences (NRC) recommendation to incorporate sound science into any future program, the state initiated a 2001/2002 effort in interior Alaska to gather additional data. Predator reduction programs were placed on hold, as a census revealed four times more moose than estimated in the study area.



photo: Johnny Jacobson

In early 2003, however, Gov Frank Murkowski appointed a new Board of Game whose seven members are exclusively hunters and trappers; there is no representation from wildlife viewers, photographers, or the tourism industry. Predator control was reinstated

Over public objection and with no scientific basis, this predator control program was greatly expanded in March 2004 to over 30,000 miles. An additional 20,000 miles authorized in November 2004 included aerial shooting from privately-owned aircraft and snow machines to run wolves down (as many as 10 a day in some areas.) There were no limits on number of wolves that could be trapped and snared. Alaskan brown bear populations were also targeted for severe reductions.

(For ACTION NEEDED, please see p. 7!)

-- Valanne Glooschenko, Alaska Chapter

## alaska report

alaska report is the newsletter of the Sierra Club Alaska Task Force, encouraging advocacy on Alaska federal lands issues, particularly as they pertain to the passage and implementation of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980.

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