



# FIELDREPORT

Alaska Region | Summer 2018



## Pebble ... Again

**T**he Pebble Mine proposal is back. After a controversial legal settlement with the Environmental Protection Agency last spring, the Pebble Partnership has submitted a permit application for the massive mine and accompanying infrastructure in the Bristol Bay area near Lake Clark National Park and Preserve.



In its application, Pebble proposes a port and road in Cook Inlet just north of McNeil River State Game Sanctuary and Refuge. McNeil borders Katmai National Park and is one of the great bear viewing spots in the world. Katmai bears that wander in and out of McNeil could be impacted by the port, road and mining traffic.

Pebble also proposes a 230-megawatt power plant just 15 miles upwind of Lake Clark National Park and Preserve. These projects, combined, threaten the air quality of the area, the integrity of the wildlife habitat and the natural soundscape. The mine could pollute the water table, significantly damage the Bristol Bay fishery and disrupt the subsistence lifestyle of nearby communities. In addition, the mine infrastructure could precipitate the development of an

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**Above:** Pebble Mine Logo by Save Bristol Bay

## The Department of Interior Pushes Park Service to Stop Protecting Bears and Wolves

by Jim Adams

**T**he Department of Interior has ordered the National Park Service (NPS) to reconsider its ban on extreme sport hunting methods on national preserves in Alaska. In 2015, NPS took a stand against extreme sport-hunting tactics like brown bear baiting, killing black bear mothers and cubs in dens, and trapping wolves and pups during denning season. Now, Interior Secretary Zinke has proposed rolling back those protections, effectively endorsing the state of Alaska's larger campaign to reduce bear and wolf populations across much of the state and on many national preserves.

The effort to roll back protections for bears and wolves ignores the years of careful consideration, taxpayer dollars and thousands of people who already spoke up in support of bears and wolves on national parklands in Alaska. NPS held 26 public meetings and allowed 120 days for public comments when it created the 2015 rule. During that time, more than 70,000 Americans supported the NPS proposal to protect bears, cubs, and wolves.

This time, NPS is limiting public comment on its proposal to reverse bear and wolf protections to 60 days and has not scheduled

any public meetings. Please help us tell NPS that protections for bears and wolves must stand.



**Top:** Alaska Peninsula brown bear sow with cubs. Image courtesy of Thomas D. Mangelsen | www.mangelsen.com **Above:** Curious group of gray wolves, Denali National Park ©Jeffrey McGraw | Dreamstime

### TAKE ACTION

Tell NPS that protections for Alaska bears and wolves on national preserves are essential! Submit your comments at <https://bit.ly/2KLhegn>

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## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

by Jim Adams

**O**n May 11th, long-time Alaska NPCA staff member and national parks advocate Joan Frankevich retired. Joan worked to protect Alaska's national parks with this organization for over 20 years. She fiercely advocated for wild, quiet national parks with healthy populations of bears, wolves and other wildlife. She testified in front of the Alaska Board of Game many times, waded through countless park management plans and lengthy Environmental Impact Statements, inspired activists to use their voice to make

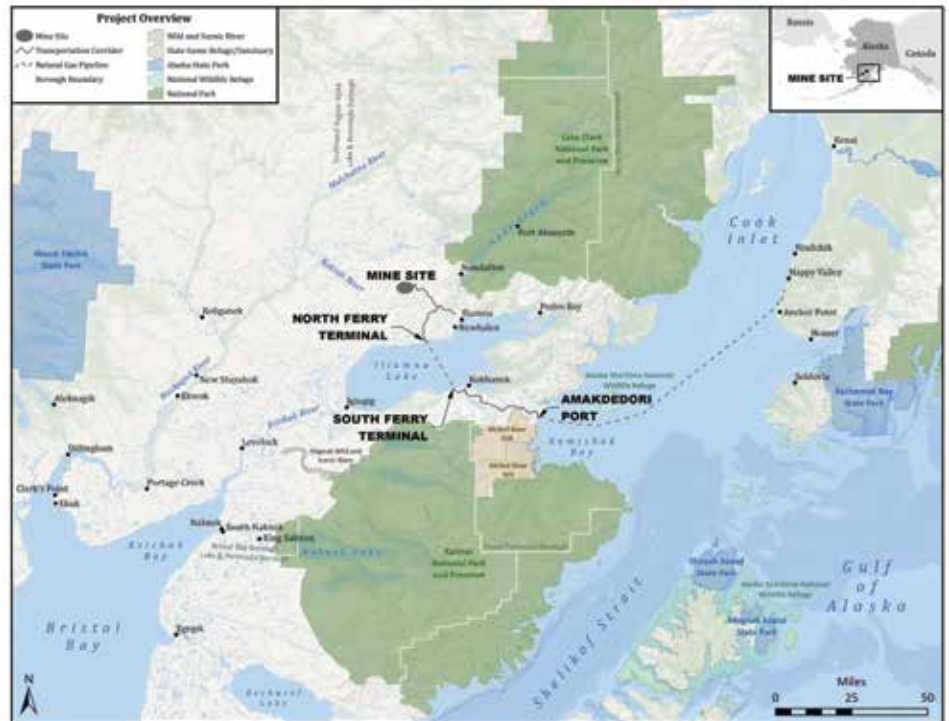


change, and even ran the Alaska office. She was a terrific and cheerful colleague who built lasting bonds with her co-workers.

We know Joan will stay involved with national parks in Alaska. She has taken a job as a guide and will spend the summer introducing visitors to some of the beautiful places—like Kenai Fjords National Park—that she has worked hard to conserve. We are grateful for all her work to protect parks and will dearly miss her.

**Above:** Alaska Region's Joan Frankevich enjoying winter camping in Alaska. Photo Courtesy of Joan Frankevich.

## Pebble ... Again



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industrial mining district throughout the entire region that would threaten Lake Clark's clean water supply and magnify the impacts of the proposed mine.

Pebble's application is being considered by

the Army Corps of Engineers, and the public comment period is open until June 29th. Please help protect Lake Clark and Katmai National Parks' salmon and bears by commenting before the deadline. Visit NPCA's website and search "Pebble Mine" for more information.

**Above:** The Pebble Mine proposal includes a road that cuts between Katmai and Lake Clark National Parks and Preserves. Photo: Public Domain | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

# Working with the Next Generation to Protect National Parks

by Erica Carroll

The Alaska Regional Office has been busy engaging, educating, and empowering youth and young adults to be the next generation of national park advocates.

In March, Field Representative Erica Carroll joined Alaska Youth for Environmental Action during their annual Civics and Conservation Summit in Juneau. Over two dozen high school students from all over the state chose increased protections for wolves near Denali National Park as one of their four focus bills of the week. They learned how to advocate, communicate with lawmakers, and stay informed and involved in local issues. Then they met with legislators to practice their new skills.

The following week, NPCA collaborated with Student Conservation Association (SCA) and the National Park Service (NPS) for NPS Academy Alaska week. Sixteen college

students destined for summer internships in Alaska national parks learned about the history of NPS, Alaska-specific park issues and how to be an effective national park advocate. The group also made a trip into Kenai Fjords National Park. To round out



the week, each student completed a project and presented it to a panel of park professionals, including NPCA's own Jim Adams. The students offered ideas and creative solutions to issues directly impacting parks in Alaska.

In May, NPCA took part in the National Park Youth Fair at Sitka National Historical Park. The fair was focused on building a connection between community youth and the park. Booths and activities were offered by NPCA, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Sitka Sound Science Center, Sitka 4-H, Sitka Conservation Society and NPS.

The Alaska Regional Office will continue to cultivate relationships with communities and youth across the state to further NPCA's mission to protect and enhance America's National Park System for present and future generations. If you have any ideas or questions or would like to become more involved in this effort, please contact Erica Carroll at (907) 444-1137 or at [ecarroll@npca.org](mailto:ecarroll@npca.org).

**Left:** Alaska Region's Field Representative Erica Carroll training with SCA and NPS Staff in Kenai Fjords National Park. Photo Courtesy of Erica Carroll

## Katmai Celebrates 100 Years

by Joan Frankevich

Katmai National Park began with a bang. It was June 6, 1912, when the sky started to fall. For three days the eruption of Novarupta volcano continued. On record as one of the largest volcanic eruptions in history, it released 30 times more magma than Mount Saint Helens and buried the Ukak River valley with ash and pumice up to 700 feet deep. One hundred miles away, the village of Kodiak lived in darkness for days, roofs collapsed under a foot of heavy ash, radio communications failed and water was undrinkable. Happily, there were no fatalities.



A few years later, a National Geographic expedition explored the region, marveling at the newly formed volcanic features and naming the "Valley of Ten Thousand



Smokes" for the many steaming fumaroles created by the still-hot ash. The scientists' reports on the spectacular landscape led to the designation of Katmai National Park in 1918.

Today, Katmai is better known for phenomenal bear viewing at Brooks Falls and along the coast. And although the steaming fumaroles are long gone, the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes remains a wonderland of deep gorges of colored ash and pumice. Katmai also boasts thousands of years of human history, prehistoric artifacts,

and millions of acres of mountains, rivers and coastline.

Events commemorating Katmai's 100th birthday are planned throughout the summer. See the Katmai National Park or Katmai Conservancy websites for details and visit this incredible national park to experience it for yourself.

**Left:** Katmai's centennial logo, with the Valley of 10,000 Smokes behind ©NPS **Above:** Early explorers capture a photo of a steaming crater in Katmai National Park's volcanic history. ©National Geographic Creative | Alamy



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# PROJECT UPDATES

## Ambler Mining Road through Gates of the Arctic

First, a huge thank you! Over 10,000 NPCA members and supporters contacted the National Park Service this winter about the proposed Ambler mining road. The proposed road would negatively impact Gates of the Arctic fish and wildlife, fundamentally change wilderness recreation opportunities, and adversely affect local communities. More than a dozen local villages and subsistence councils near the proposed route have passed resolutions in opposition to the project. Both the National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management are working on plans for separate portions of the road, and your comments will help inform their next steps. We expect the public will be able to review and comment on the draft plans sometime in the next year.

## Sturgeon Lawsuit

In October, 2017, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit again ruled in favor of the National Park Service in a lawsuit challenging NPS authority over rivers and lakes within national parks. A ruling against NPS could have given the state of Alaska the authority to allow placer mining, predator control (on frozen lakes and rivers) and hovercraft use within national parks. The plaintiff John Sturgeon and the state of Alaska have filed a request for review with the Supreme Court, and we await that decision.

## Offshore Oil and Gas Development

Earlier this year, the Department of Interior proposed opening almost all of Alaska's outer continental shelf to oil and gas drilling



as part of a larger proposal to dramatically expand offshore oil and gas development around the country. Alaska has 10 spectacular coastal parks—from Glacier Bay and Kenai Fjords to Cape Krusenstern in the far northwest—that could be jeopardized by offshore oil and gas development. Together, the coastal parks protect amazing scenery, important archeological sites, and essential coastal habitat for seals, salmon, and other coastal fish and wildlife. They also provide plentiful recreation opportunities. Visitors to Alaska's coastal national parks spent \$600 million in Alaska communities in

2016, making the parks an essential part of Alaska's coastal economy.

**Above:** Beautiful Summer day along the coast in Kenai Fjords National Park in Alaska ©Alyssand | Dreamstime.

## Donation Request

As NPCA approaches our fiscal year-end on June 30, please support our increased local and national park protection work with a donation at: [www.npca.org/give](http://www.npca.org/give). Thank you!

