



WE
ARE THE
ARCTIC



WE
ARE THE
ARCTIC



BRAIDED RIVER



PLEASE JOIN US

OUR LIVES ARE INTERTWINED. As one species we are dependent on the life-supporting gifts from the natural world that we inherited, care for now, and will leave to our children.

We Americans live in a time of abundance. The Earth is so vast we can be lulled into thinking that there will always be more. And yet every seemingly small act has consequences that reverberate and stress the resiliency of the things humans depend on for survival: clean air and water, healthy soil, shelter, food, and a moderate climate. We've become careless.

We are connected to every part of the planet, to places we may never see—other continents, oceans, and mountains—and to people we will never know. The rain forests of the Amazon filter air on a global scale. Glaciers in remote mountain ranges around the globe hold and release clean water on which our lives and civilizations depend. Migrations of animals, birds, and insects define the cycle of life on Earth: whales give birth in the lagoons of the Baja Peninsula, then migrate thousands of miles to abundant Arctic waters to feed.

In the following pages we invite you to explore a remote, life-sustaining place—the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in northeastern Alaska, along the coast of the Arctic Ocean. And remarkably, every citizen has a stake and a voice in what happens to this **public land** we share as an American birthright. In this moment we can decide if it should be kept as a natural treasure as it has been during the lifetime of this planet, or exploited and spent for what is estimated to be six months of American oil consumption.

We are **mothers** who wake each morning driven by visions of possibilities.

We are **soldiers** returning from conflicts, celebrating freedom, and seeking peace.

We are **young**—excited and anxious about our civic inheritance, knowing that we *can* do better than our parents. Knowing that we *must*.

We are respectful of the teachings of our **elders** and the hundreds of generations before us that define our sacred relationship to the Earth—bringing us life and knowledge we humbly share.

The astonishing beauty and our quest to understand the mysteries and rhythms of the planet—like migration and the seasons—define our lives as **adventurers** and **scientists, teachers** and **poets**.

We are different from each other, but we share a love for this planet. We pledge to ensure that the gifts that make our lives possible are not squandered.

WE ARE THE ARCTIC.

ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE WITH COASTAL PLAIN



NOW IS THE TIME

FOR OVER 60 YEARS, CITIZENS have called on the US Congress to fully protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in northeast Alaska. In the 1950s, visionary conservationists Olaus and Margaret Murie led campaigns to establish the nation's first ecosystem-scale conservation area. In 1960, Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower made this vision a reality by establishing the 8.9-million-acre Arctic National Wildlife Range specifically for its "unique wildlife, wilderness, and recreational values." In 1980, under the leadership of Democratic President Jimmy Carter, Congress continued this legacy by expanding this pristine region, designating much of the land as protected Wilderness, and renaming it the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA).

At 19.6 million acres, it is the largest national wildlife refuge in the United States. Combined with adjacent Ivvavik and Vuntut National Parks in Canada, the Arctic Refuge is part of one of the largest protected ecosystems in the world. However, due to political pressure, the 1.5-million-acre coastal plain, the biological heart of the Refuge, was left unprotected. ANILCA prohibits oil and gas development on the coastal plain, but allows for a future act of Congress to permit it. Since 1980 there has been relentless debate about its future.

The 110-mile coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge represents only 5 percent of the north slope of Alaska and is the only part of the north slope that is closed by statute to drilling. A bill to protect the coastal plain as Wilderness has been introduced in every Congress since 1986. However, efforts to open the Arctic Refuge to oil and gas drilling have been just as persistent. These measures have failed, but so have citizens' calls to permanently protect the entire Arctic Refuge from drilling.

In January 2015, the US Fish & Wildlife Service announced its revised Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The agency made an important decision to formally recommend Wilderness designation for the crucial coastal plain area.

Now is the time to achieve the goals first set in 1950: Congress and the Administration should take steps to secure the strongest protections possible for this iconic landscape. Now is the time to support the "unique wildlife, wilderness, and recreational values" recognized by President Eisenhower when he first established the Refuge. We citizens must continue to voice our demands for a balanced approach for managing our resources for future generations.



A PRAYER TO BEGIN OUR WORK

MY NAME IS LORRAINE NETRO; I am from the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Old Crow, Yukon, Canada. My late mother's name is Mary Netro. I respectfully acknowledge the First People whose land we meet on.

Creator, God, we give you thanks for the many blessings you have provided. We pray for those who are facing challenges in their lives and for those who live without clean water, nourishing food, and safe shelter.

Today, we ask for your love, peace, and gratefulness in our hearts, minds, and spirits as we do the work that is placed in our paths. We are grateful for those who walk with us to protect our sacred lands.

We give you thanks for providing an abundance of Food, Water, and Animals, and a Clean Environment, and we pray that we may continue to live in harmony with all that is alive.

We ask for courage, love, and commitment for all our leaders, to enable them to find it in their hearts to protect the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge—*Ishik Gwats'an Gwandaii Goodlit*, the Sacred Place Where Life Begins.



LORRAINE NETRO was born and raised in Old Crow, Yukon, Canada. She was taught the traditional values of the Vuntut Gwitchin by her late mother and has served on the Porcupine Caribou Management Board and the Gwich'in Council International. Netro has made the three-day journey to Washington, DC, many times over the past fifteen years to share her story with members of Congress in order to protect the Arctic Refuge for the future of her grandchildren, the Gwich'in Nation, and those not yet born. Author photo © Tony Hoare

GWICH'IN AMBASSADOR



CARIBOU CAMP

FAMILIAR SOUNDS PULL ME FROM my slumber: snorts, coughs, sneezes, and hoof falls punctuated by the clip-and-pull of grass. But there's something different—something new and urgent. I shuck off the damp sleeping bag, fumble for my glasses, and sidle up to my wife sitting at the tent door.

It is June 2, our second month of skiing and hiking with the Porcupine caribou herd, and within moments I see the groaning cow a hundred feet in front of us, splayed like so many others here on the coastal plain. She is lying sideways in a bed of tussocks, gripped with contractions that ripple from her bony shoulders to her bonier hips.

It's not the first birth of the year—a few one- and two-day-old calves already cavort in the curtain of thousands of caribou milling in the background—but because of fog banks rolling off the nearby Arctic Ocean, it's the first we've seen since the migration brought us here two days ago. A bundle of wet fur emerges from the cow's hind end, followed by a miniature muzzle suckling at the air. Nuzzled by its proud mother, the calf struggles up, falls down, and struggles up again, a bundle of misfiring muscles and short-circuiting nerves trying to connect under its paper-thin skin.

Leanne and I fiddle with camera gear and attend to our bladders within the confines of our four-foot-by-six-foot

tent. It'd be better to do our business outside, but contrary to what the oil companies and pro-development politicians proclaim, these expectant and new mothers are skittish, bolting at the sight of anything noncaribou, even if it's half a mile away. So we do our business in our cups and discreetly empty them out the back door, hunkered down at the epicenter of life while oil companies make their plans tens of thousands of miles away.



KARSTEN HEUER is a wildlife biologist and author who has spent much of his time following endangered North American wildlife on foot and skis. His second book, *Being Caribou*, won the 2006 US National Outdoor Book Award. Author photo © Karsten Heuer

BIOLOGIST & AUTHOR



EXTRAORDINARILY VAST

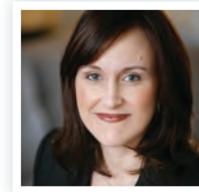
I'M A GIRL FROM IOWA farm country who found her way into politics and environmental policy in Washington, DC, because of the Arctic Refuge. When I was in college, I went to a slide presentation by Lenny Kohm, who is profiled in this book. He made such a clear, compelling case of what was at stake if congressional action led to drilling in this special place. Because of Lenny and his passionate story, I went to DC and lobbied Congress for the first time. I spent the next fifteen years working on climate change and environmental issues in the House, the Senate, and the White House. Through both Republican and Democratic presidencies, I witnessed the effectiveness of coalitions of Alaska Natives and citizens who worked vigorously, held elected officials accountable, and won victories time and time again to protect the Refuge.

Eight years ago I finally had the chance to visit what I was fighting to protect. We flew in on a small plane and camped along a glacial lake. Even today I remember exactly what the water looked like and how the air smelled. Looking at a map doesn't provide a sense of how extraordinarily vast it is—where you can blaze your own trail for miles and feel that no one else has ever placed a foot in the exact place you are placing yours.

The oil and gas industry—properly regulated—has an important role to play in our domestic security. But that

doesn't mean it should have unfettered access. The Arctic Refuge coastal plain—a sliver of an ecosystem that exists nowhere else on Earth—is the only part of the north slope where oil companies have no access under law. The last small percentage of land that remains undeveloped needs to stay that way.

The Arctic Refuge has defined my career and my life's work. I can offer nothing more important to future generations than a chance to see and experience this refuge in the same way that I did.



HEATHER ZICHAL is the former deputy assistant to President Barack Obama for energy and climate change. She helped to shape and execute many of the President's top energy and climate priorities, including establishing historic new fuel economy standards, reducing mercury pollution, and supporting clean energy deployment in the United States. Zichal has been a strong and steady voice for policies that reduce America's dependence on foreign oil, protect public health and the environment, and address global climate change. Author photo © Scott Henrichsen

POLICY ADVISOR



HEART OF THE WILD

I STOOD ON THE ICE-RIMMED EDGE of the Beaufort Sea, in Alaska's remote northeast corner. More than a dozen polar bears glowed in the slanted autumn sun. To the east stretched the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; in the distance, peaks of the Brooks Range shimmered like sails on a blue-white sea of land.

As a former longtime resident of Arctic Alaska, I join millions of Americans in celebrating President Obama's recent proposal to recommend wilderness status to 12 million acres of the Arctic Refuge. For over three decades, this vast sweep of Arctic seacoast, wet tundra, and rolling uplands has been the focus of bitter wrangles between pro-development forces and conservationists. Virtually all of Alaska's elected leaders in that time have opposed protection of the Arctic Refuge, often with militant, over-the-top rhetoric. In a recent rant, Congressman Don Young labeled President Obama's proposal "an attack on our people and our way of life."

It's easy to imagine that a casual observer looking down over the coastal plain might see only a featureless, frozen desert. But in summer, it provides vital habitat for the Porcupine caribou herd, 197,000 strong, and nesting grounds for uncounted throngs of migratory birds. The ground teems with lemmings, ground squirrels, and ptarmigan, and predators from Arctic foxes to grizzlies. And in winter's cold silence,

the coastal plain serves as Alaska's single most important onshore denning habitat for pregnant female polar bears. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge seems a fitting name for one last wild place that lies at the far northern edge of this great country. What best defines Alaska, not only to ourselves but to the world: One last wild, protected space, or another guzzle of oil?

Sorry, Congressman Young. I'll take polar bears any day.



In 1979 city-born author and photographer **NICK JANS**, who had always dreamed of living in a wilderness setting, settled in a remote Arctic Eskimo village two hundred miles off the road grid. There he worked for a hunting guide, managed a trading post, and taught Inupiat Eskimo children in the local school. He has traveled tens of thousands of wilderness miles by skiff, canoe, foot, skis, and snowmobile, often alone. His most recent book is *A Wolf Called Romeo*. Author photo © Nick Jans

ALASKA AUTHOR & PHOTOGRAPHER



THE LITERACY OF LANDSCAPE

I LIKE TO SAY THAT the imagination is the ultimate renewable resource because it thrives when it is nurtured and shown different perspectives and given a place that allows reflection. In our modern society we're experiencing information overload—there's too much of everything, all the time. Getting out of New York, getting away from it all allows me to think about how to write a composition, how to make new multimedia work. To experience the openness of a place like the Arctic Refuge is powerful, and hits the reset button on my creative process.

Being in the Arctic Refuge was a powerful journey for me. The river was not just a physical thing. As we paddled, at every turn we had to make decisions—left, right, straight, back. We navigated shallow areas and deep areas—we had to read the river like a legible surface, a text of nature.

How do we think about a place that is transforming when facing climate change and environmental issues? One of the things artists can help with is creating a sense of literacy that informs how we engage in the issues of the moment.

As I traveled above the Arctic Circle, I met members of this incredible tribe called the Gwich'in, one of the oldest civilizations in North America—over twenty thousand years old. I took a long walk with one of the tribal elders in the

Arctic Refuge in what appeared to me a green, beautiful landscape. The elder said his people had no words in their native language to describe what we were seeing. To me, it looked amazing—but to him, the landscape should not have been that green, and it was a sign of disaster. It was climate change.



PAUL MILLER, aka DJ SPOOKY, is a National Geographic Explorer and electronic hip-hop musician, conceptual artist, and writer. One of his acoustic portraits of landscapes is the multimedia composition, book, and installation called *The Book of Ice*. Listen to his album based on the sound of ice, *Of Water and Ice*, at www.jamendo.com/en/list/a122759/of-water-and-ice. Author photo © 이관형 2014

EXPERIMENTAL ARTIST | EXPLORER



VITAL GROUND

SOURCE OR RESOURCE? THE RESOURCE is obvious, which is why any argument over whether or not to save the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge exists. The resource is oil. Source is difficult to define or describe and impossible to price, and therefore must be a type of magic. The source is wild. The Arctic is the most vast, least known mother lode of wild. The breeze changes direction, moves across a field of just-bloomed sweet peas, and our eight heads turn toward this source of instant intoxication. A thousand caribou mysteriously appear in the bright dawn (what word is the opposite of “vaporize”?). The polar bear moves like liquid through morning fog. Distances disrupt our senses and infinity becomes an actual place. And when the snowy owl rises as if pulled skyward on an invisible cord, it is our collective breath escaping from our source that her wings push against. My own source—my *green fire*—is replenished by this mother lode of wild. My strength increases; my role in moving our species toward a future where we thrive becomes clear. How will this planet make the best use of us?

We’ve figured out resource; we know what it can do for us and we’ve learned how to sell it. We know the price of a board foot or a barrel; we don’t know its value because value must also include the extent to which its complete loss will diminish us.

A source says, *It is all here*—everything essential, as in “necessary,” but also as in “of essence.” Life force flows from the source. It is stored there.

The resource is recent and changing. The source is ancient, reaching back in the distant time to our earliest ancestors. Arctic creatures (bears and whales and owls, for example, but also salmon and dragonflies, mosquitoes) can leave the source to visit us in our dreams. And what if they exist only in our dreams and not on the tundra, beneath the ice, or in boundless water? What will we do then? Although there is no proof of this, we will surely die of loneliness.



BROOKE WILLIAMS's conservation career spans thirty years, most recently with the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance. He is the author of five books, including *Halflives: Reconciling Work and Wildness* and *Escalante: The Best Kind of Nothing*. Author photo © Terry Tempest Williams

AUTHOR & CONSERVATIONIST



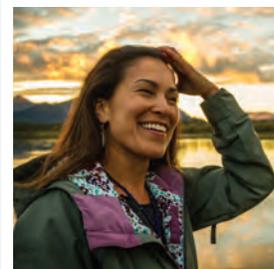
SPIRITUAL BONDS

A CARIBOU CALF SLIPS OUT of the womb and onto the soft padding of the tundra. Steam rises off its body, new to the world, to air, to life on Earth. In these first few hours he will bond with his mother, learning how to suckle, how to identify her scent and voice. These hours are critical to the survival of mother and calf in a herd of thousands. It is the only time they will have alone together. We humans are not so different in the way we give birth. The basics needed for life to begin. A mother's warm body full of milk and reassurance. A safe place. A warm cabin. A manger. A refuge.

All of us who overconsume must pay a price in the grand scheme of life. The coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is sacred ground, deemed so by the births of millions of animals over thousands of years. And my people, the Gwich'in, are there today only because of the spiritual bond we have with the Porcupine caribou herd. In our culture the caribou give themselves to us so that we may survive. We are humbled. Each of us humans should walk with that humbleness, knowing that it is ultimately this massive cycle of life that provides us with what we need to survive: clean air and water, soil to grow our gardens, and the fish and wildlife on which many of us depend.

All life is sacred. We all want to live, to experience the gift of creation—this great mystery we are all a part of. Truly

we are all related. You and I are brother and sister. We are related to the caribou, and whales, and polar bear; we are even related to the birch trees, and the forget-me-nots, and the tundra grass. *Shalak naii*, my relatives—let us carry this knowledge in our hearts and minds as we continue on our respective journeys. And *hai'choo* to you who are working so tirelessly for our future generations!



PRINCESS DAAZHRAII LUCAJ

is a writer, actor, and filmmaker. She is Gwich'in Athabascan from Fairbanks, Alaska, and is the former executive director of the Gwich'in Steering Committee, an indigenous nonprofit whose mission is to ensure the long-term health and viability of the Porcupine caribou herd that sustains the Gwich'in way of life.

Author photo © Ryan Red Corn

ARTIST & NATIVE LEADER



A SOLDIER'S DREAM

“AS SOON AS YOU FREE yourself, you’ll have a better day,” our guide Don Murch said. He was speaking to a group of five veterans, including me, who had spent time in Iraq or Afghanistan. If we would embrace the cold, icy water on the tundra, we could instead spend our energy paying attention to the majesty of our surroundings.

We had all spent time in the armed forces, but for me—and maybe for the others—this felt like the first time I really understood what it was I had meant, or at least what Congress and the president had meant, by saying we were fighting for our country. This was physically *our country*. The Arctic held all in one place the best of what our nation’s high-minded philosophy of liberty and justice for all had to offer.

The freedom was not easily won and the justice could be cold and, at times, miserable—but I received the just dues for whatever actions I took. I could walk wherever I wanted and in any direction I wanted. No one was there to stop me because of what I believed, who I loved, or the color of my skin. Every sunset and sunrise greeted our group with equal

beauty. No one got any more or less sunshine unless he ran, often without luck, to escape a shadow.

There’s beauty and wildness all over our great country, but nowhere else is it so big and nowhere else is it so whole and uncut. All the good that remains in the American dream is in the Arctic.



STACY BARE is a 2014 National Geographic Adventurer of the Year and a brand ambassador for The North Face and Keen Shoes. He received the Bronze Star for Merit during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Author photo © Zack Bazzi

VETERAN & ADVENTURER



MY ARCTIC WILD

JUST OVER A YEAR AGO, I unpacked my waterproof bag, which was filled with all the gear essential for the spectrum of summer conditions in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Quite frankly, I am still unpacking that experience and sharing with others what it meant to spend nearly a week in one of the wildest and most remote places in the world—especially in the context of the work I do leading and inspiring Outdoor Afros around the country to engage with nature.

A stellar and experienced Sierra Club team led and supported us, but before we left, our friends and families still admonished us to “be careful.” They did not know that the coming experience would be a gift, helping us understand what it means to be human in relation to the wild.

The first afternoon in the Mollie Beattie Wilderness, we had a bear in camp.

Yes, a grizzly. And yes, it was frightening. No physical barriers stood between our group and this creature. For what seemed like several minutes, it curiously observed us. Then, following a sudden whiff of northern air and a distant Porcupine caribou herd, it disappeared without fanfare into the Brooks Range.

I realize now that the experience was not about the bear, or our fear of it, but rather our awareness of our humanity in

its presence—in its wild. We were not at the top of the food chain. We continued to see many creatures—countless caribou, several birds on my life list, tenacious mosquitoes—all in an ever-changing climate that did not care about our presence or comfort. This kind of wild will continue to roll on and thrive without regard for its human passengers.

The wilderness as I experienced it in the Arctic is a system of immeasurable strength and resiliency. It was an honor to step out of my illusion of control and to know a type of dependence and fragility found only in the remote wild. I know I am better for it.



RUE MAPP founded Outdoor Afro as a blog in 2009; since then it has grown into a national organization that connects people, especially from the African-American community, to nature and the benefits of spending more time outdoors. Author photo © Micah Baird

ACTIVIST & COMMUNITY LEADER



OASIS, NOT OILFIELD

THE ARCTIC IS UNDER SIEGE.

Climate change threatens its very existence. This vastly important land is the world's cooling system, but it is warming more rapidly than any other region on Earth. Today, Arctic sea ice is declining. As temperatures climb, ice cover and glaciers melt at an accelerated pace, causing sea levels to rise with devastating global implications.

The cause of climate change—carbon-polluting fossil fuels—also threatens the Arctic. Not only is their use causing untold destruction in the Arctic, but because of the unchecked need for more oil, special interests want to destroy the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge through drilling. That is why I have spent decades fighting to build our clean-energy economy, slow our consumption of fossil fuels, and fight climate change.

In 2005, I participated in the fight to prevent drilling in the Arctic. Senate Democrats held firm and refused to permit the violation of the coastal plain. We won that battle, but special interests ensure more will come. As inhabitants of Earth, we must all continue to protect the Arctic and support Arctic conservation. Not only because it's the right thing to do, but because our future depends on it.

The United States has a long tradition of preserving our vital landscapes. The designation of Yellowstone as a national park in 1872, the first of its kind in the world, has been emulated across the globe. It is a legacy to be proud of—and to build on.

In 1960, Republican president Dwight D. Eisenhower created the Arctic National Wildlife Range, another monumental step. President Jimmy Carter and Congress later expanded that range and renamed it the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Today, the Arctic Refuge is one of the nation's most treasured and pristine lands.

We still have much more to do. The competition for land and resources has made conservation designations controversial, but we need additional protections. It is up to each of us to defend our nation's most valued places. It is our duty to encourage government leaders to protect the Arctic. After all, life on Earth depends on it.



HARRY REID is the senior US senator from Nevada, having served since 1987. Reid currently serves as the US Senate Democratic Leader. Author photo courtesy of US Senate Photographic Studio

POLITICIAN & CONSERVATIONIST



ALASKA'S REAL STATE BIRD

GRIZZLIES. CARIBOU. POLAR BEARS. Musk oxen. Dall sheep. Wolves. Gyrfalcons and red-breasted mergansers flapping across an expanse of soggy tundra. In our reverence for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge's buffet of wildlife, we are forgetting which species benefits most from this fully stocked Golden Corral.

Humans? Hell, no. I'm talking about Alaska's thirty-five species of mosquito. In the Lower 48 they are sprayed and swatted into bloody pulps, yet in the Arctic Refuge they fly free over 19 million acres. (Did you know a horde of mosquitoes is called a moron? Look it up.)

Mosquitoes confined to the southern latitudes must make do with sips stolen from kids too dumb or too slow to smash them. In the *Anopheles* heaven that is the Arctic Refuge, unimpeded morons can drain a musk ox or errant paddler from Pennsylvania in thirty seconds flat.

Look, nobody really gives a crap about the cow-like caribou, do they? And bears are total jerks. Birds? When stricken by insomnia, I crack open *Birds of America* and it beats Ambien. So most animals are lame, but *in our blind thirst for fossil fuels we forget* that opening the Refuge up to oil exploration of any kind comes with a price too high to bear. We risk driving away the array of blood bags that sustain our most precious resource of all: the mosquitoes.

Join me in imagining an Arctic tundra in late June unlike one we've ever seen. The air at dusk is still and quiet. No vibrating fog of arthropods obscures a horizon going peach with the setting sun. Your exposed arms and legs are without the usual stippling that itches you into madness. When that familiar whine fails to arrive in your ear, a single tear rolls down your cheek. Is this the future Arctic Refuge you want for yourself, for your children?

Still not convinced? Consider this: if we can't keep the Arctic Refuge protected and the Alaskan state bird where it belongs, you can bet those bloodsucking bastards are coming after us.



TED ALVAREZ is a contributing editor at *Grist.org*, Northwest editor for *Backpacker* magazine, and author of *National Parks Coast to Coast*. Author photo © Ted Alvarez

WRITER, ADVENTURER & HUMORIST



WILD SILENCE

I FIRST SPOTTED THE TRACKS as our chartered bush plane circled to land in the snow-covered foothills of the Brooks Range. Polar bears.

I knew there was a chance we'd encounter them while our team of ski mountaineers spent three weeks in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Yet such early evidence acted as a welcome sign:

"You Are Here. Welcome to the Wildest Place in Our Country, Where a Dall Sheep May Have Just Witnessed the Birth of Two Polar Bear Cubs Now En Route to the Beaufort Sea. Wild Silence and Ancient Mountains Await You. Enjoy Your Visit and Please Leave No Trace."

On day two a wolverine ran in front of us at the far edge of the frozen riverbank.

On day three we climbed for ten hours to reach the summit of a mountain; there we gazed fifty miles north to the Arctic Ocean before skiing through the crevasses of a glacier that will likely have melted away less than one hundred years from now.

On day four a snowstorm immersed me in a wild silence unlike any I'd ever experienced.

On days five and six we skied southward, deeper into the mountains. We followed the solo tracks a wolf had laid

just hours ahead of us, and I wondered if I belonged there enough to ski over them?

On day seven we climbed another ten hours to the top of Mount Isto, the highest mountain in the Brooks Range, amid the calm evening light. From this place it came to me: for now, in all directions there is endless and pure wilderness with not a sight, sound, or bit of tension from human development. My wish is that a place as rare as this continues to exist.



Two-time world champion freeskiier and ski mountaineer **KIT DESLAURIERS** (The North Face) is the first person to have skied off of each of the Seven Summits. During a 2010 expedition to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Kit skied the highest mountain in the Brooks Range and then sixty miles north to the Beaufort Sea. Author photo © Jimmy Chin

SKI MOUNTAINEER



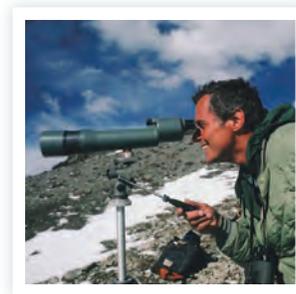
AMERICA'S SERENGETI

AS WE SETTLE INTO CAMP we immediately begin to absorb the wild beauty around us. We have come to study not only the natural history but also to gather impressions of the “precious intangible values,” as Olaus Murie phrased it, with the hope that this knowledge will lead to protection of the area.

In this land of the midnight sun the jubilant singing of juncos, myrtle warblers, tree sparrows, and gray-cheeked thrushes can be heard twenty-four hours a day. From our tents we see occasional bands of caribou crossing the lake ice in single file and hear the sound of their clicking hooves. They are part of what is known as the Porcupine herd, and they, too, are heading to the tundra of the coastal plain, where they will gather by the tens of thousands to calve. One day two massive grizzlies the color of winter grass trace the shoreline eating tender grass sedges. And once a gray wolf trots past our tents; we name the lake by our camp Lobo Lake in his honor. . . .

Leaving the valley, I climb among the stark, gray limestone cliffs bordering it up to the alpine tundra, where I note the first gentian and delphinium of the season and add wheatear, horned lark, and Lapland longspur to our bird list. . . .

Standing among sharp-edged peaks, at the convergence of mountain and sky, I am alone at a place without roads or people, not even trails except those trodden by wild sheep and caribou; there is nothing to violate the peace, with mountains still unaffected by humankind. Here one can recapture the rhythm of life and the feeling of belonging to the natural world.



GEORGE B. SCHALLER's work with Panthera and the Wildlife Conservation Society has contributed to establishing parks and preserves throughout the world. With Olaus and Mardy Murie he was a member of the 1956 expedition in northeastern Alaska that resulted in establishing the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. These excerpts are from his re-

membrances, captured in *Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: Seasons of Life and Land* by Subhankar Banerjee. Author photo © Kay Schaller

FIELD BIOLOGIST & AUTHOR

◀ *Members of the Porcupine caribou herd enter the mountain valleys in the Arctic Refuge where they find lush vegetation. Caribou are constantly feeding, even while migrating, in order to gain sufficient weight to survive the challenging winter months. © Florian Schulz*



LAND AS HOME

WE ARE ALL INDIGENOUS to somewhere.

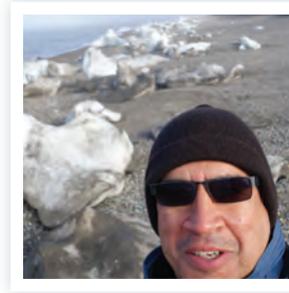
Wherever we might have come from originally—our community, our neighborhood, our village, our barrio—we call that home. For many of those who live in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, it has been their home for generations unknown: generations that lived in accordance with the instinctual calendar and movement of the indigenous wildlife. They did not impose themselves on the face of the land; they were part of nature, living among, not over.

Drilling is not indigenous. Drilling is an aggressive invasive species. It displaces, disturbs, and devours nature.

It is our responsibility to understand that we wouldn't let this happen to our own home, so why would we stand by and let it happen to those whose subsistence depends the most on preserving the delicate balance of the wild?

America's Arctic is a breathtakingly natural, wild place, and right now we have the power to faithfully preserve it so that those who live there can thrive and our families can experience and enjoy it.

I have been given the opportunity to exult in the vast beauty of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge firsthand, and it would be selfish of me to not work to ensure that future generations have that same opportunity.



Democratic Caucus vice chair Robert Menendez. Author photo © Mark Magaña

MARK MAGAÑA is the president and founder of GreenLatinos, a national coalition of Latino environmental, natural resources, and conservation leaders. The first Latino to serve as senior staff at the White House and in Congressional leadership, he was special assistant to President Clinton for legislative affairs and senior policy advisor to the House

**CONSERVATIONIST &
COMMUNITY ACTIVIST**



THE PLACES IN BETWEEN

IN THE REMOTEST PARTS OF the world, largely untouched by humans, there are no roads, no trails, no pretense. These places strip the labels that define us—parent, friend, child, provider, warrior, author, teacher—leaving us stark naked and vulnerable to Mother Nature and her elements, to each other, and to ourselves. With identities gone, all that is left is our connection to the ground beneath our feet and the air we breathe.

After returning from war, I longed for sacred spaces—places that felt as if they were created by greater forces and unravaged by the inhumanity of man. *These elusive places in between.* I spent a week on the North Slope of Alaska, floating down the Kongakut River. I sat in my tent after capturing and freeing my most unwelcome mosquito guests, quieted my mind and heart, and explored the spaces in my soul. On that vast Arctic tundra, it was impossible not to hear my center of peace beckoning and finally welcoming me home.

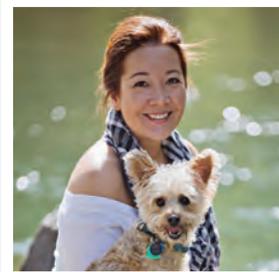
Alaska, meaning “great land,” changed me. She unselfishly gifted me with a profoundly different perspective and afforded me such vast open spaces where the expansion of consciousness was inevitable. Among our cities, traffic, pollution, and the organized and cultured chaos of everyday life, it’s impossible to hear our soul speak to us. Out there on the tundra, it was impossible not to. The North Slope’s moon and

stars held a nightly vigil which afforded me divine stillness where something in me shifted. My connection to that earth monumentally impacted how I view myself, my place in this world, the Earth, my connection to her, and what I now fundamentally know is our responsibility to protect her.

This is home.

All of ours.

War is not the worst of all things. Forgetting what we sacrificed and fought for is.



Recipient of the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star, and the Combat Action Badge, **GENEVIEVE CHASE** is a veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom VII and XIII and the survivor of a suicide attack in Afghanistan. Chase, the founder of American Women Veterans, has dedicated herself to veterans advocacy with a focus on women and their families from all US wars. Author photo © Hillary Maybery

VETERAN & ADVOCATE



OUR HOME

Robert Thompson worked as the guide for wildlife photographer Subhankar Banerjee, for his landmark book Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: Seasons of Life and Land—a book that has been critical to helping preserve the Arctic Refuge. Robert's extensive experience in Arctic conditions and his unique knowledge of the land and wildlife were crucial to the success of capturing the book's incredible photographs, taken in all four seasons of the year.

THE ARCTIC REFUGE IS MY HOME. It has been home to my people, the Iñupiat, for thousands of years. It is now as it has always been. I wish for it to remain this way for future generations of Iñupiat.

When my granddaughter was a small child, we were out on the land; she raised her hands and said, "Thank you, God, for this good land." If we were in an oil field, would she have been so inspired?

The land as she saw it was something to be thankful for. It is an Iñupiat value to respect the land. It has taken care of us;

it is part of our culture. It must be protected from exploitation to sustain the culture of future generations of Iñupiat.

It must be preserved for all people.



ROBERT THOMPSON is an Iñupiat wildlife guide. He has lived most of his life in Kaktovik, on Barter Island, with his family, and has a great love and respect for the traditional hunting lands and whaling waters of the Iñupiat people. Robert has traveled the country and lobbied in Washington, DC, speaking for protection of the Arctic Ref-

uge, which is literally the backyard of the Iñupiat people who have practiced subsistence hunting and conservation on this land for centuries. Author photo © Gerrit Vyn

ARCTIC RESIDENT

◀ *Subhankar Banerjee wears a traditional Iñupiat parka called a tigi, made out of sheepskin with a wolf ruff, while traveling with Robert Thompson in the Hulahula River valley of the Arctic Refuge coastal plain. © Subhankar Banerjee*



THE LAST GREAT WILDERNESS

WHEN I WAS FIFTEEN, I dreamed of coming to America. It was not what I saw in Hollywood movies that drew me to the country but my imagination of a wild land and its animals. While in Europe we have a wealth of human history, we have lost most of our natural history.

In the twenty-five years since, I have followed that dream, spending many years in the field from Mexico to Alaska. It is the high Arctic, though, within the borders of the Refuge, where I have found some of the most unspoiled open places. It shows us what most of the continent looked like before European settlement. Here our eyes can wander over the coastal plains for miles and miles until they reach the mountains of the Brooks Range. No power lines or roads disturb the view. There is no other place like it. When Olaus and Mardy Murie first rallied for its protection, she called it “The Last Great Wilderness.” This is more true today than ever.

For the moment the magic border of the Canning River holds the rampant oil development at bay. I have seen the land to the east. Starting at Point Thomson, oil roads, pipelines, drilling pads, and oil facilities stretch for sixty miles until Nuiqsut. Viewed from space at night, this area is blanketed

with lights that rival a large metropolitan area. It is a harsh contrast. Imagining the expansion of oil development into the coastal plains of the Refuge must hurt the heart of anyone with a sense of beauty. I can only hope wisdom will prevail over greed and my children’s children will still be able to visit the last great wilderness.



As part of his ongoing *Freedom to Roam* project, wildlife photographer and cinematographer **FLORIAN SCHULZ** has published four books on the drama and beauty of North America’s most critical wild areas and migration corridors. His most recent book, *The Wild Edge: Freedom to Roam the Pacific Coast*, connects the entire west coast of North America to the Arctic. Author photo © Florian Schulz

CONSERVATION PHOTOGRAPHER



IT BELONGS TO ALL AMERICANS

THE ARCTIC IS IMPORTANT to me because I care about the animals and the indigenous people, and want the Arctic to be around and to be as beautiful when I grow up as it is now. My mom says the Arctic Refuge belongs to all Americans, so that means it belongs to me too.

I have been to Washington, DC, three times for Alaska Wilderness Week and wilderness protection. I have learned about some of the vulnerable animal species like polar bears and Porcupine caribou. We also learned about and met many of the First Nations, Iñupiat, and Gwich'in people from Alaska and Canada. I became very interested and intrigued after hearing their incredible stories about their culture and how they survive in the wilderness. After that, we lobbied Congress and I was very grateful to be able to share some of their stories. One was about how they live off the food from the whales and have for centuries. They believe that whales give themselves to them so they will be able to survive. They feed pregnant women and their elders the best food from the whale first. They used to occasionally eat polar bears too, when there was nothing else, but now they feed the bears. They see how the bears are struggling and feel sorry for them.

I want to be a vet because I love animals and want to help them. If we don't protect this special and unique wilderness,

many of the animals won't survive and it won't be this spectacular when I grow up. One of my dreams is to go to Alaska to see the Arctic Refuge someday. Look at the photographs in this book, and you'll see that it is one of the world's most beautiful places. We need to take action and protect OUR Arctic.



At her first Alaska Wilderness Week, twelve-year-old **BELLA PARRA** from Grayslake, Illinois, accompanied her mom's lobbying team to their meetings and participated in a training session. She was working on homework in one office lobby when an older gentleman walked in. She asked, "Are you the congressman?" He said yes, and she said she

was there to protect Alaska. In his personal office, she shared her passion for protecting polar bears and the place they call home, and asked him if he'd support the bill to protect the Arctic Refuge. Less than a week later, Congressman Hank Johnson from Georgia was a cosponsor of the Udall-Eisenhower Arctic Wilderness Act. Author photo © Barbara Klipp

YOUNG ACTIVIST



A PLACE OF HEALING

THE ARCTIC REFUGE IS THE ultimate place for natural healing from the soul-bruising effects of multiple kinds of trauma, whether it's what I experienced as a twenty-year-old army infantryman in Vietnam or the many other psychological wounds so many carry.

This is the story of my healing: Living in Denver after I returned from Vietnam, I felt lost and confused, self-medicating but finding no relief. At my lowest point, I somehow knew I needed to get up into the mountains, and that's where I began my healing, where I felt like I was starting to come home, that I'd no longer abandoned myself.

From that turning point, my life path took me to Alaska, and within a few years, I had started a wilderness guiding business in the Alaskan Arctic. For me, those early years were about the enjoyment of exploring this vast, wild land, feeling fully alive again, physically and mentally strong.

I was asked to testify before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources in 1987, and it was only as I was trying to find words to convey why the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge should be protected from oil development that I realized more consciously what had been sustaining me and enhancing the lives of those on our wilderness trips.

It was that same healing energy of nature I first found in the Colorado Rockies. But in the Arctic Refuge, that energy is present in its purest, most unaltered, uninsulated form. And while we all have an innate circuitry that connects us with nature, when our internal wiring has been traumatized and scrambled, we need this purest expression of wholeness, of what is real and true, so that our soul can remember itself.



JIM CAMPBELL and his wife, Carol Kasza, have been guiding trips in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge since 1979 through their Alaska-based family business, Arctic Treks. Author photo © Sonya Champion

VIETNAM VET & ARCTIC GUIDE



AS THE CARIBOU GO, SO GO THE GWICH'IN

I EXPERIENCED THE REFUGE THROUGH the perspective of Gwich'in women while working on a film. The Refuge is their home. We drank water straight out of a creek. On windy summer days when mosquitoes left us alone, we collected blueberries and leaves for tundra tea. We paddled upstream to hunt caribou and moose, the main source of food for the Gwich'in since time immemorial. I experienced the Refuge as the Gwich'in people's lifeline and foundation for their physical, cultural, and spiritual needs.

In their creation story, the Gwich'in people—the original people of the Arctic—used to be caribou, which give birth and raise their young on the coastal plain. When they split, the caribou and Gwich'in made an oath that the caribou would always take care of the Gwich'in as long as the Gwich'in would always take care of the caribou. For the Gwich'in, protecting the Refuge is an obligation to caribou, their ancestors, and future generations. Sarah James, a Gwich'in elder, said that even during the starvation time in their history, the Gwich'in never went to the coastal plain to hunt caribou. They chose to starve rather than intrude upon the caribou's birthing and nursing ground. For the Gwich'in, disturbing the sacred place meant jeopardizing their future.

If the caribou go, so will the Gwich'in. I don't want to be a part of that story. Instead, I want to tell a celebratory story of how we won and kept our heritage, and how people from

all walks of life came together to permanently protect the coastal plain. Such a victory will give hope and be a positive example for other indigenous communities and oppressed people that if you stay together, you win for your ancestors, you win for today, and you win for many generations that come after you.

There are no words to describe “wilderness” in the Gwich'in language. Sarah said the closest words are “leave it the way the Creator made.” So that will be my relationship to the coastal plain.



MIHO AIDA, born in Japan, is a filmmaker, educator, and the founder of the environmental media project *If She Can Do It, You Can Too: Empowering Women Through Outdoor Role Models*. Her short film *The Sacred Place Where Life Begins: Gwich'in Women Speak* advocates for permanent protection of the Refuge's coastal plain. Author photo © Duffy Ross

FILMMAKER & EDUCATOR



THE POWER OF ONE

A MEMORIAL TRIBUTE

LENNY KOHM WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY organizer and advocate for the wild places of the Earth. In midlife, he transitioned from a career in jazz drumming to photography, wandered to Alaska, and spent two seasons taking hundreds of marvelous and evocative pictures of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the Gwich'in people who subsist there.

Recognizing that the Refuge he loved and the caribou that fed his Gwich'in family were both threatened by oil development, he spent the next decade driving from hamlet to hamlet in the Lower 48, showing his slideshow to anyone who would listen, at public libraries, colleges, and churches. He was always accompanied in these forays by a member of the Gwich'in people. At a time when Congress was regularly floating proposal after proposal to drill in the Refuge, he and his Gwich'in brethren reminded Americans one by one, in hundreds of congressional districts, why they should be proud of and care for their patrimony.

His effort was strategic: he always knew which were the swing districts and which local congressperson was in need of additional backbone from home. He covered most of the United States this way in what can only be described as a broken-down jalopy, because, until his friends chipped in to help, he didn't have the money to buy a better car.

Lenny loved life. His humor and laughter lit his way. Most of all, he loved the way ordinary Americans respond when they clearly see what is at stake in a conservation struggle. He believed in the American people, in their judgment, in their fairness, and in their love for their land. That belief made him a superlative organizer. In an era in which at least some environmental community leaders appear to think that campaigns are best conducted by social media, Lenny knew that you had to touch people in person, and reach their hearts, to move them to effective action. And he did. —*Brooks Yeager*



LENNY KOHM, 1939–2014, inspired countless people from the Arctic to Appalachia to stand up and exercise their right to protect the land and communities they love. Photo © Matt Wasson

ADVOCATE & ORGANIZER



WHERE BIRDS ARE BORN

WHEN I WAS IN THE Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in July several years ago with Subhankar Banerjee and Robert Thompson, they would often point to a particular species and ask, “Where does that bird come from?” Each time the question caught me off guard, and I thought to myself, “What do they mean? We’re looking at a nest; that bird comes from right here.” From my southern perspective, I went to the Arctic to see these birds on their breeding grounds—to see where they came from. But from an Arctic perspective, these birds are just brief visitors; some are in Alaska for only a few weeks. They may be born in the Arctic Refuge, but most of them don’t really have a permanent home; they’re always moving, and, in that sense, they don’t come from anywhere.

There is a kind of music in the patterns of bird migrations, a delicate rhythm that plays over the slow cycles of seasons, the orbits of planets, the raising of mountains. It is the rhythm of the Earth made plainly visible.

In many places, our modern lifestyle—with its time clocks and computers and automobiles and insulated, air-conditioned buildings and processed food—has isolated us from this rhythm. The ancient rhythms are there; they are a part of all of us. We understand them and follow them subconsciously, but too much of our lives now is separate from them, and we hear them only when we know what to listen for. Sanctuaries like the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

are among the few places on Earth where we can hear the natural rhythms clearly, and where some humans still live in harmony with those rhythms.

Nobody knows what drove the Labrador Duck to extinction in the 1800s, and nobody can predict what will happen with increased human activity in the Arctic. Oil exploration could be enough to tip birds in jeopardy, such as the Steller’s Eider and the Buff-breasted Sandpiper, into extinction. Whatever the results of development may be, it is certain that migrating birds will make those effects, small or large, visible all around the world.



DAVID ALLEN SIBLEY is the renowned artist and author of *The Sibley Guide to Birds* and *The Sibley Guide to Bird Behavior*, which set a new standard for both artistic beauty and detailed bird identification. This essay is from *Arctic Wings: Birds of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge*. Author photo © Richard Pasley

ORNITHOLOGIST. AUTHOR & ARTIST



THE SACRED NATURE OF LAND

AS IF LOOKING THROUGH the eyes of God, I have seen the beauty of the Arctic Refuge from the vantage of a small airplane. More importantly, I came to know this place from the Gwich'in way of life on what they call the Sacred Place Where Life Begins. For ten years, it was my honor and joy as the bishop of Alaska to be close to the Sacred Place and the life it made possible. Since that time, many of my perceptions of and hopes for this world come from this Land.

This is a place where you can see humanity's beginnings and the essential living relationship that God has given us with the Land. Here, you realize the close connection between creation and human beings, their community, and their culture. Through this lens, we understand the intimate embrace of the Land and human rights—a connection recognized internationally in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

You can see humanity's beginning, but you can also see our present peril. People cannot understand the issue of oil exploration in the Refuge as a human rights issue because they cannot imagine the living relationship between the Gwich'in and the Land. This degraded perception is related to the deeper problem of understanding the living relationship

of all peoples to the Land—the environment in which God has placed us. The Land shapes us, our imagination, and our capacity for the fullness of life. We are human because of the Land, a prophetic truth told by the Gwich'in and the Refuge.

So we could also say that through the Arctic Refuge we see the sacred destiny and goal of human life—we see our beginning and our future. Let us be hopeful but committed to these truths, to the lessons of the Sacred Place Where Life Begins.



THE RIGHT REVEREND MARK MACDONALD was the seventh bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Alaska; he is now the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop of Canada and the North American president of the World Council of Churches. Author photo © Michael Hudson for General Synod Communications

ANGLICAN BISHOP



IN SITU

This is what I saw in the village of Kaktovik:

Painted houses on the edge of the sea;
Boats, trucks, snow machines;
Men, women, and children;
Sled dogs chained to stakes waiting for snow:
Caribou skins, wolverine skins, geese;
A boneyard of Bowhead Whale skulls, vertebrae, and ribs;
Great White Bears swimming to shore;
Great White Bears walking toward the boneyard;
Great White Bears standing among bones,
licking bones, becoming bones.

This is what I saw outside the village of Kaktovik:

A Snowy Owl standing on a tussock
draped in fog, yellow eyes burning.
And when the fog lifted—a forest
of large white crosses of Iñupiat elders
stood behind her—

and behind them—a line of light—the Brooks Range.

It was not a mirage.

This is what I remember from the village of Kaktovik:

Three gunshots heard at night is a warning: a polar bear is in the village.

Three gunshots heard at night: a polar bear is in the village walking.

Three gunshots heard at night and I remember looking out the window—

I met a woman named Marie. Marie was dancing in the village
twirling-twirling-twirling—in the middle of the road—
her family's fishing camp had collapsed into the sea.

There is no sanctuary from the rising seas or the warming Earth,
only the Refuge of our own making.



Known for impassioned and lyrical prose, **TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS** is the award-winning author of eighteen books, including, most recently, *The Hour of Land: A Personal Topography of America's National Parks*. Author photo © Brooke Williams

CITIZEN WRITER & NATURALIST



A TIME FOR COURAGE

THE ARCTIC REFUGE STANDS ALONE as America's last truly great wilderness. This magnificent area is as vast as it is wild, from the windswept coastal plain where the polar bears and caribou give birth, to the towering Brooks Range where Dall sheep cling to cliffs and wolves howl at the midnight sun.

One of the most unforgettable and humbling experiences of Rosalyn's and my lives occurred on the coastal plain. We had hoped to see caribou during our trip, but to our amazement, we witnessed the migration of tens of thousands of caribou with their newborn calves. In a matter of a few minutes, the sweep of tundra before us became flooded with life, with the sounds of grunting animals and clicking hooves filling the air. The dramatic procession of the Porcupine caribou herd was a once-in-a-lifetime wildlife spectacle. We understand firsthand why some have described this special birthplace as America's Serengeti.

Standing on the coastal plain, I was saddened to think of the tragedy that might occur if this great wilderness was consumed by a web of roads and pipelines, drilling rigs and industrial facilities. Such proposed developments would forever destroy the wilderness character of America's only Arctic Refuge and disturb countless numbers of animals that depend on this northernmost terrestrial ecosystem.

We must look beyond the alleged benefits of a short-term economic gain and focus on what is truly at stake. At best, the Arctic Refuge might provide 1 to 2 percent of the oil our country consumes each day. We can easily conserve more than that amount by driving more fuel-efficient vehicles. Instead of tearing open the heart of our greatest refuge, we should use our resources more wisely.

There are few places on Earth as wild and free as the Arctic Refuge. It is a symbol of our natural heritage, a remnant of frontier America that our first settlers once called wilderness. Little of that precious wilderness remains.

It will be a grand triumph for America if we can preserve the Arctic Refuge in its pure, untrammelled state. To leave this extraordinary land alone would be the greatest gift we could pass on to future generations.



As the thirty-ninth president of the United States, **JIMMY CARTER** signed into law one of the most significant land conservation measures in our nation's history: the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), which protected over 100 million acres of public lands in Alaska, doubled the size of the country's national park and refuge

system, and tripled the amount of land designated as wilderness. This essay is from *Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: Seasons of Life and Land* by Subhankar Banerjee. Author photo © Rick Diamond

PRESIDENT & WILDERNESS CHAMPION



TAKE ACTION

CALCULATED RISK TAKING is a core part of who I am. From a single store in 1978, my company, Zumiez, has grown organically into what is today the largest action-sports lifestyle retailer in the world, with over 640 stores in four countries.

Public lands and the wild lands of the American West are good for business and essential for the company's growth. People ski and snowboard on public land, surf on public beaches, and skateboard in public spaces. The outdoor retail industry supports millions of jobs on a national scale and contributes to the economic and social vitality of many small communities.

One of the most important places I've spent a good portion of my life and resources working to protect is America's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. These 19 million acres are part of the largest roadless area left on Earth. You can experience the most incredible jumble of light and life rarely seen elsewhere on the planet, with grizzlies, wolves, caribou, musk oxen, wolverines, lynx, polar bears, bowhead and beluga whales, 200 species of birds . . . and the politically vulnerable 1.5-million-acre coastal plain.

If you've been tracking this incredible landscape over the decades, you know that it's threatened because there is oil in the ground. Not much, maybe a six-month supply for America that would have little to no impact on the price we pay at the pump. And yet, this iconic landscape is the subject of one of the most high-pitched political battles in American history, and it has gone on for decades.

This past summer, President Obama became the first sitting American president to visit America's Arctic. The public response was enthusiastically supportive. *We Are the Arctic* is a year-long campaign to thank the president for his support of wilderness and to ask him for the strongest possible protection for the Arctic Refuge.

NOW IS THE TIME. Please write a letter, send the postcards in this book, and tell your friends to thank the president. Visit www.WeAreTheArctic.org for updates and ways to take action.

We can do this—with your help.



TOM CAMPION is the cofounder and chairman of Zumiez, and the cofounder with his wife, Sonya, of the Campion Advocacy Fund. He serves on the board of the Alaska Wilderness League and is a founding board member of Conservation Northwest. Author photo © Bob Spiwak

OUTDOOR INDUSTRY LEADER

LEARN MORE

ABOUT THE ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

- At 19 million acres (the size of South Carolina), it is the largest national wildlife refuge in the country.
 - The Arctic Refuge encompasses the traditional homelands of the Iñupiat of the coast and the Gwich'in Athabascans of the interior.
 - By law, industrial activities like oil drilling can occur on national wildlife refuges only if such activities are formally determined to be compatible with wildlife conservation and refuge purposes. Oil drilling has never been found to be compatible with wildlife conservation on any national wildlife refuge anywhere in the United States.
 - The coastal plain encompasses approximately 1.2 million acres and serves as the biological heart of what is often called "America's Serengeti" because it is home to one of the world's last great herds of caribou and more than 250 bird and animal species, including wolves, grizzlies, and rare musk oxen.
 - With heavy insulated wool coats, musk oxen are able to brave the frigid winter temperatures and are the only large mammal to live year-round in the Refuge. Musk oxen and caribou are the only two Arctic hoofed mammals that survived the end of the Pleistocene era (10,000 years ago).
 - The coastal plain supports the 197,000-animal Porcupine caribou herd. Each spring, the herd makes a 1400-mile migration north to their calving areas to give birth. Archaeological evidence shows that the herd has used the coastal plain as a calving area for more than two million years. During the winter the herd disperses throughout the southern part of the Refuge and into Canada. It is estimated that an individual caribou may travel more than 3000 miles over the course of a single year.
 - The coastal plain includes some of the most important onshore denning habitat for polar bears in the United States.
 - About 70 bird species from five continents utilize the coastal plain during migration. Long migrations require some birds to nearly double their body weight while in the Arctic prior to take-off, which would be the human equivalent of eating 1600 cheeseburgers in a month—on top of a normal diet. The Arctic provides abundant insect life and twenty-four-hour light for plenty of time to forage.
 - In addition, the rivers and coastal waters are vital habitat for more than 36 species of fish.
- For more information, visit www.WeAreTheArctic.org.**



PHOTOGRAPHERS OF THE ARCTIC

SUBHANKAR BANERJEE uses photography to raise awareness of issues that threaten the well-being of our planet, with a focus on indigenous human rights and land conservation issues in the Arctic. His book, *Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: Seasons of Life and Land*, was instrumental in defeating a bill that would have allowed drilling in the refuge. His Arctic Refuge photographs have been shown in forty individual and group exhibits and published in more than one hundred magazines and newspapers internationally. subhankarbanerjee.org

PAUL BANNICK specializes in the natural history of North America with a focus on birds and habitat. Paul's first book, *The Owl and the Woodpecker*, is one of the best-selling bird books in North America. His work has appeared in *Audubon*, *Sunset*, *Pacific Northwest*, *PhotoMedia*, *Seattle Times*, the *National Wildlife Federation Field Guide to Birds of North America*, and *Smithsonian Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. Bannick currently serves as the director of development for Conservation Northwest, an organization dedicated to protecting and connecting wild areas from the Pacific Coast to the Canadian Rockies. paulbannick.com

PATRICK ENDRES is recognized for his extensive imagery of Alaska's natural world, and his landscape work is defined by a strong blend of technical and creative excellence. His work has been published in *National Wildlife*, *USA Today*, *Time*, *Sierra*, and many books and calendars. In 2003 he was

featured in *The World's Top Photographers—Landscape*. AlaskaPhotoGraphics.com

AMY GULICK is a photographer and journalist whose work has been featured in *Sierra*, *Audubon*, and *National Wildlife* magazines, and in the conservation campaigns of the Alaska Wilderness League, Alaska Rainforest Campaign, Sierra Club, and others. Her book, *Salmon in the Trees*, illustrates the deep interconnectedness of the Tongass rainforest. She has won the North American Nature Photography Association's Mission Award, as well as their Philip Hyde Grant, and the Alaska Conservation Foundation's Daniel Housberg Wilderness Image Award. She is a fellow with the International League of Conservation Photographers. amygulick.com

BILL HESS has dedicated his career to creating publications, including *Uiñiq Magazine* and Alaska's *Village Voices*, that serve the Alaska Native Eskimo, Indian, and Aleut communities. He is the author and photographer of *Gift of the Whale: The Iñupiat Bowhead Hunt—A Sacred Tradition* and photographer for *Celebration: Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian Dancing on the Land*. His work has appeared in a host of national and international publications, ranging from *National Geographic* to *Geo*. wasillaalaskaby300.squarespace.com

STEVEN KAZLOWSKI earned a degree in marine biology before setting out for Alaska to pursue his true passion: wildlife photography. His photos have been featured in *Vanity Fair*,

Time, *National Wildlife*, *Audubon*, *Backpacking*, and *Canadian National Geographic* magazines. Eight years of fieldwork culminated in *The Last Polar Bear: Facing the Truth of a Warming World*. This project led him to be recognized with the Sierra Club's Ansel Adams Award in 2008. lefteyepro.com

From the Arctic to the Antarctic **HUGH ROSE** has worked as a freelance outdoor nature photographer, and photo and natural history guide for the last twenty years. Hugh's photographs have appeared in various conservation organization and wilderness calendars, Frommer's travel guides, *Alaska Airlines Magazine*, *Outdoor Life*, *National Wildlife Federation*, and numerous other publications. hughrosephotography.com

FLORIAN SCHULZ is a professional wildlife and landscape photographer whose images have won awards in the BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year Competition, Nature's Best International Photography Awards, Banff International Mountain Photography Competition, and the European Nature Photographer of the Year competition. He received the North American Nature Photography Association's Vision Award in 2008 and the Sierra Club's Ansel Adams Award in 2012. His book *Freedom to Roam: Yellowstone to Yukon* received an Independent Publisher Award as one of the "Top Ten Outstanding Books of the Year." His most recent book, *The Wild Edge: Freedom to Roam the Pacific Coast*, documents this ocean-based migration corridor. visionsofthewild.com

DAVE SHREFFLER is a full-time restoration ecologist and part-time professional photographer. He received the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society's 2007 Conservation Award

for his work in salmon habitat restoration. Dave has photographed extensively in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Gates of the Arctic National Park, and the National Petroleum Reserve. His Arctic photos have appeared in: *On Arctic Ground: Tracking Time Through Alaska's National Petroleum Reserve* and *The Quiet World: Saving Alaska's Wilderness Kingdom, 1879-1960*. braidedriver.org/dave-shreffler

GERRIT VYN is a photographer and natural sound recordist whose work often focuses on birds as powerful and visible indicators of environmental health and change. His first book, *The Living Bird*, celebrates one hundred years of research by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Vyn's images have appeared in *National Geographic*, *Audubon*, *Living Bird*, *BBC Wildlife*, *Natural History*, and *National Wildlife*. He has contributed thousands of recordings to Cornell University's Macaulay Library and produced and authored *Voices of North American Owls* and *Bird Songs of the Pacific Northwest*. His audio and video work has been featured on NPR's *Morning Edition*, PRI's *Living on Earth*, *Birdnote*, PBS *NewsHour*, and CBS *Sunday Morning*. gerritvynphoto.com

ART WOLFE has worked on every continent and published more than eighty books. His images interpret and record the world's fast-disappearing wildlife, landscapes, and native cultures and act as a lasting inspiration to those who seek to preserve the very subjects he records. In *Art Wolfe's Travels to the Edge*, a public television series which airs nationally and in over sixty countries, he shares awe-inspiring landscapes and the unique animals and people that inhabit them. *American Photo* named his latest book, *Earth Is My Witness*, the best photo book of the year in 2014. artwolfe.com



BRAIDED RIVER

BRAIDED RIVER®, the conservation imprint of Mountaineers Books, combines photography and writing to bring a fresh perspective to key environmental issues facing western North America's wildest places. Our books reach beyond the printed page as we take these distinctive voices and vision to a wider audience through lectures, exhibits, and multimedia events. Our goal is to build public support for wilderness preservation campaigns and inspire public action. This work is made possible through the book sales and contributions made to Braided River, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Please visit BraidedRiver.org for more information on events, exhibits, speakers, and how to contribute to this work.

Braided River books may be purchased for corporate, educational, or other promotional sales. For special discounts and information, contact our sales department at 800.553.4453 or mbooks@mountaineersbooks.org.

THE MOUNTAINEERS, founded in 1906, is a nonprofit outdoor activity and conservation organization, whose mission is "to explore, study, preserve, and enjoy the natural beauty of the outdoors . . ." Mountaineers Books supports this mission by publishing travel and natural history guides, instructional texts, and works on conservation and history.

Send or call for our catalog of more than 700 outdoor titles:
Mountaineers Books
1001 SW Klickitat Way, Suite 201
Seattle, WA 98134
800.553.4453
www.mountaineersbooks.org

All photographs © by the photographers
All essays © by the contributors

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form, or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Acquisitions and Developmental Editor: Helen Cherullo
Project Manager: Margaret Sullivan
Copy Editor: Kirsten Colton
Cover and Book Design: Jen Grable
Map Art and Design: Rose Michelle Taverniti
Map Relief: Dee Molenaar
Science Review: Stanley Senner, National Audubon Society

Cover photographs, clockwise from top left: *Robert Thompson*, © R Francis Smith; *Jim Campbell*, © Sonya Campion; *Princess Daazhrai Lucaj*, © Ryan Red Corn; *Short-eared owl*, © Paul Bannick; *Rue Mapp* © Micah Baird; *Caribou* © Amy Gulick; *Polar bear*, © Steven Kazlowski; *Kit DesLauriers*, © Jimmy Chin; *Buff-breasted sandpiper* © Subhankar Banerjee

Back cover: *Polar bears on the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge*, © Steven Kazlowski

Manufactured in China on FSC®-certified paper, using soy-based ink.

HELP PROTECT THE ARCTIC

TELL PRESIDENT OBAMA THAT YOU CARE

- Sign the petition. Add your name to the growing list at www.WeAreTheArctic.org.
- Send a postcard. Sign and mail one of the postcards in this book to President Obama. Then ask a friend to do the same.

ASK YOUR FRIENDS TO TELL THE PRESIDENT THAT THEY CARE

- Share links via social media. Head to www.WeAreTheArctic.org for shareable Arctic images.
- Host a video-watching and postcard/letter writing/petition-signing party. Find party-planning advice at www.WeAreTheArctic.org.

ASK YOUR COMMUNITY TO TELL THE PRESIDENT THAT THEY CARE

- Write a letter to the editor of your local paper. Find step-by-step advice at www.WeAreTheArctic.org.
- Do you belong to a recreational club, a church, or other organized group? Ask if you can give a presentation about the Arctic and invite the participants to sign the petition.

READ UP ABOUT THE REFUGE

If you enjoyed this book, be sure to check out these other books about the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge:

- *Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: Seasons of Life and Land* by Subhankar Banerjee
- *Arctic Wings: Birds of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge* edited by Stephen Brown, PhD
- *Midnight Wilderness: Journeys in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge* by Debbie S. Miller

Find them at BraidedRiver.org, or in a bookstore near you.





DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

The Arctic Refuge is one of our nation's most important spiritual and majestic places, with more than 250 bird and animal species, including caribou, musk oxen, wolves, and polar bears, calling it home. Future generations are relying on us to protect this special place. I urge you to do everything in your power to protect the Refuge.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Email _____

A grizzly bear stands on its hind legs, to get a better view across the river, giving the impression of a warm welcome to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge coastal plain. © Florian Schulz

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

Alaska Native communities are fighting for their right to continue a way of life that depends on a healthy Arctic Refuge, and I stand with them. The changing climate is causing communities near the Refuge to lose their ability to hunt for the food that has sustained them for years. We can't risk compounding this problem through drilling or neglect. Please protect America's wild and iconic Arctic Refuge once and for all.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Email _____

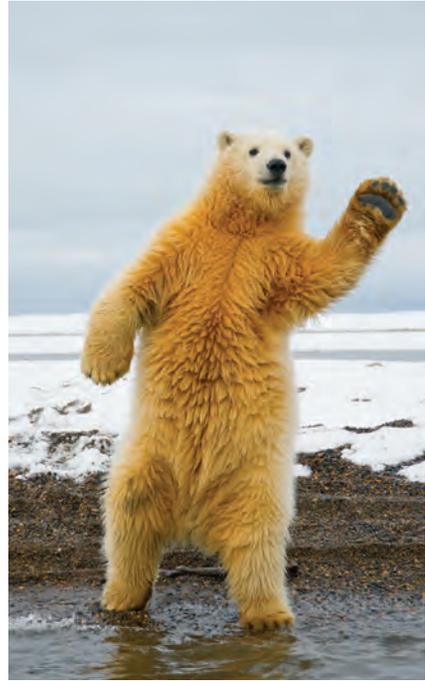
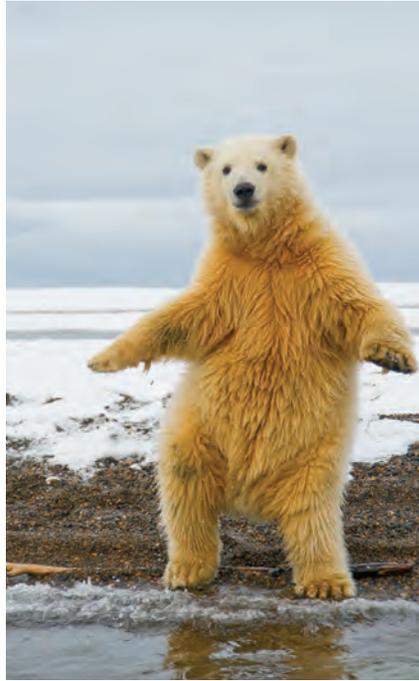
Caribou on the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge © Florian Schulz

POSTAGE
REQUIRED

PRESIDENT OBAMA
c/o Alaska Wilderness League
122 C Street NW, Suite 240
Washington, DC 20001

POSTAGE
REQUIRED

PRESIDENT OBAMA
c/o Alaska Wilderness League
122 C Street NW, Suite 240
Washington, DC 20001



NATURE \$9.95 U.S.

978-1-68051-038-6



50995

9 781680 510386

