

LOCKED UP!: A HISTORY OF RESISTANCE TO THE CREATION OF
NATIONAL PARKS IN ALASKA

By

TIMO CHRISTOPHER ALLAN

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of
TIMO CHRISTOPHER ALLAN find it satisfactory and recommend that it be
accepted.

Orlan J. Svingen, Ph.D., Chair

John Kicza, Ph.D.

Robert McCoy, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

by Timo Christopher Allan, Ph.D.
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Chair: Orlan J. Svingen

In Alaska few issues inspire as much heated debate as restrictions on the use of public lands. This is particularly true regarding the creation of national parks and their management by the National Park Service. Since Alaska's earliest years as an American possession, the relationship between the federal government and the residents of Alaska has been a contentious one as local people struggled to satisfy their immediate needs and aspirations while politicians and land managers based in Washington, D.C. selected Alaskan lands in the national interest. This study examines the tumultuous history of the creation of national park units in Alaska, focusing on the conflicts triggered by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, the use of the Antiquities Act to create national monuments in 1978, and the creation of eighty million acres of national parklands by the Alaska National Interest Lands Act in 1980. The study brings to the foreground the voices of protestors who attempted to block the creation of national parks in the state and to resist the management of parks by the National Park Service. Whereas most histories of this period focus on the political struggles between conservationists and Alaskan politicians, this study resurrects a largely undocumented chapter in the history of

Alaska's land debate by examining the reactions of Alaskans living near new national parks who launched energetic and sustained protests to protect their way of life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
MAPS.....	x
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1: VOICES FROM THE FRONTIER, 1867-1959.....	9
CHAPTER 2: NATIVE CLAIMS AND ENVIRONMENTALISM, 1959-1971.....	49
CHAPTER 3: D-2 DEBATE AND NATIONAL MONUMENTS, 1971-1978.....	70
CHAPTER 4: URBAN MONUMENT PERIOD PROTESTS, 1978-1980.....	105
CHAPTER 5: RURAL MONUMENT PERIOD PROTESTS, 1978-1980.....	129
CHAPTER 6: ANICLA AND EARLY PARK MANAGEMENT, 1980-1989.....	169
CHAPTER 7: TOURISM AND ALASKA’S NATIONAL PARKS, 1989-2000.....	199
CONCLUSION.....	227
FIGURES	241
BIBLIOGRAPHY	260
APPENDIX A.....	275
APPENDIX B	276

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Great Denali-McKinley Trespass, January 13, 1979. Fairbanks Daily News-Miner Photography Coll., Archives, University of Alaska Fairbanks	241
Figure 2: Paul Revere at Great Denali-McKinley Trespass, January 13, 1979. Fairbanks Daily News-Miner Photography Coll., Archives, University of Alaska Fairbanks	241
Figure 3: Overnighters at Great Denali-McKinley Trespass, January 14, 1979. Fairbanks Daily News-Miner Photography Coll., Archives, University of Alaska Fairbanks	242
Figure 4: Angry residents hold "Cordova Coal Party," May 4, 1911. Alaska State Library, Jack Allman Papers, ASL-MS220-01-03-01	242
Figure 5: Alaska Fever cartoon, June 13, 1978. <i>Fairbanks Daily News-Miner</i>	243
Figure 6: Alaska Fever cartoon, June 24, 1978. <i>Fairbanks Daily News-Miner</i>	243
Figure 7: Alaska Fever cartoon, June 28, 1978. <i>Fairbanks Daily News-Miner</i>	244
Figure 8: Alaska Fever cartoon, July 5, 1978. <i>Fairbanks Daily News-Miner</i>	244
Figure 9: Alaska Fever cartoon, July 6, 1978. <i>Fairbanks Daily News-Miner</i>	245
Figure 10: Antiquities Act protest, Fairbanks, December 6, 1978. Fairbanks Daily News-Miner Photography Coll., Archives, University of Alaska Fairbanks	246
Figure 11: Antiquities Act protest, Fairbanks, December 8, 1978. Fairbanks Daily News-Miner Photography Coll., Archives, University of Alaska Fairbanks	246
Figure 12: Burning President Carter in effigy, Fairbanks, December 11, 1978. Fairbanks Daily News-Miner Photography Coll., Archives, University of Alaska Fairbanks	247
Figure 13: Antiquities Act protest, Fairbanks, December 12, 1978. Fairbanks Daily News-Miner Photography Coll., Archives, University of Alaska Fairbanks	247
Figure 14: Antiquities Act protest, Fairbanks, December 12, 1978. Fairbanks Daily News-Miner Photography Coll., Archives, University of Alaska Fairbanks	248
Figure 15: Antiquities Act protest, Fairbanks, December 12, 1978. Fairbanks Daily News-Miner Photography Coll., Archives, University of Alaska Fairbanks	248
Figure 16: Advertisement for protest march, December 15, 1978. <i>Fairbanks Daily News-Miner</i>	249
Figure 17: Advertisement for retail strike, January 11, 1979. <i>Fairbanks Daily News-Miner</i>	249

Figure 18: Mike Hartman during hunger strike, Fairbanks, January 16, 1978. Fairbanks Daily News-Miner Photography Coll., Archives, University of Alaska Fairbanks.....	250
Figure 19: Eagle Action Together protest T-shirt, circa 1979. National Park Service, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, Archives, Fairbanks, Alaska.....	251
Figure 20: Protest sign, Eagle, circa 1979. Courtesy of Pat Sanders	252
Figure 21: Protest sign, Eagle, circa 1979. Courtesy of Pat Sanders	252
Figure 22: Protest sign, Eagle, circa 1979. Courtesy of Pat Sanders	253
Figure 23: Protest sign, Eagle, circa 1979. Courtesy of Pat Sanders	253
Figure 24: Protest sign, Eagle, circa 1979. Courtesy of Pat Sanders	254
Figure 25: Protest sign, Eagle, circa 1979. Courtesy of Pat Sanders	254
Figure 26: Protest sign, Eagle, circa 1979. Courtesy of Pat Sanders	255
Figure 27: Protest sign, Eagle, circa 1979. Courtesy of Pat Sanders	255
Figure 28: "Acceptable Monuments," Eagle, circa 1979. Courtesy of Pat Sanders	256
Figure 29: Alaska Fever cartoon, September 19, 1979. <i>Fairbanks Daily News-Miner</i>	256
Figure 30: Alaska Fever cartoon, January 31, 1980. <i>Fairbanks Daily News-Miner</i>	257
Figure 31: Alaskan Alpine Club erects protest sign, January 12, 1980. Courtesy of the Alaska Alpine Club, University of Alaska Fairbanks.....	257
Figure 32: President Carter signs ANILCA, December 2, 1980. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, National Digital Library, PH-ANILCA-01	258
Figure 33: Joe Vogler's bulldozer in trespass, August 1984. National Park Service, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, Archives, Fairbanks, Alaska.....	258
Figure 34: Joe Vogler's Delta 3 transporter in trespass, August 1984. National Park Service, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, Archives, Fairbanks, Alaska.....	259
Figure 35: Slana Alaskans Unite call for renewed support, April 7, 1994. <i>Copper River Country Journal</i>	259

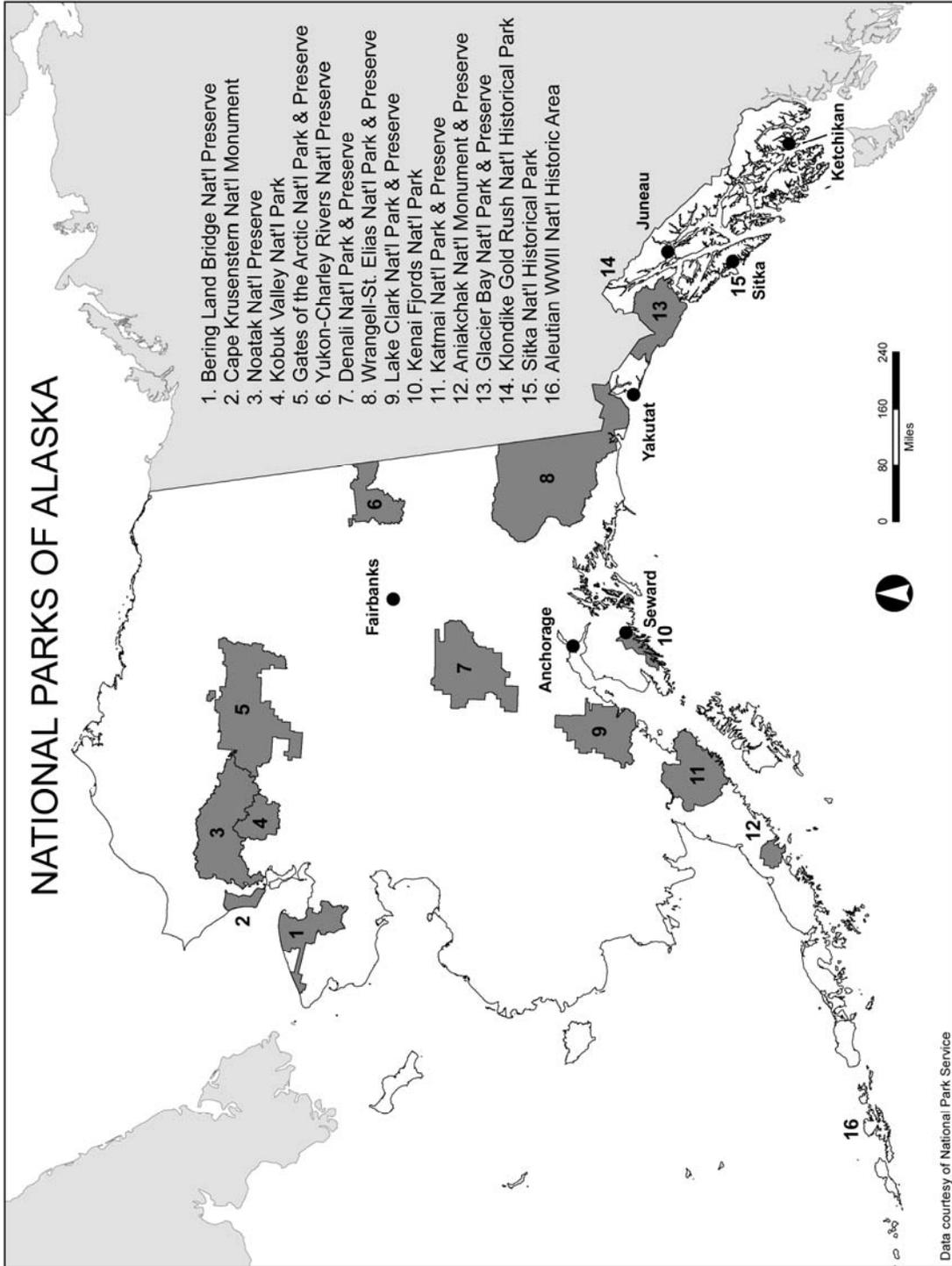
A NOTE ON USAGE

The terms used to describe the movement to protect the natural world have changed over time. Gifford Pinchot, for example, called his philosophy of saving the nation's natural resources for future use "conservation" (and its advocates became known as "conservationists"). Pinchot frequently disagreed with the naturalist John Muir, who became known as a "preservationist" because he advocated protecting extraordinary wild areas for their own sake. During the 1960s, activists concerned with the health of entire ecosystems rather than with protection of a single animal species or a single patch of forest were dubbed "environmentalists" for their more holistic perspective. In this study all three terms appear, usually within their respective historical contexts. However, the terms are at times used interchangeably in common speech, and therefore, they appear in the text and in quoted material as roughly synonymous.

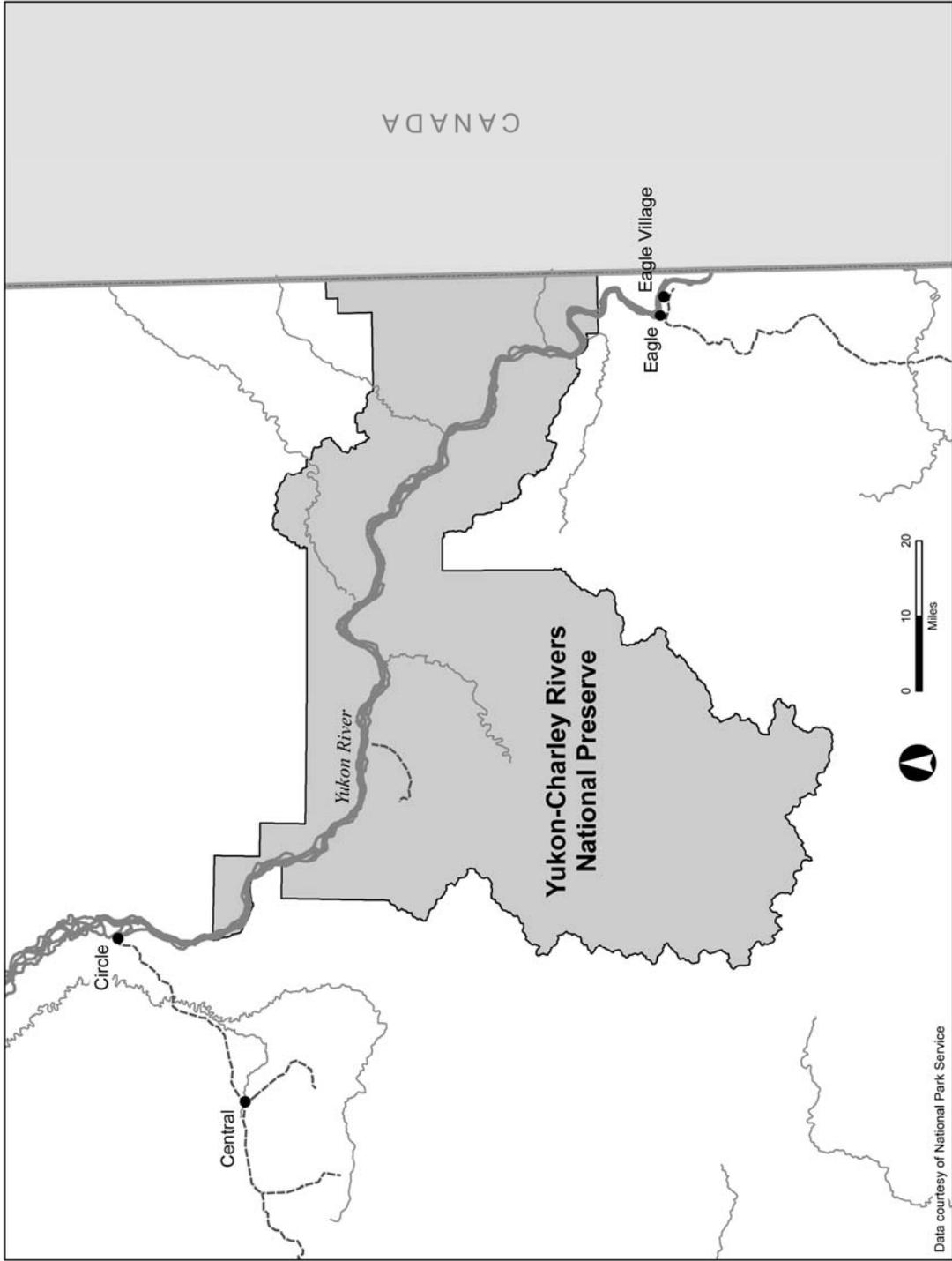
The indigenous inhabitants of Alaska are collectively known as Alaska Natives because the region includes Eskimos, Aleuts, Athabascans, and Tlingit and Haida Indians. By contrast, a non-indigenous person born in Alaska is a native Alaskan. The terms American Indian and Native American are not commonly used in the state.

The National Park Service in Alaska manages national parks and national preserves, as well as other management designations like national historical parks and national monuments. In Alaska, national preserves differ from national parks only in that sport hunting and trapping are allowed on preserve lands. In this study, the term "park" is often used to refer to any conservation unit under National Park Service management.

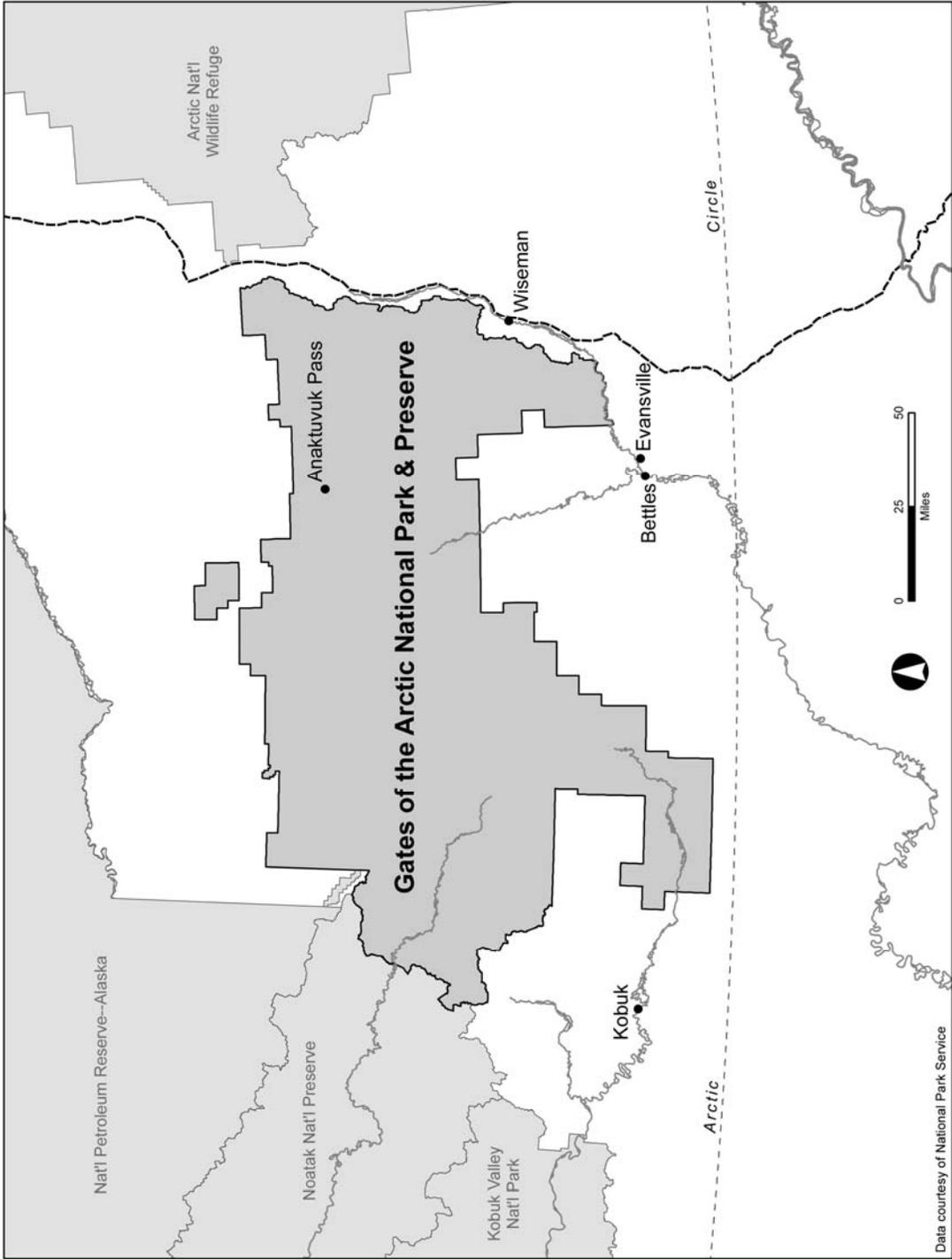
MAPS



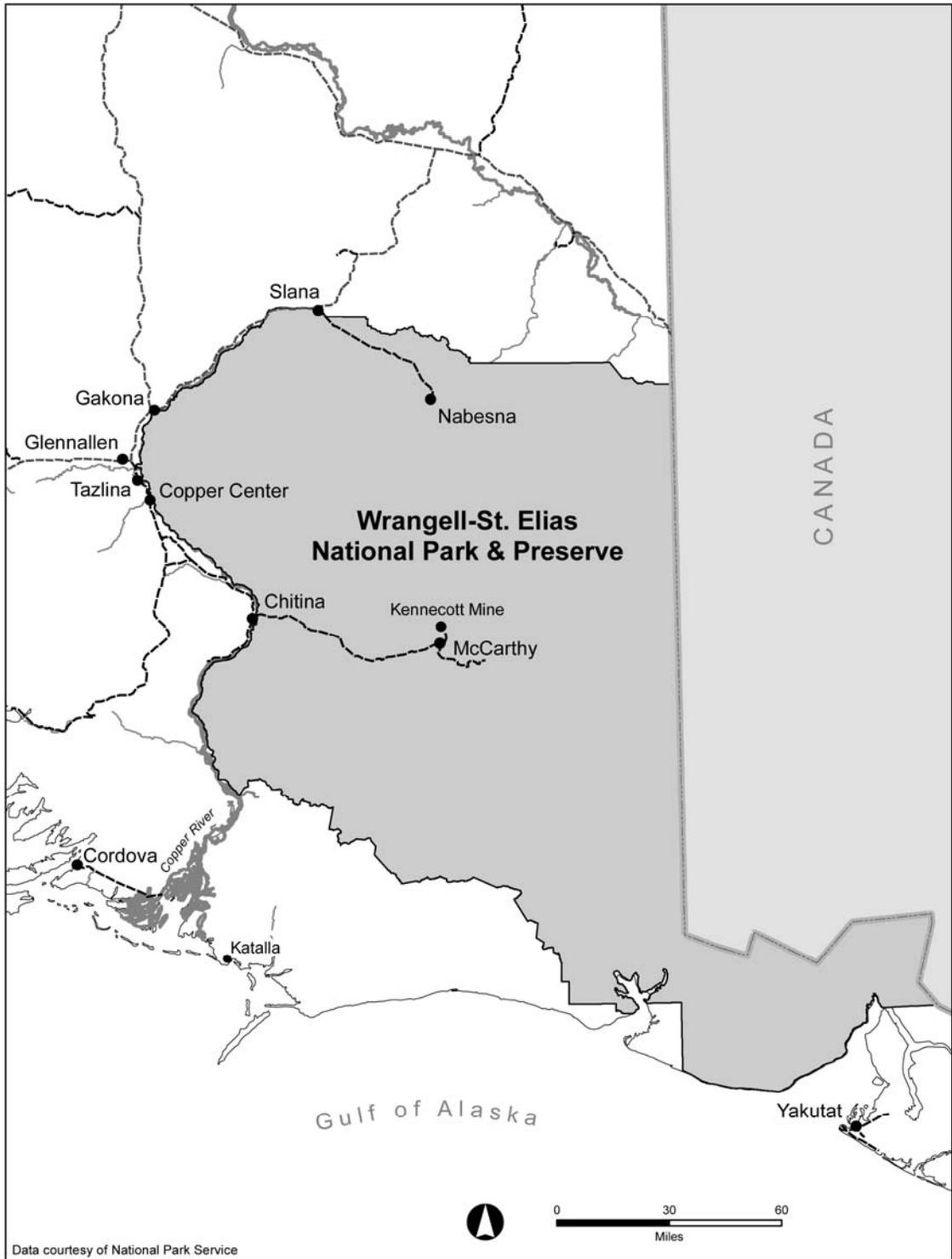
Map 1: National parks of Alaska



Map 2: Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve



Map 3: Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve



Map 4: Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

INTRODUCTION

On January 13, 1979, a fleet of cars, busses, RV campers, and private planes arrived in the tiny Alaskan community of Cantwell (population 85) just outside the recently expanded boundaries of Mt. McKinley National Park. Newspaper reports described between two and three thousand Alaska residents staging a two-day demonstration to vent their anger over President Jimmy Carter's use of the Antiquities Act of 1906 to create seventeen national monuments throughout the state, amounting to fifty-six million acres of protected public lands. After skiing, snowshoeing, and driving snowmobiles into Mt. McKinley's new monument lands, the gathering throng built bonfires while protest leaders, using a megaphone, declared that National Park Service regulations were so onerous as to be at odds with the promises of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.¹ Demonstrators took turns waving a "Don't Tread on Me" flag; a man in a Plains Indian headdress climbed onto a soapbox to denounce the president and Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus; and a rider on horseback, acting the part of Paul Revere, galloped past the crowd yelling, "The Feds are coming! The Feds are coming!" (and alternately, "The turncoats are coming!"). Meanwhile, men with black powder rifles engaged in a "turkey shoot," using as a target a large and unflattering silhouette of King George III painted on a sheet of plywood. Below the king's feet the target read, "Carter?"²

¹ "Alaskans Protest Public-Land Action," *New York Times*, January 15, 1979, 8; Tom Snapp, "Reminiscent of Pre-Revolutionary War Days 2,500 Alaskans Trespass in Denali Monument," *Pioneer All-Alaska Weekly*, January 19, 1979, 1.

² "Alaskans Protest Public-Land Action," *New York Times*, January 15, 1979, 8.

By carrying loaded firearms, shooting ptarmigan, driving snowmobiles, building campfires, unleashing their dogs, and conducting a brief (and unsuccessful) wolf hunt, the protestors intentionally violated as many National Park Service rules as they could—while daring park rangers to arrest them. Ten rangers from national parks in the Pacific Northwest had been sent to augment the small Mt. McKinley National Park staff during this organized law-breaking, but because park officials hoped to avoid negative press, the rangers simply observed from a distance while a news helicopter circled overhead. As the protestors stood around their bonfires, a hunting guide named Clark Engle—sporting a tinfoil star on his hat and “Monumental Ranger” written across his back—ambled through the crowd passing out phony arrest warrants for a dollar donation. The warrants read, “The honorable Secy. Andrus and President Carter want to protect this land from the honest, hard-working Alaskan people who are leading productive lives and respecting their wilderness areas.”³ As night approached, many of the demonstrators decided their work was done and returned to their vehicles in Cantwell, but a determined minority cooked meals over open fires and prepared to spend a chilly night tent-camping in the snow. The event, which played out as part family outing and part revolutionary rally, was declared a success by its organizers, the Real Alaska Coalition and the less well known Cantwell-based F.O.R.C.E. or Federally Oppressed Rural Citizens for Emancipation [Figures 1-3].⁴

³ Sue Lewis, “Cantwell Digs in for Trespass Protest,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 13, 1979, 1.

⁴ Sue Lewis, “Protestors Pick Jan. 13 for the Great Trespass,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 3, 1979, 1; Tom Snapp, “Amid More Wilderness Proposals . . . Alaskans Prepare for Massive Demonstrations Next Week,” *Pioneer All-Alaska Weekly*, January 5, 1979, 3; Sue Lewis, “Mission Accomplished, Say Trespassers,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 15, 1979, 1; Ken Fanning, “Great Denali-McKinley Trespass,

This backcountry gathering, known thereafter as the Great Denali-McKinley Trespass, was just one of many acts of defiance and demonstrations of anger taking place in Alaska during the 1970s and 1980s in reaction to the creation of federal conservation units in the state. What follows is a study of this Alaska-wide rebellion and an examination of the historical origins of the highly emotional debate over national parks and use of public lands that remains an open wound in Alaska's civic life. The protests described in this study were local Alaskan responses to a cascade of federal land-use legislation and executive actions that began with the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), which set in motion a highly contested search for potential conservation units. The push for federal land withdrawals continued with President Carter's decision in 1978 to create an unprecedented number of national monuments and ended with the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). This last piece of legislation angered many Alaskans because it transformed the president's national monuments into nearly eighty million acres of national parks and preserves, national forests, national wildlife refuges, and wild and scenic rivers.⁵ It was celebrated

An Unqualified Success [editorial],” *Pioneer All-Alaska Weekly*, January 19, 1979, 4. Note: The “Real Alaska Coalition” adopted this name in reaction to the umbrella group of local and national conservationist groups who called themselves the “Alaska Coalition.”

⁵ ANILCA created or expanded Denali National Park, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, Kobuk Valley National Park, Katmai National Park and Preserve, Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, Kenai Fjords National Park, Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, Cape Krusenstern National Monument, Admiralty Island National Monument, Misty Fjords National Monument, Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve, Bering Land Bridge National Preserve, Noatak National Preserve, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge, and made significant changes to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

by environmentalists as the most important conservation effort in American history, but it was a debilitating defeat for many Alaskans who nurtured a dramatically different vision of what Alaska should be and how its future should unfold. Because anti-park protests were widespread, this study focuses attention on three park units—Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve—and the communities surrounding those parks that frequently became hotbeds of local protest and headquarters for local anti-park organizations [Maps 1-4].

While attempting to explain why the National Park Service became the focus of so much anger and distrust, this study takes a two-fold approach. First, it restores a lost chapter in Alaska history by recording the voices of the Alaska residents who opposed the park idea. It focuses on protestors who attempted to block the creation of national parks by launching letter-writing campaigns, picketing in the bitter cold, violating park regulations, vandalizing government property, and making life unpleasant for National Park Service employees. By reexamining the history of park-creation in Alaska from the perspective of park opponents, the traditional protagonists—politicians, national park officials, and spokesmen for conservation groups—begin to take a step back, allowing local actors to seize the fore for the first time. Second, this study applies theoretical frameworks developed by two historians of the North—Canada’s Kenneth Coates and Alaska’s Stephen Haycox—in an attempt to place Alaska’s anti-park protests in a broader context of Northern history. Although the North has long existed as a “conceptual wasteland” where romanticized and mythologized explanations of Northern history

dominate, these two historians advance important theories that help to explain much, but not all, of the history of anti-park protests in Alaska.

During the 1970s, when the push to create an unprecedented number of new parks in Alaska gained momentum, opinions about the significance of public lands in the state and of Alaska as a whole became polarized as never before. On the side advocating more federally selected conservation units were national conservationist organizations such as the Sierra Club and The Wilderness Society, a generation of environmentally-minded Americans, congressmen and high-ranking public officials responding to their demands, and a president elected in 1976 who pledged to preserve the wilderness lands he called “this country’s crown jewels.”⁶ For this group, Alaska had come to represent not a “last frontier” offering up its resources for rapid exploitation but a “last wilderness” where the mistakes of the past could be remedied by protecting some of the last remaining large tracts of wild lands in America for future generations.⁷

The opposition was made up of a broad range of Alaskans, each with nuanced reasons for why national parks and other federal conservation units were a bad idea. This group included gold miners, homesteaders, mountain climbers, hunting guides, and loggers. It included urban businesspeople and rural back-to-the-landers, fur trappers and local politicians, staunch patriots and libertarians with secessionist leanings. From the beginning, Alaska’s congressional delegation was also determined to retain state control

⁶ Julius Duscha, “How the Alaska Act Was Won,” *Living Wilderness* (Spring 1981), 4.

⁷ Roderick Nash, “Tourism, Parks and the Wilderness Idea in the History of Alaska,” *Alaska in Perspective* 4 (1981): 1; Stephen Haycox, *Frigid Embrace: Politics, Economics, and the Environment in Alaska* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2002), 1.

of Alaska's public lands and to resist federal authority for as long as possible. Alaska's indigenous peoples—the Eskimos, Aleuts, Athabascans, and Tlingit and Haida Indians—were frequently divided on the issue of federal land withdrawals. While Alaska Natives in rural villages tended to favor the national parks they hoped would protect their hunting and fishing rights, many of the new Alaska Native political leaders sided with the park opponents, hopeful that future development in the state would benefit Native people economically. This widely disparate group of park opponents banded together because its component groups felt threatened by outside forces and because their plans for Alaska did not include public lands “locked up” as national parks or other conservation units.

The rhetoric of the anti-park protestors was most often an economic argument. Many Alaskans argued that federal withdrawal of land for conservation units interfered with the state's ability to grow and the ability of individual residents to make a living from the land. At times their argument was a call for greater political autonomy or states' rights, but inevitably it was made with a mind to pursuing economic goals based largely on exploiting natural resources. The anti-park argument also took the form of a case for Alaskan exceptionalism, suggesting that because of Alaska's distance from the seat of national government and because of its extreme climate and geography, only Alaskans were capable of properly managing the state's resources. Some Alaskans, however, argued against national parks not because of any measurable negative effects parks might bring but because the existence of parks and the presence of federal employees in their communities undermined the sort of life residents envisioned for themselves. These mostly rural residents argued that Alaska offered a last refuge from meddling bureaucrats and environmental activists, a place where adventurous and independent-minded

Americans could reinvent themselves and recapture a pioneering existence unavailable elsewhere in the country. According to these protestors, Alaska nurtured individualism, self-reliance, and a simpler existence far from the crowded cities and suburbs of the Lower 48 states, and they called not for rapid development of Alaska's natural resources but for a promise that their lives and their surroundings would remain unchanged.

In order to appreciate fully the ideological and emotional stands that park protestors took in the 1970s and 1980s, it is necessary to examine the historical tradition of anti-federal sentiment in Alaska that dates back to its earliest days as an American possession, when residents lived under military jurisdiction and aspired to territorial status and to statehood. The troubled relationship between the federal government and the first American citizens to settle in Alaska grew even more complex during the Progressive era when new policies aimed at conservation of natural resources reached Alaskan shores. After Alaska became a territory in 1912 and began pushing for statehood, the tension between residents and outsiders interested in Alaska lands grew as Alaska's first national parks and other conservation units were created. Many pioneering Alaskans believed that achieving statehood was the only way to hold the power of the federal government at bay and to fulfill their dreams of rapid economic development. Beginning in the 1960s, these white Alaskans grew increasingly disillusioned as the promise of statehood gave way to demands from Alaska Natives and conservation-minded Americans who wanted their share of Alaska's public lands. Along the way, the idea that Alaska was for Alaskans alone and that it should not be limited by federal land withdrawals became increasingly entrenched. Establishing the historical context for anti-park protests helps to explain how the state's national parks and their National Park

Service guardians became a lightning rod for anxieties deeply rooted within a century and a half of Alaskan history.

CHAPTER 1

VOICES FROM THE FRONTIER, 1867-1959

The preservation of Alaskan fauna on the public domain should not be left unreservedly to the people of Alaska, because, as sure as shooting, they will not preserve it!

—William Hornaday, Boone and Crockett Club, 1913

The story of land in Alaska is one of contrast between natural plenty and man-made restriction. It is the tale of continuous effort by Americans there to secure a small share of this abundant ground.

—Alaska Territorial Governor Ernest Gruening, 1954

The relationship between Alaska residents and the federal government has long been marred by animosity and distrust. Since 1867, when the United States purchased Alaska from the Russian Empire, Alaskans have alternately pleaded for more federal largesse and then condemned government officials as neglectful or abusive overlords. They have complained of having too little self-government and too much outside interference. They have claimed that state sovereignty should be equal to federal authority, and they have employed the rhetoric of revolution and threats of secession. The federal government, however, has not always been the sole cause of Alaskan frustration and anger—at times Alaskans viewed outside business interests as the enemy. Ultimately, however, the federal government has born the brunt of criticism emanating from its northernmost outpost. The most common charge leveled by Alaskans at their government is that access to the region's natural resources is too limited and that federal ownership of vast swaths of Alaska inhibits progress and undermines the welfare of average Alaskans. This persistent resentment of federal authority and of land-use restrictions is never more evident than when Alaskans talk about land that has been “locked up” by the National Park Service in the form of parks and preserves.

To understand why many Alaskans—like those who gathered for the Great Denali-McKinley Trespass—so zealously opposed the creation of national parks in their state, it is important to understand something about Alaska’s early history as an American possession. In the years immediately following Alaska’s purchase by the United States in 1867, the former Russian-American capital of Sitka was overrun by American fortune hunters, missionaries, prostitutes, soldiers and petty entrepreneurs, most of whom envisioned a prosperous city emerging from the rain and fog that so often envelops Alaska’s southeastern panhandle. Their ambitions were soon frustrated because as the Russians abandoned Alaska, commerce in the former colonial capital began to decline. When the Americans who had purchased property in Sitka began to search for the cause of their misfortunes, they blamed the damp climate, the local Tlingit Indians, and competition from the Hudson’s Bay Company as its traders pushed westward. As historian Ted Hinkley points out, however, “the primary target of the settlers’ fulminations and complaints was, first and always, the United States government.”¹

These fledgling Alaskans complained that they had no regular mail service, no means of obtaining legal title to land, and no lighthouses to make Alaska’s treacherous waterways safer. Without a system of laws to protect their business interests, the town’s entrepreneurs felt sure that their enterprises would fail. Initially, the U.S. Army administered the newly acquired region, but the presence of approximately two hundred troops did nothing to encourage local businesses or regional industries such as mining, fishing, or timber production. The soldiers had even been authorized to remove settlers

¹ Ted C. Hinkley, *The Americanization of Alaska, 1867-1897* (Palo Alto: Pacific Books, 1972), 48-49. See also, Ted C. Hinkley, “The United States Frontier at Sitka, 1867-1873,” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 60 (April 1969): 57-68.

who had tried to lay claim to lots in the vicinity of Sitka before such claims were legalized.² Although from the beginning some residents spoke of statehood, Alaskans would wait four decades for even territorial status, and, meanwhile, the district under military rule had no Organic Act to establish the rule of law, no governor, and no representation in the nation's capital. The men and women who journeyed north after 1867 imagined themselves in the vanguard of a vast, new frontier, and like later Alaskans their credo was simple: economic development. Echoing this local sentiment, the editor of the first issue of Alaska's first newspaper, the *Sitka Times*, condemned military rule of Alaska and wrote that once Alaska had a civil government and federal support, the nation could "expect to hear of rich minerals having been fully developed by our latent industry but not before."³ This was the first chapter in a long history of residents blaming the federal government for placing limits on economic development and for failing to act more speedily in Alaska's interests.

The first historians to document Alaska's Russian and American periods—Jeannette Nichols and Hubert Bancroft—were instrumental in articulating and advertising this view of Alaska's early history and in so doing nurtured what has become known as the "neglect thesis" of Alaska history.⁴ This doctrine holds that Alaska's white settlers

² Hinkley notes that during the fall of 1867 eager promoters "squatted over the whole vicinity of Sitka—preempted the Governor's house, and one godless individual even recorded a claim for the church and church lands!" Hinkley, *Americanization*, 34. See also, Stephen Haycox, *Alaska: An American Colony* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 175.

³ "Introductory," *Sitka Times*, September 19, 1868, 2.

⁴ See, Bancroft's *History of Alaska, 1730-1885* (1886; reprint, New York: Antiquarian Press, 1960), and Nichols' *Alaska: A History of Its Administration, Exploitation, and Industrial Development during Its First Half Century under the Rule of the United States* (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1924).

are a proud and independent people who have never gotten a fair shake from their government. Furthermore, it asserts that the federal government has denied residents control over public lands and has supported corporate investors from outside Alaska who siphon away the region's natural wealth. The doctrine also insists that by delaying self-government in Alaska the federal government has treated its residents as second-class citizens. The result, many argue, is that Alaska has long functioned as a colony of corporate investors and federal managers.⁵ Perhaps the greatest promoter of the neglect thesis was politician and self-trained historian Ernest Gruening, Alaska's territorial governor from 1939 to 1953, who in 1954 articulated his views in a book he called, a bit prematurely, *The State of Alaska*. After making the case that Alaska had long been a victim of neglect and obstructionist legislation, Gruening wrote,

The story of land in Alaska is one of contrast between natural plenty and man-made restriction. It is the tale of continuous effort by Americans there to secure a small share of this abundant ground. It is, no less, a necrology of their legitimate and age-old aspirations through the thwarting by a distant government.⁶

Although the book was more propaganda than reliable history, Gruening's leadership and the popularity of the neglect thesis in Alaska played an essential role in shaping Alaskans' understanding of their history and their concept of themselves.

In the past forty years, the historians Theodore Hinkley, Stephen Haycox, and Claus-M. Naske have advanced a more balanced view that examines the region's marginal economic conditions and points to numerous cases in which the federal government attempted to aid Alaskan prosperity. These revisionists argue that it is

⁵ Terrence Cole, "The History of a History: The Making of Jeannette Paddock Nichols's *Alaska*," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 77 (October 1986): 130-138; Haycox, *American Colony*, 168.

⁶ Ernest Gruening, *The State of Alaska* (New York: Random House, 1954), 323.

understandable that the U.S. Congress adopted a wait-and-see approach to its new northern lands and determined that territorial status must wait until the region had proven its economic viability.⁷ They suggest that at a time when the United States was still recovering from the devastation of the Civil War, the federal government could hardly be expected to pay much attention to such a distant and unknown corner of the American continent. After all, Alaska's loggers could not compete with the upper Midwestern and Pacific Northwest timber industries, which were much closer to markets. The canned salmon industry had not yet been developed. Gold in profitable amounts had not yet been discovered, and the one profitable industry in the region, the fur trade, was dominated by the Alaska Commercial Company, which opposed territorial status because the fur business thrived on vacant land unhindered by legal restrictions.⁸ The revisionists conclude that Alaska's woes were not the result of federal neglect—the real problem was its sparse population and the lack of a sustainable economic base. In addition, Haycox points out that government subsidies and spending in Alaska have played a fundamental role in Alaska's development and that Alaskans frequently “embrace an imagined history,” erroneously asserting that they are more self-reliant, more individualist, and more committed to their personal freedom than Americans elsewhere. This version of

⁷ See, Hinckley, “Frontier at Sitka,” 57-68; Claus-M. Naske, “Governor Ernest Gruening, the Federal Government, and the Economic Development of Territorial Alaska,” *Pacific Historian* 28 (1984): 5-16; Claus-M. Naske, “Some Attention, Little Action: Vacillating Federal Efforts to Provide Territorial Alaska with an Economic Base,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 26 (Spring 1995): 37-68; Stephen Haycox, “Owning It All in Alaska: The Political Power of a Rhetorical Paradigm,” in *Land in the American West: Private Claims and the Common Good*, eds. William G. Robbins and James C. Foster (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 164-189.

⁸ Morgan Sherwood, *Exploration of Alaska* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), 45; Haycox, *American Colony*, 177.

Alaska history, Haycox asserts, promotes a misinterpretation of the history of public lands and of the federal-state relationship, both of which play a central role in Alaska's past and in its economic present.⁹

In order to understand recent Alaskan attitudes toward national parks, it is important to understand that in the nineteenth century both outsiders and pioneering settlers viewed Alaska as a vast and inexhaustible storehouse of natural resources. People did not migrate to Alaska for “the spiritual qualities of broad landscapes,” as Haycox explains, they came for economic opportunity. Although some Alaska residents managed to earn a modest living from the land, distance, extreme weather, and high costs made life difficult for most. The region proved more profitable for absentee investors in gold mining, the pelagic fur seal harvest, and the salmon canneries along Alaska's southern coast. While the profits from these industries could be enormous, they were often short-lived. Environmental historian Ken Ross argues that in Alaska physical and psychological separation from centers of civilization “made rational resource management difficult and encouraged destructive behavior.”¹⁰ In the rush to repeat the pattern of conquest of the American West, Ross observes, the newly arrived Americans ignored any lessons they might have learned from Russian or Alaska Native conservation efforts. In one industry after another, unexamined, frontier practices threatened wildlife stocks and the Native people who relied on them for subsistence and as a way to participate in the cash economy.

⁹ Haycox, *American Colony*, 162-164. See also, Susan Kollin, *Nature's State: Imagining Alaska as the Last Frontier* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

¹⁰ Ken Ross, *Pioneering Conservation in Alaska* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2006), 1.

For example, when the United States acquired Alaska, the Pacific sea-otter had already been exhausted by the Russians and their Aleut hunters. Russian attempts to conserve the stocks of fur seals in the Pribilof Islands, however, meant that the fur seal rookeries offered the new American owners the opportunity for considerable profits. The Alaska Commercial Company, which was awarded a monopoly on the fur seal harvest from the United States government, was authorized to harvest 100,000 seals annually, and over the next two decades American harvest practices and poaching by foreign ships on the open ocean forced the fur-seal population into steep decline.¹¹ A similar pattern emerged between the 1860s and the 1890s as Yankee whaling ships entered the Bering Sea and the Arctic Ocean in pursuit of bowhead whales. Armed with harpoon guns, whaling crews harvested whales in ever larger numbers until their prey was nearly extinct. Like the whales, the easily accessible gold in Alaska was also soon exhausted, but not before the miners depleted entire forests for fuel and building material and permanently altered the landscape. During the twentieth century, fish traps at the mouths of major spawning streams threatened to extinguish the Pacific Ocean's most prosperous salmon stocks. Over time, Alaskans became accustomed to a boom and bust economy that used up the same natural resources that many insisted were inexhaustible.¹²

One visitor who came to Alaska for the spiritual qualities of broad landscapes was the naturalist John Muir, the father of the aesthetic or spiritual movement in American environmentalism. When he made his first journey north in 1879, Muir was already an

¹¹ Ross, *Pioneering Conservation*, 32-39.

¹² Ross, *Pioneering Conservation*, 16-24; James W. Vanstone, "Commercial Whaling in the Arctic Ocean," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 49 (January 1958): 1-10; Haycox, *American Colony*, 240-243. See also, Morgan Sherwood, *Big Game in Alaska: A History of Wildlife and People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

advocate for wilderness parks, an accomplished author, and the founder of the Sierra Club—a small group of California naturalists whose organization would eventually grow to national importance. Once he reached what he described as the “untamed, untouched solitude of the wild free bosom of Alaska,” Muir became hopelessly taken with the glacial geology and rain-forest beauty of southeastern Alaska. He declared, “To the lover of pure wildness Alaska is one of the most wonderful countries in the world.”¹³ Over a period of twenty years Muir made six trips to Alaska, but his early visits, which included long voyages in Tlingit canoes and a journey into Glacier Bay, were his most memorable.

In a series of articles about his adventures and in his book *Travels in Alaska*, Muir echoed the Transcendentalist nature worship of Emerson and Thoreau, describing this northern land as the epitome of nature’s perfection. “Day after day,” he wrote in his journal, “we seemed to sail in true fairyland, every view of island and mountains seeming ever more and more beautiful; the one we chanced to have before us seeming the loveliest, the most surpassingly beautiful of all.”¹⁴ Although Muir did not oppose the settlement or gradual development of Alaska’s natural resources, he was the first to regard Alaska’s wilderness as its greatest resource and value to humanity. Eager to discover for themselves the wonders Muir described, tourists during the early 1880s began crowding the decks of steamships passing through southeastern Alaska’s Alexander Archipelago. In this way, Muir became Alaska’s first tourism advocate and environmental preservationist.

¹³ John Muir, *Travels in Alaska* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1915), 207-208; Nash, “Wilderness Idea,” 1, 4.

¹⁴ John Muir, *John of the Mountains: The Unpublished Journals of John Muir*, ed. Linnie M. Wolfe (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), 248-249.

Muir also witnessed one of the most dramatic and transformative events in the history of the region—the Klondike gold rush. Between 1897 and 1900, tens of thousands of men and women stampeded into the Canadian Yukon and Alaska with dreams of overnight riches. Perhaps because of the size of Alaska, Muir seemed unconvinced that thousands of gold seekers would have much effect on the North. He stated that the gold rush was a better way to pass one’s time than “rotting in cities” and that at least the stampedeers were able to experience the northern wilderness.¹⁵ However, the hordes of gold-seekers did alter the natural environment wherever they went, and by 1910, energetic miners had spread across the midsection of Alaska, digging, building, and hunting the wildlife they needed to supplement their provisions. Wherever gold mining was profitable, miners used a variety of technologies—including hydraulic mining, drift mining, and gold dredges—that changed the flow of rivers and streams and systematically created what one historian called “a world turned upside down.”¹⁶ Miners also brought European diseases to indigenous groups in Alaska’s most isolated areas, and they competed with Native groups by usurping indigenous trade routes and establishing a cash economy in areas where traditional subsistence harvests had been the norm.¹⁷

With the gold rush, Alaska experienced an influx of more than 30,000 people, and the 1900 census showed a total population of over 63,000 whites and Alaska Natives.

¹⁵ Bruce Merrell, “‘A Wild, Discouraging Mess’: John Muir Reports on the Klondike Gold Rush,” *Alaska History* (Fall 1992): 33.

¹⁶ See, Doug Beckstead, “A World Turned Upside Down: A History of Mining on Coal Creek and Woodchopper Creek, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, Alaska” (Fairbanks: National Park Service, 2003).

¹⁷ Kathryn Morse, *The Nature of Gold: An Environmental History of the Klondike Gold Rush* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 67-69.

This demographic boom made Alaska's form of government and resource development in the region more important to Congress and the American public. Soon Congress appropriated money for the U.S. Geological Survey to begin work on a region-wide mineral survey and extended the coal-mining laws of the United States to the district. The U.S. Army built forts at Eagle, Nome, Haines, and at Tanana near the confluence of the Yukon and Tanana rivers, and the Department of Agriculture received money to examine the possibility of large-scale farming in Alaska. In 1900, Congress revised the civil code for Alaska, added two new judicial districts, and gave residents their first taste of self-government when it authorized the incorporation of towns. During the next twenty years, Eagle, Fairbanks, and Nome became thriving pioneer towns with their own municipal services and tax structure.¹⁸

The gold rush changed daily life in Alaska, to be sure, but more significant was the way that gold rush literature changed the world's perception of Alaska. Writers such as Jack London and Rex Beach elevated the gold rush to mythical status, and they popularized Alaska as a land of glory and quick fortune where bold men (and a few enterprising women) could forge a new life out of a rugged wilderness. London visited the Klondike in 1896, but he soon returned to California after contracting scurvy in the mining camps. Nonetheless, he was able to collect tales from miners about their gold rush experiences, information he later used as the basis for his short stories and novels like *Call of the Wild* and *White Fang*. London found that the Far North (he made little distinction between Canada and Alaska) was the ideal location for his supermen and

¹⁸ Claus-M. Naske, and Herman E. Slotnick, *Alaska: A History of the Forty-Ninth State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 86.

super dogs, pitting them against a merciless environment and the threat of vicious men.¹⁹ Meanwhile, after five years of unsuccessful prospecting in Alaska, Rex Beach began writing bestselling novels and short stories that he used to advocate for Alaska's economic development. In 1906, he published his first novel, *The Spoilers*, based on a true story of corrupt government officials swindling prospectors out of their mining claims, events Beach had witnessed first-hand during the gold rush at Nome. In *The Silver Horde*, published three years later, Beach again borrowed from the news of the day to develop a plot about an independent cannery operator struggling against a "salmon trust" loosely based upon the real-life, San Francisco-based Alaska Packer's Association. Together these authors offered Americans a romanticized vision of Alaska as a land of super-masculine heroes and virtuous underdogs battling the evils of government and corporate greed.²⁰

During the early twentieth century, the federal government owned nearly all of Alaska's land, and when President Theodore Roosevelt took office his concern for conservation of the nation's natural resources gave Alaska its first taste of large federal land withdrawals. In 1902, the Department of the Interior declared that most of southeastern Alaska would be included in the Alexander Archipelago Forest Reserve, and during the remaining years of Roosevelt's administration, the drive to create additional reserves gained momentum. By March 1909, when Roosevelt left office, federal officials had changed the name of the reserve and expanded its boundaries, incorporating nearly

¹⁹ Kollin, *Nature's State*, 61.

²⁰ Nash, "Wilderness Idea," 10-11. See also, Frank E. Buske, "The Wilderness, the Frontier and the Literature of Alaska to 1914: John Muir, Jack London and Rex Beach," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California Davis, 1976).

all of southeastern Alaska into the Tongass National Forest. They also created the Chugach National Forest that stretched across Alaska's south-central coast. Interior Department authorities took pains to point out that there were few regulations attached to the new national forests and that they were not intended to block economic development. Editorials in both the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* and Skagway's *Daily Alaskan*, however, suggested that the national forests would cause economic harm, and the *Seward Daily Gateway* declared, "there is apparently little excuse for making a large forest reserve in this part of the territory of Alaska."²¹

Although development-minded residents were concerned about forest reserves and the small wildlife refuges created during this period, they were much more alarmed by government limits on exploiting Alaska's coal reserves. One episode in particular illustrates how average Alaskans reacted when monopoly capitalists and federal bureaucrats struggled for control of Alaska's natural resources. The story begins in 1907 when President Roosevelt, alarmed by reports that mining conglomerates were snatching up important petroleum and coal lands, withdrew all coal deposits on public lands in the United States until Congress could devise a plan to protect the government's energy interests and to arrange for orderly private development. This move was inspired in large part by Roosevelt's friend and the director of the newly formed U.S. Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot. Pinchot was the principal advocate of a new idea he called

²¹ Lawrence Rakestraw, *A History of the United States Forest Service in Alaska* (Anchorage: Alaska Historical Commission, 1981), 16-17. See also, Frank Norris, "A Lone Voice in the Wilderness: The National Park Service in Alaska, 1917-1969" *Environmental History* 1 (October 1996): 66-76, and Douglas Brinkley, *The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009).

“conservation,” the rational management of national resources to replace past policies of selling or giving away the public domain to private corporations.²²

The withdrawal of the nation’s coal lands coincided with the arrival in Alaska of the largest private mining conglomerate in the United States, the Guggenheim Corporation. Roosevelt’s decree was a serious blow to the Guggenheims’ elaborate plans that included extracting the rich copper deposits in the Wrangell Mountains and mining coal deposits to power a railroad to transport the copper ore to the coast. The Guggenheims also planned to build a smelter on the coast and to purchase both the Northwest Fisheries Company, which owned twelve major salmon canneries, and the Alaska Steamship Company, which could transport passengers and refined copper the Lower 48 states.²³ After joining forces with banker and financier J.P. Morgan, the mineral development conglomerate became known as the Alaska Syndicate. Soon the Alaska Syndicate attracted the attention of muckraking critics of corporate power who argued that ordinary settlers, businessmen, and prospectors would be at the mercy of the Syndicate, particularly if it chose to charge exorbitant rates on its railroad and steamship lines. By 1907 an editorial in the *Nome Gold Digger* declared that the Alaska Syndicate was a “vampire which has already started its blood sucking operations, and is laying its plans for the complete subjugation of the country to its will.”²⁴

²² Gifford Pinchot, *The Fight for Conservation* (New York: Doubleday, Page, and Company, 1943), 40-45. See also, Samuel Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 67, and Char Miller, *Gifford Pinchot and the Making of Modern Environmentalism* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2001).

²³ Haycox, *American Colony*, 223-224; Haycox, *Frigid Embrace*, 39.

²⁴ *Nome Gold Digger*, November 24, 1907, 1; Robert A. Stearns, “The Morgan-Guggenheim Syndicate and the Development of Alaska, 1906-1915” (Ph.D. dissertation,

However much Alaskans might have disliked the idea of a corporate monopoly dominating their lives, there was another specter they feared even more: conservation. Citizens throughout the country had begun to reassess the public lands policy that had made the Guggenheims and other industrial and financial magnates of the age fabulously wealthy and powerful. Pinchot, who dubbed his philosophy the “gospel of efficiency,” urged all Americans to understand that conservation was not “the husbanding of resources for future generations” but rather a philosophy of rational development to benefit the present generation first.²⁵ Although Pinchot struggled to explain the benefits of his ideas to Alaskans, they persisted in seeing conservation as just another name for delaying Alaskan development. And, although Congress passed legislation in 1908 to open the Bering River coalfield, it was calculated to exclude the Guggenheims by limiting the size of claims so that they could support only small, home lot operations. This meant that coal from British Columbia would have to be imported to fuel railroad operations. While this dampened the Alaska Syndicate’s plans, it had a much more dramatic effect on the town of Cordova and other coastal towns that depended on continuous growth to ensure the future of their communities.

The residents of Cordova in particular were furious with the federal government for delaying the opening of coalfields in Alaska because the completion of the Syndicate’s Copper River and Northwestern Railway to the Kennecott Copper Mine in

University of California, Santa Barbara, 1967), 18; Daniel Nelson, *Northern Landscapes: The Struggle for Wilderness Alaska* (Washington, D.C.: Resources for the Future, 2004), 14.

²⁵ Gifford Pinchot, “Principles of Conservation,” in *Conservation in the Progressive Era*, ed. David Stradling (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 20.

the Wrangell Mountains was supposed to be the first step in ensuring the town's economic future. Not only had the coal ban delayed the Guggenheim operations, but it also discouraged railroad development elsewhere in Alaska because no companies were interested in financing a railroad that had to operate on imported coal. The result was that local residents, steamship companies, and Alaska's existing railroads were paying between eleven and twelve dollars per ton for imported coal when high-grade coal was readily available from the Bering River coalfields for a fraction of the price. After several years of frustration with the government's position, three hundred men from Cordova gathered at the town's wharf on May 3, 1911, determined to make their feelings known.

Evoking the spirit of the 1773 Boston Tea Party, the men armed themselves with shovels and began dumping a pile of several hundred tons of imported British Columbia coal into the Pacific Ocean. Before long the Alaska Syndicate's general agent arrived and demanded that the men halt their protest. He explained that the coal had been paid for by the Guggenheims, not by the government, and that it was the company that would sustain the loss. Undeterred, the Cordova residents redoubled their efforts and ignored threats that they would be arrested by deputized officers. A crowd grew over the course of the afternoon and began shouting encouragement. At one point a company employee grabbed a shovel from one of the protestors, but he soon saw the futility of resisting such a large and determined crowd. Eventually a local woman seized a shovel and joined in the "coal party," prompting still more applause from the crowd, and according to the *Cordova Daily Alaskan*, another woman declared that "the spirit of the Revolution was

not dead and that Alaskans should show themselves to be men and no longer tolerate injustice” [Figure 4].²⁶

While the people of Cordova were dumping Canadian coal into the harbor, signs appeared at the wharves in nearby Valdez and Seward and along the hardscrabble streets of Chitina to the north demanding, “Let us mine our own coal.”²⁷ In the newly-founded town of Katalla, which was still hoping to become the gateway to the Bering River coalfields, protestors gathered on the beach to burn Gifford Pinchot in effigy and to engage in “general jollification” throughout the evening. They also set fire to a copy of the proclamation withdrawing coal lands from entry. Around town, protestors displayed large posters declaring,

Pinchot’s ‘My Policy’:
No patents to coal lands.
All timber is forest reserve.
Bottle up Alaska.
Put Alaska coal in forest reserve.
Save Alaska for all time to come.²⁸

The townspeople also gathered for a mass meeting where local businessmen and workers delivered speeches about the hardships burdening Alaskans prevented from working their coal mining claims. Some demanded relief from the government while others drafted a resolution for President Taft describing “the disastrous result the action of the

²⁶ “Cordova Has Boston Tea Party,” *Cordova Daily Alaskan*, May 4, 1911, 1; “Cordova’s Action Talk of All America,” *Cordova Daily Alaskan*, May 5, 1911, 1; “Katalla Enters Vigorous Protest,” *Cordova Daily Alaskan*, May 11, 1911, 1.

²⁷ “Chitina Residents Back Up Stand Taken By Cordova,” *Chitina Leader*, May 13, 1911, 1; “Let Us Mine Our Own Coal [editorial],” *Chitina Leader*, June 3, 1911, 2.

²⁸ “Pinchot Is Burned in Effigy,” *Cordova Daily Alaskan*, May 4, 1911, 1. See also, Peter A. Coates, *The Trans-Alaska Pipeline Controversy: Technology, Conservation, and the Frontier* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1993), 45-46.

government has had on the development of the resources of the country, as well as practically ruining every man in the territory.”²⁹ Tensions continued for weeks after the “coal party” as deputies patrolled the docks in Seward to prevent imported coal in that town from meeting a watery end and Cordova residents formed a mosquito fleet of local vessels for the purpose of illegally mining coal seams along the coast.³⁰

Pinchot himself visited Alaska a few months after the coal-dumping incident to answer his critics, but his efforts were of little avail. To most Alaskans, the Forest Service chief had become a symbol of the conservation movement, which residents condemned as a fad of the moment and a utopian scheme inapplicable to Alaskan conditions. Conservationists were chided that their policies in Alaska were based on error: the resources of Alaska were not the property of the people of the United States to hold in perpetuity but belonged to those who were willing to invest their capital and labor in making them useable.³¹ Conservationists were seen as impediments to progress, and a Seward newspaper reported that “if all were conservationists, the process of evolution from the ape age would have been slow indeed . . . [and] some of us would still be hanging by our prehensile tails in an ambitious endeavor to gather a few coconuts.”³² As the debate raged in Alaska’s newspapers, Pinchot was accused of having done more than any man to hinder the development of Alaska. When asked what was wrong with

²⁹ Pinchot Is Burning in Effigy,” *Cordova Daily Alaskan*, May 4, 1911, 1.

³⁰ “Feeling Is Running High at Seward,” *Cordova Daily Alaskan*, May 19, 1911, 1; “Alaskans to Mine Own Coal,” *Cordova Daily Alaskan*, May 22, 1911, 1.

³¹ “Alaska Blighted by Pinchot Fads,” *Fairbanks Daily Times*, October 25, 1911. See also, Herman Slotnick, “The Ballinger-Pinchot Affair in Alaska,” *Journal of the West* 10 (1971): 343-344.

³² *Seward Gateway*, April 16, 1910, 2.

Alaska, many Alaskans simply replied, “Pinchot.” He was called a “woolly headed theorist,” “an impractical visionary,” “a degenerate,” and even the “lord high executioner of Alaska.”³³ After Pinchot departed Alaska, a journalist for the *Alaska-Yukon Magazine* wrote,

When the high priest of conservation, the prince of shadow dancers, recently visited Alaska to gloat over his handiwork of empty houses, deserted villages, dying towns, arrested development, bankrupt pioneers, and the blasted hopes of sturdy, self-reliant American citizens, it is a striking comment on the law-abiding character of our people that he came back at all.³⁴

While Alaskans may have distrusted the Alaska Syndicate, they distrusted their government and the philosophy of conservation even more. This heated rhetoric and the fundamental elements of the conflict would parallel in almost every detail the struggle to create national parks in Alaska eighty years later.

In the years following the Cordova Coal Party, Progressive conservationists and Alaska boomers took turns promoting Alaska for their own purposes. Some of the loudest voices calling for development of Alaskan resources came from Seattle, a city with much to gain from economic activity in the North. Like most Seattlites, newspaperman John J. Underwood had little knowledge of the region, but he insisted that Alaska was a frontier in the Western model. In a 1913 book called *Alaska: An Empire in the Making*, Underwood declared,

In the years yet to be . . . her verdant fields will be harvested; her cereals will be ground to flour. . . . The sturdy men and women who conquered the great Northwest, who pierced the back-bone of the continent with railways tunnels, who made productive millions of acres of desert land, were of the same hardy

³³ Slotnick, “Ballinger-Pinchot,” 341; Haycox, *American Colony*, 227.

³⁴ George E. Baldwin, “Conservative Faddists Arrest Progress and Seek to Supplant Self-Government with Bureaucracy,” *Alaska-Yukon Magazine* (February 1912), 45.

stock who, today, by their endurance, energy and industry are slowly converting the vast wilderness of Alaska into an Empire.³⁵

The following year, the journalist Charles Tuttle waxed eloquent in a similar book, challenging Pinchot's conservationist message and evoking the promise of manifest destiny. Like Underwood, Tuttle emphasized that Alaska was part of the Pacific Northwest and that there was no way to exhaust Alaska's natural bounty:

Faddists are declaring that our natural resources are becoming exhausted, and that a day is approaching when human opportunities will have become so greatly diminished that there will be no further call for human industry in the world-vineyard. These alarmists should be reminded that there is the evolution of the world, ever providing new fields for conquest. . . . The sun of new opportunities ever is rising just in advance of the vanguard of human progress, and always in the direction of the ever extending Northwest. Natural history science bids one to declare that before the Alaska now at our doors is peopled and developed, a new and even greater Land of Promise will break into vision just beyond it.³⁶

Others such as the novelist Rex Beach, who had first-hand experience living and working in Alaska, promoted more practical measures he believed to be the key to Alaska's future. In his fourth novel, *The Iron Trail*, Beach described the construction of a railroad line to distant Nome, the location of a major gold discovery in 1899, and he used his protagonist to challenge Pinchot's ideas and the federal restrictions on land development in Alaska. "Conservation is no more than economy," declared the novel's railroad-building hero, "but it's the misapplication of the principle that has retarded Alaska and ruined so many of us." Beach concluded that his Alaska needed only transportation and fuel for it to prosper, but that the government was "strangling industry

³⁵ John J. Underwood, *Alaska: An Empire in the Making* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1913), xv-xvi. See also, Coates, *Pipeline Controversy*, 32.

³⁶ Charles R. Tuttle, *Alaska: Its Meaning to the World, Its Resources, Its Opportunities* (Seattle: Franklin Shuey and Company, 1914), 29-30.

and dedicating Alaska to eternal solitude.”³⁷ Alaska’s development advocates also found the incoming president, Woodrow Wilson, to be sympathetic. During his first State of the Union message to Congress in 1913, Wilson declared, “A duty faces us with regard to Alaska which seemed to me very pressing and very imperative. The people of Alaska should be given the full territorial form of government, and Alaska, as a storehouse, should be unlocked.” Wilson urged the construction of railroads in Alaska, but he cautioned that “the construction of railways is only the first step, is only thrusting the key to the storehouse and throwing back the lock and opening the door. . . . We must use the resources of the country, not lock them up.”³⁸

Meanwhile, a number of sportsmen from the eastern United States had become concerned about the future of Alaska’s wildlife, including members of the Boone and Crockett Club, an early conservationist organization for hunters and fishermen. The mission of this New York-based organization was to promote “manly sport with the rifle” and to preserve stocks of large game in perpetuity. One of the club’s first preoccupations had been the threat of extinction facing the buffalo in the 1870s and 1880s, when the organization promoted Yellowstone National Park as a sanctuary for remnant herds. During the Klondike gold rush, club members turned their attention to Alaska, pushing for game laws that went beyond protection for birds and warning that the influx of gold

³⁷ Rex Beach, *The Iron Trail* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1913), 175-177. See also, Frank E. Buske, “Rex Beach: A Frustrated Gold Seeker Lobbies to ‘Win the Wilderness over to Order,’” *Alaska Journal* (1980): 37-42.

³⁸ Claus-M. Naske, “Governor Ernest Gruening, the Federal Government, and the Economic Development of Territorial Alaska,” *Pacific Historian* 28 (1984): 6; William H. Wilson, *Railroad in the Clouds: The Alaska Railroad in the Age of Steam, 1914-1945* (Boulder: Pruett Publishing, 1977), 25. See also, Gruening, *State of Alaska*, 177.

seekers threatened to drive bear, sheep, moose and caribou to extinction.³⁹ In 1892, George Bird Grinnell, a pioneering naturalist and club member, helped to convince President Harrison to create the first federal wildlife reserve at Afognak Island, one of the Kodiak Islands in the Gulf of Alaska. Another prominent member of the club, William Hornaday, campaigned unsuccessfully for a game preserve that included a wide coastal strip from Bristol Bay to Yakutat, including the Kodiak Islands and the Alaska and Kenai Peninsulas. He also recommended banning the sale of wild game, quadrupling the warden force, halving the bag limits on big game, and instituting a 10-year moratorium against killing walruses for their ivory. “The preservation of the Alaskan fauna on the public domain,” Hornaday declared, “should not be left unreservedly to the people of Alaska, because, as sure as shooting, they will not preserve it!”⁴⁰

By the 1920s, there were a number of national parks and protected lands in Alaska, although Alaskans themselves had little to do with their creation. These early parks were created either by executive authority or as a result of campaigning by eastern wildlife advocates, or both. Since John Muir first began writing about his Alaska adventures for American periodicals in the 1880s, Alaska had attracted a growing number of tourists. Muir was also a member of the Edward H. Harriman Expedition of 1899 that brought wealthy adventurers and scientists to marvel at Alaska’s animal life and other

³⁹ Edward W. Nelson, “Notes on the Wild Fowl and Game Animals of Alaska,” *National Geographic* 9 (April 4, 1898), 132. See also, Coates, *Pipeline Controversy*, 42.

⁴⁰ William T. Hornaday, *Our Vanishing Wildlife: Its Extermination and Preservation* (New York: New York Zoological Society, 1913), 179; Coates, *Pipeline Controversy*, 44; Ross, *Pioneering Conservation*, 126-128.

natural wonders.⁴¹ Many of these visitors later demanded the preservation of exceptional areas, and conservation interest in Alaska grew significantly during the Progressive period. Alaska's first park, Sitka National Monument, was established in 1910 because it was the site of an 1804 battle between the local Tlingit Indians and the colonizing Russians. The site later became famous for its impressive collection of Tlingit and Haida totem poles. The Old Kasaan National Monument was set aside by President Wilson in 1916 to protect the ruins of a former Haida Indian village and another impressive collection of totem poles and indigenous art.⁴² Both parks were created under the authority of the Antiquities Act, a law originally designed to protect historical and archeological treasures in the nation.

Signed into law by President Roosevelt in 1906, the Antiquities Act gave the president the authority to restrict the use of selected public lands by executive order, thereby bypassing congressional oversight or approval. The law resulted from concerns about looting and vandalism that threatened American Indian ruins in the West, such as Chaco Canyon in New Mexico and Devil's Tower in Wyoming where pot hunters desecrated sites by removing artifacts and selling them. The Antiquities Act allowed presidents to designate "national monuments" at sensitive cultural sites with the

⁴¹ William H. Goetzmann and Kay Sloan, *Looking Far North: The Harriman Expedition to Alaska, 1899* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 10-11, 26-28.

⁴² George F. Williss, "'Do Things Right the First Time': The National Park Service and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980," (Anchorage: National Park Service, 1985), 2, 5. Because the Old Kasaan monument was in Tongass National Forest, the site was originally administered by the U.S. Forest Service. Administration was transferred to the National Park Service in 1933. Because looting and vandalism later eroded the integrity of the site, the monument was abolished on August 25, 1955. See, Frank Norris, "A Victim of Nature and Bureaucracy: The Short, Sad History of Old Kasaan National Monument," in *Proceedings of the Alaska Historical Society Annual Meeting, October 6-9, 2000, Ketchikan, Alaska*, 83-97.

understanding that the monuments would only be as large as was necessary to protect the cultural treasures.⁴³ Alaska's first two monument sites fit into the category of American Indian archeological and artistic treasures described in the act, but in later decades the act was repeatedly challenged when its critics complained that it was being used inappropriately and that it overextended executive power. In spite of these challenges, the Antiquities Act has been called the most important piece of preservation legislation ever enacted by the United States government because it introduced an element of flexibility into the preservation process, allowing presidents, federal officials, interested professionals, and other special interest groups to achieve preservation goals without relying on congressional approval or popular consensus. For this reason, the act became a critical tool for the National Park Service to create national monuments as "waystation" conservation units that would later become full-blown national parks. The Grand Teton, Grand Canyon, Bryce, Zion, Acadia, and Olympic National Parks, for example, were first created as national monuments.⁴⁴

Alaska's grand experiment in creating national parks began in earnest in 1917 with Mt. McKinley National Park, created not by the Antiquities Act but by act of Congress. The park was the brainchild of Charles Sheldon, a wealthy hunter and naturalist from Vermont who first visited the area in 1906. He was so captivated by the

⁴³ David Harmon, Frances P. McManamon, and Dwight T. Pitcaithley, eds., *The Antiquities Act: A Century of American Archaeology, Historic Preservation, and Nature Conservation* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006).

⁴⁴ Hal Rothman, *Preserving Different Paths: The American National Monuments* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989). See also, Hal Rothman, "Second-Class Sites: National Monuments and the Growth of the National Park System," *Environmental Review* 10 (Spring 1986): 44-56; Robert W. Righter, "National Monuments to National Parks: The Use of the Antiquities Act of 1906," *Western Historical Quarterly* 20 (August 1989): 281-301.

experience that he returned a year later to the area and spent the winter in a log cabin. The campaign to create the park was conducted largely by the Boone and Crockett Club (Sheldon was a committee chairman) with support from the Camp Fire Club of America, the American Game Protective Association, and key officials in the Department of the Interior, including Assistant Secretary Stephen Mather who subsequently became the first director of the National Park Service in 1916.⁴⁵ Once the park became widely known, it captured the imagination of many easterners who cherished the idea of a primitive America preserved for all time. Alaskans, by contrast, were solidly opposed to any bill containing restrictions against hunting, either by setting bag limits, imposing hunting seasons, or instituting hunting closures over specified geographical areas. As a result, the members of Congress interested in the park made certain concessions. Unlike any other national park or national monument, Mt. McKinley National Park allowed subsistence hunting and mining operations, and for more than a decade following the bill's passage, Mt. McKinley was the only national park where local hunters enjoyed that privilege.⁴⁶

While National Park Service officials were pleased with the creation of Mt. McKinley National Park, they were also concerned that the new park might impede future projects. In 1917, the scientist and writer Robert Griggs and the National Geographic Society proposed establishing a national park on the Alaska Peninsula in southwestern Alaska in an area known as the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. The "smokes" were steam vents or fumaroles created by the cataclysmic eruption of the

⁴⁵ Frank Norris, "Alaska Subsistence: A National Park Service Management History" (Anchorage: National Park Service, 2002), 33; Williss, "Do Things Right," 1; Ross, *Pioneering Conservation*, 131-134.

⁴⁶ Norris, "Alaska Subsistence," 33.

Novarupta volcano in 1912. Although acting National Park Service director Horace Albright agreed that the area warranted protection, he declared that the creation of new Alaska parks by Congress was impossible because he believed local resistance from Alaskans would be too fierce. Instead, he suggested that the president would have to use his authority under the Antiquities Act to designate the site as a national monument. To this end, Griggs and the National Geographic Society, aided by National Park Service officials, undertook a campaign that culminated with President Wilson setting aside more than a million acres in 1918 for Katmai National Monument.⁴⁷

By employing the authority built into the Antiquities Act, park advocates had avoided a lengthy battle in Congress, but they encountered another problem—Alaskan opposition. Many Alaskans protested what they saw as the “locking up” of public lands in federal ownership and spoke out against the new monument. The monument’s critics pointed out that the fumaroles that had made Katmai’s volcanic zone famous in the early years after the eruption had all but disappeared, leaving little justification for the existence of a national monument. Alaska’s territorial governor Thomas Riggs, Jr. was one of the most vocal critics of federal parks and the territory’s treatment by the federal government. The year that Katmai National Monument was established, Riggs declared in his annual report, “[the monument] serves no purpose and should be abolished. . . . For the sake of the future of Alaska, let there be no more reservations without a thorough investigation on the ground by practical men and not simply on the recommendation of men whose interest in the Territory is merely academic or sentimental.”⁴⁸ Riggs

⁴⁷ Ross, *Pioneering Conservation*, 154-175.

⁴⁸ U.S. Department of the Interior, “Annual Report of the Governor of Alaska for 1918,” (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1918), 60-61; John A. Hussey, “Embattled Katmai: A

continued in a letter to Assistant Secretary Mather shortly after the establishment of the monument:

I cannot help but feel that the withdrawal of land embraced in this monument was ill-advised, owing to the intense feeling which is aroused in Alaska through additional withdrawals. It is a common saying throughout the Territory that the President's announcement about the rights of small peoples to have a voice in their government applies to everybody on the face of the earth except Alaska.⁴⁹

In a 1920 report to the secretary of the interior, Riggs charged that the federal government had paid "little attention . . . to the proper development of the [territory's] great natural resources" and had "pursued an uncoordinated policy hardly fitted to a sparcely [sic] settled pioneer country."⁵⁰

Although Katmai National Monument eventually gained notoriety for the remarkable concentration of brown bears in the park, hunters, trappers, miners, commercial fishermen, and construction companies (seeking Katmai's volcanic pumice) continued to push for access. In 1946, for example, the Territorial House of Representatives asked "that steps be taken to have the Katmai National Monument abolished . . . so that fishing and mining may be carried out legally in that area."⁵¹ A year later, Bob Bartlett, Alaska's territorial delegate to Congress, introduced a statehood bill that would have transferred to the state most of Alaska's public lands, including those

History of Katmai National Monument" (San Francisco: National Park Service, 1971), 420.

⁴⁹ Williss, "Do Things Right," 2.

⁵⁰ U.S. Department of the Interior, "Report of the Governor of Alaska to the Secretary of the Interior, 1920" (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1920), 5, 76-77. See also, Claus-M. Naske, "Some Attention, Little Action," 41.

⁵¹ Frank Norris, "Isolated Paradise: An Administrative History of the Katmai and Aniakchak National Park Units" (Anchorage: National Park Service, 1996), 75.

within the monument. This move delighted the fur trappers and clam-diggers who were already operating along the monument's coastline. In the end, the much-maligned Katmai National Monument was saved by the popularity of the sportsman's retreat known as Brooks Camp and opportunities for world-class sportfishing and bear-viewing at Katmai's famous Brooks Falls.⁵²

Six years after Katmai National Monument was created, another group of park advocates sought to preserve a collection of tidewater glaciers and glacial fjords known as Glacier Bay at the northern end of Alaska's panhandle. Compared to Katmai, the push to designate Glacier Bay as a national monument was far more difficult. Unlike the Katmai area, Glacier Bay was well known to Alaska residents. It was located near populated areas, and it contained gold and other valuable minerals. For these reasons, it required more public support and attracted greater resistance. As with Katmai National Monument, the drive to establish Glacier Bay as a national monument was due primarily to the efforts of scientists and conservationists—in this case, the National Ecological Society and more than eighty other organizations that endorsed the plan. In fact, with the exception of a statement regarding accessibility, the rationale for protecting the monument enunciated in the President's proclamation was identical to that of the National Ecological Society. The proclamation emphasized the opportunity for scientific study of glacial behavior and valuable relics of ancient interglacial forests.⁵³

⁵² "Katmai Volcanic Ash to be Used for Construction," *Anchorage Daily News*, February 25, 1953, n.p.; Ross, *Pioneering Conservation*, 168-175. See also, Norris, "Tourism in Katmai Country: A History of Concessions Activity in Katmai National Park and Preserve," (Anchorage: National Park Service, 1992).

⁵³ Williss, "Do Things Right," 2; Ross, *Pioneering Conservation*, 183.

In the nearby communities of Juneau and Haines, the local chambers of commerce registered their objections, and they cited U.S. Geological Survey reports that indicated the presence of gold, silver, and molybdenum in the area. These reports notwithstanding, the influential Council on National Parks, Forests, and Wild Life endorsed the monument and convinced Interior Secretary Hubert Work to recommend the preservation of Glacier Bay to President Coolidge. As soon as the order was signed on April 1, 1924,⁵⁴ the editors of Juneau's *Alaska Daily Empire* called the proposal "a monstrous proposition" and declared,

The suggestion that a reserve be established to protect a glacier that none could disturb if he wanted and none would want to disturb if he could or to permit the study of plant and insect life is the quintessence of silliness. And then when it is proposed to put millions of acres, taking in established industries and agricultural lands and potential resource that are capable of supporting people and adding to the population of Alaska, it becomes a monstrous crime against development and advancement. It leads one to wonder if Washington has gone crazy through catering to conservation faddists!⁵⁵

Dr. William Cooper of the National Ecological Society replied to the *Daily Alaska Empire*'s editorial, trying to calm critics of the new monument and to address their individual concerns. Cooper pointed out that the nation's system of national parks and monuments contained no other examples of a tidewater glacier, what he called one of the "most imposing and awe-inspiring of the wonders of nature," and he argued that for this reason alone the area was worth protecting. Cooper defended his position by saying,

⁵⁴ President Calvin Coolidge invoked the Antiquities Act to establish the 1.2-million-acre Glacier Bay National Monument on February 26, 1925.

⁵⁵ "A Monstrous Proposition [editorial]," *Alaska Daily Empire*, April 28, 1924, 4. See also, John Kauffmann, "Glacier Bay National Monument, Alaska: A History of Its Boundaries," (Anchorage: National Park Service, 1954), 4.

“We are not ‘conservation faddists,’ but we are interested in sane conservation, which cannot do other than benefit Alaska and the proper development of its resources.”

According to Cooper, Alaska was valuable not only because of its mines, fisheries, and forests but also because of the visitors attracted by the area’s natural splendor. “Don’t forget the tourists,” he argued,

Over in Glacier Bay there is a source of revenue to the residents of Juneau that is at present utterly neglected. The publicity arriving from its setting apart as a National Monument will cause our tourists to desire to see it. Such a demand will bring about the providing of facilities on the part of the steamship companies. . . . In the more distant future there are possibilities of a tourist trade beyond our present dreams. Hotels on the shores of lower Glacier Bay, motor boats carrying visitors to its many points of interest. Why not? Is this fantastic?”⁵⁶

Meanwhile, the residents of Gustavus, a tiny community all but encircled by the new monument, launched a letter-writing campaign protesting the National Park Service’s control of potential agricultural land. The campaign was so effective that they succeeded in eliminating about 19,000 acres from the monument for farming. The Gustavus exclusion only partially alleviated bad feelings between local residents and the National Park Service. When asked if National Park Service personnel residences might be located in Gustavus, Superintendent Henry Schmidt replied, “There is a problem of daily living in close proximity with ‘homesteaders’ who are not too happy about any government regulation, and who do not hesitate to carry on a ‘cold war’ with any people connected with the government.”⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Kauffmann, “Glacier Bay,” 7.

⁵⁷ Theodore Catton, “Land Reborn: A History of Administration and Visitor Use in Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve,” (Anchorage: National Park Service, 1995), 146-147; Frank Norris, “A History of Alaska Wilderness,” *U.S. Forest Service Proceedings*, RMRS-P-49 (2007): 11.

During the 1920s and 1930s, Alaska's fortunes rose and fell as the conflict over its natural resources continued. One of the loudest voices promoting development in Alaska belonged to Scott Bone, a former editor of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* who served as territorial governor of Alaska between 1921 and 1925. Summoning all of his journalistic powers, Bone complained that "far removed from the seat of Federal Government, aloof, comparatively unknown, save for its scenery and its gold, Alaska has bidden in vain for fair recognition and just treatment for the fifty-odd years since its purchase from Russia."⁵⁸ Governor Bone dreamed of an Alaska with a population of a million or more people, no longer a territory but a state (or perhaps two states), and he asked rhetorically "How is Uncle Sam to do it?" The answer was the same combination of less government and free enterprise that had become orthodoxy among Alaska boosters:

By opening Alaska to settlement; by inviting capital and people to come in and making it easy for them to gain a foothold; by unlocking its resources and freeing the Territory from red-tape rule; by silencing and shunting aside the visionaries and theorists whose ideas have been expensively tried and clearly found wanting; by proceeding with the development of Alaska as a big business proposition; by dismissing the fooling, demagogical fear that any so-called predatory interests ever can or ever will gobble up so huge a land as Alaska . . . and, finally, by tardily realizing that Alaska, given an honest chance, will populate itself and go ahead and wax opulent and develop grandly and gloriously.⁵⁹

In his own way, Bone attempted to reconcile the push to develop Alaska with the conservation policies emanating from Washington D.C. In an editorial for the

⁵⁸ U.S. Department of the Interior, "Report of the Governor of Alaska to the Secretary of the Interior, 1921" (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1921), 7. See also, Naske, "Some Attention, Little Action," 41.

⁵⁹ Scott C. Bone, *Alaska: Its Past, Present, Future* (Alaska Governor's Office, 1925), 6-7.

Philadelphia Public Ledger, Bone made the case that conservation and development could work together:

Develop Alaska! This has been the uniform demand for years of practical-minded men familiar with the Territory and its potential resources. Conserve Alaska! Such is and long has been the consistent outcry of well-meaning people interesting themselves in the Territory's keeping thousands of miles away. Why not both development and conservation? Logically they go hand in hand. . . . To real conservation Alaska is actually a stranger. It has experienced nothing worthy of the name. A locking-up of its resources belied that term. Hoarding is not conservation. Alaska has been dealt with academically, theoretically, spasmodically, intermittently, incoherently . . . Development with conservation is possible, practicable and profitable; conservation without development is paralyzing and resolves itself into a hoarder's dream.⁶⁰

Very few Alaskans disagreed with this pro-development sentiment, and those who did worked behind the scenes to promote the creation of Mt. McKinley National Park, Katmai National Monument and Glacier Bay National Park. It was not until a U.S. Forest Service forester named Robert Marshall arrived in 1929 that Alaska got its first high-profile wilderness promoter and park advocate.⁶¹

Born in New York City, Marshall vacationed with his family in the Adirondack Mountains where the young man learned to love backcountry recreation and to dream about wilderness adventure. Fearing that he was too late to explore a wild continent in the style of Lewis and Clark, Marshall studied forestry and eventually made his way to Alaska. Although he was ostensibly studying the northernmost extent of the tree-line in the Arctic, Marshall spent his time searching for what he called "blank spaces on maps" to satisfy his profound urge to explore and to see nature in its undisturbed state. Like the

⁶⁰ Bone, *Past, Present, Future*, 18. See also, Daniel L. Henry, "Battle for the Last Frontier: A Rhetorical History of American Conservation and the Alaska Lands Controversy (M.S. thesis, University of Oregon, Department of Speech, 1983), 153.

⁶¹ Nash, "Wilderness Idea," 17.

naturalist John Muir before him, Marshall exulted in Alaska where he found that civilization existed only as small pockets lost in a sea of wilderness, not the other way around. After his initial visit, Marshall returned three more times to the upper Koyukuk River region to climb mountains, map rivers for the Geological Survey, and simply glory in the rugged and often dangerous landscape around him. During a thirteen-month period when he lived in the mining town of Wiseman, he gathered notes about the lives of his friends and neighbors for his bestselling 1933 sociological study *Arctic Village*.

By the 1930s, Marshall had become one of the principal wilderness advocates in the United States and a co-founder of The Wilderness Society. After his father's death in 1929, Marshall inherited a fortune, but instead of abandoning his career to live a life of leisure, he developed a reputation as a zealous bureaucrat, agitating for the rational management of the nation's forests and calling for the preservation of America's last pristine wilderness areas. In his article "The Problem of the Wilderness," Marshall offers a definition of wilderness that shaped later wilderness philosophy, calling it "a region which contains no permanent inhabitants, possesses no possibility of conveyance by any mechanical means and is sufficiently spacious that a person in crossing it must have the experience of sleeping out."⁶² According to Marshall, exerting one's self in these wild places was good for the physical body, but it was even more important to the mental self. Marshall insisted that all Americans, regardless of economic status, should have access to the health benefits of the wilderness experience. His donations to unions and socialist organizations during the 1930s caught the attention of conservative congressmen who accused him of being a communist before the House Committee on Un-American

⁶² Robert Marshall, "The Problem of Wilderness," *Scientific Monthly* (February 1930), 141.

Activities. Marshall responded to his accusers: “Because I’ve been out in the woods and up in the Arctic a good part of the past five years, it may be that the Bill of Rights was repealed without my hearing about it.”⁶³

During his time in Alaska, Marshall accumulated his own northern gang of detractors, not from Wiseman where he appears to have been universally liked but from among the territory’s development-minded residents. His writings from this period leave no doubt that he was in love with Alaska. He called it “an explorer’s heaven,” and when asked to give his opinion about Alaskan resource development for a congressional committee report, he argued that the “pioneer conditions” and the “emotional values of the frontier” in an undeveloped Alaska were worth far more to the nation than agricultural settlement would be.⁶⁴ In an appendix to the report, Marshall painted Alaska as the last hope for establishing a large area free from roads and industry, and he added that, in his opinion, the territory’s Native population would be much happier being left alone to live off the land. “Therefore,” he concluded,

I would like to recommend that all of Alaska north of the Yukon River, with the exception of a small area immediately adjacent to Nome, should be zoned as a region where the Federal Government will contribute no funds for road building and permit no leases for industrial development. . . . In the name of a balanced use of American resources, let’s keep Alaska largely a wilderness!⁶⁵

Not surprisingly, Alaskans erupted in protest. They disliked the government report, but they liked Marshall’s appendix even less. The Alaska territorial legislature called for a

⁶³ “Federal Officials Accused as ‘Reds,’” *New York Times* (February 2, 1935), 5.

⁶⁴ James M. Glover, *Wilderness Original: The Life of Bob Marshall* (Seattle: Mountaineers Books, 1986), 120; Coates, *Pipeline Controversy*, 60.

⁶⁵ U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Natural Resources Committee, “Alaska: Its Resources and Development,” (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1938), 213.

new study and rejection of the old. Even the report's principal authors believed Marshall's proposals were extreme and irresponsible, and there was some confusion about how the offending appendix made it into the published report.⁶⁶

By January 1939, editorials in Alaskan newspapers were picking apart the report and Marshall's contribution in particular. One angry Fairbanks writer demanded, "How'd you like to see about a third of Alaska fenced off for a playground for the playboys and playgirls of America? . . . that is exactly what would happen in the wholly extraneous opinion of one Robert Marshall of the U.S. Forest Service." This particular contributor continued: "Every Alaskan knows that the development of mineral properties or use of her commercial forests would not despoil her scenic charms or deface her beauty any more than a speck on the moon." The title of the article struck a decidedly sarcastic tone: "'Let's Keep Alaska a Wilderness,' Oh Yeah!"⁶⁷ Alaska's newspapermen and their readers were not the only ones to respond negatively to the idea that an outsider would promote parks and discourage future federal spending in Alaska. In *Valley of Thunder*, published in 1939, Rex Beach used his protagonist, David Glenister, to promote the rapid development of the region and to protest outside interference. "Sometimes," Glenister complained, "I think Washington is seriously bent on turning the entire territory into a national park, a picnic ground for visiting schoolma'ams in which us sourdoughs will be forbidden to run anything except filling stations and hot-dog stands."⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Nelson, *Northern Landscapes*, 23; Glover, *Wilderness Original*, 261.

⁶⁷ "'Let's Keep Alaska a Wilderness,' Oh, Yeah! [editorial]," *Fairbanks Daily News* (January 16, 1939), 2.

⁶⁸ Rex Beach, *Valley of Thunder* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1939), 103.

With the outbreak of World War II in the Pacific, Alaska's conservation debate was eclipsed by the need for rapid mobilization of troops and materiel necessary to dislodge the Japanese from the Aleutian Islands and to guard against further attack on the nation's northern flank. Alaska also became a strategic link for Lend-Lease aircraft being flown from the United State to Siberia and beyond to the Russian front. By bringing defense dollars and tens of thousands of people northward, the war transformed Alaska's economy and its demographics. About 300,000 military personnel were stationed in Alaska during the war, and the civilian population grew from about 60,000 in 1940 to more than 100,000 by the war's end. By 1950 the territorial population was more than 150,000. The establishment of major military installations in Alaska, the increase of commercial air traffic between the territory and the contiguous United States, and the completion of the Alaska-Canada Highway all served to bring Alaskans closer to the rest of the nation and to accelerate the push for statehood.⁶⁹

Although some residents had dreamed of statehood from the moment the United States bought Alaska from Russia, the idea languished in Congress for almost a century. Critics scoffed at the region's remoteness and argued that its tiny population was incapable of generating enough taxes to finance local government. Powerful commercial interests like the Seattle salmon-canning industry consistently opposed statehood because they feared increased regulation and higher taxes. However, World War II represented a clear turning point for statehood because the economic boom it produced was even bigger than the Klondike gold rush. Despite a momentary lull in Alaska's economic activity immediately following the war, tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union

⁶⁹ Naske and Slotnick, *Forty-Ninth State*, 131.

fueled federal defense spending in Alaska that gradually became a key component in the territorial economy.

Statehood advocates such as Alaska Delegate Bob Bartlett were keenly aware that Congress was unlikely to approve Alaska statehood in the absence of an adequate economic foundation. Bartlett and others welcomed federal spending, but they also believed that the new state would need to have control over its richest natural resources. In 1948 he offered this assessment of the federal land policy in Alaska:

In the early part of the century when conservation of our natural resources very properly became a lively national issue, Alaska appeared to be the one area left under the flag where the people's property could be saved from despoliation. Mindful of all the mistakes which have been made here—and for which I for one will readily admit we are just beginning to pay—a great padlock was placed on Alaska. One grievous error was made. No formula was established to unlock that padlock on proper occasions. In their anxiety to save something for future generations the conservationists forgot that a wise policy allows proper use by the present generation.⁷⁰

During hearings on statehood over the next decade, Alaskans developed a mantra: lack of statehood hinders and impedes Alaska's economic development. Few attributed Alaska's failure to develop to geography or climate; rather, federal policies and absentee owner exploitation were the culprits. Many Alaskans believed that statehood, with its corresponding land grant from the federal government, would solve all of Alaska's longstanding problems.

One of the strategies that the pro-statehood lobby used to convince Congress and the nation that Alaska was ready for statehood was to convene a constitutional convention in November 1955. The constitutional delegates met at the University of

⁷⁰ E.L. "Bob" Bartlett to Bernard De Voto, January 1948, Bartlett Papers, Alaska and Polar Regions Department, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, Alaska; Claus-M. Naske, *A History of Alaska Statehood* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985), 44.

Alaska campus in Fairbanks where they began drafting a constitution for the first new state since Arizona in 1912. Among the participants was former Alaska territorial governor and champion of the neglect thesis Ernest Gruening, who gave the convention's keynote address entitled "Let Us End American Colonialism." Gruening opened his speech with a list of Alaskan grievances, not unlike those found in the Declaration of Independence, before declaring,

We meet to validate the most basic of American principles, the principle of consent by the governed. We take this historic step because the people of Alaska who elected you have come to see that their longstanding and unceasing protests against the restrictions, discriminations, and exclusions to which we are subject have been unheeded by the colonialism that has ruled Alaska for 88 years. The people of Alaska have never ceased to object to those impositions even though they may not have realized that such were part and parcel of their colonial status. Indeed, the full realization that Alaska is a colony may not yet have come to many Alaskans nor may it be even faintly appreciated by those in power who perpetuate our colonial servitude.⁷¹

Although the rhetoric of other statehood advocates and convention delegates typically focused on voting representation in Congress and the right of Alaska residents to practice "home rule," the issue that was never far below the surface was natural resource exploitation.

In fact, Gruening's argument that Alaskans were colonial subjects was another way of saying that they did not control their own natural resources. "Despite lip service to planned and sustainable development," explains environmental historian Daniel Nelson, "statehood advocates were hostile to most conservation measures and to proposals, such as [Bob] Marshall's, to leave large areas of Alaska untouched." "At its core," he continues, "the statehood movement was an expression of the long-standing

⁷¹ Ernest Gruening, "Let Us End American Colonialism," Address to Alaska Constitutional Convention, November 1955, n.p.

desire to ‘unlock’ Alaska’s riches.”⁷² This conclusion is echoed by Alaska historian Stephen Haycox. “As in many western territories before Congress enabled their statehood,” he argues, “in Alaska the issue was the people’s right to free access to the fruits of economic exploitation of the region’s natural resources. Those contesting that right were considered the enemy.”⁷³ From the earliest days of the campaign for statehood, Alaskans hoped for an enormous grant of federal land as part of the act granting statehood. As late as 1958, Alaska’s non-voting representatives in Congress asked for a land grant of 182 million acres of the public domain, prompting some of statehood’s critics to describe the request as the greatest giveaway of natural resources in American history. The final bill reduced the amount but not so much that any Western state would not have viewed it as a good deal.

After fifteen years of struggle, Congress passed the Alaska Statehood Act, and on January 3, 1959, President Eisenhower signed it into law, officially admitting Alaska as the forty-ninth state of the United States. The legislation granting statehood allowed Alaska to select a total of 103,350,000 acres, an area larger than the state of California, from the unappropriated federal domain over a 25-year period after admission. In addition, the federal government relinquished title to tens of millions of acres of submerged lands along the continental shelf. The magnitude of the federal land grant to the new state can best be understood in a comparison with other Western states. In Nevada the federal government owns eighty-seven percent of the land; in Utah, sixty-six percent; and in Idaho, sixty-three percent. Alaska, at the time of statehood, was fourth on

⁷² Nelson, *Northern Landscapes*, 31-32.

⁷³ Haycox, “Owning It All,” 165.

the list with sixty percent of its land owned by the federal government. Even so, because of its size, Alaska received nearly five times the acreage granted to any other state, along with all navigable waters and its entire coastline, which is longer than that of the entire coast of the contiguous United States. In addition, the act addressed the problem of financing state administration by stipulating that ninety percent of all federal mineral lease revenue be returned directly to the state. This so-called 90-10 split was an act of remarkable generosity to Alaska, another example of federal support for the region's economic viability.⁷⁴

Many Alaska residents believed that statehood would solve the problems they had encountered for decades. They believed it would promote economic growth, attract settlers to the new state, and give state government control over vast untapped and undiscovered natural resources. After the initial excitement, however, the state's leaders began to realize that statehood was not all that they imagined. The state's population density was less than one-half person per square mile, or about one percent of the national average. Alaska still had no manufacturing and little agriculture. Its economic underpinnings lay in the exploitation of natural resources by absentee investors and in federal spending. Meanwhile, newly elected state officials went about selecting some of the lands it had been promised, lands that they hoped contained valuable petroleum and precious metals. One of the first selections was along the Arctic Coast at Prudhoe Bay, where oil seepages hinted at significant subterranean oil deposits. A number of factors, however, conspired to slow the state land selection process so that by 1965, the federal

⁷⁴ Susan Schiefelbein, "Alaska: The Great Land War," *Saturday Review* (February 17, 1979), 15; Naske, "103,350,000 Acres," *Alaska Journal* 2 (Autumn 1972): 2-13. See also, Haycox, *American Colony*, 272.

government had only conveyed 12 million of the 103.3 million acres allocated in the Statehood Act.

During the decades after statehood, Alaska's non-Native residents found themselves facing two unexpected and unwelcomed challenges. First, Alaska Native peoples began demanding that their land claims be recognized, and second, a rising national interest in environmentalism and wilderness preservation threatened to alter Alaska's land-use future. Before statehood, about eighty million acres had been withdrawn for various federal reserves, including military lands, national forests, national parks, fish and wildlife refuges, and a naval petroleum reserve on the Arctic Coast. Acreage occupied by municipalities and in private hands was less than 300,000 acres.⁷⁵ When Alaska's non-Native residents began pursuing that they perceived as the promise of statehood—that is, nearly 104 million acres and economic independence—they would have to contend with indigenous land claims, powerful environmental lobbyists, and a national government unwilling to let Alaska's most scenic and scientifically interesting public lands slip away.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Stephen Haycox, "The Politics of Environment: Cecil Andrus and the Alaska Lands," *Idaho Yesterdays* (Fall 1992), 30.

⁷⁶ Kenneth Coates, "Controlling the Periphery: The Territorial Administration of the Yukon and Alaska, 1867-1959," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 78 (October 1987): 141-51. Coates explains that contrary to myth, the American government was much more attentive to Alaska's economic development than the Canadian government was in the Yukon or the Northwest Territories. See also, Stephen Haycox, "Alaska and the Canadian North: Comparing Conceptual Frameworks," in *Northern Visions: New Perspectives on the North in Canadian History*, eds. Kerry Abel and Ken Coates (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2001), 151-152.

CHAPTER 2

NATIVE CLAIMS AND ENVIRONMENTALISM, 1959-1971

The only real threat to the wildlife and wilderness of the Alaskan arctic stems from the activities of a handful of wilderness extremists and Federal officials.

—Clarence Anderson, Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game, 1958

Alaska is part of this environment which has a quality and character that must be preserved at all costs. Alaska must not succumb to the modern or it will lose much.

—Alaska Task Force, National Park Service, 1965

Contrary to the expectations of many, statehood was not a panacea. It failed to diminish the federal role in Alaska; it did not attract large numbers of new settlers, nor did it produce rapid economic growth. And, the cost of running a new state was considerable. Residents were eager for development, not only logging, fishing, and trapping—elements in Alaska’s traditional economy—but also opening oil and gas fields and mineral deposits. The large land grant promised future economic development, but the state of the economy in 1958 was discouraging. Military spending had passed its peak some years earlier, followed by steady decline. Gold mining had never fully recovered after it was declared nonessential to the war effort in the early 1940s, and salmon fishing faced a crisis brought about by years of federal mismanagement, overfishing, and recent high-seas salmon catches by Japanese fishing fleets. Agricultural production was negligible, and so was the income derived from furs. The future of the timber industry looked brighter, and by 1959 three petroleum wells were operating on the

Kenai Peninsula. Many Alaskans feared, however, that the traditional boom-and-bust economic cycles would repeat themselves.¹

To make matters worse, there was a major obstacle standing between the newly-minted state government and the process of completing its public land selections. During the push for statehood, few politicians considered that the claims of Alaska Natives might be identical to those of the state. Since Alaska's purchase from Russia, Alaska Native rights and land claims had been largely ignored. The 1884 Organic Act, which applied the laws of Oregon Territory to Alaska, gave informal recognition to Native land claims, but it also postponed permanent disposition indefinitely. "Indians and other persons . . . shall not be disturbed in the possession of any lands actually in their use or occupation or claimed by them," the act read, "but the terms under which such persons may acquire title to such lands is reserved for future legislation by Congress."² The language of the Alaska Statehood Act was similarly vague about the rights of Native people to own their ancestral lands, and many in Alaska seemed to view state selections and Native rights as mutually exclusive.

Alaska's indigenous political leaders, however, did not see it that way.³ And, as if the complex and contentious issue of Native land claims were not enough, Alaska's

¹ Naske and Slotnick, *Forty-Ninth State*, 167-176.

² Craig W. Allin, *The Politics of Wilderness Preservation* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2008), 208. See also, Donald C. Mitchell, *Sold American: The Story of Alaska Natives and their Land, 1867-1959* (Fairbanks, University of Alaska Press, 2003).

³ In both the Statehood Act and the state constitution, non-Native Alaskans disclaimed "all right and title to any lands or other property not granted or confirmed to the State . . . and to any lands or other property (including fishing rights), the right or title to which may be held by any . . . Natives, or held by the United States in trust for said Natives." Allin, *Wilderness Preservation*, 209. See also, Robert D. Arnold, *Alaska Native Land Claims* (Anchorage: Alaska Native Foundation, 1978), 91.

development-minded white residents found that during the 1960s and early 1970s a second even more controversial issue was emerging, which also threatened to undermine the promise of statehood. That issue was the growing consensus that the nation had an interest in protecting large amounts of Alaska's wild lands as federal conservation units. As the state of Alaska struggled to settle indigenous land claims in the decade after statehood, state government officials found it impossible to avoid addressing the call for protection of these "national interest" lands. The legislation that first addressed this concern—the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971—not only changed the lives of Alaska's Native peoples, but it also set in motion a remarkable battle over the creation of national parks and other conservation units in Alaska.

While Alaska Native people had always been comparatively large in number compared to the non-Native population, until the 1960s they lacked a coherent political voice. Unlike American Indians of the contiguous United States, the Eskimos, Aleuts, Athabascans, and the coastal Indians of southeastern Alaska had never been conquered, bought out, or forced to sign treaties relinquishing their rights to traditional lands. Their participation in the economic and political life of Alaska was limited, however, and they were for the most part left to their own devices.⁴ It was not until the rise of the civil rights movement in the United States that Alaska Natives began to unite and organize politically. One of the earliest factors contributing to the political awakening of Alaska's indigenous population was the establishment of the *Tundra Times*, a newspaper edited by a Point Hope Eskimo named Howard Rock. The newspaper cultivated a group consciousness among Native communities, and it provided them with a journalistic

⁴ Haycox, *American Colony*, 175.

forum. A second element in the Alaska Native “identity revolution” was the emergence of a number of energetic and capable young Native leaders who “were able to think simultaneously as United States citizens and as Natives.”⁵ Responding to threats to their land rights, Natives in approximately two hundred villages scattered across rural Alaska formed local and regional organizations that eventually led to the creation in 1965 of the statewide political organization known as the Alaska Federation of Natives.

Some of the first issues that helped to mobilize Alaska Natives were environmental threats which alarmed both Alaska Natives and some of Alaska’s earliest environmental activists. The first of these was a scheme proposed by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission in 1958 to create an instant harbor on Alaska’s Arctic Coast by detonating several thermonuclear bombs. As historian Dan O’Neill explains in *The Firecracker Boys*, Alaska appealed to the commission’s planners for a number of reasons: it was distant from major population centers, it had ample coastline for testing in a marine environment, and it was regarded by many as an empty wasteland. The plan, dubbed Project Chariot, was to use six bombs: the first hundred-kiloton devices would carve out an entrance channel of the harbor, and two one-megaton bombs would excavate a turning basin for large vessels. Taken together the explosions would be equivalent to forty percent of all the firepower expended in World War II. The site the Atomic Energy Commission targeted for this unprecedented experiment was on the Chukchi Sea coast, about thirty miles from the ancient Eskimo community of Point Hope, the longest continuously-occupied settlement in North America.⁶

⁵ Naske and Slotnick, *Forty-Ninth State*, 193.

⁶ Dan O’Neill, *The Firecracker Boys: H-Bombs, Inupiat Eskimos, and the Roots of the Environmental Movement* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), 1-4. See also,

The principal organizer of Project Chariot was Edward Teller, the Hungarian physicist celebrated as the “father of the hydrogen bomb,” who arrived in Alaska in July 1958 to sell his plan and announce that the detonations could begin as early as the following summer. Even though many Alaskans were troubled by a postwar economic decline and were eager for more federal spending, Alaska’s businessmen and other boosters did not see the advantage of a port on the Arctic Coast that would be locked in sea ice nine months of the year. They suggested instead that Teller blast a channel through the Alaska Peninsula in southwestern Alaska to speed maritime transport between the Pacific Ocean and the Bering Sea, or alternately, that Teller might choose a different site for a harbor closer to North Slope oil deposits or the population center at Nome. Undeterred, Teller toured Alaska a second time in spring 1959, and this time, some key Alaskan voices had changed their tune. Still elated after the passing of the Alaska statehood bill, the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* declared, “We think the holding of a huge nuclear blast in Alaska would be a fitting overture to the new era which is opening up for our state.”⁷

At the commission’s urging, chambers of commerce in Alaska’s cities launched a “get out the vote” campaign for Project Chariot, and project promoters described that particular corner of the state as a barren wasteland, a “bleak spot” located in a wilderness far from human habitation. The commission and the Alaskan developers, however, failed to take into account that Point Hope was situated near the proposed blast site and that the

Dan O’Neill, “H-Bombs and Eskimos,” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 85 (January 1994): 25-34.

⁷ Editorial, *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, June 24, 1958, 2. See also, Ross, *Environmental Conflict*, 96-109, and Nelson, *Northern Landscapes*, 56-61.

villagers had no intention of allowing the government to blow up their homeland. Meanwhile, a group of young scientists from the University of Alaska raised their opposition to the plan by pointing out misleading statements and outright lies that the commission had been using to advertise Project Chariot. Ultimately, noisy protests from Point Hope residents and a cadre of concerned scientists and environmentalists developed into the first successful opposition to the American nuclear establishment.⁸

Project Chariot was not the only proposed development project during this period that challenged Alaskans' ideas about appropriate land use and that transformed some residents into environmental activists. As early as 1948, government officials had examined the Rampart Gorge at the midsection of Alaska's Yukon River for its hydroelectric potential, but it was not until the early 1960s that the Army Corps of Engineers seriously considered the possibility. The proposed dam would produce an estimated five gigawatts of electricity, and it would create a reservoir four hundred miles long and eighty miles wide with a surface area greater than that of Lake Erie. Supporters of the project included Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy who both made campaign stops in Alaska.⁹ Local dam supporters included businesspeople, politicians, and industry representatives who formed Yukon Power for America, Inc., which promised not only cheap electricity but new industries such as aluminum smelting, a new tourism destination at the lake, and minimal impacts on the environment and Alaska Native peoples. Alaska Senator Ernest Gruening, one of the most enthusiastic pro-Rampart

⁸ Peter A. Coates, "Project Chariot: Alaskan Roots of Environmentalism," *Alaska History* 4 (Fall 1989): 1-31.

⁹ John F. Kennedy, "Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy at Edgewater Hotel, Anchorage, Alaska," JFK Presidential Library and Museum, September 3, 1960.

advocates, claimed that the dam would improve the lives of the 2,000 Athabascan Indians whose traditional villages would be inundated. “Their habitations are miserable and their livelihood a bare subsistence supplemented by relief,” he argued. “[T]hey will have better homes, better community facilities and a permanent income from now nonexistent activities, generated by the lake.”¹⁰

Beginning in 1960, growing alarm spread through the nascent environmental community and the nine Native villages that would either be destroyed or have their salmon runs disrupted. The Alaska Conservation Society was the first sizable conservation group to oppose construction of the dam, followed by the distant California Fish and Game Commission, which declared, “Nowhere in the history of water development in North America have the fish and wildlife losses anticipated to result from a single project been so overwhelming.”¹¹ Articles in *Field and Stream*, *The Atlantic*, and *Audubon Society Magazine* followed, and all agreed: the dam would destroy Alaska’s most priceless resource, its fish and wildlife and the wilderness that sustained them. Alaska Native leaders from Point Hope and other Eskimo communities in the Arctic also protested the dam idea. As in the case of the Atomic Energy Commission’s thermonuclear designs, Rampart Dam planners quietly shelved their blueprints when Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall in 1962 announced that he was strongly opposed to the idea. What the controversial project made plain for all to understand was that

¹⁰ Ernest Gruening, “Ducks and the Dam,” *Sports Illustrated*, August 5, 1963, n.p. See also, Coates, *Pipeline Controversy*, 134-161.

¹¹ A. Starker Leopold and Justin W. Leonard, “Alaska Dam Would Be Resources Disaster,” *Audubon* (May/June 1966), 178; Paul Brooks, “The Plot to Drown Alaska,” *Atlantic* 215 (May 1965), 53-59; Clare Conley, “Rampart Dam and the Perpetual Engineers,” *Field and Stream* (June 1966), 34-36; Stephen H. Spurr, “Rampart Dam: A Costly Gamble,” *Audubon* (May/June 1966), 173-175.

environmental activism would no longer be limited to lobbying for the protection of beautiful scenery. Whole ecosystems, including animals, plants, watersheds, and humans, were now the top priority. And like Project Chariot, the dam project had encouraged Alaska Native peoples to organize and to make their voices heard in future land-use planning.

Amid the controversy over these projects, Alaska's Natives were also beginning to challenge the state government's land selections. As the state began to select acreage in 1959 and 1960, Natives grew alarmed because many of the blocks of land included areas that Natives had depended upon since time immemorial. These lands, from the point of view of Alaska Natives, were still subject to considerations of aboriginal title. Bureau of Indian Affairs attorneys encouraged Natives to identify areas they considered ancestral, and after learning how casually state officials ignored their interests during the Project Chariot and Rampart Dam episodes, Native peoples responded quickly. As early as 1961, the Bureau of Indian Affairs protested the state's selections of areas claimed by Natives near the villages of Northway, Minto, Tanacross, and Lake Aleknagik.¹² Throughout the state, Natives filed so many land claims that the Department of the Interior had to hire additional attorneys to process them. In fact, because the total number of claims overlapped, the number of acres under Native selection exceeded the total acreage in the state.

By 1963 Alaska Natives were asking Interior Secretary Stewart Udall to halt all selection of federal lands by the state until a comprehensive Native land claims settlement could be reached. Although at first Udall ignored their request, three years

¹² Robert Cahn, *The Fight to Save Wild Alaska* (New York: National Audubon Society, 1982), 12.

later, after recognizing that a hopeless tangle of lawsuits was inevitable, Udall responded by imposing a moratorium, halting the state's selection process until the Native land claims issue could be resolved.¹³ This "land freeze" angered most non-Native Alaska residents who regarded the Statehood Act as a compact or sacred promise that Congress would not interfere with the state's land selections. The controversy created considerable racial tension as white Alaskans began to realize that the promise of the Statehood Act would, at least temporarily, take a back seat to Native land claims.¹⁴ Because ninety-five percent of the potential state land was still under federal ownership, the land freeze dramatically limited economic development for the foreseeable future. Although Governor Walter Hickel, elected in 1966, attempted to sue the federal government to lift the freeze on state selections, the suit was overturned, and before Udall left office he changed the informal freeze into law. Udall's Public Land Order No. 4582 withdrew all vacant, unappropriated, and unreserved public lands in Alaska from appropriation under any land law until December 31, 1970.¹⁵

Since the late 1950s, drilling in the Cook Inlet on the coast of south-central Alaska had produced significant oil profits for Alaska. Because the state received ninety percent of federal revenues from such leases, the land freeze was a costly proposition because it prevented new oil fields from being developed. In January 1968, however, the

¹³ Arnold, *Native Land Claims*, 117-118; Donald Mitchell, *Take My Land, Take My Life: The Story of Congress's Historic Settlement of Alaska Native Land Claims, 1960-1971* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2001), 435-436.

¹⁴ Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Land & Water Management, "'Promised Land': A History of Alaska's Selection of Its Congressional Land Grants," (May 1987), 41.

¹⁵ Arnold, *Native Land Claims*, 123-125.

stakes were raised dramatically when the Atlantic-Richfield Company announced that an exploratory well southeast of Point Barrow on the state's first land selection had yielded "a substantial flow of gas" and evidence of large crude oil deposits. Subsequent exploration confirmed that the field contained an estimated 9.6 billion barrels of oil, making it the largest ever discovered in North America and sparking speculation that it might be one of the largest oil fields in the world.¹⁶ State planners and executives from a dozen oil companies realized that the pipeline they needed to move Prudhoe Bay crude to a port on Alaska's southern coast would likely trespass on land claimed by Alaska Native peoples. Suddenly everyone had a vested interest in settling the ancestral land claims of Alaska Natives, and after a 100-year delay, negotiations for a settlement began in earnest.

Before long, one more group joined the now burgeoning cast of characters in the play for Alaskan land. Environmentalists eyed the huge statehood grant, and they understood the potential for a large Native land claims settlement as well as the hugely valuable corporate oil and mineral claims. They came to fear that Alaska's wilderness would be destroyed in the rush to make the last frontier into a vast industrial park and a simulacrum of suburban America. But, to understand why circumstances in Alaska provoked such a reaction, it is important to consider the rise of environmentalism in the nation and how this national movement made inroads in Alaska. During the 1960s, attitudes in the United States regarding the natural world evolved rapidly. Historian Roderick Nash, the chronicler of American perspectives on wilderness, notes that wilderness benefited greatly from the birth of the counterculture, what he calls "the most

¹⁶ "'Substantial Flow of Gas' in Arctic," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 16, 1968, 1; Pamela Ruinstein, "Pipeline Prospect Gains," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, June 26, 1968, 1; "North Slope Oil Find One of Biggest," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, August 7, 1968, 10.

intense and widespread questioning of established American values and institutions in the nation's history.”¹⁷

Although exploitative attitudes toward the natural world were alive and well in America during the 1960s, a growing number of Americans, young and old, began to question the value of technology, power, profit, and unlimited growth. Many Americans found solace and spiritual awakening in wilderness. Others saw national parks as an antidote to the civilization that they had come to distrust and resent. As Nash explains, to these new “green” thinkers, centralization, urbanization, and industrialization were “forces of destruction rather than the saviors of mankind.” By the end of a decade marred by war, riots, and assassinations, such disenchantment was widespread across the country. Defending wilderness had become another means of resisting the establishment and spending time exploring the country's wild places became an increasingly popular way of finding inspiration in an age of alienation.¹⁸

Even those who did not venture far beyond their cities and suburbs were stirred by messages about the value of wilderness from publications by the Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society, and from Western and outdoor magazines. Others were introduced to the beauty of mountain, forest, and desert landscapes by photographers such as Ansel Adams and other nature photographers whose work appeared in mass distribution weeklies like *Life*, *Look*, and *Colliers*.¹⁹ Wilderness and ecology themes became inculcated into American thought by two highly visible books published in the early

¹⁷ Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 251.

¹⁸ Nash, “Wilderness Idea,” 18-19; Haycox, “Politics of Environment,” 29.

¹⁹ Haycox, *American Colony*, 287.

1960s. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* became a bestseller because it exposed the careless use of chemical pesticides in the agricultural industry. Pesticides like DDT that were shown to be carcinogenic leached into aquifers and contaminated the land. The book sparked environmental outrage across the nation, resulting in federal, state, and municipal laws banning certain pesticides; it ultimately led to the adoption of federal and state clear water and air standards. A second book, *The Quiet Crisis* by Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, argued that because of population growth, development, and ignorance, Americans were losing their vast wilderness areas, a heritage Udall called "priceless." The book was read widely, and it helped to mobilize wilderness enthusiasts in their campaign to pass congressional legislation to create a federal wilderness protection program.²⁰

Alaska too had its wilderness advocates. During the 1950s, Olaus and Mardy Murie began a campaign to save the northeast corner of the state from development by convincing Congress to create the 19.3-million-acre Arctic National Wildlife Range. Unlike John Muir and others, the Muries rejected the belief that the Arctic's remoteness, rugged terrain, and lack of mineral deposits would protect the region in perpetuity. Because Alaska's backcountry was increasingly accessible by roads and airplanes, Olaus Murie argued that Alaska needed long-term land-use planning to protect wildlife and to

²⁰ Haycox, *American Colony*, 288. In *Quiet Crisis*, Udall described Alaska as a last chance to preserve wild places: "In Alaska we have a magnificent opportunity to show more respect for wilderness and wildlife values than did our forebears. The wonders of the wilderness still abound there; if we spoil them, we cannot excuse their defilement with pleas of ignorance." Stewart L. Udall, *Quiet Crisis* (New York: Avon Books, 1963), 193-194.

prevent the loss of wilderness in the nation's last frontier.²¹ Despite their reservations about federal withdrawals of Alaskan lands, a segment of Alaskan residents were drawn to the idea of a conservation unit that preserved recreational opportunities and the state's "Arctic frontier flavor," provided, of course, that the region in question offered little economic value.²²

Opponents argued that the conservationist argument that Arctic lands were threatened was overblown and that formal protection was superfluous. Commissioner Clarence Anderson of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, for example, sneered that the "only real threat to the wildlife and wilderness of the Alaskan arctic stems from the activities of a handful of wilderness extremists and Federal officials." The Arctic, he concluded, was "probably in little more peril of being trampled in future years than is the moon."²³ After years of lobbying and several false starts, Interior Secretary Frederick Seaton convinced President Eisenhower to sign an executive order on December 6, 1960 establishing the Arctic Wildlife Range (which later became the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge) and the smaller Izembek and Kuskokwim wildlife ranges. The Arctic Wildlife Range was the first major protected area since Mt. McKinley National Park (1917) and

²¹ Olaus Murie, "Planning for Alaska's Big Game," in *Science in Alaska*, ed. Henry Collins (Washington, D.C.: Arctic Institute of North America, 1952): 258, 267. See also, Coates, *Pipeline Controversy*, 96.

²² Coates, *Pipeline Controversy*, 100. See also, Roger Kaye, *Last Great Wilderness: The Campaign to Establish the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2006), 205-206, and Jonathan Waterman, *Where Mountains Are Nameless: Passion and Politics in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005).

²³ Coates, *Pipeline Controversy*, 102-103. See also, Daniel Nelson, "Idealism and Organization: Origins of the Environmental Movement in Alaska," *Alaska History* 18 (Spring/Fall 2003): 13-35.

Glacier Bay National Monument (1925), and it was much larger. The campaign to create the refuge helped to galvanize Alaska's small conservation community during the 1960s.

National legislation also gave the environmentalism movement in America a boost. Members of The Wilderness Society, including its director Howard Zahniser, and several congressmen had been pushing for a law protecting wilderness areas in the United States since the mid-1950s, and they had been repeatedly frustrated. In 1956, Representative Wayne Aspinall called the first wilderness bill drafted by Zahniser "a crazy idea," and even the National Park Service, with its emphasis on park hotels and road access in parks, originally opposed the idea of heavily protected federal lands. In 1964, however, President Johnson signed the Wilderness Act into law, which defined wilderness this way: "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain."²⁴

The original bill established 9.1 million acres of federally protected wilderness in national forests, thereby creating the National Wilderness Preservation System, which mandated that wilderness was to be managed "for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such a manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness." This directive was similar to the National Park Service's mandate, except that the wilderness designation was more restrictive than the management policies in national park units. Roads are not allowed in a wilderness area, and permanent camps or

²⁴ Mark Harvey, *Wilderness Forever: Howard Zahniser and the Path to the Wilderness Act* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 226-238; Allin, *Politics of Wilderness*, 103-137.

structures are prohibited as well. Vehicles or other forms of mechanical equipment are also banned. Wildlife and wildlife habitat were to be maintained in as primitive a condition as possible, and human beings were not allowed to use wilderness lands for consumptive purposes. Since the Wilderness Act became law, the wilderness designation has frequently served as an overlay, adding to a national park's management strategy. The practice became a point of contention in later debates over the creation of national parks in Alaska.²⁵

In many ways, the evolution of the National Park Service's role in Alaska and the evolution of environmental consciousness were separate phenomena. With the exception of the Sitka and Old Kasaan monuments, Alaska's earliest parks were remote, seldom visited, and guarded by skeleton crews. The agency lacked funding and personnel to manage their conservation units effectively, and visitation remained low for decades. For example, National Park Service records show no visitors to Glacier Bay between 1925 and 1940, and Katmai recorded just thirty-two visitors during the same period. Mt. McKinley National Park attracted a steady stream of visitors, perhaps as many as 1,500 per year, but between 1920 and 1940, the park's annual visitor count was the lowest of any national park in the country.²⁶ The effect of minimal management was somewhat paradoxical. On the one hand, tiny cadres of park employees were hard pressed to monitor park land use by locals who harvested firewood, prospected for gold, or poaching fur-bearing animals. On the other hand, failure to manage Alaska parks and monuments reinforced perceptions in Alaska that the federal government was insensitive

²⁵ Norris, "Alaska Wilderness," 10-12.

²⁶ Norris, "Lone Voice," 70.

to the needs of the public. According to National Park Service historian George Williss, this damaged the agency's image in Alaska and made it difficult in the 1960s and 1970s to muster support for its efforts to make new additions to the National Park System.²⁷

Beginning in the late 1920s, the National Park Service began a series of unsuccessful bids to create new national parks in Alaska; however, the effort did result in area surveys that, when viewed as a group, began to remedy the lack of information agency officials in Washington, D.C. had about Alaska. The process accelerated between 1950 and 1954 when the Alaska Recreation Survey produced, among other things, a study of tourism, a comprehensive geological survey of the territory, a biological study of Katmai, and a broad-scale recreation plan for Alaska. These studies, however, could not overcome the agency's chronic lack of funding and personnel. Some relief came in 1957 when Mission 66, a National Park Service campaign to improve interpretation and construct visitor centers, provided Alaska parks with money for badly needed roads, tourist facilities, and operational buildings. Such improvements made the Mt. McKinley, Glacier Bay, and Katmai parks more accessible. But, despite these improvements, when National Park Service planner John Kauffmann traveled to the state in 1964 to make a film about the Alaskan parks, he was appalled by what he observed. He wrote a withering report that circulated throughout the agency's national headquarters, describing opportunities lost, failures to adapt to the Alaska environment, and a lack of an organized plan for Alaska's park system. He charged that the National Park Service had failed to

²⁷ Williss, "Do Things Right," 7.

make its presence known in the state, and he added that “after more than forty years as an organization, the Service is the Cheechako of all federal agencies at work in Alaska.”²⁸

When George Hartzog, Jr. became the national director of the National Park Service in 1964, he soon recognized that any significant growth in the national park system would need to occur in Alaska. Hartzog’s approach to expanding the national park system was “take it now, warts and all . . . if you try to solve all problems you may never get the park,” and he regarded Alaska as “ripe for the taking.”²⁹ To implement his bold proposal, the new director created the Alaska Task Force, a group of experienced “Alaska hands” charged with assessing the agency’s performance and suggesting a future course. Like Kauffmann before them, the task force produced a report called “Operation Great Land,” which criticized National Park Service operations and warned that major steps needed to be taken before either Alaskans or other Americans would support the agency’s program in Alaska. The report was a call to arms, identifying seventy-six million acres of federal land in Alaska that the task force recommended for designation as national parks. The report explained, “[w]hat the National Park Service is concerned with is the total environment of the nation. Alaska is a part of this environment which has a quality and character that must be preserved at all costs. Alaska must not succumb to the modern or it will lose much.”³⁰ Few of the task force’s recommendations were

²⁸ Williss, “Do Things Right,” 10. Cheechako is a local term referring to a greenhorn or newcomer to the North; it is thought to have come from “Chicago,” the hometown of many gold-seekers.

²⁹ George B. Hartzog, Jr., *Battling for the National Parks* (Mt. Kisco, NY: Moyer Bell Limited, 1988), 205.

³⁰ National Park Service, “Operation Great Land: Alaska Task Force Report,” (January 1965), 9.

acted upon, and ultimately Hartzog, after deciding that the report was too aggressive, chose not to circulate it.³¹

The most ambitious attempt to expand the national park system in Alaska during the 1960s was an effort by National Park Service officials to convince President Lyndon Johnson to approve seven million acres of new monuments in Alaska and elsewhere during the closing months of his presidency as “a parting gift for future generations.” The plan was hatched by Interior Secretary Udall in fall of 1968, and it included six areas in Alaska. The proposed parklands included additional land for Mt. McKinley and Katmai and a newly created, two-unit park in the Brooks Range called Gates of the Arctic National Monument. Despite nearly four months of concentrated effort on the part of National Park Service employees, other agencies, and Interior Department staff, President Johnson balked at the very last moment and refused to sign most of the proclamations prepared for his signature. It is unclear why Johnson decided against the full package. In the end, however, he signed proclamations for three monuments in the contiguous states and one in Alaska, a 94,000-acre addition to Katmai National Monument.³² Although agency planners had largely failed in the 1960s to create new national parks in Alaska, a bill was working its way through Congress that would become what one historian called

³¹ While explaining why he shelved the report, Hartzog said, “I believe that if the Park Service proceeds on its own to take leadership, that action may be misconstrued and resented even though no usurpation of the prerogatives and the programs of other agencies would be intended. It is for this reason that I do not believe we should circulate this report, since it may be construed as a Service attempt to take over Alaska resource planning.” Williss, “Do Things Right,” 13.

³² Robert Cahn, “How National Park Plan Slipped Away,” *Christian Science Monitor*, January 23, 1969, 1. See also, Cahn, *Save Wild Alaska*, 9; Ross, *Environmental Conflict*, 194.

“the vehicle that would provide for parks in Alaska almost beyond the wildest dreams of anyone in the National Park Service.”³³

The authors of that legislation—what became the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA)—were not driven by a desire to create national parks. Their focus was the recent discovery of petroleum deposits at Prudhoe Bay on Alaska’s Arctic Coast. In the two years following the oil discovery, company officials collaborated with a coalition of Native leaders to write a claims settlement bill. After months of negotiation, the draft bill promised Alaska Natives title to 44 million acres of land and transformed indigenous cultures overnight by organizing Native groups into regional and village corporations that would use their lands as a basis for profit-making in the national and international marketplaces. These Native-owned corporations would share \$962.5 million as compensation for agreeing to extinguish their ancestral title to Alaska’s remaining lands. While negotiations were underway, a number of conservation organizations united to form the Alaska Coalition, which then lobbied to add a “national interest” lands provision into the bill. The coalition’s efforts ultimately transformed ANCSA from a lands settlement act for indigenous Alaskans into a lands act for all Americans.

When it first formed, the Alaska Coalition consisted of the Sierra Club, the Wilderness Society, the National Wildlife Federation, the Wildlife Management Institute, Friends of the Earth, Defenders of Wildlife, Trout Unlimited, Zero Population Growth, Environmental Action, and the Citizens Committee on Natural Resources. In Alaska the organization operated through the Alaska Conservation Society, Sierra Club/Alaska,

³³ Williss, “Do Things Right,” 20.

Alaska Wilderness Council, and the Fairbanks Environmental Center.³⁴ Because the environmental movement in the nation was at its peak, as was the movement for minority rights, Congress could not ignore the claims of Alaska Natives or this powerful environmental lobby. In Anchorage, the director of the Alaska Wilderness Council, Mark Ganopole, organized a group of 200 people who called themselves the “Maps on the Floor Society,” and seemingly overnight, the National Park Service in Alaska had a new set of park advocates. The group, which included National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife professionals, spent months pouring over maps on the floor of the Wilderness Council office and drafting proposals for future park lands.³⁵

After several unsuccessful attempts to include a “national interest” lands provision in early drafts of the bill, the Alaska Coalition finally succeeded in adding Section 17 (d)(2) to the land claims settlement act. The provision called for designating up to eighty million acres of the public domain in Alaska as conservation units. It gave the Interior Secretary just nine months to withdraw lands he determined were suitable for consideration as additions to each of the four conservation categories: national parks, national forests, national wildlife refuges, and wild and scenic rivers. The secretary was given until December 19, 1973 to make his final recommendations to Congress about which lands initially withdrawn from entry should be protected by the federal government in perpetuity.³⁶ The debate in Alaska and in the nation about which lands

³⁴ Ross, *Environmental Conflict*, 195; Coates, *Pipeline Controversy*, 217-218.

³⁵ Ross, *Environmental Conflict*, 194, 196; Nelson, *Northern Landscapes*, 120-122.

³⁶ Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 244-245.

should be protected and which left open to development became known as the “d-2 land debate.” This highly contentious issue expanded the original intent of ANCSA—settling indigenous land claims—and it focused the attention of millions of Americans on the question of how to preserve Alaska’s wild places.

CHAPTER 3

D-2 DEBATE AND NATIONAL MONUMENTS, 1971-1978

Alaska is being used as a sacrificial lamb for every American who has ever committed an abuse—real or imagined—against the environment.

—Chuck Hawley, Alaska Miners Association, 1977

We have no intention . . . of turning Alaska into some sort of wilderness playground for the rich. And equally we will not allow it to become a private preserve for a handful of rape-ruin-and-run developers.

—Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus, 1978

The architects of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 resolved to address a number of pressing issues—and they did. ANCSA settled Alaska Native claims to their ancestral lands; it extinguished future Native land claims in the state; and it specified that if the Secretary of the Interior wanted to set aside a pipeline transportation and utility corridor, neither the State of Alaska nor Alaska Natives could select lands within it.¹ However, Section 17 (d)(2) of the act indicated that Alaska Native people would not be the only ones making selections from public lands—so would the Secretary of the Interior on behalf of the American people. This dramatic turn of events mobilized environmentalists in Alaska and across the nation because they saw a chance to protect large tracts of Alaska’s public lands. The d-2 provision also caught the attention of state officials who saw themselves slipping from first in line for land selections immediately after statehood, to second in line after Alaska Native claims in the 1960s, to third in line after environmental activists in the 1970s. Although Alaska Natives were already going through a cultural and political transformation with ANCSA,

¹ Coates, *Pipeline Controversy*, 226-227.

they were forced to join the d-2 debate because regulations in new national parks and multiple-use options for public lands could disrupt traditional indigenous land-use patterns. Along the way, Alaska's non-Native residents, average folks without political connections, found their voice and found themselves in a rhetorical battle against forces more powerful than they. And, whereas before Alaska's land-use struggles had primarily been an internal affair, the d-2 land debate of the 1970s placed the question of national parks in Alaska onto a national stage, triggering a bitter 9-year struggle over ownership of Alaska's wildlands that some called "the scramble to cut up Alaska."²

During the 1970s, many residents and state officials were still clinging to what they regarded as the promise of statehood—the nearly 104 million acres of public lands that were supposed to guarantee Alaska's economic future. These residents grew increasingly anxious over the course of the d-2 selection process as the total area of federal land withdrawals grew from 80 million acres to nearly 104 million acres, roughly the same as was promised to Alaska under its Statehood Act. Once withdrawn, the protected lands would be closed to state selection and to appropriation under other public land laws, including mining and oil leasing, until the Interior Secretary made recommendations and Congress acted to make the selections permanent. This circumstance sparked a fierce battle that produced several rounds of coordinated and spontaneous local protests against what was becoming the largest conservation effort in American history. Although several years passed before most Alaskans became engaged in the d-2 debate, Alaska's politicians and media pundits weighed in almost immediately. Over the course of the decade, Alaska and its congressional delegation employed a

² Naske and Slotnick, *Forty-Ninth State*, 225.

variety of tactics to gain the upper hand in the swiftly evolving land claims imbroglio. The struggle, however, would end badly for the anti-park partisans because by 1978 the federal government stepped in to protect far more acreage than was authorized under ANCSA.

The first interested party to act after ANCSA became law was the State of Alaska. Rather than waiting for the federal government to make its preliminary d-2 land selections, Governor William Egan waited just three weeks before attempting to preempt the entire federal land selection process by filing for seventy-seven million acres for the state under the authority of the Statehood Act. The state selections were concentrated in the central Brooks Range, the Wrangell Mountains, and other areas that the National Park Service and the Alaska environmentalists considered ideal for new national parks. The selection would have been a significant portion of the 104 million acres promised under statehood had it been successful, but the maneuver angered Interior Secretary Rogers Morton who ignored the request and continued gathering information about exceptional Alaska lands. The Sierra Club's newspaper condemned the state's provocative move, declaring, "A giant land grab, the likes of which the world has never known, is now under way. . . . the state government of Alaska has already jumped the gun."³

Meanwhile, a coalition of conservation groups, including the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society, and The Wilderness Society, spent \$30,000 on full-page newspaper advertisements that appeared simultaneously in Anchorage, New York, Boston, and San Francisco asking Secretary Morton to take action on the d-2 issue.⁴ In early March 1972,

³ Ross, *Environmental Conflict*, 196; Nelson, *Northern Landscapes*, 120-121.

⁴ "Interior Action Pleases Sierra, 'Ads Paid Off,'" *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 16, 1972, 1; Nelson, *Northern Landscapes*, 120.

speaking before a National Park Service group in Washington, D.C., Morton said, “I feel especially fortunate and privileged to be Secretary of the Interior at a time when my office is invested with the authority to preserve a substantial and unique part of America for future generation. . . . [it] is an opportunity which will not be passed by—I promise you that.”⁵

Among the first in Alaska to respond was Governor Egan, who declared that the Interior Secretary’s decision had been “arbitrary, capricious, and an abuse of discretion,” and he announced that the state would file a lawsuit in federal court to block the withdrawals.⁶ Alaska Attorney General John Havelock called it “a 135 million-acre ripoff” and charged that Morton had “caved in” to “national pressure groups,” making his decision based not on the national interest but on propaganda from the Alaska Coalition’s advertising and public relations campaign. He also argued that Morton had violated constitutional guarantees to Alaska under the Statehood Act. After learning that forty-two million acres of the withdrawn lands overlapped the lands selected by Alaska earlier in the year, the state’s Natural Resources Commissioner Charles Herbert explained, “I feel about the same way I did on Dec. 8, 1941, the day after Pearl Harbor. . . . We’re in an awful battle and there’ll probably be a lot of blood-letting.” House Speaker Gene Guess said Morton’s order was “a premeditated assault on Alaska’s sovereign right to manage

⁵ “Interior Action Pleases Sierra, ‘Ads Paid Off,’” *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 16, 1972, 1.

⁶ Morton and the Department of the Interior settled out of court with the State of Alaska by permitting the state to select 600,000 acres that would have been added to the southern edge of Mt. McKinley Park. The state could also select parts of the central Brooks Range and retain a transportation corridor across a portion of what later became Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. In return, the state relinquished its demand for immediate selection of the entire seventy-seven million acres. Ross, *Environmental Conflict*, 196-197. See also, Williss, “Do Things Right,” 53.

its own destiny” to which State Representative Nick Begich added that the withdrawal was “nothing less than a massive land grab by the federal government at the expense of the people.”⁷

Editorialists in Alaska’s more conservative and development-oriented newspaper, the *Anchorage Times*, also joined the fray. One writer described the federal withdrawals as a betrayal and explained in dramatic fashion that “In issuing the withdrawal, Interior Secretary Rogers C.B. Morton used no knife. But the pen he used to sign the order was, in the view of some Alaskans, just as deadly.” The newspaper’s editor questioned Secretary Morton’s assertion that he had not impinged on the state’s legal rights, and he urged the governor to pursue the lawsuit against the federal government “promptly, with the best legal advice and help he can obtain.”⁸ Another editorial in the same issue of the newspaper quoted Morton’s announcement of the withdrawals and stated:

[I]t’s the kind of caretaker, oppressive comment Alaskans probably are going to hear more and more often in the future. Unfortunately, it is beginning to appear that Alaska’s sovereign status as a full member of the Union is more an illusion than it is a fact. . . . Alaskans were once pioneers dedicated to conquering and developing a hostile and forbidding land. They were tough individuals who had to fight for survival and who were willing to fight for the common good of those who shared the battles waged on the last frontier. That may all be in the past. Alaskans of the future may be just a collective glob of zoo keepers. And the Sierra Club will cheer.⁹

The rhetoric generated by Alaska’s politicians and published in the *Anchorage Times* was not the only response to the Secretary Morton’s March withdrawals. Included

⁷ “Alaska’s Politicians Blast Interior Withdrawals,” *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 16, 1972, 2.

⁸ “The Battle Goes On,” *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 16, 1972, 6.

⁹ “The Zoo Keepers’ State [editorial],” *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 16, 1972, 6.

in ANCSA was a mandate to collect public opinion on d-2 land selections through a joint federal-state land use planning commission, which was already making plans to hold public hearings in thirty-one Alaska communities and four cities in the contiguous United States. Representatives from four federal agencies—from the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, and the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation—would also attend the hearings to consider testimony related to lands the might fall under their respective jurisdictions. An eight-page brochure explaining the d-2 lands process was mailed to all the state’s registered voters to acquaint them with the topic and to prepare them for the hearing that began on April 20, 1973 in Anchorage. The commission’s findings would later be sent to the Department of the Interior and to Congress to assist them in making land selections.¹⁰

The 1973 hearings began slowly with only eight people testifying on the first day. The agenda was arranged so that politicians had an opportunity to speak first, and at length, before average citizens began their testimonies under a two-minute time limit. The range of opinions fell into a predictable pattern as Alaska Representative Don Young urged that a minimum amount of land be set aside and that it be classified for multiple-use. He argued that Alaska belonged to Alaskans first and only secondly to the nation and that the state “is not a pie to be sliced and apportioned according to the appetites of different federal agencies.” He also questioned the wisdom of creating large wildlife refuges and urged that humans be considered in land use planning, “not just muskrats, mountains or money.” Later, Rollin del Piaz of the Alaska Conservation Society stated

¹⁰ Tyler Jones, “80 Million Acres: D-2 Hearings Set,” *Anchorage Daily News*, April 16, 1973, 1; Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission for Alaska, “Land Planning and Policy in Alaska: Recommendations Concerning National Interest Lands” (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1974).

that protected wild lands were “there for our children and our desire for a little better and richer life for our children.” Del Piaz argued that d-2 lands should be locked up for conservation purposes like a “safety deposit box” adding, “If we sell, or worse, give away public lands to private interest development, as we have done all too often in the past, the key to the future use and enjoyment of those lands is lost.”¹¹

When the hearings reached Fairbanks, the local newspaper, the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, ran an editorial that argued that “to tie up a large amount of the last frontier would likely prove a real folly in future generations,” and it reminded readers that only the National Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management employed a multiple-use management approach. “The future of our state is on the line,” the writer insisted, for “Alaskans have already contributed many times more land to preservation than any other state. It is time to stand and be counted; not to be stifled by the conscience of a vocal minority from the smaller states.”¹² The testimony in Fairbanks for the most part followed this line of thinking. A construction foreman testified to the benefits of mining beyond the extraction of minerals, stating, “Mining is beneficial to the land. I consider myself a conservationist, but I don’t hold with the alarmist strategy. Mining helped create homesites and to develop the land.”¹³ Other participants in the hearings insisted that more study was necessary before land selections should be made by the government. “We believe time has been too short, information too sketchy, a methodology too one-

¹¹ Andy Williams, “Land Use Hearings: What to Do with 80 Million Acres,” *Anchorage Daily News*, April 24, 1973, 1.

¹² “Take Message to Commission [editorial],” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, May 17, 1973, 4.

¹³ Alan Arnold, “Sackett Urges Land Use Analysis,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, May 18, 1973, 1.

sided,” declared Barry Jackson, head of the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce Task Force on Land Use, “to give the assurance that recommendations made now for the disposition of D2 lands will be seen to be wise 50 and 100 years from now.”¹⁴ State Senator George Silides also insisted that the state needed more time to study the d-2 lands and asked that the commissioners “use the influence of this commission to stand between us and those in political and economic power who would relegate this state to the status of a chattel to be ignored, enjoyed or manipulated at will to the benefit of their own real or imagined interests.”¹⁵

In Fairbanks, the president of the newly formed Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, Joseph Upickson, spoke for his Alaska Native shareholders in northern Alaska when he urged that a national park be created in the central Brooks Range. Upickson suggested that the park be called Nunamiut Park and that it establish its headquarters in the Nunamiut Eskimo community of Anaktuvuk Pass (population 250) deep within the mountain range. He added that no rights-of-way or easements should be permitted in the proposed park and that only subsistence hunting should be allowed. This national park concept came in response to concerns among the residents of Anaktuvuk Pass who had recently seen the State Department of Highways build a road through their backyard and across their caribou hunting grounds as part of an effort to allow Alaska’s

¹⁴ Alan Arnold, “Land Use Testimony Calls for Alaskan Control,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, May 19, 1973, 1.

¹⁵ Alan Arnold, “Sackett Urges Land Use Analysis,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, May 18, 1973, 1; Alan Arnold, “Land Use Testimony Calls for Alaskan Control,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, May 19, 1973, 1.

truckers to supply Prudhoe Bay oil rigs with parts and supplies.¹⁶ Concerns about disruption of traditional Alaska Native cultures and losing out on the prosperity from economic development were widespread in Native communities throughout the state.

When the hearings reached Anaktuvuk Pass later that month, many of the residents who attended spoke only their native Inupiaq language and relied on an interpreter when taking the podium. They spoke about a time before the town was founded in the late 1950s when the Nunamiut traveled seasonally through the Brooks Range in pursuit of caribou herds and to the Arctic Coast to trade. They testified that their people were now caught between two worlds—the cash economy and a subsistence economy—and they voiced concerns about outside hunters taking caribou and wolves in the area and about the regulations that might be employed if the area were made into a national park. A young man named John Hugo asked the interpreter to explain the community’s feelings about the prospect of living in a national park: “He said he really doesn’t understand what a park means,” the interpreter said, “but they have been talking about it here for some time. And, they would like to see their land protected from any other intrusions.”¹⁷ The testimony by the people of Anaktuvuk Pass did not address larger economic issues in the region. Behind the scenes, however, Alaska Native leaders of the corporations created by ANCSA were considering ways to benefit economically

¹⁶ Chris Allan, “The Brief Life and Strange Times of the Hickel Highway: Alaska’s First Haul Road,” *Alaska History* 24 (Fall 2009): 23-25.

¹⁷ John Hugo, Tape #AAF2789, May 12, 1973, Anaktuvuk Pass D2 Hearings, Project Jukebox, Oral History Program, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

from oil development on the North Slope. This included allowances for an oil pipeline through the Brooks Range and Anaktuvuk Pass, the lowest pass through the mountains.¹⁸

While the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission gathered information from Alaskans about their preferred uses for public lands, a number of federal agencies realized that they lacked critical information about which lands in Alaska needed protection under the four conservation systems. The Forest Service, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, and the National Park Service all began conducting their own studies of the potential d-2 lands. The National Park Service study group, still known as the Alaska Task Force, consisted of four small teams, each comprised of a team captain, an ecologist, a landscape architect, and an interpretive planner. The task force was instructed to take an “eco-systems approach” to proposing new park lands which meant selecting complete watersheds, intact wildlife habitats, and large units of geological importance such as entire mountain ranges or, in the case of the Kobuk Valley, unique arctic sand dunes.¹⁹ As the various federal study teams began their work, they came to realize that information from previous studies was inadequate for their purposes. For example, the Alaska Task Force recognized from the very beginning that subsistence (the legal right to hunt animals for food and collect other natural products like furs and firewood) would be a critical issue in the creation of new parks; however, no hard data on the extent or location of subsistence use of the land existed. Furthermore, national park

¹⁸ Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission for Alaska, “Codinvolve Analysis of the 1973 Land Planning Hearings for Alaska Held by the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission,” (1973). For more about the effects of ANCSA on Alaska Native peoples, see Thomas R. Berger, *Village Journey: The Report of the Alaska Native Review Commission* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985).

¹⁹ Williss, “Do Things Right,” 54.

critics charged that parks would “lock up” Alaska’s potential mineral wealth. Even after several years of studies, the fact remained that neither the National Park Service nor those who opposed national parks knew with any accuracy where the state’s major mineral deposits were located. As a general rule, the government valued scenic and scientific areas; the state focused on mineral-rich areas with access, and the two categories were usually mutually exclusive. None of the interested parties could be sure, however, and the d-2 land debate continued unabated.

With just two days to spare before the d-2 deadline of December 19, 1973, Interior Secretary Morton submitted a package of twenty-one proposed national parks, national wildlife refuges, and national forests, three large additions to existing national units, and four new wild and scenic rivers. His proposals included all areas identified by the “Maps on the Floor Society” and most but not all of what the National Park Service had proposed for new parklands.²⁰ The Morton recommendations totaled 83.5 million acres or about one-fifth of Alaska. As expected, the plan was attacked immediately on several fronts.²¹ Some Alaskans objected because the plan seemed oriented exclusively to single-use parks and wildlife areas. Conservation leaders also expressed opposition because too much land was slated for multiple-use as national forests or under Bureau of Land Management control. Morton’s proposals drew fire from none other than former Alaska senator and governor Ernest Gruening who declared in a *New York Times* letter to the editor that “Alaska continues under siege of the conservationist extremists who,

²⁰ Ross, *Environmental Conflict*, 196; Williss, “Do Things Right,” 52.

²¹ Robert Cahn, “Alaskan Parklands Up to Congress Now,” *Christian Science Monitor*, December 19, 1973, 9; Ross, *Environmental Conflict*, 196; Williss, “Do Things Right,” 67-68.

however well intentioned, are in total disregard of the interest of the people of Alaska and of the nation and are seeking to convert Alaska into a combination of wilderness and zoo.”²² *Anchorage Daily News* reporter Dave Parker took a more moderate position urging readers to understand that while opponents condemned the Morton proposals as “another federal lockup,” the issue was not as simple as “multiple use” versus “single use.” Instead, issues like the prospect of increasing tourism in the state made the d-2 issue more complex.²³ The subtleties of Parker’s argument, however, were lost on Alaskans who felt betrayed by the federal government’s actions and who preferred Gruening’s bombast.

A year after Interior Secretary Morton made his recommendations, the Assistant Interior Secretary Nathaniel Reed testified before the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs that passage of a “national interest” lands bill would be “one of our highest environmental priorities and perhaps the most significant conservation measure since Theodore Roosevelt took the lead in establishing national forest reserves at the turn of the century.”²⁴ Both the Nixon and the Ford administrations chose to ignore Morton’s proposals, however, and the process of drafting such a bill for Alaska languished during much of the 1970s. Nonetheless, the interested parties continued drafting a bewildering array of bills, each designed as an attempt to outmaneuver one another. For example, conservationists wanted to preserve environmentally significant lands and potential

²² Ernest Gruening, “Extremists vs. Alaska [editorial],” *New York Times*, January 14, 1974, 26.

²³ Dave Parker, “D-2 Land Puzzle—What It Means,” *Anchorage Daily News*, January 27, 1974, 1.

²⁴ Williss, “Do Things Right,” 84.

wilderness areas and therefore asked for maximum acreage under National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife protection. Meanwhile, Alaska Representative Don Young and Alaska Senator Ted Stevens introduced a predominately “multiple-use” alternative that set aside only sixty-seven million acres in conservation units and designated eight transportation corridors to allow utilization of potential mineral resources. The state bill provided for state regulation of sport hunting and control over subsistence policy, and, perhaps most importantly, it insisted that much of the d-2 lands be managed cooperatively by the state and federal governments. The Alaska Native corporations followed a similar path when the Northwest Arctic Native Association, a regional corporation created under ANCSA, proposed the creation of a series of “ecological ranges” in northwestern Alaska cooperatively managed by the federal and state governments, the regional corporations, and individual village corporations.²⁵ This flurry of bill proposals came to nothing until 1977, when a new, conservation-minded president and a newly interested Congress turned their attention to Alaska.

As a presidential candidate, Jimmy Carter campaigned for a strong Alaska lands bill and pledged to select conservationists for key positions in his administration, and when he won the presidency in November 1976, the environmental agenda of the nation changed dramatically. During his campaign he had portrayed himself as a man of the soil and an outdoorsman. However, he appeared uncomfortable with Western issues until he appointed former Idaho governor Cecil Andrus to serve as a kind of “minister of western affairs” and began looking to Andrus for leadership on questions of land disposition and

²⁵ Williss, “Do Things Right,” 84.

development.²⁶ Although he was originally from Oregon, Andrus had been elected governor of Idaho at thirty-nine after several terms in the Idaho State Senate. He had run a small sawmill in northern Idaho, and as governor he earned a reputation for dealing even-handedly with environmentalists and Idaho's mining companies. He was elected governor of Idaho in 1974 and worked closely with Carter in the National Governors Conference when Andrus served as chairman of the body's executive committee.²⁷

Andrus immediately began studying the Alaska situation and announced at his confirmation hearings that "the establishment and protection of large land areas in Alaska . . . is the highest environmental priority of this administration."²⁸ Within weeks of the election, another key event took place in the House of Representatives when Morris Udall of Arizona, younger brother of former Interior Secretary Stewart Udall, became the chairman of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee.²⁹ A strong conservationist, Udall soon met with the leaders of the Alaska Coalition, and when the 95th Congress opened in January 1977, he introduced House Resolution 39, the bill that would eventually become the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. The bill was a conservationist's wish list that called for 64 million acres in new or expanded national parks, 46 million acres in national wildlife refuges, and an astounding 145 million acres of land designated as wilderness. The proposed wilderness lands would not

²⁶ Peter Wiley and Robert Gottlieb, *Empires in the Sun: The Rise of the New American West* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1982), 58.

²⁷ Haycox, "Politics of Environment," 30. See also, Cecil Andrus and Joel Connelly, *Cecil Andrus: Politics Western Style* (Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 1998).

²⁸ Williss, "Do Things Right," 89.

²⁹ Donald W. Carson and James J. Johnson, *Mo: The Life and Times of Morris K. Udall* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001), 195.

be simply selected for study—they would instead become “instant wilderness” once the bill was passed into law. The move to include a large percentage of instant wilderness was a radical departure from previous Alaska land planning efforts. It was inconsistent with the language in previous park and refuge bills, and it brought howls of protest from the Alaska Congressional delegation and from various development-oriented groups.³⁰

Representative Young was one of the first to respond to H.R. 39 when he blasted the legislation in an interview:

All I’m saying is that we should think of the future. I want people to be able to go on their land in Alaska and hunt and fish and trap. It is immoral to set aside lands for nothing but parks when you cannot hunt or fish there. There are no bikeways, no tramways in our parks. No one can get to them. . . . I would rather work with my chairman [Udall] than fight him. But I’ll fight him if I have to.³¹

Soon the opponents of the Udall approach responded with yet another bill, this time sponsored by Senator Stevens and supported by Alaska governor Jay Hammond. The Stevens bill would have reduced the park and refuge system to twenty-five million acres and place an additional fifty-five million acres under joint federal-state control for future classification. Hammond conceded that Alaska’s approach had little chance of success, but he said he believed Congress might be persuaded to consider a joint-management plan for Alaska’s parklands.³² Opposition to H.R. 39 also came from the delegates of the Alaska Federation of Natives who expressed their concern that large wilderness areas might threaten Native subsistence rights and development options for Native

³⁰ John Lengel, “Andrus: Preserve d-2 Lands,” *Anchorage Daily News*, April 26, 1977, 1; Norris, “Alaska Wilderness,” 12.

³¹ “Battle for Land Begins: Udall’s Proposed Bill Demands Public Share,” *Anchorage Times*, January 5, 1977, 2.

³² Robert Jones, “Battle Lines Form Around Last Frontier,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 5, 1977, A1.

corporations. Chambers of commerce, the tourism industry, logging industry, miners, and recreation groups all expressed varying degrees of opposition, and Alaska's business owners became the main organizers of an umbrella group calling itself Citizens for Management of Alaska Lands, which began a lobbying campaign that opposed the Udall bill and promoted efforts for one more favorable toward development.³³

Until 1977, Alaska's d-2 land debate had taken place primarily in the halls of Congress and in Alaska's capital in Juneau; however, that was about to change. The newly formed Subcommittee on General Oversight and Alaska Lands, led by Representative John Seiberling of Ohio, began an extensive series of public hearings to gauge the reaction of the American public to the issues raised by H.R. 39. Udall and Seiberling believed that the testimony of citizens from throughout the nation would help them overcome the argument presented by Alaska residents that the d-2 issue should not be a national issue but strictly an Alaskan decision. Between April and September, the panel of two congressmen heard testimony from concerned citizens during twenty-five public hearings in five major cities in the contiguous United States and in a number of Alaskan towns, including Anchorage, Fairbanks, Bethel, Kotzebue, Anaktuvuk Pass, Fort Yukon, and Galena. Unlike the 1973 hearings, which were poorly advertised and poorly attended, more than one thousand Alaskans and a total of 2,300 American citizens testified at these hearings. This was the first time that large numbers of people had the opportunity to make their voices heard, and the arrival of the congressional panel in Alaska gave residents the opportunity to launch a wave of protests that followed the hearings as they traveled through the state.

³³ Williss, "Do Things Right," 89.

In the contiguous United States, however, supporters of the bill overwhelmed the opposition. From the beginning, the Alaska Coalition viewed the hearings as an opportunity to demonstrate broad support for a strong Alaska lands bill, and as the hearings passed through Washington, D.C., Chicago, Denver, and Seattle, the organization was successful in mustering support for the pro-park, pro-wilderness position. Members of conservation groups turned out in force, and according to one observer, of the 264 people testifying at the Atlanta hearing, only 10 were opposed to Congressman Udall's bill. Edgar Wayburn of the Sierra Club submitted his testimony in the form of an essay entitled "Alaska: The Last Great First Chance," in which he stated:

We believe that in Alaska there are rare—indeed unmatched—opportunities for all the people of the United States. There is not only the superb scenic and wildlife resource with unequaled recreational potential. There is the chance for our country to make wise decisions—to combine good development with good conservation—and to do it right the first time. In Alaska we have an unparalleled opportunity to learn from our past mistakes. We have been all too generous with many of our country's greatest treasures. . . . Now we are having to buy back that land and at enormous cost. In Alaska, we have a remarkable opportunity – we can set aside superb national lands for their highest and best use at no cost to the American people, to whom they now belong.³⁴

The phrase "do it right the first time" caught on and became the informal motto of the Alaska Coalition and the other pro-park forces. President Carter also followed the hearings closely and announced before Congress that "The Congress now has an opportunity of historic dimensions to conserve large unspoiled sections of the American wilderness in Alaska. . . . No conservation action the 95th Congress could take would have more lasting value than this."³⁵

³⁴ Edgar Wayburn, "Alaska: The Last Great First Chance," *Sierra Club Bulletin* (September 1977), 41-42.

³⁵ Betty Mills, "Carter Promises D2 Support," *Anchorage Times*, May 24, 1977, 1.

Some Alaskans who happened to be present for these meetings gave the congressmen an earful, and one *Anchorage Times* editorial announced, “Communiqués from the far-flung D2 battlefronts aren’t encouraging for those Alaskans who think 116 million acres are a bit much to set aside for those who worship wilderness.”³⁶ Chuck Hawley, executive director of the Alaska Miners Association who testified at the Washington, D.C. hearing, said that H.R. 39 was “stacked against Alaska,” and that he was upset at seeing most of the nation’s oil and gas reserves and half the nation’s coal supply put “off limits.” Hawley said that it “defies logic” to consider “locking up of Alaska’s resources” during an energy crisis, adding that Alaskans seemed to be paying the price for earlier bad management decisions:

Such irrational, almost fanatical thinking is explained by our barbershop psychiatrist. He theorizes that Alaska is being used as a sacrificial lamb for every American who has ever committed an abuse—real or imagined—against the environment. He can expiate his guilt, clear his conscience by going all out to endorse protection of a land he had probably never seen, may never see and about which he knows very little.³⁷

As news of the early meetings in Washington and Atlanta began to make its way to Alaska, development-minded Alaskans became increasingly alarmed, and Alaskan environmentalists, few though they were, began preparing their pro-park testimony.

When the congressional panel at last reached Alaska, it would find just how polarized Alaskans had become. In each community the responses of residents to d-2 and wilderness issues depended on the proximity of proposed conservation units and the

³⁶ “Fighting the Odds [editorial],” *Anchorage Times*, May 17, 1977, 4.

³⁷ “Fighting the Odds [editorial],” *Anchorage Times*, May 17, 1977, 4. See also, U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, “Hearings before the Subcommittee on General Oversight and Alaska Lands of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs,” Part I (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1977), 195-196, 514-516.

dependence of the local economy on particular natural resources. For example, when the congressional panel reached Sitka in southeastern Alaska, it was met by a crowd of locals concerned mainly about the health of the logging and mining industries. Signs posted on the walls of the hearing room declared, “If H.R. 39 passes, all of Alaska will die,” and picketers outside the building carried signs saying, “Make our forest grow, plant a Sierra Clubber.”³⁸ Witness after witness declared before the panel that the wilderness legislation in H.R. 39 would destroy the economy. “It isn’t the environment that is fragile, it is the economy that is,” announced state legislator Pete Meland. “The forest industry of Alaska would be seriously restricted by the legislation.” Sitka mayor Ben Gussendorf added that the Udall bill was “not balanced or truly representative of the working people. We are not a colony to be exploited.” In Sitka, Seiberling used his introductory statement to assure those attending that in addition to environmental considerations, the committee would also “decide how are we going to support the local population . . . how are we going to protect the local economy.” However, he chastised those who thought that “Alaska is for Alaskans and Uncle Sam should keep his cotton-picking hands off it” because, he argued, if the United States had not purchased Alaska “most of us wouldn’t be here now.”³⁹ The disagreement over who owned Alaska or should own Alaska was fundamental, and it reappeared as the committee made its way through the state.

³⁸ Craig Medred, “Sitkans Decry Udall Bill,” *Southeast Alaska Empire*, July 5, 1977, 1.

³⁹ Craig Medred, “Sitkans Decry Udall Bill,” *Southeast Alaska Empire*, July 5, 1977, 1; Rosemary Shinohara, “Sitka—Still Torn by the d-2 Debates,” *Anchorage Daily News*, August 8, 1977, 1; “Wilderness Plan Disputed in Alaska City,” *New York Times*, August 22, 1977, 16.

After touring other communities in southeastern Alaska, the committee arrived in Juneau on July 8, 1977, where it found that testimony alternated between wilderness protection and land utilization arguments. The crowd of over five hundred that turned out in the state capital was far less hostile than in Sitka, but a few demonstrators carried signs outside saying “Seiberling is a flat tire” and, in a reference to the region’s pulp production for paper manufacturing, “Committee proposals are written on paper!” The local newspaper reported that most who testified before the committee seemed content to voice their positions politely and then leave, and the testimony generally fell along established lines. Miners, lumbermen, businessmen, representatives of the local chamber of commerce, and members of Citizens for Management of Alaska Lands spoke against the bill, saying that the multiple-use concept should be preserved and that environmentalists were not being realistic. Members of various environmental organizations embraced it, urging Congress to take the initiative and suggesting that a more sustainable timber yield would be possible even after H.R. 39 became law.⁴⁰ The pro-wilderness faction gained a new ally in State Representative Mike Miller, a Democrat from Juneau, who surprised everyone when he became the only Alaska legislator to express his support for the legislation.⁴¹

After ten days of touring southeastern Alaska and holding hearings, the congressmen returned to Washington, D.C. but revisited Alaska the following month to continue the process. They arrived in Anchorage on August 7, and Seiberling and Udall

⁴⁰ Craig Medred, “Juneau D-2 Testimony Balanced Between Pro and Anti-Wilderness,” *Southeast Alaska Empire*, July 8, 1977, 1.

⁴¹ G. Michael Harmon, “S.E. Land Victories?” *Southeast Alaska Empire*, July 12, 1977, 9.

discussed likely changes they would recommend for H.R. 39, including a reduction of wilderness land acreage in the bill. Seiberling said that he would consider designated wilderness only in core areas in Alaska's large national parks and making the surrounding areas into national wildlife refuges. Designating lands as refuges would provide more flexibility for subsistence uses, but it would block the kind of development that would destroy wildlife.⁴² More than one thousand people signed up to testify at the hearings in Anchorage, but Seiberling alarmed some by announcing, "They won't all show up. Even if they did, we're not interested in numbers. If we were, we'd hire someone to take a survey. If all 400,000 Alaskans said they were against H.R. 39, it would be insignificant. We're just not interested in numbers."⁴³

In the end, only 277 of those who signed up to testify actually appeared, and the results were evenly split. Of those who testified, 136 were counted as supporters of the Udall bill, 131 were counted as opponents, and 10 could not be categorized. At times the hearings adopted a carnival atmosphere as residents of Anchorage, Homer, and the Matanuska Valley lined up to speak. One wilderness supporter named Mairiis "Mossy" Davidson brought a guitar to the hearings room and sang her support for the bill to Udall:

How long Alaska will your forests stand?
How long your mountains unchanged by man?
How long your rivers run wild and clear?
Although you're changing, I'll always hear.⁴⁴

⁴² Rosemay Shinohara, "Udall Says Bill Not 'Cast in Concrete,'" *Anchorage Daily News*, August 12, 1977, 1.

⁴³ "I'd Be a Little Worried, Too, Ohio's Seiberling Tells Briefing," *Anchorage Times*, August 7, 1977, 1.

⁴⁴ Rosemary Shinohara, "Seiberling Listens . . . Anchorage Talks d-2," *Anchorage Daily News*, August 13, 1977, 2; Kay Brown, "Akron Congressman 'Can't Even Believe' Alaska's d-2 Debate," *Alaska Advocate*, August 18, 1977, 6.

When she finished, Udall commented that the last person to sing at one of his hearings was John Denver and that she “compared very favorably.” Ray Metcalfe, a business owner, testified that the “overwhelming majority” of Alaskans would rather see Alaska secede than accept the Udall bill. “What we have seen here today is by no means an accurate picture of how Alaskans feel,” Metcalfe told the committee. “The Sierra Club is here in force. They’re coached and they’re salaried. All polls indicate that the majority of Alaskans have a feeling of frustration about this issue. They’ve given up, and that’s why they’re not here.”⁴⁵

A real estate developer from the nearby community of Palmer repeatedly referred to the story of Genesis, emphasizing how God told man to use the land and subdue it. Pete Green, the president of the Kiwanis Club in Palmer, brought a wheelbarrow full of oversized Matanuska Valley vegetables to show to the committee members that development and wilderness could exist side by side. Green too seemed genuinely convinced that God was on the side of multiple-use policies and against the Udall bill. “I feel like I wasted my time,” he said after his two-minute presentation. “They’re going to go by the numbers, and it hurt us that all these young people who like to travel around in the woods showed up. They’re all for the Udall bill, but they don’t realize that one day they’ll be hungry and need a job.”⁴⁶

Other participants in the hearings were more conventional. Anchorage mayor George Sullivan argued that lands intended for recreation needed to be accessible, saying,

⁴⁵ Kay Brown, “Akron Congressman ‘Can’t Even Believe’ Alaska’s d-2 Debate,” *Alaska Advocate*, August 18, 1977, 6.

⁴⁶ Kay Brown, “Akron Congressman ‘Can’t Even Believe’ Alaska’s d-2 Debate,” *Alaska Advocate*, August 18, 1977, 6.

“Parents must be able to load the kids and grandma into the back of the family jalopy and get away from it all . . . as well as the student backpacker and corporate executive in his twin-engine bonanza [airplane].” Leo Anthony, a minerals expert and University of Alaska professor, recommended that the d-2 lands be evaluated more carefully for mineral deposits, saying, “These lands are presently withdrawn and protected, and there is no justification for making a poker player’s decision when so much of Alaska’s future and the national interest is at stake.” Tom Lewis, a representative of the Alaska Oil and Gas Association, argued that denial of access across d-2 lands would hinder development of offshore oil and gas resources in the Beaufort Sea, particularly if the Arctic Wildlife Range were to be expanded as suggested in the bill.⁴⁷ Danny Karmun, representing fifteen Eskimo reindeer herders and their families, had flown in from Nome to plead for the right to continue grazing reindeer, building corrals and cabins, and using snowmobiles on d-2 lands. An attorney named Edward Burton, a supporter of the bill, said he had come to the hearing in response to “the propaganda barrage” and urged Alaskans to speak out. “All this is having a very divisive effect on the people of Alaska,” he explained. “If it’s dragged out for several years, as some suggest, it might very well come to bloodshed.”⁴⁸

Udall took time during the hearings to interject when he thought necessary. At one point he halted the rapid parade of witnesses to comment on Theodore Roosevelt’s struggle to set aside the Grand Canyon. “The cattlemen and the timbermen said they

⁴⁷ Rosemary Shinohara, “Seiberling Listens . . . Anchorage Talks D-2,” *Anchorage Daily News*, August 13, 1977, 2.

⁴⁸ Kay Brown, “Akron Congressman ‘Can’t Even Believe’ Alaska’s d-2 Debate,” *Alaska Advocate*, August 18, 1977, 6.

loved it and they said they'd take care of it, but if they'd gotten their way it would have been chewed up in little bits and pieces," he said. "I'm not so much concerned about what Alaskans think of me now, as I am with what they'll think of me 10 or 20 years from now."⁴⁹ During the hearings, Udall had become, in the words of one journalist, "either the patron saint of environmentalists or the demon of developers." In an article entitled "Mr. D-2 Speaks Out: Plain Talk from Mo Udall," the Arizona congressman was asked a number of questions, including whether or not Alaskans had been misled by park opponents and the news media:

Yes. There's been a climate and an atmosphere and a whole set of attitudes among the business establishment and the pro-development people that has been very, very misleading. I find just talking to ordinary people here that they assume somehow that this bill is going to take away land from them that they already have, when in fact we are simply dealing with how we manage federal land. . . . You've got so much land and so many wonderful values, you can have your cake and eat it too.⁵⁰

When Seiberling and Udall arrived in Fairbanks in Alaska's interior on August 20, they were still discussing alterations to the bill and accommodations to Alaska's unusual circumstances. Seiberling admitted, for example, that he believed that they had "probably chewed off a little too much instant wilderness" but that Alaskans needed to understand that the proposals permitted the traditional use of snowmobiles, power boats, subsistence hunting, logging for home construction, and trapping.

When the congressmen arrived on the University of Alaska campus in Fairbanks, they were greeted by as many as seven hundred people and large banners hanging from

⁴⁹ Kay Brown, "Akron Congressman 'Can't Even Believe' Alaska's d-2 Debate," *Alaska Advocate*, August 18, 1977, 6.

⁵⁰ Kay Brown, "Mr. D-2 Speaks Out: Plain Talk from Mo Udall," *Alaska Advocate*, August 18, 1977, 4.

the outside of the building that read “Welcome Mo,” “Alaska, the Last Frontier,” and “Development is the Biggest Lock Up.” Inside, the advocates of wilderness were wearing their new green and white T-shirts declaring “Me Too for d-2.” Citizens for Management of Alaska Lands also supplied T-shirts that read “H.R. 39, an environmental octopus,” but no one was seen wearing them. As was usually the case, state politicians spoke first, beginning with the governor, and not one politician spoke in favor of H.R. 39. When Fairbanks residents began to testify, however, a broad range of opinions and concerns emerged. A newspaper reporter noted that “the surprising part was that though there were plenty of dedicated conservations around in dirty pants and fuzzy hair . . . the most compelling testimony came from some very ordinary folk who appeared to believe as conservationists do because that’s the way they live their lives.” A woman named Mary Bishop spoke about living a subsistence lifestyle, and she told the committee that if Mt. McKinley park were extended, she would no longer be able to live in that fashion. Her two sons held up a hand-marked map showing the proximity of her home to the proposed parklands. Others spoke about subsistence living on the Yukon River and describing their work as wilderness guides in the Brooks Range. Although some expressed the feeling that the d-2 process was either “not fair” or moving too quickly, more seemed to be cautiously in favor of land withdrawals as long as they were not too restrictive.⁵¹

George Matz, director of the Fairbanks Environmental Center, said that he was happy that witnesses favoring H.R. 39 outnumbered those opposed. “We thought it

⁵¹ Jane Pender, “Mixed Views on D-2,” *Anchorage Daily News*, August 22 1977, 2.

would be at least 50-50,” he said, “but we are pleased it went a little higher.”⁵² One person who was not pleased was Joe Vogler—gold miner, lawyer, and head of the Alaskans for Independence movement. Vogler began participating in the d-2 debate in February 1973 when he spearheaded a state-wide petition to make Alaska a sovereign nation. The petition read,

We the undersigned residents of Alaska do hereby respectfully and without malice or rancor petition the president and the Congress of the United States of America to grant us and our land free and independent sovereignty, under the auspices of the United Nations, from this day forth.⁵³

Three years later, Vogler announced plans “to pull Uncle Sam’s whiskers” by launching a lawsuit claiming that the federal government had violated the Alaska Statehood Act: the d-2 process, he charged, did not allow the state a full twenty-five years to select its 104 million acres from Alaska’s public lands.⁵⁴ At the hearing in Fairbanks, Vogler’s message was much the same, and it carried the same bluster that had made him a folk hero to disgruntled Alaskans:

It’s my contention that the purchase of the State of Alaska, while a good business deal, was illegal and unconstitutional. . . . This makes this present Udall bill a monstrosity of colonialism like that Senator Gruening complained of that has never been exceeded since the Spanish colonized their plunder in South America, Central America and Mexico. . . . Now, I don’t know how far it’s going to go, but I wish to warn you, I’m the head of the Alaskans for Independence movement,

⁵² “Seiberling, Udall Set to Yield on D-2,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, August 22, 1977, 2; “Victory on D(2) Day,” *Alaska Environmental Notes* (September 1977), 1.

⁵³ Tom Snapp, “Vogler Spearheading Drive for Alaska Independence,” *Pioneer All-Alaska Weekly*, February 16, 1973, 2; “Independence Drive Gaining Steam,” *Pioneer All-Alaska Weekly*, March 16, 1973, 7.

⁵⁴ Tom Snapp, “Vogler Plans Suit Alleging Breach of the Statehood Act,” *Pioneer All-Alaska Weekly*, April 16, 1976, 1.

and . . . I have renounced allegiance to the United States over this because I cannot stomach this gross taking of our rights.⁵⁵

After debating the point for a few moments, Seiberling reminded Vogler that Congress possessed the power to call the militia to execute the laws of the nation and to suppress insurrections. “The last time [a state tried to secede] was in 1860 and it didn’t work,” Seiberling warned, “so I would just advise you to proceed with caution.” Although Vogler appeared to some as a comic character, his popularity among residents who opposed federal policies in Alaska guaranteed him considerable notoriety. His hard stand against all federal ownership of Alaskan lands would, seven years later, pit him against the superintendent of the Yukon-Charley National Preserve in a battle of wills and a lawsuit that brought attention to the question of whether or not property owners in parks possessed an unrestricted right to gain access to their land [See Chapter 5].

After concluding their hearings in Fairbanks, Udall and his colleagues traveled to a number of rural Alaska communities in northern and northwestern Alaska, including Shishmaref, Noatak, Selawik, Kotzebue, and Galena, a community of 350 people on the banks of the Yukon River west of Fairbanks. The first thing that caught the congressmen’s attention in Galena was a flood dike between the town and the river that protected the town from seasonal floodwaters. The dike had been constructed with federal money and was owned by the federal government, a point the visiting congressmen and staffers found telling. Their sightseeing was cut short, however, by local man who demanded, “Who’s the guy who wants to lock up Alaska?” According to a reporter who was present, Udall stepped out of the milling crowd and said, “I am, and

⁵⁵ U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, “Hearings before the Subcommittee on General Oversight and Alaska Lands of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs,” Part XII (Washington, D.C, GPO, 1978), 207.

John Seiberling, too. You'll have to hang us both together." The man stated a second time, "Well, I want to know who's the guy that wants to lock up Alaska," to which Udall responded, "You'll have your chance to have your say when we get inside."⁵⁶

The scene inside the Galena meeting hall was described in detail by a reporter for the *Alaska Advocate*, a newspaper that specialized in investigative reporting on issues of statewide importance. The reporter described an elderly Native trapper who referred to the American purchase of Alaska from the Russians when he declared himself to be "an American citizen, bought and paid for by the U.S. government." Marshalling his patience, Seiberling explained to the trapper that the state was prevented by its constitution from giving preference to Native subsistence hunters but that the federal government was not. He added that his committee planned to give Natives priority use of subsistence resources. "I know that," barked Udall's earlier challenger. "I want to know how long it's gonna last." Seiberling answered, "We intend it to last in perpetuity, but, of course, any Congress can undo the work of any previous Congress." The boisterous critic again demanded, "Yeah, but how long is it gonna last?" Seiberling searched for words while the crowd waited for an answer that would silence his critic. Udall ended the exchange by interrupting and stating, "A hell of a lot longer than if we don't pass this bill." With that the atmosphere in the meeting hall relaxed, and the testimony continued uninterrupted. The reporter observed that after the hearing the audience milled around outside the hall and the individual who had been so hostile earlier shouted: "Hey, Udall,

⁵⁶ Ken Roberts and Andy Williams, "A d-2 Journal," *Alaska Advocate*, August 25, 1977, 3.

you should run for president.” Udall, who had already run and lost against President Carter, shrugged his shoulders and waved goodbye.⁵⁷

When the group reached Kotzebue, the president of the local Native corporation, John Schaeffer, bought dinner for the entire group of congressional visitors, and after the meal, he gave a speech. “In your society,” Schaeffer told the visitors,

there is no such thing as a free meal. In ours, food is so important we Native people give it away. When you are back in Washington, I hope you will remember this meal. Food for us is not just food for the belly, but food for the soul. We do not resent you proposing these laws. If you did not do it, the state would. We would be better off if you had never come here, but you are here, and we hope you do as little damage as possible.⁵⁸

Once the congressmen left Alaska, the testimony before the subcommittee was compiled into a sixteen-volume report that captured much of the essence of the struggle over Alaska’s d-2 lands. In spite of the show of strength the conservationists had been able to muster, Interior Department officials decided to rewrite parts of H.R. 39 to accommodate mining and hunting interests. The revisions reduced the amount of instant wilderness and left open seventy-five percent of Alaska’s lands for mineral development, eighty percent of its timber for logging, and sixty percent of its land for sport hunting.⁵⁹

After considerable debate in Congress and several bill revisions, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 39 on May 19, 1978 with a vote of 279-31. Supporters hoped that the overwhelming margin of victory in the House would pressure the Senate to

⁵⁷ Ken Roberts and Andy Williams, “A d-2 Journal,” *Alaska Advocate*, August 25, 1977, 3.

⁵⁸ Ken Roberts and Andy Williams, “A d-2 Journal,” *Alaska Advocate*, August 25, 1977, 4.

⁵⁹ Williss, “Do Things Right,” 97-98; Nelson, *Northern Landscapes*, 191-197; Ross, *Environmental Conflict*, 197-198.

act quickly, but the obstacles were considerable. Alaska Senators Stevens and Gravel fought vigorously to limit the size of the Alaska withdrawals, while Representative Young waged a similar battle in the House of Representatives. The Senate was, as a rule, reluctant to pass any bill affecting a state over the protests of that state's congressional delegation. Both senators from Alaska were on record in opposition, and Gravel, who had introduced his own bill a month earlier, stated repeatedly that he intended to prevent passage of any bill that session. "It is too late for compromise," he declared. Senator Stevens felt just as strongly; however, he also recognized that the divisive d-2 land debate was already a barrier to progress in Alaska. Stevens was therefore determined to work for resolution of the issue, a position that pitted him against Gravel and exacerbated an already fractious relationship between the two lawmakers.⁶⁰ Rather than attempting to block H.R. 39 entirely, Stevens used a tactic that Representative Young also pursued in the House—to delay the bill at every step, recognizing that compromise would come more readily when the December 18, 1978 expiration of d-2 protection loomed closer. However, they would find that the maverick Gravel would undermine even this stratagem.

Meanwhile, Secretary Andrus was contemplating tactics to protect the proposed conservation units in Alaska whether Congress managed to pass H.R. 39 or not. Andrus's plan was to use executive power and his own authority as Secretary of the Interior to respond to the mounting threat from Alaska's congressional delegation. He stated his case in the *New York Times*, explaining which laws the Carter administration

⁶⁰ "Sen. Stevens Suggests Bargaining on D2 Bill," *Anchorage Times*, June 3, 1978, 2; Susan Andrews, "And Sen. Gravel Says D2 Is Dead," *Anchorage Times*, June 3, 1978, 2.

had at its disposal and added, “Whatever actions we take . . . we will make sure that Alaska’s rural-subsistence way of life is protected.” To his critics and the anti-park forces in Alaska, he offered this promise:

We have no intention, as some have charged, of turning Alaska into some sort of wilderness playground for the rich. And equally we will not allow it to become a private preserve for a handful of rape-ruin-and-run developers. The crown jewels of Alaska’s spectacular scenery and living resources will be protected for all Americans.⁶¹

When Andrus met with the president to urge swift action, he presented a map of Alaska and recommended that Carter set aside fifty-six million acres to protect proposed parklands from the Gates of the Arctic portion of the Brooks Range in the far north to the Misty Fjords area at the southern end of the Alaska’s panhandle. According to Andrus, Carter asked, “Can I do that?” seemingly incredulous that here was a domestic issue on which the president could decisively act. “You have the authority, sir,” Andrus responded. “Let’s do it,” Carter said.⁶² In Alaska, the threat of executive action during the summer of 1978 inspired a series for political cartoons from cartoonist Jerry Stu, whose work regularly appeared in the *Anchorage Times*. The cartoons portrayed, for example, Interior Secretary Andrus as Captain James Cook planting a flag to claim all of Alaska for the Department of the Interior. The image made reference to the famous explorer’s claims on the Alaska coast in the name of the British Crown two hundred years earlier. In another, an Alaska sourdough writes President Carter asking, “Please explain to me again how come you gave Panama to the Panamanians but you don’t want to give Alaska to the Alaskans.” One cartoon in the form of a movie poster announced

⁶¹ Cecil D. Andrus, “Guarding Alaska’s Crown Jewels [editorial],” *New York Times*, October 11, 1978, 7.

⁶² Andrus and Connelly, *Politics Western Style*, 68.

the arrival of “King Conservation,” a monstrous bear atop a skyscraper menacing a helpless Alaska playing the role of Fay Wray [Figures 5-9].

In October 1978, Senator Gravel began to make good on his threat when he torpedoed a compromise version of H.R. 39 being crafted on an ad hoc basis by members of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, including Representatives Udall and Seiberling and Senators Jackson, Stevens, Gravel and Durkin. Just at the moment that the group seemed to have reached agreement on most major issues, Senator Gravel, who had remained silent during the proceedings, spoke up for the first time. He listed demands for seven transportation corridors across park and refuge lands, a large hydropower project, \$8 million for access and recreational facilities, and a clause prohibiting future use of the Antiquities Act or wilderness withdrawals in Alaska. Even after the ad hoc committee attempted to make revisions to accommodate Gravel, he again threatened to filibuster the bill and the call for an extension of d-2 protection for another year.⁶³ Gravel later blamed Udall, Seiberling, and the conservationists for forcing him to act as he did. He had blocked H.R. 39, he explained, because the Alaska Coalition considered the bill only “the first step” in a continuing effort to create more conservation units in Alaska.” “They don’t want just this,” Gravel charged, “they want all of Alaska.”⁶⁴

Gravel killed H.R. 39 on the eve of the December 18, 1978 deadline for the d-2 provision, and in doing so he ignored Interior Secretary Andrus’s repeated warnings that the Carter administration would use whatever means available to protect the d-2 lands in

⁶³ Williss, “Do Things Right,” 101-102.

⁶⁴ “Here’s Gravel’s Account of the D-2 Meeting,” *Anchorage Times*, October 15, 1978, 2.

the face of congressional inaction. One of the most powerful tools the executive branch had to protect land was the Antiquities Act of 1906, and on two occasions the National Park Service had recommended to the Interior Department that the lands proposed as national parks be first designated national monuments under the authority of the act.⁶⁵ It is likely that President Carter did not intend to go that far, but the State of Alaska, once again, took steps to force the issue. On November 14, 1978, in violation of what Secretary Andrus regarded as an oral agreement to restrict any state selections to lands outside the proposed conservation areas, state officials filed for selection of roughly 41 million acres of land, including 9.5 million acres within proposed conservation areas. This move angered Andrus and prompted the Interior Secretary to initiate a cascade of federal land withdrawals.

Citing the need to protect the “integrity of Alaska lands,” Andrus began by immediately withdrawing 110,750,000 acres of land under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. Also known as the Bureau of Land Management Organic Act, the law permits executive withdrawals under emergency circumstances for administration by the Bureau of Land Management.⁶⁶ Then, on December 1, President Carter used his authority under the Antiquities Act to designate fifty-six million acres of Alaska lands as national monuments. The president also directed Secretary Andrus to designate forty million acres as permanent wildlife refuges and requested that Secretary of Agriculture Robert Bergland ban mining operations in another eleven million acres of land in the Tongass and Chugach National Forests. By

⁶⁵ Williss, “Do Things Right,” 103.

⁶⁶ “Shocked State Leaders Try to Fathom Effect of Freeze,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, November 17, 1978, 1; Haycox, “Politics of Environment,” 28.

the time they were done, the president and his secretaries had withdrawn roughly 120 million acres of Alaska's 375 million acres of land, and only an act of Congress could reverse these executive actions.⁶⁷ "It's hard to express how really happy we are," said Rita Molyneaux of the Alaska Coalition. "President Carter has put himself in the position of being one of the two greatest conservationist presidents—the other being Theodore Roosevelt."⁶⁸

Although the Antiquities Act had been used numerous times by previous presidents to protect lands regarded as sensitive, President Carter's use of the law was unprecedented in the nation's history.⁶⁹ With one stroke of a pen, the president had more than doubled the acreage of the National Parks System from 33 million to 74 million acres and expanded the amount of national wildlife refuge lands from 34.5 million acres to 45 million acres. The 56 million acres of national monument lands alone were larger than the state of Washington (43.6 million) and Idaho (53.5 million), and the protected lands as a whole were greater than the state of California. President Carter emphasized that his action had been made necessary by Congress's failure to act before the d-2 deadline and that he intended his national monument proclamation to be merely a stopgap measure while Congress continued to work on the issue. This was little consolation to Alaskans who opposed his actions and who believed they were on the losing side of a national conspiracy. Spurred on by encouragement from their politicians, they attempted

⁶⁷ Williss, "Do Things Right," 103; Naske and Slotnick, *Forty-Ninth State*, 231-232.

⁶⁸ Brad Knickerbocker, "Alaskans Determined to Challenge 'Monuments,'" *Christian Science Monitor*, December 4, 1978, 11.

⁶⁹ Williss, "Do Things Right," 217; Haycox, "The Politics of Environment," 17.

to organize and to attract national media attention. When the new Congress convened in early 1979, haggling over H.R. 39 continued at the highest political levels, but for many Alaskans the time for debate had come to an end.

CHAPTER 4

URBAN MONUMENT PERIOD PROTESTS, 1978-1980

Alaskans are upset not so much about losing money, although many will, but about losing a way of life, an independent lifestyle and a communion with the land.

—*Ketchikan Daily News* editor, 1978

If they intend to arrest or stop Alaskans from these environmentally sound pursuits which have always been the greatest expression of man in harmony with nature, then let them stop 3,000 or 4,000 or 5,000 of us at once, rather than pick on us one at a time.

—Ken Fanning, Real Alaska Coalition, 1979

In the days and weeks after President Carter invoked the Antiquities Act to create new national monuments in Alaska, a fundamental shift occurred in Alaska's land debate. The Alaska Coalition was still pitted against the state's development interests, the state government, and Alaska's congressional delegation, but now a new group was making its views heard. Residents from Alaska's urban centers and their rural counterparts quickly formed loose coalitions to express a grassroots anger at the new monuments as much for what they represented—capricious federal authority and change in Alaska—as for economic reasons. Waves of anti-monument demonstrations swept across the state, some organized by local activists, others carried out by individuals inspired to protest in their own ways. Beginning in December 1978, these protests dominated headlines in local newspapers and prompted a statewide debate about the limits of executive power, the desirability of parklands, and ultimately, the relationship between state sovereignty and federal authority.

The president's announcement that he would protect fifty-six million acres as national monuments was met with dismay, confusion, and anger throughout Alaska, but nowhere did it provoke a more rapid response than in Fairbanks. Just three days after the president's announcement, Alaskans from all walks of life began arriving in front of the city's Federal Building and Courthouse, bundled against the cold and carrying placards bearing messages that ranged from the philosophical ("Can Alaska Manage Washington?") to the seditious ("Protect Alaska, Abolish the Interior Department," "Let's Lock Up Andrus and Carter,") to the insulting ("Antiquities Act of a Peanut Brain") and the outright threatening ("What's the Bag Limit on Federal Wardens?").¹ The demonstrations against President Carter and Interior Secretary Andrus also attracted the Alaskans for Independence organizer Joe Vogler, who distributed a petition requesting Congress to pass a bill called the "Alaska Secession Law of 1979," which would grant Alaska independence, halt all federal taxation, and remove the postal service and the armed forces from Alaska. The petition also called Carter's monument proclamation "inappropriate" and described the Antiquities Act as "an illegal act clearly meant to preserve historical and geological curiosities." Although only twenty-four demonstrators showed up on the first day to protest the monument proclamation, their numbers rose quickly to one hundred and beyond during subsequent protests [Figures 10-11].²

By the following week, the demonstrators had shifted their protests to the parking lot of Fairbanks's post office where on December 11 a group of approximately

¹ "More Protests Planned," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, December 9, 1978, 3.

² "More Protests Planned," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, December 9, 1978, 3; "Antiquities Protest," *Alaska Libertarian* (November 1978), 3.

two hundred protestors assembled, including Fairbanks mayor William Wood and his predecessor, Harold Gilliam. The crowd waved signs that read, “This is Our Country, Not Carter Country,” “Jimmy Carter—The Man Who Destroyed the Last Frontier,” and “Give Them 56,000,000 Acres of Ashes” as they formed a line that stretched around a city block. The temperature hovered around four degrees above zero, but that did not discourage the demonstrators, two of whom arrived with a straw-packed effigy fashioned from a coverall suit and bearing a picture of President Carter’s face. As reporters took photographs, the men erected a tripod of spruce poles, hung the dummy by the neck, doused it with lighter fluid, and set it ablaze while the crowd cheered. “These people are just a bunch of Alaskans damned mad about the whole thing,” said Pete Haggland, a self-employed Fairbanks pilot and spokesperson for an informal group calling itself Alaskans Unite that had staged four noon-time protests since the Antiquities Act withdrawals.³ Haggland went on to explain that the group was the birth of a statewide, grassroots movement pushing the Alaska state government to fight the federal government’s recent action. Demonstrators at the effigy-burning were not necessarily aligned in their reasoning for opposing the monuments. Some explained their opposition as a basic constitutional issue, citing the need for expanded states’ right, while others argued that the monument proclamation would hurt them financially. Others complained of limits on personal freedom once National Park Service rangers arrived to manage the new monuments. Describing the reason for his participation, the mayor observed that “an

³ Dermot Cole, “President Burned in Effigy,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, December 12, 1978, 1; “Carter Effigy Burned in Fairbanks,” *Anchorage Times*, December 12, 1978, 38; “Carter Burned in Effigy at D-2 Protest in Fairbanks,” *Anchorage Daily News*, December 12, 1978, 1.

injustice has been perpetrated and an action has been taken by people in political power that is unfair to the people in the area most affected” [Figures 12-15].⁴

The organizers of Alaskans Unite encouraged the residents of other communities to launch their own protests, and after the first wave of protests in Fairbanks, the demonstrations spread to Anchorage where scores of sign-toting protestors congregated in front to the Federal Building during their lunch hour on December 13. While maintaining a sardonic humor, the signs and placards on display reflected the widespread belief that Alaska had long been treated like a colony and as a storehouse of wealth from which only outside interests profited. The slogans also suggested that the monument proclamation was the act of an indifferent and tyrannical administration:

Cecil, Kiss My Pick

Miners, Rally to Your Constitutional Rights

Peanuts Cause Brain Damage

Lock Up Andrus, Not Alaska

Dump Colonialism, Viva Alaska

Down With King Carter

The James Gang, Carter and Andrus

Alaska Knows Best, Not Dictatorship from Washington

Alaska National Monuments? No. We Can't All Work for the Parks Service

Protest organizer Clark Engle, a hunting guide who said he had been put out of work by Carter's action, said that the group of hunters, fishermen, homesteaders, and “just plain citizens” would continue their protests through the week when their last demonstration would culminate in the burning in effigy of Carter and Interior Secretary Andrus in

⁴ Dermot Cole, “President Burned in Effigy,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, December 12, 1978, 5.

Anchorage's business district.⁵ Engle told reporters that the picketing did not represent any single group but represented "people in the field" who had grown tired of the "federal government taking away our rights." A master guide with twenty years of experience, Engle said that when bear season opened he would ignore any new regulations and guide hunting expeditions on lands that had recently become part of Mt. McKinley National Park.⁶ "People have got a belly full of what has happened in the state as to federal control of the state," Engle said. "We feel the Antiquities Act is kind of a final stroke. People are frustrated and don't know which way to turn. We started the protest to give people direction."⁷

A number of local politicians and congressional spokesmen took part in the demonstrations in Anchorage. An office manager for Representative Young carried a sign saying "Carter—Where's Human Rights for Alaskans?" and he indicated to reporters that this sentiment represented the congressman's views on the national monuments issue. Meanwhile, officials at Young's office were asking television stations in Anchorage to send news clips of the demonstrations from Fairbanks and Anchorage to network stations in the hope of reaching viewers across the country. State Representative Mike Beirne, a Republican from Anchorage, also joined the demonstration. Over the objections of environmentalists and state officials, voters had recently passed Beirne's homestead initiative designed to open thirty million acres of state land to private

⁵ Clark Engle first appears in this study in the Introduction as a Great Denali-McKinley Trespass organizer. See also, Figure 1.

⁶ Suzan Nightingale, "Pickets Berate Lands Lock-Up," *Anchorage Daily News*, December 14, 1978, 1.

⁷ Ray Tyson, "Land Act Protest Grows: Groups Rally Here," *Anchorage Times*, December 13, 1978, 1-2.

ownership by a vote of 59,142 to 48,249. The Beirne Homestead Initiative proposed that any man, woman or child who had been a resident of Alaska for three years could claim forty acres of free state land. Five-year residents were entitled to 80 acres and 10-year residents to 160 acres.⁸ At the anti-park demonstration, Beirne told reporters, “I want to offer my support to this kind of rally. These protests around the state hopefully will be carried nationwide to show that the nation’s government is not responsive to people.”⁹ The Anchorage demonstrations also marked the birth of a statewide protest organization calling itself the Real Alaska Coalition, representing thirty sportsmen’s organization, including the Alaska Professional Hunters Association, the Alaska Rifle and Pistol Association, and Alaska Gun Collectors.¹⁰

When the wave of statewide protests over Carter’s use of the Antiquities Act reached Ketchikan in southeastern Alaska, local protestors were not concerned about hunting or subsistence issues in the new monuments but about limits on logging in the newly created 2.2-million-acre Misty Fjords National Monument located within 17 miles of the town. The monument, the protestors believed, threatened the economy of their town, which depended almost entirely on income from fishing and logging. Just days

⁸ Although the Beirne Homestead Initiative would later be ruled unconstitutional by the state supreme court, it demonstrated how profound the desire for private land was in the state. See, “Alaskans Rally in Campaign for Private Land Ownership,” *New York Times*, November 27, 1978, A16; Brad Knickerbocker, “Alaskans Ready to Vote a Land Rush,” *Christian Science Monitor*, October 18, 1978, n.p.; “Court Decision Kills Land Disposal Program,” *Alaska Industry* 11 (May 1979), 17.

⁹ Paul Nussbaum, “Beirne Initiative to Take Effect March 1,” *Anchorage Daily News*, December 16, 1978, 1.

¹⁰ Ray Tyson, “Land Act Protest Grows,” *Anchorage Times*, December 13, 1978, 2; Real Alaska Coalition, “Alaskans Unite on Alaska d-2 Lands Legislation,” brochure supplement to newspapers in Alaska, 1978.

after Carter's action, a local man named Ted Clifton, a 23-year-old self-employed builder, launched a letter-writing campaign he hoped would involve communities across the country and dump thousands of letters of protest on the president's desk. Acting with the assistance of the Alaska Loggers Association, Clifton wrote a letter to the president explaining the economic impact of the land withdrawal and asking him to reverse his decision. At the bottom of the letter, below a dashed cutoff line, was a note asking the addressee to sign the letter and forward it to the president, congressional representatives, newspaper editors, and friends. "The only way we Alaskans can be heard in Washington, D.C. is if you, our friends and relatives from other states, can help us scream," the letter explained.¹¹

Although the Ketchikan Visitors Association was predicting an increase in local tourism and local fishermen supported the monument because it protected salmon spawning streams, Clifton and other local residents were determined to give voice to their concerns.¹² "They burned them [Carter and Andrus] in Fairbanks. We're going to drown them here," declared Clifton when he explained his plans to the local press. In the days leading up to their protest, Clifton and several other Ketchikan men built two life-sized dolls of straw with papier-mâché peanuts for heads. At mid-day on December 16, about seventy-five people gathered at the Federal Building in Ketchikan for a rally against the monuments, many holding hand-lettered signs that read "We Don't Want Carter's Park," "Jimmy's Got a Case of the Gimmies," "Sierra Club Go Home," and "Alaskan Lands for

¹¹ Gerry Bruder, "Angered by Carter's Action, Local Man Starts Letter Campaign," *Ketchikan Daily News*, December 12, 1978, 1.

¹² Gerry Bruder, "Monument Status Could Enhance Ketchikan's Tourism," *Ketchikan Daily News*, December 12, 1978, 1; Gerry Bruder, "Carter to Be Drown in Effigy Saturday," *Ketchikan Daily News*, December 14, 1978, 1.

Alaskans.” Clifton gave a speech condemning the Antiquities Act and declared, “There is one common belief we share: that land use decisions must be made on the basis of research and facts in Alaska, not politics and propaganda in Washington, D.C.” As the protestors marched through downtown on their way to the city dock, their numbers mounted, and by the time they arrived at the water, the group had grown to over two hundred. As the demonstrators cheered and a local clown made balloon animals for the children, the papier-mâché and straw effigies of Carter and Andrus were hurled into the waters of the Tongass Narrows. The floating effigies were then retrieved by men in a skiff and tossed into the water a second time to the delight of the crowd. Clifton told reporters that he was happy with the turn-out: “The crowd was exuberant without being rowdy. We’re not out to hurt anybody. We only want to drown Carter in a political sense.”¹³

Meanwhile, protestors were gathering throughout Alaska to demonstrate on December 18, the original deadline for d-2 land selection before the president preempted the process by issuing the monument proclamation. In the community of Kenai on the Kenai Peninsula in south-central Alaska about one hundred protestors gathered at the headquarters of the National Moose Range to protest Carter’s action. About seventy people gathered in nearby Soldotna at the borough hall to muster support for a petition against the creation of national monuments and to urge the state government to pay any fines for trespass incurred by citizens who opposed the Antiquities Act. In Glennallen, a town at the edge of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Monument, more than eighty people gathered in below-zero temperatures for a protest march from the Bureau of Land

¹³ Duncan Frazier, “200 Help ‘Drown’ Carter, Andrus,” *Ketchikan Daily News*, December 18, 1978, 1.

Management office to the U.S. Post Office and back. The Alaska Federation of Natives expressed concern about the forty-four million acres Alaska Native people had been promised under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and it stated that the organization saw no practical benefit to the president's use of the Antiquities Act, adding that withdrawing land "to the detriment of native interests for the mere purpose of political expediency is unlawful." Alaska's attorney general, Avrum Gross, announced that the state would sue the federal government on the grounds that the president had used the Antiquities Act inappropriately and that he did not have the right to withdraw lands that had already been selected by the state. In Fairbanks, as many as three hundred people protested in front of the downtown post office, including a woman with her own sled and dog team. And in Anchorage, a red-suited Santa joined the protests there with a sign complaining that "Santa's Land is Frozen Over."¹⁴

As protests against the new national monuments moved from one part of Alaska to another, they provoked responses from Alaskans concerned about the images that the protestors were employing in their bid for national media coverage. On December 15, the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* ran an advertisement from the Interior Wildlife Association, an organization of hunters and sportsmen, that featured a photograph of President Carter doctored with a Hitlerite mustache and the slogan "Adolph Carter's SALT Agreement: (S)teal, (A)laskans' (L)and (T)oday."¹⁵ The advertisement provided

¹⁴ "D-2 Protests Continue Across State," *Anchorage Daily News*, December 16, 1978, 2; Dermot Cole, "Statewide Protest Planned for Jan. 6," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, December 18, 1978, 3; "Protestors March in Kenai, Soldotna," *Ketchikan Daily News*, December 19, 1978, 1; May Lenz, "Carter: Greatest Conservationists or Land Hijacker?" *Ketchikan Daily News*, December 22, 1978, 1.

¹⁵ Advertisement, *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, December 15, 1978, 7. Note: The advertisement makes reference to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks Agreement in

the time and location of the next protest planned for downtown Fairbanks three days hence [Figure 16]. On that day more than three hundred monument protestors marched past an effigy of President Carter hanging upside-down with a sign attached to his torso that read, “Il Duce Benito Carter Traitor.”¹⁶ Although the Fairbanks-based protestors were beginning to back away from plans to burn more effigies, some Alaskans thought the damage had been done.¹⁷ The editor of the *Anchorage Daily News*, explained,

A group of well-meaning Alaskans is about to make a mistake that will be damaging to Alaska’s image in the country, and in the long run, probably harmful to their cause. . . . The purpose of the effigy burning, undoubtedly, is to draw national attention to the issue and the plight of sports users. But we think that such action has precisely the opposite effect than what may be intended. . . . The burning in effigy of Carter and Andrus is the type of overkill that only further blurs the Outside viewpoint about Alaskans. If many of us here are already seen as plunderers of the land, won’t this planned episode only add to the barbaric image?

The editor ended by stating that an attack on the person of the president, even symbolically, was “way off base in these times of mass tragedy and assassination. . . . Let’s knock it off.”¹⁸

Even if the protests had not received much attention from national media outlets, it was clear that they were generating debate among Alaskans themselves. This debate prompted a number of newspaper editors to weigh in on one side or the other, attempting

between President Carter and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev to curtail the manufacture of nuclear weapons in the late 1970s.

¹⁶ Dermot Cole, “Statewide Protest Planned for Jan. 6,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, December 18, 1978, 3.

¹⁷ “Effigy Burning Not Planned,” *Anchorage Times*, December 15, 1978, 3; “D-2 Protests Continue Across State,” *Anchorage Daily News*, December 16, 1978, 2.

¹⁸ “Overkill of the Worst Sort [editorial],” *Anchorage Daily News*, December 15, 1978, 4.

to explain the rising tide of emotion in the state. For example, the editor of the *Ketchikan Daily News* attempted to explain the statewide phenomenon this way:

Alaskans are a private lot, generally. . . . They aren't crazy about crowds. Many came here to get away from crowds. But we are seeing a strange sight in Alaska these days—statewide, independently organized demonstrations spurred by the Carter administration's designation of 56 million acres of state land as national monuments. . . . In our years in Alaska we've rarely seen demonstrations of any kind and have never seen the kind of statewide protests that are springing up now. True, many are organized by people with an economic stake in keeping open access to the land. But the organizers are still 'little guys'—guides and small builders—not big corporation executives. And they are attracting ever growing crowds. Why all the fuss? Alaskans are upset not so much about losing money, although many will, but about losing a way of life, an independent lifestyle and a communion with the land. . . . We don't know what, if any, impact the Alaska protests will have on the issue, but at least for now they are a way to vent our frustrations with far off Washington.¹⁹

The protests also inspired Alaskans to write letters to the newspapers, expressing their concern about the tone of the demonstrations and their own positions on the issue. One letter to the editor of the Sierra Club/Alaska newsletter expressed the belief common among conservationists that Alaska's statehood land grant was generous and that the national interest in Alaska's public lands was legitimate. After referring to the burning in effigy of the president in Fairbanks, the writer expressed his views by addressing spirit of the nation directly:

Dear Uncle Sam:
[The effigy burning] is another kick-in-the-ass from your ungrateful wards; for whom you spend over one billion dollars per year; and for whom your gift of Prudhoe Bay now produced about \$1000 per capita per year in oil revenues. Ironically, Alaskans are the land grabbers, not you who already own it. If we don't get another acre from you, we will still be fabulously rich from what we already own. Please excuse my fellow Alaskans' rude, greedy behavior—they know not what they do.

¹⁹ "Editor's Corner: Alaska Stands Up," *Ketchikan Daily News*, December 15, 1978, 3.

To his letter the author added a postscript that summed up the pro-park position on the state's belated land selections and Alaska Native land selections under ANCSA:

Of course, Alaska will still eventually get its full 104 million acre Statehood entitlement (larger than California's 101.564 million acres area), but will no longer have first choice like during the first 10 years of Statehood. In addition, Alaska Natives will get 40 million acres and our State already owns all tidelands for 3 miles offshore. Wow! So what more can we rightfully demand?²⁰

Some Alaska Native residents in rural villages decided that they did not agree with the Alaska Federation of Natives' position and expressed their support for the Antiquities Act monuments, including seven members of the Evansville Native Village Corporation based in the community of Evansville near the new Gates of the Arctic National Monument. In a letter to the Native-owned *Tundra Times*, they expressed their support for the new monument because of the protection it offered their traditional way of life:

Dear Editor:

I would like to wish everyone a happy New Year and with deepest sincerity to United States President Jimmy Carter and Rep. Morris Udall and John Denver and others who care about you and me and our well being. Most of us are in favor of this Antiquity Act. Reason—for the last thirty-five years Sports Trophy hunters have been coming to Bettles Field [in] the Brooks Range, in the neighborhood of four to six thousand of them. They didn't hunt for food or clothing but for trophy horns, etc. We should not allow this. The land set aside for Parks now, will help curb this senseless slaughter, and it still allows us to live subsistence hunting and fishing. . . . We hope they won't be allowed to kill off our moose, caribou and other game like they did the bison, etc. in the South 48.²¹

These pro-monument voices were few and far between in Alaska, despite the attempts of the Alaska Coalition to turn the tide of public opinion. The more common approach was the one established by the state's political leaders.

²⁰ "All These Protests and Effigy Burnings [letter to editor]," *Alaska Newsletter* (January 1979), 10.

²¹ "Antiquity Act [letter to editor]," *Tundra Times*, January 11, 1979, 2, 10.

Early in the debate over the new national monuments, Alaska's congressional representatives had set the tone by declaring rhetorical warfare against the president. At a convention of the Northwest Mining Association soon after the president's proclamation, Representative Young announced, "They've declared war on Alaska . . . I mutually declare war against President Carter, and there are enough votes west of the Mississippi to do something."²² Senator Stevens echoed this sentiment when he declared, "There is no question in my mind that we're at war. . . . We must have a united position as a state."²³ Governor Jay Hammond agreed that the Antiquities Act withdrawals were bad for Alaska, but he had taken a moderate position on the d-2 debate and suggested a system of cooperative management to include the state in management of public lands. During the anti-monument protests he expressed doubt that local protests could affect change on a national level. Beginning in January 1979, Hammond spoke out on radio and television, complaining that a combination of factors were "damaging Alaska's image on Capitol Hill." He cited continued anti-park protests, the use of state money to lobby against federal land withdrawals (plans were under way to authorize \$4.5 million for this purpose), and disagreements among Alaska's congressional representatives.²⁴ Hammond's solution was an invitation to the Real Alaska Coalition, Citizens for Management of Alaska Lands, Alaskans Unite, and other interest groups to agree on a lobbying strategy for a new Alaska lands bill. However, the governor's ideas could

²² "Young Declares War on Carter Over d-2," *Ketchikan Daily News*, December 4, 1978, 10.

²³ "Stevens Urges Alaskans to Have United Front on Lands," *Ketchikan Daily News*, December 6, 1978, 2.

²⁴ "Caution Urged on d-2 Lands," *Anchorage Daily News*, April 24, 1980, 3; Ray Tyson, "But Land Strategies Differ," *Anchorage Times*, January 6, 1979, 1-2.

hardly be regarded as an attempt to reach a middle ground. Hammond's proposed platform included a call to Congress to revoke the Antiquities Act monuments and to transfer seventy million acres of land to the State of Alaska. Some of his other proposals did eventually come to pass, such as park boundaries drawn to exclude mineral-rich areas, support for "traditional Alaskan activities" on federal lands, and state management of fish and game on all lands in Alaska.²⁵

During this period in Alaska history, when passions ran high, advocates for national parks in the state may have been hard to come by, but they did exist. Following the effigy-burning in Fairbanks and the first protests in Anchorage, Alaska State Resources Commissioner Bob LeResche came under fire for his criticism of the demonstrations. "What a childish way to deal with a very real problem," he told reporters. "I hope they don't offend him [Carter] so much he won't help us on other things."²⁶ This view was shared by Vic Fischer, a University of Alaska professor and participant in the 1958 constitutional convention that led to Alaska statehood. Fischer told reporters that "the withdrawals will have a rather minimal overall effect on Alaska's economy or future development" and that "the hysteria over the whole d-2 issue is quite unjustified." According to Fischer, the vast majority of the monument lands had not been utilized for resource extraction in the past and showed little sign of ever being profitable in the future. When asked about the question of hunting guides being put out of work, he said that although the consequences were serious for a few Alaskans that it "may be

²⁵ Ray Tyson, "But Land Strategies Differ," *Anchorage Times*, January 6, 1979, 2; "Hammond Urges 'Summit' on Land," *Anchorage Daily News*, January 13, 1979, 2.

²⁶ Suzan Nightingale, "Pickets Berate Lands Lock-Up," *Anchorage Daily News*, December 14, 1978, 1.

something Alaskans will have to live with,” adding, “personally, I am not all that sympathetic to all of those rich people coming from Frankfurt, Germany, or Houston, Texas, to kill Dall sheep or grizzly bears.” Regarding the argument that the federal withdrawals were a violation of the statehood compact, Fischer countered that it was “pure nonsense,” adding that Alaskans had abandoned any claims to lands not granted to the state under the Statehood Act. “I personally believe,” Fischer concluded, “that if we can keep our head about all this and approach the problems rationally that we can deal with them: If we get emotional and carried away, we’ll just get like responses from the other side.”²⁷

Neither Hammond’s call for a summit to shape a unified anti-monument message or words of caution from protest critics like Fischer had any effect on the protest plans already underway. One of those plans was a scheme by Alaskans Unite organizer Clark Engle to orchestrate a “statewide strike” that would close the doors and the cash registers of Alaska businesses for two hours on a Friday in mid-January. The idea was intended to send a message to state administrators in Juneau that Alaskans were not happy. “We feel that our state’s administration is adopting an attitude towards the federal government that is too reticent in relation to the devastating effects of the act,” Engle told reporters. “A concerted effort on behalf of this statewide strike can’t help but prove to our legislators that Alaskans are indeed interested in the destiny of Alaska.”²⁸ To advertise the

²⁷ Jane Pender, “Some Calming Voices in the D-2 Storm,” *Anchorage Daily News*, January 13, 1979, 2.

²⁸ “Alaskans Unite Organizing Statewide Strike,” *Anchorage Daily News*, January 10, 1979, 1; “Alaskans Are Uniting [editorial],” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 11, 1979, 4.

statewide action, the organization took out large advertisements in the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* and other newspapers that announced,

Alaskans Unite!

Don't be misled—the issue is NOT Development vs. Conservation;

The major issue is Self-Determination vs. Big Government;

Help roll back the Federal Bureaucracy;

Take part in the statewide 'strike' against the Antiquities Act [Figure 17].²⁹

The organization then launched a statewide membership drive aimed at recruiting 350,000 Alaskans concerned about “constitutional rights and states rights.” In a newspaper advertisement that included cut-out membership cards for Alaskans Unite, the organization asked for “peaceful people” to join them in pushing for the following demands and backing for one statement of non-violent intent:

1. Removal of the Antiquities Act
2. Title to State land selections
3. Title to Native land selections
4. State management of fish and game throughout the entire state
5. Traditional and historical access and utilization of Federal lands for consumptive and nonconsumptive uses
6. Unrestricted access to and between all state and native lands
7. Exclude known mineralized areas from land classification which prohibits mining
8. We do not endorse derogatory, demeaning, or violent actions³⁰

²⁹ “Alaskans Are Uniting [editorial]” and Alaskans Unite! [advertisement], *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 11, 1979, 4.

³⁰ Advertisement, *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 12, 1979, 17; “This Is What We Are Fighting . . . Complete ‘Lock Up,’” *Pioneer All-Alaska Weekly*, February 9, 1979, 16; “Alaskans Are Uniting [editorial],” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 11, 1979, 4.

On the day of the strike, at least 136 businesses, including supermarkets, department stores, service stations, car dealers, lumberyards, and clothing stores in the Anchorage area shut their doors for two hours at mid-day, while motorists and pedestrians stopped to listen as Alaskans Unite mounted a demonstration in front of the Federal Building to voice yet more dissatisfaction with the president's decision.³¹ A group of roughly 150 demonstrators carried signs that read, "Can the Peanut Farmer," "More Jobs Not Parks," and "Theft is Revolting," while Engle addressed the crowd with a megaphone, announcing, "We have to thank Carter and Andrus for locking up the land. They have stopped us from using the land." One of the protestors, a local artist named Dan Moore, carried a sign and told reporters, "I want to know how Carter can lock up land that he has never eaten on, flown over, or even seen." Pilot and fishing guide Bob Curtis argued that the use of the Antiquities Act by Carter had been "totally illegal and immoral" adding that "From Yakutat to Saint Michael north of the Yukon River on the Bering Sea, there is not one stretch of land following the coast that is not under federal control. It is because of this sort of thing that I am protesting."³²

While Alaskans Unite continued to organize protests in Anchorage, the members of the Real Alaska Coalition were already planning the protest cum camping holiday on the new monument lands surrounding Mt. McKinley National Park that would become the Great Denali-McKinley Trespass. One of their main concerns was that they wanted to demonstrate that "the land can be used without disturbing it" by avoiding any littering,

³¹ Sue Lewis, "Trespass Organizers Planning to Violate 27 Federal Laws," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 11, 1979, 1.

³² Ray Tyson, "Groups Direct Protest at Act," *Anchorage Times*, January 12, 1979, 1.

asking protestors to haul their own firewood, and using portable toilets. “Instrumental to its success is the fact that it be conducted orderly and peacefully and completely clean—not so much as a gum wrapper is to be dropped on the ground,” declared a letter from the member organizations.³³ The day before the trespass, an editorial in the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* expressed the delicacy of this public relations issue:

[W]e can be sure that we’ll be front page news Monday if one television cameraman spots a beer can in the snow or one reporter hears some talk about running a moose with a snow machine. We have to watch our step, and keep conflicts with the National Park Service at the verbal level. . . . Let’s make the great trespass a memorable event and keep in mind that the whole world may be watching.³⁴

The trespass organizers had invited the three national television networks as well as news magazines such as *Time* and *Newsweek*, and as a result, they were concerned that all go according to plan.³⁵ So when a rumor hit Alaskan newspapers that protestors were planning to use effigies of Carter and Andrus for target practice, trespass organizers were quick to respond. “We have nothing to do with any shooting in effigy,” said Real Alaska Coalition board member Tom Scarborough, who assured reporters that the demonstrators would be using metal animal silhouettes from the Fairbanks-based Tanana Valley Sportsmen’s Association. Scarborough said the rumor originated with members of Alaskans Unite based in Anchorage, to which Anchorage organizer Pete Haggland responded that he was unable to track down the source of the rumor. “Shooting effigies

³³ “Protest Camp-Out Set at Monument,” *Anchorage Daily News*, December 12, 1978, 2.

³⁴ “The World May Be Watching [editorial],” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 12, 1979, 4.

³⁵ Tom Snapp, “All Systems ‘Go’ for Massive Antiquities Act Protests,” *Pioneer All-Alaska Weekly*, January 12, 1979, 1, 5; Michael Carey, “U.S. Can’t Sell Cantwell Crowd,” *Alaska Advocate*, January 18-24, 1979, 6.

is definitely not sponsored by Alaskans Unite,” he told the press, adding that any such action would be “irresponsible.”³⁶

Meanwhile, Alaska’s congressmen were busy distancing themselves from the protests that they had been encouraging. Senator Stevens refused to give his blessing to the Denali-McKinley monument trespass, explaining in an interview with a Fairbanks reporter that “as a lawyer, I’m an officer of the court, sworn to uphold the law, so I cannot advise anyone to violate the law.” He assured Alaskans, however, that he was working hard to get National Park Service rules and regulations changed to favor hunters and fishermen. In a telegram to the protest organizers who invited him to the trespass action, Senator Gravel said, “While as a senator, I cannot sanction a trespass on federal lands, I nevertheless understand why you will be demonstrating . . . and I believe, in fact, you are exercising your constitutional right to free political expression,” adding also, “I join your protest in spirit.”³⁷ A spokesman for Representative Young said that the congressman “had no intention of taking a public position on the demonstration,” while Governor Hammond, for his part, continued to argue that legislative action, not street protests, was the key to easing monument regulations and winning the d-2 battle in the long run. He did, however, encourage the protestors by announcing that the state was unable to enforce federal hunting, trapping, and fishing regulations in the new monuments. Although the governor’s press secretary stated that “there’s clearly no intent to encourage people to break the law,” this unwillingness to aid the federal government’s

³⁶ “Effigies Receive a Reprieve,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 10, 1979, 1; “A Flap Over Effigies,” *Pioneer All-Alaska Weekly*, January 12, 1979, 2.

³⁷ Laurie McGinley, “Stevens Can’t Give Support,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 11, 1979, 1.

efforts in new parklands bolstered later organized attempts to defy the new monument regulations.³⁸

On the evening before the trespass action, Mt. McKinley National Park superintendent Frank Betts met with the protestors in Cantwell, and although the demonstration organizers announced their intent to violate park rules, Betts told his rangers to avoid making arrests or interfering with the event. Answering charges that the National Park Service intended to use aircraft to conduct surveillance of the protest, public relations officer Gale Brammer told reporters that a light airplane might be stationed at Cantwell but only for transportation purposes. “We’re not performing surveillance,” Brammer said. “We’ll be there to treat these people like park visitors. This is simply a park visitors operation. Law enforcement is way down on our list.”³⁹ Two weeks before the protest was scheduled to begin, the federal government issued new regulations that were specifically applicable to Alaska’s new national monuments, and most of these rules provided for more “relaxed subsistence and access provisions” than were normally allowed.⁴⁰ Although National Park Service officials explained that many of the activities the trespassers were planning were not necessarily violations under these new rules, the organizers seemed determined. Real Alaska Coalition members announced their plans to operate aircraft in the monument, to camp outside of designated

³⁸ Suzan Nightingale, “State Can’t Enforce Carter’s Hunting Ban,” *Anchorage Daily News*, December 7, 1978, 1; “Hunters Ask Help for ‘Traditional Use,’” *Anchorage Times*, December 12, 1978, 1.

³⁹ Sue Lewis, “Six Park Rangers Added for Trespass,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 10, 1979, 1; Sue Lewis, “Feds Map Strategy for Trespass,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 4, 1979, 1.

⁴⁰ Suzan Nightingale, “Some Tips About the Trespass,” *Anchorage Daily News*, January 13, 1979, 1; Norris, “Alaska Subsistence,” 88.

campgrounds (none yet existed in the monument), to use pack animals, and to tow people on sleds or skis behind snowmobiles. After consulting monument rules from the contiguous United States, trespass organizers also planned “illegal activities” such as hitchhiking, operating radios, ignoring noise ordinances between 10:00 PM and 6:00 AM, and assembling publicly without a permit. “If they intend to arrest or stop Alaskans from these environmentally sound pursuits which have always been the greatest expression of man in harmony with nature,” warned Ken Fanning, director of the Real Alaska Coalition, “then let them stop 3,000 or 4,000 or 5,000 of us at once, rather than pick on us one at a time.”⁴¹

When the day of the trespass finally came, an estimated seven hundred vehicles and seventeen airplanes streamed into Cantwell. In Fairbanks a news film crew climbed aboard a bus taking protestors to Cantwell and interviewed them en route.⁴² State troopers were present, controlling traffic as the vehicles eased along the side of the community airstrip, and three National Park Service employees could be seen smiling and mingling with the gathering protestors. Observers reported that the orderly crowd was comprised of families with children of all ages, all bundled in snowsuits and parkas

⁴¹ Ken Fanning, “The Great Denali-McKinley Trespass,” *Pioneer All-Alaska Weekly*, January 5, 1979, 5. The full list of planned rule violations included skydiving, hunting, guiding, using snowmobiles, riding horses, setting traps, landing airplanes and helicopters, using a public address system, carrying loaded firearms (including muzzleloaders), using bows and arrows and spears, using CB radios and single side-band radios, lighting campfires, staging sled-dog races and allowing dogs off leash. See, “From Ketchikan to Barrow,” *Alaska* (March 1979), 18.

⁴² The press coverage of the event was not what the organizers had hoped. Part of the television crew’s work aboard the bus was later aired on the CBS Sunday “Late Night News;” however, the broadcast did not show in Alaska. The event did get coverage on page eight of the *New York Times* under the subtitle “Paul Revere’s Ride and George III Are Evoked in Demonstration against the President.” See, “Alaskans Protest Public-Land Action,” *New York Times*, January 15, 1979, A8.

and wearing ski caps and heavy boots. The parents carried baskets and backpacks full of picnic supplies, and some carried rifles on their backs as they made their way three-quarters of a mile from the Cantwell airstrip to the Denali National Monument. Once people began to gather inside the monument boundaries, a number of skydivers delighted the crowd by deploying their bright parachutes against the grey sky and floating down to the designated demonstration site.⁴³ The protest action was marred by the accidental death earlier in the morning when the demonstrators were still assembling in Cantwell. The incident occurred when a 23-year-old Fairbanks man, speeding across the landing strip on his snowmobile, collided with the wing strut of a small private airplane that was rolling to a stop. The man, who had been drinking and had been repeatedly warned to stay clear of the landing strip, was killed instantly.⁴⁴

Two days after the Great Denali-McKinley Trespass, one of the trespass participants, a Fairbanks man named Mike Hartman, decided to launch his own one-man protest against the president's monument proclamation. Described in the local newspaper as a 39-year-old sales manager, inventor, and father of three, Hartman announced publicly that he planned to put his life on the line over what he called the "illegal application of the Antiquities Act in Alaska." After taking leave from his job at a local sawmill, he set up a cot with a sleeping bag and a chemical toilet in front of the city's

⁴³ Jane Pender, "Protesters Are Peaceful," *Anchorage Daily News*, January 15, 1979, 1; "Trespassers Say Point Was Proved," *Anchorage Daily News*, January 15, 1979, 1.

⁴⁴ "Cantwell Mishap Leaves One Dead," *Anchorage Times*, January 14, 1979, 2; "Plane-Snowmachine Fatality Puts Damper on Trespass," *Pioneer All-Alaska Weekly*, January 19, 1979, 10. See also, Frank Norris, "Crown Jewel of the North: An Administrative History of Denali National Park and Preserve," Volume 1 (Anchorage: National Park Service, 2006), 256-257.

downtown post office despite bone-chilling temperatures [Figure 18]. “I’m going to live here until President Carter and Congress repeal the ridiculous law or until my feet and hands freeze and I keel over,” he told reporters. Hartman said that he did not want to sound like a martyr but that he would not mind freezing his limbs or even giving his life if it would “get the government off our backs.”⁴⁵ Hartman announced that for the first seven days he would eat ten ounces of homemade stew each day, but from then on he would restrict himself to liquids like warm water and herb tea. He said he realized that the odds were against him, but he hoped to draw enough media attention to prompt residents of the Lower 48 states to write to the president demanding a repeal of restrictive land classification on the fifty-six million acres. “The Antiquities Act could be repealed in one day,” he claimed. “President Carter could go to Congress and say, “Hey fellas, I made a mistake.”⁴⁶

From his post in the parking lot, Hartman told reporters that the Laborer’s Union, which owned the property adjacent to the post office, had given him permission to stay there and that he would not go inside the post office to warm up but would stay with the uncovered cot and sleeping bag. He also promised that he would not be receiving more clothing than what he was already wearing.⁴⁷ After twelve days of camping in below-zero temperatures, Hartman ended his fast and his protest and was photographed for the

⁴⁵ Dermot Cole, “Resident Begins His Own ‘Freeze,’” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 16, 1979, 1; “Still Protesting [photograph],” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 22, 1979, 3; “Chilly Protest Ends,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 27, 1979, 1; “Hartman Ends Protest,” *Pioneer All-Alaska Weekly*, February 2, 1979, 10.

⁴⁶ Dermot Cole, “Resident Begins His Own ‘Freeze,’” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 16, 1979, 1.

⁴⁷ Dermot Cole, “Resident Begins His Own ‘Freeze,’” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 16, 1979, 1.

cover of the Fairbanks newspaper hugging his wife. The deep circles under his eyes told the tale of his ordeal, and his right hand was swollen from shaking hands with the thousands of Fairbanksans who wished him luck. He said he at last decided to end his protest after speaking to Representative Young, who convinced him that no legislation reversing Carter's decision could make its way through Congress in time. "From my point of view, it's been really great," he said, adding that his decision to camp outside the post office had received some media attention but not as much as he had hoped. "It's time to go on to other things," he said. "There's a lot to do, getting on the telephone and typewriter and working on it."⁴⁸ After Hartman's open-air hunger strike, the weekly demonstrations in Alaska's urban centers tapered off and ceased altogether. In the rural communities closest to the new national monuments, however, the struggle continued.

⁴⁸ "Chilly Protest Ends," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 27, 1979, 1; Sam Bishop, "Land Action Ignited Protests in Alaska," *Northland News* (January 1986), 3.

CHAPTER 5

RURAL MONUMENT PERIOD PROTESTS, 1978-1980

The city council of the City of Eagle Alaska does not advocate violence, but we can be no more responsible for the actions of an individual citizen than we can be for any animal when it is cornered.

—Eagle City Council resolution, 1979

Alaskans want easy access to the virgin wilderness. But no virgin ever survived easy access.

—Gates of the Arctic Ranger Ray Bane, 1979

Although these protests against the president's use of the Antiquities Act took place all across the state, hotbeds of protest emerged in the small towns closest to three newly created monuments: the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Monument, the Wrangell-St. Elias National Monument, and the Gates of the Arctic National Monument. In the near-park communities of Eagle, McCarthy, Glennallen, and Bettles, angry residents decided that the National Park Service was not welcome, and they took steps to not only exclude park personnel from the life of the community but to make it impossible for them to do their jobs. In a number of cases, residents even threatened the lives of agency personnel and attempted to drive them out of town using various forms of intimidation. The Nunamiut Eskimo community of Anaktuvuk Pass, however, offered a dramatic exception for two reasons: first, because the village's residents had decided that they would side with the National Park Service in an effort to protect their traditional way of life, and secondly, because they elected to have the park boundaries entirely encircle

their town, the only situation of its kind in an Alaska park.¹ Meanwhile, the congressional debate over the Alaska lands bill H.R. 39 continued with all the same fervor as earlier in the decade—that is, until the election of Ronald Reagan to the presidency in 1979. Faced by the threat of an administration hostile to Alaska’s lands bill, the supporters of H.R. 29 pushed the lame-duck Congress to pass the broadest conservation legislation in American history, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act.

While anti-monument demonstrations were taking place in Alaska’s urban centers, in rural Alaska, commonly known as “the Bush,” there existed an even higher level of confusion, despair, anger and bitterness. Although rural and urban Alaskans shared the view that the monument proclamation was a frightening new development in the long-running d-2 land struggle, Bush-dwelling Alaskans tended to be more concerned with putting food on the table or keeping small businesses afloat than with states rights issues or the constitutional fine points of the state-federal relationship. In certain cases, the residents of rural communities found that the new monument lands were either in their own backyards or that the monument boundaries encircled their privately owned lands called “inholdings.” In the case of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Monument, Wrangell-St. Elias National Monument, and Gates of the Arctic National Monument, the surrounding communities became hotbeds of local protest because these residents, unlike urban residents, faced not only the idea of new parklands but the presence of National Park Service personnel in their communities. They also struggled with the arrival of new

¹ Although the community of McCarthy appears to be encircled by Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, the town is linked to the outside world by a state-owned road which is flanked by privately-owned lands.

regulations limiting their use of land they had long considered their own for recreation, subsistence use, business operations such as guiding or trapping, and, in many cases, seasonal or year-round living in cabins and backcountry lodges.

Three factors exacerbated the anxiety in rural communities. The first was a lack of accurate information about how the National Park Service would manage the new monument lands. Even basic questions such as the location of monument boundaries and whether or not people are allowed into wilderness areas went unanswered because residents in remote locations did not have access to the agency's maps, and they often relied more on rumor than on information issued by government sources. In many cases, the more difficult questions—about subsistence rights, cabin or guiding permits, and whether sport hunting would be allowed—would become major obstacles to park management. The second factor was the episodic nature of the National Park Service presence in the monuments themselves. Lacking the funding or personnel to staff the monuments, many parks had only one official representative in the area. Later in 1979, the agency again formed an Alaska Task Force, this time of park rangers with law enforcement training from other American park units who would spend the summer season in the new Alaskan monuments. This stopgap effort served the National Park Service's needs, but it also created a great deal of bitterness in local communities where people were already inclined to resent federal authority of any kind. The third factor that transformed certain communities into hotbeds of anti-park protest was the attempt by the National Park Service to establish park headquarters in these communities. Many residents found it impossible to accept that not only would there be a nearby national

park unit that limited their use of the land but that the town's residents would be confronted by uniformed reminders of federal authority on a daily basis.

Even before the national monuments became a political reality, National Park Service director William Whalen seemed sure that law enforcement in Alaska would be a routine matter, stating at one point that "our business is managing people and resources, and we will apply the law reasonably and firmly in the Alaska monuments."² Whalen was unaware, however, of the considerable financial hardships with which the National Park Service in Alaska would struggle or of the unique challenges that agency personnel would face in the state. One of those challenges was outright hostility from Alaska's political establishment, even at the very highest levels. For example, five months into the monument period, Representative Young proposed that Alaskans try to bring national attention to the Alaska lands battle by fighting the federal government on the grounds that it had broken the terms of the Statehood Act. In a speech to the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce, Young suggested that Alaskans adopt a bill asserting state ownership of most federal land in Alaska and that they shut off utilities to federal buildings to emphasize their displeasure at President Carter's national monuments. "Now I want to know how long the FBI, IRS, BIA, and all those others are going to survive at 60 below," Young asked rhetorically. "Not once have we taken the president to task. We've got to do something positive and you can call it civil disobedience," he continued, adding, "I'm not talking about throwing bombs or anything."³ Goaded to action by their representatives and lacking even basic information about National Park Service plans and regulations,

² Williss, "Do Things Right," 139.

³ "Young Wants Fight with Feds," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, May 30, 1979, 2.

rural residents were left to imagine worst case scenarios. As a result, they also produced some of the angriest protests of the era.

The town of Eagle (population 100), on the banks of the Yukon River just twelve miles from the Canadian border, was one such community. Eagle was founded in 1899 by a group of disillusioned and restless Klondike prospectors from the United States who tired of paying Canadian taxes on their gold discoveries in the Yukon and looked westward to the American side of the international border. Within two years, the U.S. Army had built a frontier fort near the town, and Eagle became the seat of the newly formed Third Judicial District's courthouse that provided the only law in a region stretching over 300,000 square miles from the Arctic Ocean to the Aleutian Islands. From this auspicious beginning, Eagle's fortunes declined along with its population. Through the 1940s and 1950s, a handful of locals scattered up and down the Yukon River lived by growing large gardens, trapping, fishing and hunting wild game, and a few determined placer miners continued sifting gold from creeks and streams.⁴

In the mid-1970s, Eagle became famous when its unusual denizens were described in John McPhee's popular profile of Alaska called *Coming into the Country*. In the book McPhee described what he called "river people" who had come to the region in the 1960s and 1970s looking for adventure and lives away from crowded cities or the trappings of suburban American life. He found that they were looking for a place where they could test themselves against the natural world, free themselves from the yoke of wage labor, and turn their backs on what they regarded as federal government interference in the lives of individuals. McPhee's portraits of the rugged few who

⁴ For a brief history of Eagle, see Chris Allan, "Save Fort Egbert!: How the People of Eagle Reclaimed Their Past," *Alaska History* 23 (Spring/Fall 2008): 37-62.

populated Eagle in the early 1970s and who inhabited cabins (“trespass cabins” according to the Bureau of Land Management) along the river revealed a rebellious mixture of philosophers, eccentrics, romantics, misfits, and misanthropes, most of whom were already poised to resist any restrictions on how they used the lands they regarded as free for public use.⁵

For this reason, only two weeks had passed since the president’s proclamation when the City Council of Eagle voted to advise President Carter that it found his use of the Antiquities Act to create the nearby 1.7-million-acre Yukon-Charley Rivers National Monument “illegal, immoral and in violation of the basic human rights of American citizens.” In the two-page letter addressed to the White House, the council explained that the proclamation was immoral “because it attempts to force local residents to renounce the independence of a subsistence lifestyle and to accept the government-controlled lifestyle of the welfare recipient.” Therefore, the letter continued, the proclamation “removes our privilege to live as free men and women.”⁶ The council’s letter also gave a clear indication of how agency employees could expect to be treated when they arrived in Eagle:

We do not intend to obey the directives and regulations of the National Park Service. The city council of the City of Eagle Alaska does not advocate violence, but we can be no more responsible for the actions of an individual citizen than we can be for any animal when it is cornered. The policy of the Eagle City Council shall be to offer no aid or assistance to the National Park Service or its employees while your current regulations are in effect.⁷

⁵ See John McPhee, *Coming into the Country* (New York: Noonday, 1976).

⁶ “Eagle Vows Disobedience,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, December 14, 1978, 1, 5.

⁷ Williss, “Do Things Right,” 104.

Much of the anxiety that prompted this city council resolution arose from local fears that subsistence rights would be granted exclusively to Alaska Natives. Since the founding of Eagle in the 1890s, there had always been an Athabascan community located three miles upriver called Eagle Village (population 60). It seems white Eagleites feared that their Native neighbors would be the only ones allowed to use monument lands for subsistence. This prompted the city council to argue in its letter to the president that “whites in the area are much more dependent on subsistence than are the local Natives,” adding that “the taking of fish and game as a means of support for ourselves and our families has been allowed the residents of the North American continent since the first white man set foot to it.”⁸

When the announcement was made that the president had withdrawn fifty-six million acres as national monuments, Interior Secretary Andrus stated that the proclamation “permits continued subsistence hunting by rural Alaskans, most of whom are Eskimo, Indians and Aleuts.” He added that “[i]t would be ironic and unfair to protect this land and at the same time injure the traditional people who live nearby and depend on this land for their livelihood.” In addition, Interior Department officials tried to point out that the importance of subsistence activities was written into the language of the proclamation itself:

The land withdrawn and reserved by this proclamation for the protection of the geological, archeological, biological and other phenomena . . . supports now, as it has in the past, the unique subsistence culture of the local residents. The continued existence of this culture, which depends on subsistence hunting, and its availability for study, enhance the historical and scientific values of the natural objects protected herein because of the on-going interaction of the subsistence culture with those objects. Accordingly, the opportunity of the local residents to

⁸ Sue Lewis, “Feds to Try to Ease Eagle Fear,” *Fairbanks Daily News*, December 19, 1978, 3.

engage in subsistence hunting is a value to be protected and with continue under administration of the monument.⁹

Although agency officials and others hastened to explain that “local resident” was in no way defined on a racial basis, even Governor Hammond admitted his confusion when he first heard the details of the proclamation over the telephone. He stated that “based on that phoned description, it appeared that the definition of subsistence was based on racial grounds.”¹⁰

The question of subsistence rights was only one of the issues that angered the residents of Eagle, and they did not wait long to advertise their displeasure to the world. To begin with, the residents of Eagle formed a protest organization called Eagle Action Together, and they began planning a monument trespass of their own. They timed the protest action to coincide with the Great Denali-McKinley Trespass taking place some four hundred miles to the south. After assembling in Eagle, a group of between twenty-five and thirty local residents, including three who were living within monument boundaries, traveled roughly thirteen miles by snowmobile, sled, dog team and airplane in below-zero temperatures to stage a trespass just downstream from a riverside landmark within the monument called Calico Bluff. There the protestors set about violating what they believed were at least twelve federal regulations, including carrying loaded firearms, using snowmobiles, landing of aircraft, camping without a permit, building fires without a permit, and sport hunting. Jeff Austin, a spokesman for Eagle Action Together, said

⁹ Sue Lewis, “Feds to Try to Ease Eagle Fear,” *Fairbanks Daily News*, December 19, 1978, 3; Mary Lenz, “Whites Can Subsistence Hunt,” *Ketchikan Daily News*, December 16, 1978, 1.

¹⁰ Mary Lenz, “Whites Can Subsistence Hunt,” *Ketchikan Daily News*, December 16, 1978, 1.

that he hoped the demonstration would encourage other Bush communities to take action on their own.¹¹

The statewide monument protests and the trespass by Eagle Action Together prompted the residents of Central, a tiny community of only a dozen or so inhabitants one hundred miles downriver, to voice their grievances. After the monument proclamation, the residents of Central found themselves sandwiched between the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Monument and the proposed Yukon Flats Wildlife Refuge that would be managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Following the example of their neighbors in Eagle, the residents held a protest march near their town's Bureau of Land Management station with signs that read, "Federal Promises Aren't Worth Peanuts!" "20 Years of Broken Promises," and "They're Taking Our Land—Try Taking Our Guns." Later about thirty residents in the community met for a potluck dinner, pool tournament, and letter-writing session where they raised \$380 in donations for Alaskans Unite. And, just down the road, in the neighboring town of Circle, a similar protest took place where forty-eight residents carried signs in front of the only federal building in the town, the post office. Sandy Roberts, a 76-year-old Athabascan Indian who had lived in Circle for more than five decades, told a reporter, "In 54 years in Circle it's the worst I've ever seen. I wish Mr. Carter and his gang would come to Circle and try to make a living by snaring rabbits. It's just not fair."¹²

¹¹ "Eagle Has Own Trespass," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 18, 1979, 2.

¹² "Eagle Has Own Trespass," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, January 18, 1979, 2; "Central Residents Protest," *Pioneer All-Alaska Weekly*, January 26, 1979, 11; "Circle Residents Firm on Land Stand," *Interior Wildlife Association of Alaska Newsletter* (1979), 6.

These protests went unnoticed by National Park Service officials because the agency made no attempt to send park rangers to the new monuments during the winter months, and by the time spring arrived, many local residents were beginning to suspect that the proclamations would not change their lives at all. The first sign of National Park Service authority that many rural communities encountered was Alaska area director John Cook who was on a mission to visit the towns that had demonstrated the greatest resistance to the park idea. Cook had been hired the previous year and had heard stories about effigy-burning and angry, potentially violent rural residents. While preparing his park-to-park itinerary in April, he heard that the residents “were going to kill the first Park Service people to set foot in Eagle, Alaska after the proclamations.”¹³ Determined to show no fear in the face of threats, Cook asked the broadcaster for the “Caribou Clatters” show on the local radio station to announce that he was on his way to the Yukon River community and that he wanted to talk.¹⁴

According to Cook, he then packed his duffel bag full of necessities and added a bottle of peppermint schnapps and two bottles of Jim Beam whiskey. The schnapps, he explained, were for an Eagle man named Sarge Waller, who Cook had heard was partial to the minty spirits. He boarded the mail plane in Fairbanks with National Park Service planners Bill Brown and Doug Warnock, and together the three men flew for an hour before receiving a rather rude greeting at the Eagle airport:

As we buzzed the airport, every member of every family in Eagle, Alaska was out to welcome us as we went by. We got the one-finger salute as we went by. We

¹³ John E. Cook, Tape #H91-22-31, October 8, 1991, interviewed by Dan O’Neill and William Schneider, Project Jukebox, Oral History Program, University of Alaska Fairbanks (hereafter John E. Cook interview).

¹⁴ John E. Cook interview.

landed, and everybody turned their back on us, except for Sarge Waller who said to me, 'I'm not about to be intimidated by you or anybody else. Would you like a ride downtown?'¹⁵

One member of the group, Bill Brown, had been living in Eagle for some time before being hired by the National Park Service, and he had developed friendships with many Eagleites, friendships that were now in jeopardy. Jack Boone, the local store owner and a member of Eagle Action Together, had taken part in the group's decision the previous week to greet the visitors with "a position of non-recognition." Boone told reporters that he personally refused "to beg for my rights from the representative of a dictatorship, no matter how nice a guy he is [referring to Brown]. He can't be an advocate for my view without losing his job, so if he's an honest man, all he can do is smile. If not, he can promise me things."¹⁶ Other members of Eagle Action Together showed their displeasure by sporting T-shirts featuring a half-drown river rat, battered and bandaged and carrying a broken canoe paddle, declaring, "I should never have told them I work for the National Park Service!" [Figure 19].

On the way to town, Brown, Cook and Warnock could not help but notice a series of signs that the locals had placed along the route into town. Some addressed them personally, declaring, "Turn Back!" and "Park Service Not Welcome Here," while others, like the sign on the front of one of Eagle's many abandoned log cabins, urging that Congress "Repeal Antiquities Act!" The signs had been erected the previous week by a local man who posted twenty on consenting homes and businesses. He reported that within the time it took him to hang the first batch, he received requests for forty more,

¹⁵ John E. Cook interview.

¹⁶ Diana Greene, "First Tourists in Eagle Meet with Chilly Greeting," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, May 1, 1979, 4.

and it seemed that “the usually unpolitical Eagle suddenly came alive with political individuals who had taken their stand and decided to stick with it.”¹⁷ As the National Park Service team approached the downtown area they noticed that the signs grew more elaborate [see Figures 20-27]:

Eagle Refuses Park Service Control of Our Life and Livelihood

When Government Does Not Make Sense To Americans, Americans Will Not Buy That Government. Resist Tyranny—Thomas Jefferson

NPS Policy Will Not Hamper or Divert Us From Cultivating Our Simple Lifestyle. Good Old-Fashioned Garden Variety Freedoms of Choice Grow Here

National Park Service employees and anyone else advocating a dictatorship (including those locally who support National Park Service activities under the Antiquities Act) are not welcome here!¹⁸

Along the banks of the Yukon, the protestors had placed a second crop of signs for river travelers that read:

Don't Let Park Service into the Country

War Zone: Eagle Is Under Attack by Park Service

Due To A Low Popularity Rating The Park Service Show In Eagle Has Been Permanently Cancelled.¹⁹

Undeterred by this hostile reception, Cook and his colleagues set up shop in an old cabin that they had rented for the occasion. After spreading maps of the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Monument on a rough table and setting the bottles of whisky and schnapps next to them, they opened the door to receive locals with comments or questions. Before long

¹⁷ Diana Greene, “First Tourists in Eagle Meet with Chilly Greeting,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, May 1, 1979, 4.

¹⁸ Williss, “Do Things Right,” 104.

¹⁹ All photographs of protest signs in Eagle are courtesy of Pat Sanders, Park Ranger for Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve.

they noticed a form of macabre monumental art just next door—two headstones complete with plastic flowers, each with its own shallow grave and a pair of winter boots sticking out of the melting snow. The first headstone read, “R.I.P. Antiquities Act” and the second, “R.I.P. Yukon Charlie.” Above the diminutive graveyard, a sign hung from a tree with two arrows pointing downward and the words “Acceptable Monuments” [Figure 28].

Although the National Park Service representatives were barred from entering the store and members of Eagle Action Together refused to speak to them, Cook reported that over the next two days many of the town’s residents passed through the improvised information booth to complain or to ask about regulations in the national monument. Some of the questions were difficult to answer. Cook did not know, for example, if the national monument designation would remain or be replaced a new congressional action, and he was unable to say whether the agency planned to establish a park headquarters facility in the community, an issue that would become very contentious in the years to come. Cook and his colleagues also attended the Eagle Village Corporation meeting in the Native community upriver, and they found that the majority of village people spoke against the Antiquities Act proclamation because they believed it would usurp their traditional subsistence rights. Although Cook admitted later that his visit had been uncomfortable at times, he pointed out that his team never had to cook a meal because they were invited to local homes for dinner and breakfast. In those cases, apparently, the Alaskan tradition of hospitality overpowered the desire of local residents to send a message to the people they viewed as their tormentors. “Frankly, we weren’t that mistreated,” Cook reported. “There was every attempt at physical intimidation with the

signs and the ‘Turn Backs’ and that sort of thing, but there were enough people there who came by and we talked to . . . and we didn’t leave with anything in the three bottles.”²⁰

The rural community of Bettles, above the Arctic Circle in the southern foothills of the Brooks Range, also became a hotbed of anti-park protest in the aftermath of the Antiquities Act proclamation. Located roughly thirty-five miles from the 9-million-acre Gates of the Arctic National Monument, Bettles residents felt constrained by the new federal conservation unit and angered by the idea that National Park Service would establish a headquarters office in their town. Bettles was originally settled as a gold rush outpost in 1899 at the northernmost navigable point on the Koyukuk River, but during the 1940s many of its buildings were moved seven miles upriver where the military constructed an airfield to assist the flow of Lend-Lease aircraft to Siberia and the Russian Front. Since that time, “Bettles Field” had become a remote outpost for a handful of hunters, trappers, and Bush pilots who fancied themselves modern-day frontiersmen and defenders of Alaska’s rugged and romantic reputation. As in the case of Eagle and Eagle Village, Bettles also had an adjacent Alaska Native community. Evansville, with a population of twenty-eight Athabascan and Eskimo people, also took shape in the 1940s largely to take advantage of employment opportunities related to the airfield. The two communities, while existing side-by-side and sharing necessities like the airstrip and fuel depot, were also divided by racial tension.

The story of anti-park protest in Bettles began with Ray Bane, the only National Park Service representative in the northern Alaskan community at the time of the monument proclamation. Bane was an anthropologist who had come to Alaska in 1960

²⁰ John E. Cook interview.

to teach school in the Eskimo village of Barrow, and he stayed to become a Bush pilot and National Park Service planner. Bane and his wife Barbara were living and working out of a log cabin in Bettles when the d-2 deadline neared and the president began considering other options to protect proposed parklands in Alaska. In November 1978 Bane was called to Washington, D.C. to assist with the rapid deployment of a statewide Environmental Impact Statement in case the President Carter followed through on his threat to use the Antiquities Act in Alaska. Bane recalled that even after he returned to Bettles and told his neighbors that a proclamation was in the works, most did not believe him:

Many of the people who were most adamant in regard to being opposed to the parks—who would just do anything to get rid of them after the fact—at the time, before the monument proclamation, they were pretty blasé about it. There had never been a park here before. I don't think they were fully convinced there ever would be one.²¹

In fact, Bane recalled that some of his neighbors actually felt sorry for him because they predicted that “once they killed the d-2 bill” he would be unemployed. Bane said that some of his Bettles friends were trying to find work for him; he was even offered the coveted job of maintaining the Bettles airfield for the State of Alaska.²² Bane found much the same disbelief when he spoke with the Alaska Native residents of Evansville. “I think they listened to us and tried to understand, but they had nothing to base an

²¹ Ray Bane, Tape #H93-15-43, August 3, 1992, interviewed by David Krupa, Project Jukebox, Oral History Program, University of Alaska Fairbanks (hereafter Ray Bane interview).

²² Ray Bane interview.

understanding on,” explained Bane. “Virtually none of them had even heard about a national park except in some old magazine they might have picked up.”²³

Bane found himself exhausted by the Environmental Impact Statement writing process, and he suggested to his wife that they take a much-delayed vacation to Hawaii, their first trip out of Alaska in fifteen years. By the time the Banes returned in early December 1978, the president had created the new national monuments. “It was as if someone had set fire to a keg of dynamite,” explained Bane. En route to Bettles, the couple first stopped in Anchorage where they visited the National Park Service office for an update on the news they had only read about in the newspaper. “The first thing I heard,” explained Bane, “was ‘Ray, you probably don’t want to go to Bettles. Those people are up in arms. They’ve been sending in petitions. There are all sorts of letters coming in. People are protesting’ and so forth. Essentially, they were saying, you move out of there and we’ll find a place to put you.”²⁴ Bane was not convinced that the situation could be that bad, and he told his employers that he was flying north anyway. He asked his colleagues for of all the information they could provide about the new monuments so that he could hold a public meeting in Bettles to explain the new situation. Then he called his friends in Bettles to arrange the meeting:

I got a-hold of people who were enraged, and they were enraged at me. And, I was called every name you could think of. I had people who were old friends who just read the Riot Act to me, and swore that I had been a plant and I had been up there to take away their rights. . . . And, so when we arrived in town there were only about three people who would talk to us.²⁵

²³ Ray Bane interview.

²⁴ Ray Bane interview.

²⁵ Ray Bane interview.

Bane later described passing through the Bettles Lodge which was festooned with anti-National Park Service signs, some of which were addressed specifically to him. When he entered the meeting hall that same evening, some people shouted at him. “When I turned around to face those folks, it was a very angry, very hostile group,” he recalled. Bane spent all evening and much of the night answering questions and doing what he could to dispel the rumors and misinformation that had spread like wildfire:

A lot of crazy information was out there. They thought that the boundaries took them in or came right up to the edge of town. They were surprised at where the boundaries really were. They didn’t think they would be able to hunt and fish. They were surprised to find they could. There was a lot of misinformation, and some [accurate information] still made them mad.

While the Banes were away in Hawaii, a local trapper named John Hankee had circulated a petition that was signed by more than fifty of the sixty permanent Bettles residents.

The petition made reference to National Park Service proposals to establish a headquarters and ranger station in Bettles and to move up to twelve Park Service families into the town, plans the petition emphatically condemned. The petitioners demanded instead that Bane and any other Park Service employees leave town immediately.²⁶ The petition, which had already been mailed to the National Park Service office in Anchorage, declared, “We the undersigned, as residents of Bettles Field, Alaska, oppose the establishment of a National Park Service headquarters in Bettles for the following reasons”:

1. These national monuments are an unjust lockup of our land.
2. Our constitutional and human rights to use these lands are being taken away.

²⁶ “New Park Employees Unwelcome in Bettles,” *Anchorage Times*, December 14, 1978, 1; Stewart McBride, “Alaska: The Great Terrain Robbery?” *Chicago Tribune*, May 6, 1979, Section 2; also reprinted as Stewart McBride, “The Battle of Alaska: Who Owns the Forty-Ninth State?” *Atlantic Monthly* 243 (May 1979), 80-86.

3. Park Service employees in our community would represent the loss of our freedoms on these lands, therefore they would not be welcome, nor fit in our community.
4. Many of us are miners, hunters, trappers and guides making all or part of our living through these activities and we will not tolerate Park Service personnel in Bettles making their living by preventing us from making ours.
5. We lack faith in the integrity of the Park service, as they have made many promises and statement locally that have already proven to be false and misleading.
6. We do not want this outside impact of Park Service personnel competing with us on our limited local lands for their own recreational hunting, trapping, fishing, gold prospecting and etc. . . . when we are in turn banned from these activities on national monument lands.²⁷

Despite the hostility that Bane and his wife faced in the community, they continued to work for the good of the monument and to refuse agency offers to relocate them.

Speaking to a reporter at the time, Bane explained his profound belief in the mission of the National Park Service and in the Alaska lands bill process:

The purpose of d-2 is to keep America's last wilderness alive. And that means protecting big chunks, whole ecosystems. You can't subdivide the wilderness and expect it to live. Some people want to trim down the park, and now miners are telling us that digging a few holes in the park won't hurt. That's like saying it wouldn't hurt a Rembrandt to punch a few holes out of its center.

On a separate occasion, Bane spoke to a reporter while on patrol in the Brooks Range, and he made his case less delicately: "Alaskans want easy access to the virgin wilderness. But no virgin ever survived easy access."²⁸

During the months that followed, tempers cooled in Bettles, perhaps because of Bane's educational efforts and perhaps because Bane was the only agency employee on the scene. However, in July when the Alaska Task Force rangers arrived, tempers flared

²⁷ "New Park Employees Unwelcome in Bettles," *Anchorage Times*, December 15, 1978, 1.

²⁸ Stewart McBride, "Alaska: The Great Terrain Robbery?" *Chicago Tribune*, May 6, 1979, Section 2.

again. “It was one thing to hear there were parks,” explained Bane, “[but] lo and behold, here came guys wearing ranger uniforms, flying helicopters, and landing and setting up headquarters. . . . The protests went right back up again.”²⁹ On the day when Rangers Donald Utterback and Roger Rudolph arrived in town, no one in Bettles appeared to notice—it was not until they started flying patrols inside the monument that their presence became known. They made contact with residents and visitors inside the park and in the other near-park communities of Anaktuvuk Pass and Ambler, while also trying to memorize the park’s major drainages and geological features. They were in uniform, but they did not carry weapons. “When people would ask us about enforcing the new regulations, we would deemphasize law enforcement by explaining other duties park rangers perform,” explained Utterback in his end-of-season report.³⁰

As the August opening of the hunting season approached, however, the tempo of the anti-monument activity increased statewide as a coalition of groups including the Alaskan Outdoor Association, Real Alaska Coalition, Alaskans Unite, and the Alaskan Alpine Club encouraged Alaskans to commit acts of civil disobedience on monument lands by sport hunting and mountain climbing without a permit. The organizers scheduled the demonstration to coincide with the opening of the hunting season, and they called the event the Great Alaskan Monument Trespass. State and local activists also urged Alaska’s state government to set aside funds to cover the fines and legal fees incurred by monument trespassers. State officials considered the request, but it was later rejected. The trespass planners hoped to use any arrests as a pretext to challenge National

²⁹ Ray Bane interview.

³⁰ Donald Utterback to Bill Tanner, Final Report, October 15, 1979, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve collections, National Park Service, Fairbanks, Alaska.

Park Service regulations in court. “If any trespassers are arrested,” stated Ken Fanning of the Real Alaska Coalition, “so much the better . . . If they arrest any individuals, that would get the legality of the Antiquities Act in court right away.”³¹ Fanning’s group produced bumper stickers that read, “There’s No Monument Like No Monument” and T-shirts that read, “Keep on Hunting and Trapping; It’s The Alaskan Lifestyle.” The T-shirts also featured a cartoon of a defiant Alaskan dog-musher standing by as his team urinates on a sign that reads “National Monument—Keep Out!”³²

The monument trespass idea caught on in Bettles, where bumper stickers and signs were posted around town supporting the upcoming trespass action. One morning, Bane and the two rangers found two anti-monument bumper-stickers on their airplane, and hunters planning trips into the monument territory began issuing what the rangers called “indirect threats of violence and sabotage.” A ranger report from Utterback described the tone of the intimidation they received: “One individual, John Hankee, had told us directly that we had better be wearing a big gun when we came into his camp. Other people told us on several occasions that they had nothing against us, but someone was likely to shoot us or sabotage our plane during hunting season.”³³ Just before hunting season, two additional rangers arrived on the scene, but their presence only worsened local tensions. For the first few days of the hunting season (and of the trespass action), the ranger force chose to keep a low profile, observing but not approaching

³¹ “New Trespass,” *Alaska Libertarian* 2 (July/August 1979), 1.

³² “Non-Violent Trespass [advertisement],” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, August 10, 1979, 13; “New Trespass,” *Alaska Libertarian* 2 (July/August 1979), 1.

³³ Donald Utterback to Bill Tanner, Final Report, October 15, 1979, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve collections, National Park Service, Fairbanks, Alaska (hereafter Utterback to Tanner, Final Report).

hunting camps within monument boundaries. Because the rangers were flying a small fixed-wing aircraft, the absence of landing strips meant that they could not land, even when they suspected illegal hunting was taking place. This approach, however, also came at a price as this ranger report indicates:

It was within this first week that the press printed articles stating Park Rangers were not enforcing the regulations. One guide, Dan Rodey, stated in an interview that it was business as usual for him. He had not seen a Park Ranger, and planned on continuing his hunts.”³⁴

It was not until the second week of hunting season that the rangers finally cited a hunter for illegally killing a Dall sheep, and by the third weekend they received information that illegal hunting camps existed at a number of new locations. The rangers also learned that week that a U.S. Geological Survey helicopter had been turned away from a camp at gun point. Meanwhile, threats of sabotage and personal violence continued.

Having decided that their fixed-wing airplane was ineffective, the rangers requested the use of an agency helicopter from Fairbanks, and they spent the next two days monitoring twelve different hunting camps on monument lands. This decision and the procedure they used to approach hunters operating in violation of the rules would later become highly controversial as park protestors began accusing the National Park Service of “Gestapo tactics.” As one ranger report indicated, from the beginning they avoided anything that might be viewed as heavy-handed:

All rangers wore second chance vests underneath uniform shirts because we had received a direct threat from one of the camps. We worked in teams of three. Two men carried shotguns and the other only a handgun. Other than the first two contacts, the procedure was this: the team leader would direct the helicopter to land near a camp so the prop thrust wouldn’t disturb the camp area. He, armed

³⁴ Utterback to Tanner, Final Report.

only with a hand gun, would approach the camp. If he needed assistance he would signal for the other two to approach with or without shotguns.³⁵

Although the Bettles rangers used the helicopter for only one long weekend, it caught the attention of local residents who responded by refusing to sell the rangers aviation gasoline, complaining about the rangers' use of a Bureau of Land Management bunkhouse as a residence (the rangers were later asked to find other accommodations), and communicating what the rangers called "prevarications and exaggerations" to the press and politicians. Even so, the rangers reported that "the helicopter operation did let people know we were capable and willing to enter remote camps that had threatened and defied park regulations."³⁶

There was one benefit to having the Task Force rangers patrolling the park: the residents of Bettles focused much of their animosity on the newcomers rather than on the Banes family. When the rangers left the first week of October, however, the Banes once again became the only visual reminders of the hated federal presence. As Bane explained in an interview, "there weren't a whole lot of targets to shoot at except for my wife and myself. . . . we had kids throwing rocks at us, people who would not serve us. I would walk into the store [and] people would turn their backs and refuse to serve me—my wife too."³⁷ On October 22, after the rangers had returned to their parks in the contiguous United States, vandals found another target when they slashed the tires and severed the steering cables of the National Park Service airplane while it was parked at the airfield.

³⁵ Utterback to Tanner, Final Report.

³⁶ Utterback to Tanner, Final Report.

³⁷ Ray Bane interview.

The damage was estimated at \$2,000, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation was called in to investigate the matter, but the guilty parties were never caught.³⁸

Unlike Bettles, which was located thirty-five miles from the southern boundary of Gates of the Arctic National Monument, the Eskimo village of Anaktuvuk Pass was entirely encircled by the new monument boundaries. The circumstances that led to this unusual situation explain a great deal about the differences between Alaska Native concerns and those of non-Native rural residents. The Nunamiut or Inland Eskimos of Anaktuvuk Pass were until the 1950s a nomadic people who traveled seasonally between the Brooks Range and the Arctic Coast in pursuit of caribou, seasonal fish runs, and trading opportunities with coastal Eskimo bands. During the era of commercial whaling in the Arctic Ocean in the last half of the nineteenth century, Nunamiut men found employment on whaling vessels and in whaling stations along the coast. On the coast, Nunamiut groups also came into contact with missionaries, and they began sending their children to church-sponsored schools. By the 1940s, several groups of Nunamiut people had returned to the mountains to hunt caribou, Dall sheep, and moose when they began to interact with the commercial pilot and guide Sig Wien. Promising a school and regular mail service, Wien convinced one band of Nunamiut to settle in the cradle of Anaktuvuk Pass where airplane access would be easier and caribou would pass through on their annual migration. Soon two more bands of Nunamiut had joined the original settlers, and by 1958 the villagers had constructed a church and had abandoned their traditional skin-covered dwellings for homes built of logs and sod. Since those early days, the Nunamiut have faced the sometimes painful realities of living in two worlds—still hunting caribou

³⁸ Williss, “Do Things Right,” 140, 147. “From Ketchikan to Barrow [photographs],” *Alaska* (January 1980), 18.

and cherishing their land, but also riding all-terrain vehicles (commonly known as ATVs) and living in Western-style homes with electricity and telephones.³⁹

Located deep in the Brooks Range between Alaska's interior and the Arctic, Anaktuvuk Pass is one of Alaska's most isolated communities in a state dotted with isolated communities. Even so, the Nunamiut have not been immune to the influence of the outside world. During the early 1960s, Project Chariot, the failed atomic plan to blast a harbor on the Arctic Coast known, had stimulated scientific interest in the effects of radiation and nuclear testing on the peoples of the Arctic. The people of Anaktuvuk Pass participated in a study that found the amount of Cesium-137 in their bodies was between 100 and 200 times that of people in the contiguous United States, due largely to the atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons throughout the world.⁴⁰ The discovery of vast reservoirs of oil in Prudhoe Bay in 1968 did even more to focus the eyes of the world on northern Alaska, and it prompted the National Park Service to look at the Brooks Range for possible parklands, an urgent mission given that petroleum development threatened to change the region forever. The discovery of North Slope petroleum deposits also had a direct effect on Anaktuvuk Pass residents because it triggered a rush to transport material for pipelines and oil rigs that resulted in caravans of bulldozers pulling sleds through the mountains and past their community. In 1968 the governor of Alaska, Walter Hickel,

³⁹ See, Vincent T. Mathews, "A Case Study of a Homeland and a Wilderness: Gates of the Arctic National Park and the Nunamiut Eskimos" (M.S. thesis, University of Alaska Fairbanks, 1990), and William Brown, *The History of the Central Brooks Range: Gaunt Beauty, Tenuous Life* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Fairbanks, 2007).

⁴⁰ Wayne Hanson, "The Fallout of Strontium-90 and Cesium-137 in Northern Alaskan Ecosystems during 1959-1970" (Ph.D. dissertation, Colorado State University, 1973), 1-5. See also, Morgan Sherwood, "The End of Wilderness" *Environmental Review* 9 (Fall 1985): 204.

authorized the construction of a “frontier road” to allow Alaskan truckers to supply North Slope oil rigs during the winter. Within weeks the road that became known as the “Hickel Highway” was bulldozed through the pass and beyond to the oil company airfield of Sagwon.⁴¹

The people of Anaktuvuk Pass eventually sued to block future use of the Hickel Highway route, and they were the first Alaska Natives to select lands under the authority of ANCSA in 1971. In concert with the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, they also proposed the creation of a “Nunamiut National Park” that would protect their traditional hunting lands while still allowing the residents to benefit from the oil boom. The park proposal included a provision for oil and gas development inside park boundaries. Another provision provided easements across the proposed parklands for an oil pipeline to serve the village.⁴² The people of Anaktuvuk Pass, numbering barely one hundred, were swept up in a period of rapid change for Alaska Native people across Alaska, and it was clear from the beginning that any conservation unit created in the region would exist as both park and Nunamiut homeland. Although the initial National Park Service proposal for a Gates of the Arctic park was rejected in 1969 by President Johnson, nearly ten years later, when the d-2 process was in full swing, the Nunamiut elected to become part of the proposed Gates of the Arctic park, with the understanding that their subsistence rights would be protected. Although the National Park Service and the Nunamiut would agree to the mutual benefits of a large park covering all of the central Brooks Range, the problematic issue of subsistence rights and the use of modern

⁴¹ See, Allan, “Hickel Highway,” 1-29. See also, Tom Brown, *Oil on Ice: Alaskan Wilderness at the Crossroads* (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1971), 40-46.

⁴² Brown, *Central Brooks Range*, 181-185.

transportation technologies for subsistence harvest would later threaten the already delicate relationship between the agency and the indigenous residents of the new park.⁴³

Over two hundred miles to the southeast, the 9.2-million-acre Wrangell-St. Elias National Monument was also causing anger and anxiety in the local population. The new national monument was surrounded by a string of small communities with names such as Slana, Chitina, Nebesna, and Copper Center. The largest of these, Glennallen, was located near the beginning of a state-owned dirt road that went deep into the center of the new monument. At the other end of that road was the tiny community of McCarthy, just eight miles from the remains of the Kennecott Copper Mine, the same Alaska Syndicate operation that led to the Cordova Coal Party in 1911 [see Chapter 1]. In addition to these communities, the new monument included more “inholdings,” or private lands within its boundaries, than any other park in the state. Together these communities and backcountry landowners viewed themselves as one large Copper River Basin community, and they were galvanized to action by their opposition to the president’s Antiquities Act proclamation. Because the Wrangell Mountains had attracted attention as a potential park since the 1930s, by the late 1970s, the local residents were already wary of what they viewed as by premature promises and conflicting park proposals from federal various agencies.⁴⁴ They were aware that a park would bring improved roads and visitor facilities, but they feared for their privacy and their ability to use the land for subsistence

⁴³ Mathews, “Study of a Homeland,” 45-47; Brown, *Central Brooks Range*, 191-204. See also, Theodore Catton, *Inhabited Wilderness: Indians, Eskimos and National Parks in Alaska* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997).

⁴⁴ For a full treatment of the proposed parks in the Wrangell Mountain area, see Michael Lappen, “Whose Promised Land?: A History of Conservation and Development Management Plans for the Wrangell and Saint Elias Mountains Region, Alaska, 1938-1980” (M.A. thesis, University of California Santa Barbara, 1984).

hunting, guiding, and placer mining. Expressing a widely held sentiment in the region, Glennallen resident Phil Jackson explained, “The federal people are happy to discuss and listen to suggestions, the only suggestion they will not listen to is to go away, let it be!”⁴⁵

Glennallen had come into existence in the late 1940s as a construction camp for the Glenn Highway that linked Anchorage to the Alaska-Canada Highway. Since that time, the town functioned as a commercial center for motor traffic along the Glenn and Richardson Highways and as home to the Jesuit-run Copper Valley School. Because of its central location, the town became both a hotbed for anti-park protests and a convenient site for establishing a headquarters for the new monument. This would not, however, be a simple task. Chief Ranger Craig Johnson, who joined the Alaska Task Force from Channel Islands National Park, later described the warning he received that the job would be a challenge, even before he reached the Copper River Valley:

The briefing in Anchorage didn’t prepare us for the reception that we received in Glennallen and other gateway towns to the Wrangells. But then, probably no amount of briefing could have prepared us—we had to see and learn for ourselves. We did get an inkling of what was to come when each speaker, during the briefing, would pause and ask who was going to Glennallen, and then as we raised our hands would sympathetically shake his head as if to say, ‘you guys are really in for it.’⁴⁶

During the first week in Glennallen, the Task Force rangers made decisions that set the tone for their interactions with local resident for the next two months. One was to wear their ranger uniforms to “show the colors.” Next, they encouraged individuals and organized groups to meet where the rangers could talk with large groups, hoping to “short

⁴⁵ Lappen, “Whose Promised Land?” 136, 138.

⁴⁶ Chief Ranger Craig Johnson to Alaska State Director, Final Report, October 11, 1979, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve collections, National Park Service, Fairbanks, Alaska (hereafter Johnson to Alaska State Director, Final Report).

circuit as much as possible all the erroneous information” about monument regulations that was circulating in the region. Chief Ranger Johnson explained:

We held meetings at Glennallen, Copper Center, Slana, and McCarthy. In these meetings we were able to make contact with over 130 people, most of whom exhibited open hostility toward the National Park Service, the National Monuments and us as individuals. In fact, our lives were threatened, both directly and indirectly, during some of these meetings. On at least one occasion, a threat against our lives drew supporting applause.⁴⁷

The three rangers held the first of these meetings in late July in the tiny town of Slana on the northern border of the park. They found the local scene particularly heated. Three months earlier, the Slana chapter of Alaskans Unite had organized its own version of the Great Denali-McKinley Trespass, inviting protestors from Eagle and elsewhere to join them in their own “turkey shoot” and other strategic rule violations.⁴⁸ The July meeting was well attended by these same activists who taunted the rangers, calling them “leaches off the taxpayers” and issuing a variety of threats. The rangers later admitted that after the meeting they were all emotionally “strung out” from absorbing the high levels of hostility.⁴⁹

Once the rangers returned to their temporary quarters in Glennallen, they concluded that the entire community was arrayed against them. The local businesses in particular seemed determined to make life difficult for the newcomers by posting signs that read “We reserve the right to refuse service to anyone. Park Service personnel not

⁴⁷ Johnson to Alaska State Director, Final Report.

⁴⁸ Alan Campbell, “Monument Foes to Challenge Federal Rules This Saturday,” *Anchorage Times*, March 29, 1979, 51.

⁴⁹ Geoffrey T. Bleakley, “Contested Ground: An Administrative History of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Alaska, 1978-2001” (Anchorage: National Park Service, 2002), 40.

welcome.”⁵⁰ “The majority of business people aren’t offering them services,” Glennallen businessman Ray Richcreek told reporters, adding that the rangers “have been asked to leave and told they were not welcome. . . . Personally, I hope they leave peacefully, because what they are representing is not accepted.” At the community meeting, residents met with the monument rangers and explained that they hoped the men would not take the refusal of service personally. “If they take it personal, it’s their misinterpretation,” offered Richcreek.⁵¹ The threats became more personal when the motel where the rangers had been staying received bomb threats, and the owner decided that he could not risk having them as customers. In his end-of-season report, Chief Ranger Johnson explained that although the campaign against them was intense, not every local person was on the side of Alaskans Unite,

On Saturday, July 28, we began to feel the pressure put on by a hard core group of anti-park people in the Glennallen-Copper Center area. We received an eviction notice from the Heartbreak Motel and signs began appearing in store windows stating that they reserved the right to refuse service to National Park Service Law Enforcement Officers. This action was initially demoralizing to us but we soon saw that some people actually were offended by the action and rallied to our side because of the unfair treatment accorded to us.⁵²

The rangers decided on a strategy to confront every store owner or manager who had a sign up and to tell them that they “wanted to hear it personally, face to face, that we would not be served.” Although every one of the storekeepers held the line and denied the rangers service, some confessed that it was not their idea. Others indicated that their

⁵⁰ Jon Matthews, “Glennallen Won’t Welcome Park Rangers,” *Anchorage Daily News*, August 1, 1979, 10; “Park Service – Unwelcome!” *Copper Valley Views*, August 8, 1979, 1.

⁵¹ Jon Matthews, “Glennallen Won’t Welcome Park Rangers,” *Anchorage Daily News*, August 1, 1979, 10.

⁵² Johnson to Alaska State Director, Final Report.

business and property had been threatened if they failed to comply with the plan to ostracize National Park Service employees. A small number of business owners and clerks refused to be intimidated, making it known that they would serve anyone who came into their store.⁵³

The interactions between the three rangers and local residents in and around Glennallen sparked a lively exchange between editors and readers of the local newspaper, *Copper Valley Views*. The exchange began when the newspaper's editor tried to introduce the rangers to the community; he suggested that locals adopt less antagonistic stance by viewing the newcomers as human beings rather than mortal enemies. The letter conveyed Ranger Johnson's feelings:

Johnson . . . said the animosity shown toward the group makes him realize how the blacks felt during the civil rights struggle in the '60s. It is, he said, an uncomfortable situation. And it is quite in contrast to the respect and cooperation the men received in the lower '48, where Park Rangers are considered the good guys.⁵⁴

The editor suggested that the National Park Service personnel were only trying to do their jobs, and they were only temporarily assigned to the area to answer questions and to act as a focal point for residents to express concerns. "From what we have seen and heard regarding these temporary residents here in the valley, some local behavior has been rather boorish, to put it mildly," the editor chided, adding, "it might be easier by being mannerly to get our point across, and express our fears as to the present and future impact upon our livelihoods and way of life." The editorial suggested that the protests were

⁵³ Johnson to Alaska State Director, Final Report.

⁵⁴ "Park Service Dilemma [editorial]," *Copper Valley Views*, August 8, 1979, 2.

corrupting average people and that accepting change by embracing new tourism business might be the better course:

The resistance to change often turns other wise nice people into ugly monsters. Like it or not, change has caught up with us. Instead of relying on a few sports hunting parties, we may have to accept a much larger crowd of sightseers, bird watchers, camera freaks, and a different sort of tourist trade than before.

In the end, the editor drew an historical analogy with Germany in the 1930s that provoked reactions from readers. “When Hitler persecuted the Jews,” he continued, “he encouraged everyone to show their loyalty by hating, abusing and showing violence toward the Jews. I get the feeling that reprisals may befall those who do business with or befriend our park service personnel who have come to live and do their job among us.”⁵⁵

In the next issue of *Copper Valley Views*, the editorial board of the newspaper apologized for the “reference to Hitler and the Jews,” and it explained that what was meant was that “tyranny persecutes the friends of its adversaries as well as the adversaries themselves—by such means sides are hopelessly polarized.” The editorial prompted many readers to write in, and the newspaper attempted to demonstrate its impartiality by printing at least one typical response:

When a situation has deteriorated to the point that violence against a neighbor is given serious consideration (i.e. the threatened bombing of the Heartbreak Motel) things have definitely gotten out of hand. Yet, in this instance who is truly to blame? People are angry and frightened. Their very homes and life-styles are in danger. . . . The foreseeable future for many is a murky formless thing that gives them little hope for a better life. . . . Life in Alaska is far from easy. One works like a dog all summer long in order to survive the winter. Hardship is an accepted part of life in an Alaskan winter. It takes a rugged determination and fierce independence to live here and like it. Those very qualities are the ones that make life in the more populated Lower 48 hell on earth for the individual who thinks of Alaska as a paradise.

⁵⁵ “Park Service Dilemma [editorial],” *Copper Valley Views*, August 8, 1979, 2.

And when addressing the issue of refusing service to the rangers in local businesses, the writer suggested,

This stand has served to make the National Park Service aware of the depth of feeling against them in the [Copper River] basin. If they consider the issue, those three men might realize that that is the crux of the matter. The Alaskan way of life does mean more to the individuals who live it than money. The average Alaskan isn't about to sell his or her birthright for a bundle, and take the money and run. The reason for that is simple: this is the last frontier and there is nowhere left to run to.⁵⁶

The debate over the presence of National Park Service rangers and changes generated by the Wrangell-St. Elias National Monument were by no means limited to Glennallen. The town of McCarthy, located deep inside the park at the end of a state-owned road, had long since begun its protests against the National Park Service. In an attempt to catch the attention of Morris Udall and John Seiberling during their visit to Alaska for the 1977 d-2 hearings, a bulldozer operator from McCarthy used a D-9 Caterpillar tractor to scrape a message, in letters one hundred feet long, on a gravel island between two arms of the Chitistone River near town. It read: SIERRA CLUB GO TO HELL. The message could only be read from an airplane overhead, but the backcountry graffiti artist knew that the congressmen would be arriving in a small airplane.⁵⁷ By the time the Great Alaskan Monument Trespass reached McCarthy in August 1979, nearly everyone in the town of just two dozen residents was ready for a conflict.

As one of the primary organizers of the trespass action, Real Alaska Coalition executive director Ken Fanning telegraphed President Carter, Cecil Andrus, and Andrus's Anchorage aide, telling them he would be sheep hunting in the Wrangell-St.

⁵⁶ "Editorial Opinion," *Copper Valley Views*, August 22, 1979, 2.

⁵⁷ Cover illustration, *Alaska Newsletter* (October 1978); Michael Parfit, "Alaska: Eleventh Hour for America's Wilderness," *New Times* (September 18, 1978), 42.

Elias National Monument. He challenged them to arrest him. A Fairbanks taxidermist also sent a telegram to the president, announcing that he was offering a free Dall sheep mount to the trespassing hunter who brought in the largest sheep from the monument. The Real Alaska Coalition was determined to challenge the National Park Service's ability to enforce the no-sport-hunting rule in the hope that they could then test the legality of the monuments in the courts. The agency, however, refused to take the bait. When asked about the organized trespass, agency spokesman Bob Belous told reporters, "We're just not out there hiding behind every rock waiting to catch somebody doing something wrong."⁵⁸

As part of the trespass action, the Alaska Outdoors Association sponsored a group of hunters who established themselves at a hunting camp operated by a guide named Ron Reyes in the Wrangell Mountains forty miles east of Glennallen. The protestors called their holdout "Camp Tradition," and they announced to park officials that they would not leave "until the Park Service threw them out." The men spread a 50-foot sign along the airstrip near the camp that said "Fight Back, Alaska!" and they waited for the rangers to arrive. During late August and early September, the National Park Service airplane occasionally flew over the site, but the rangers generally left the hunters to their own devices. Eventually the rangers dropped a message from their plane indicating that the rough airstrip near the camp was too short for them to land and that the protestors were not violating any monument regulations by simply camping.⁵⁹ After a week of waiting

⁵⁸ Sue Lewis, "No Trouble Reported in Parks Protest," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, August 10, 1979, 10.

⁵⁹ Bill Blessington, "Protest Camp Pulls Stakes after Rangers Ignore It," *Anchorage Times*, September 18, 1979, 3; "From Ketchikan to Barrow," *Alaska* (December 1979), 34-35.

for something to happen, the men packed up and left. Warren Olson, a board member of the Alaska Outdoor Association, told reporters that the group considered the protest a success because it revealed the political sensitivity of National Park Service officials who wanted to act cautiously until Congress made a final decision about Alaska's public lands. "It let us see their true colors," Olson told reporters. "They were just trying to pacify us. . . . They want to keep it down to a dull roar until a D-2 bill is passed in Congress, then we're going to hear a lot more from them."⁶⁰

One result of the agency's use of airplanes and helicopters during the 1979 monument trespass action was that park protestors increasingly accused the agency of using heavy-handed tactics against residents within park boundaries. Hank Rust, a hunting guide and owner of an air-taxi business, told reporters that he flatly refused to carry National Park Service rangers in his planes. "I won't haul them to gumshoe around to observe and arrest fellow Alaskans," he said. "They use helicopters in assault-type tactics and come into camps wearing flak jackets and packing riot guns to see if people are hunting." The rangers' tactics, he said, "are about as un-American as you can get."⁶¹ The stories of rangers using "Vietnam-type tactics" irritated National Park Service Area Director Cook. Cook admitted that his rangers carried sidearms and shotguns on the job, not to frighten hunters but because it was standard procedure to carry firearms in bear country. He conceded that rangers did "drop in" at camps by helicopter, but, he said, the

⁶⁰ Bill Blessington, "Protest Camp Pulls Stakes after Rangers Ignore It," *Anchorage Times*, September 18, 1979, 3; "Trespass Violations Become Headache for Park Service," *Interior Wildlife Association of Alaska Newsletter* (1980), 7.

⁶¹ Richard James, "Angry Alaskans Say Smokey Bear Has Mailed Paw," *Wall Street Journal*, January 4, 1980, 1, 17. Reprinted as Richard James, "Angry Alaskans Fed Up," *Interior Wildlife Association of Alaska Newsletter* (1980), 6.

camps were not surrounded and were approached by only one ranger initially.⁶²

Nonetheless, the image of rangers harassing innocent Alaskans in the backcountry was too alluring for the anti-park groups to ignore.

Once the complaints of overly aggressive tactics reached Alaska's congressional representatives, the National Park Service confronted a serious public relations problem. "We've had a number of complaints about park service and fish and wildlife service activities," announced Representative Young. "I don't like what I'm hearing. If what is being said is true, the attitude of the park service is near to the gestapo tactics in Germany." Young said he had taken affidavits and received photographs from two people who complained about agency actions, and he said he was prepared to subpoena others, including Alaskan pilots working for the National Park Service. He also described a report of a sheep head being confiscated by rangers, though the alleged violator was not arrested. "This total police action is deplorable," Young told reporters. "I see a trend of total arrogance. There have been statements made in public that they are not to be violent, but then they arrive out of helicopters with shotguns wearing flak jackets—I'd like to know in what other states they do that."⁶³ At the same time that the congressman's complaints appeared in Alaska newspapers, the *Anchorage Times* printed a cartoon of a heavily armed ranger leaping out of a helicopter, menacing a hapless

⁶² Richard James, "Angry Alaskans Say Smokey Bear Has Mailed Paw," *Wall Street Journal*, January 4, 1980, 1, 17.

⁶³ Betty Mills, "Says Agency Uses 'Gestapo Tactics,'" *Anchorage Times*, September 17, 1979, 1.

fisherman, and announcing, “All right you . . . I’m from the Park Service . . . Let’s see your fishing license!” [Figure 29].⁶⁴

The rangers at Wrangell-St. Elias National Monument had heard rumors of plans to sabotage their airplane almost as soon as they had arrived. The threats did not become reality, however, until mid-September when an arsonist set fire to their Cessna 180 parked at the Tazlina Glacier Lodge fifty miles west of Glennallen. Although many of the anti-National Park Service signs had been removed from windows in area businesses, the rangers operated out of Tazlina because they had been asked to leave their motel and had been refused gasoline in Glennallen. The fire-gutted airplane served as a potent reminder that the threat to their lives and their mission had not yet dissipated, and, as in Bettles, the investigation into the fire failed to identify the culprit.⁶⁵ During this period, the *Anchorage Times* printed a cartoon making a tongue-in-cheek reference to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and to tensions in Alaska. The cartoon showed President Carter pointing to a map of Central Asia and saying to Interior Secretary Andrus, “Here’s an idea, Cy! Why don’t I declare it a national monument and have the Park Service push them out?” [Figure 30].⁶⁶

Determined not to be pushed out of their favorite climbing areas, three members of the newly formed Alaskan Alpine Club, a splinter faction of the more law-abiding

⁶⁴ “Young Says Park Service Uses ‘Gestapo Tactics,’” *Anchorage Daily News*, September 8, 1979, 3; “Alaska Fever [cartoon],” *Anchorage Times*, September 19, 1979, 4.

⁶⁵ Bill Blessington, “Protest Camp Pulls Stakes after Rangers Ignore It,” *Anchorage Times*, September 18, 1979, 3; Bleakley, “Contested Ground,” 40; Williss, “Do Things Right,” 140.

⁶⁶ “Alaska Fever [cartoon],” *Anchorage Times*, January 31, 1980, 10.

Alaska Alpine Club, announced plans to climb Mt. Drum, a 12,000-foot peak in the Wrangell Mountains, to erect a protest sign condemning the National Park Service's proposal that climbers in the new monuments be required to obtain a permit and pay a fee to climb.⁶⁷ On January 12, 1980, the rebel climbers made good on their promise by erecting at the summit a commercial-quality aluminum sign with reflective lettering in the agency's own style that declared, "Go Home National Park Service" [Figure 31]. After anchoring the signpost in the ice with cables, the climbers placed a thick aluminum plaque at the base engraved with the following:

In memory of the freedom of the mountains destroyed in Alaska by the President of the United States Jimmy Carter and his Secretary of the Interior Cecil Andrus. In open defiance of the United States National Park Service, this plaque is placed here in 1980 by members of the Alaskan Alpine Club.⁶⁸

The defiant club members told reporters that their eight-day climb was intended to protest "the N.P.S.'s replacement of the Alaskan bush lifestyle with a California oriented, Park Service developed Disneyland." The group also produced more signs and called for climbers across the state to install them on popular summits to protest the agency's policies. The group also announced plans to plant a sign on Mt. McKinley (a cloth

⁶⁷ The new alpine club announced itself to the world with a 1979 poster declaring, "We are the ALASKAN ALPINE CLUB (with an 'N'); We are the mountain climbers—the outlaws. We are protecting the freedom of the mountains." The poster also explained the reason for the split from the mountaineering club backed by the University of Alaska: "The University of Alaska hierarchy rescinded our University recognition because we are protesting proposed National Park Service regulations that will needlessly encumber Alaskan adventurers." See, "Outlaws" [poster], circa 1979, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Park and Preserve Collection, Fairbanks Administrative Center, National Park Service, Fairbanks, Alaska.

⁶⁸ "Alaskan Alpine Club Plants 'Go Home Park Service' Sign," *Pioneer All-Alaskan Weekly*, January 25, 1980, 5; Doug Buchanan, "Mt. Drum—A Trespass Climb," *Summit* (June-July 1980), 11-13; Doug Buchanan, "Outlaws on Mt. Drum," *Alaskan Mountain Newsletter* (Winter 1979-1980), 17.

version this time) and declared that signs would remain in place “until the Alaskan citizens receive Congressionally guaranteed protection of their rights from the often abused, discretionary authority of the National Park Service.”⁶⁹ Photographs of the climbers carrying out the Mt. Drum sign-raising appeared in mountaineering newsletters and at least one statewide newspaper, but the event went mostly unnoticed by monument officials.⁷⁰

During the spring of 1980, the National Park Service began recruiting a new group of rangers to patrol the monuments and to address local concerns. And, in many ways, the second season was a repeat of the first. At Wrangell-St. Elias, a team of five rangers set up a temporary office in Glennallen Library in August 1980, and rangers flew into McCarthy and Chitna to meet with local residents. They described their reception as “tolerantly hostile,” and their official reports suggested that conditions were little improved since the previous year:

We are always on edge. We had threats made on our lives. It’s hard to let your hair down. We have to be careful about everything we say. When we go to dinner we wonder whether or not we are going to be served. We can’t eat at some restaurants. Now I know how blacks felt in the sixties in the south. It’s the same with us. The antagonism is the one thing that bothers me most about this job.⁷¹

Although the deployment of temporary rangers had been a stopgap measure, the visiting rangers had managed to establish an agency presence in the proposed parklands. They personalized the operational side of the National Park Service, and although they had

⁶⁹ “Climbers Place Carter Plaque,” *Copper Valley Views*, January 23, 1980, 1.

⁷⁰ For more anti-National Park Service protests from Alaskan Alpine Club founder Doug Buchanan see the club’s website at www.alaskanalpineclub.org.

⁷¹ Donald C. Defenderfer and Robert B. Walkinshaw, “One Long Summer Day in Alaska: A Documentation of Perspectives in the Wrangell Mountains,” Publication 8, Environmental Field Program, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1981, 94.

faced resistance at nearly every turn, a surprising number of Task Force rangers returned later to work for Alaska's national parks.⁷² National Park Service employees stationed throughout Alaska would need to remain resolute because the agency continued to face challenges, both from the residents of near-park communities and from the federal government itself.

A political shift in the United States was underway in the late 1970s and early 1980s that would transfer great power into the hands of Republican conservatives who supported all of the goals of the State of Alaska and the Alaskan congressional delegation—rapid resource exploitation, private land ownership, fewer environmental restrictions, and a diminished federal presence in the West and in the lives of every American. Paradoxically, this conservative revolution, led by the charismatic former governor of California, would accelerate the passage of H.R. 39, and in despite of staunch resistance from Senator Gravel and Alaska's other congressmen, ANILCA was poised to become a political reality. Meanwhile, many Alaskans were listening to protest songs by Matt Hammer, a musician who had moved to Anchorage in 1978 and had embraced the anti-park cause. Hammer teamed up with long-time Alaskan June Allen from Fairbanks to produce the folk-rock protest tunes, "D-2 to You Too" and "Free Alaska," which they planned to record and distribute to radio stations across the country. In the first song, Hammer expressed the widespread belief among residents that only Alaskans were equipped to manage Alaskan lands:

Well, we all love this land that we live in
And we're proud to say the land of the free
And we know we can care for those acres out there
If those federal boys would just let us be

⁷² Williss, "Do Things Right," 140.

Well, we'd like to get on with state business
And we'd like to attend to our land
Without the noise from those Outside boys
'Cause everybody out there's got a plan

Oh, Alaskans can handle Alaska
We know what we're doing don't you see
We can drill, dig, and toil and we don't have to spoil our fragile ecology
We can drill, dig, and toil and we don't have to spoil our fragile economy.⁷³

⁷³ Lyrics courtesy of Matt Hammer, transcribed from CD-ROM recording of "Free Alaska" and "D-2 to You Too," Hey Matt Studios, Anchorage, Alaska, online at www.heimatt.com. See Appendices A and B for full lyrics of the songs. See also, Susan Andrews, "Local Musician to Record Songs in Effort to 'Free Alaska,'" *Anchorage Times*, August 15, 1979, 56.

CHAPTER 6

ANICLA AND EARLY PARK MANAGEMENT, 1980-1989

Never before have we seized the opportunity to preserve so much of America's natural and cultural heritage on so grand a scale. . . . we are acknowledging that Alaska's wilderness areas are truly this country's crown jewels.

—President Jimmy Carter, 1980

The basic difference between this Administration and the liberals is that we are market-oriented, people-oriented. We are trying to bring our abundant acres into the market so that the market will decide their value.

—Interior Secretary James Watt, 1981

The president's use of the Antiquities Act to create national monuments had been a ploy to goad Congress into passing a comprehensive Alaska lands bill, a ploy that would not have been successful without some major upheaval on the national political scene. During 1980, the congressional struggle over the future of Alaska's public land continued with bills introduced by the Alaska Coalition proposing the withdrawal of 122 million acres in new conservation units and by Senator Stevens who sought to protect only 60 million acres. However, on the eve of the November election, Congress remained at an impasse over Alaska's public lands. What ultimately decided the issue was a fundamental political shift in the nation that swept the former California governor Ronald Reagan into the presidency. This shift also established a new Republican majority in the Senate (including Frank Murkowski for Alaska) and a much more conservative House of Representatives. In early November 1980, Alaska Coalition leaders recognized that the incoming conservative majority in Congress was unlikely to accept the full range of environmental protections that national conservation groups wanted in Alaska and that they needed to pass a compromise bill instead. Although the

arrival of ANILCA was a watershed land management law in Alaska, it did little to change the climate of distrust and anger in the communities surrounding the newly formalized national parks. Instead of continuing their blanket protests of the park concept, disgruntled Alaskans near the new parks began to test the limits of National Park Service management and the viability of ANILCA on issues such as mining, access to inholdings, sport hunting, use of cabins on park lands, and subsistence in parklands and designated wilderness. Understaffed and underfunded, the agency in Alaska faced all the normal challenges of managing national parks compounded by the realities of isolation, distance, a harsh climate, and a social climate in rural communities that was almost wholly negative.

Ronald Reagan's promise to unleash the forces of free-market capitalism and to restore pride in America resonated with an electorate that had grown tired of Carter's economic and foreign policy failures. The final year of the Carter administration looked particularly grim in light of severe economic problems, the seizure of American hostages in Iran, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.¹ As candidate for president, Reagan won broad support with his platform of deregulation and states rights, tax cuts for the wealthy, and reduced domestic spending. Reagan also introduced an entirely new environmental vision designed to reverse everything that Carter had tried to achieve during his presidency. Rising unrest in the Western states over federal management of land provided a stage for Reagan's private enterprise, resource development-oriented environmental policy. During a televised debate between the candidates in October 1980,

¹ Frank Cormier, "Daring Hostage Rescue Fails: Carter Takes Responsibility," *Anchorage Daily News*, April 25, 1980, 1.

Reagan attacked Carter's conservationist policies and his recent monument proclamations in Alaska, declaring,

Our government has in the last year or so taken out of multiple use millions of acres of public lands. . . . It is believed that probably 70 percent of the potential oil in the United States is probably hidden in those lands, and no one is allowed to even go and explore to find out if it is there. This is particularly true of the recent efforts to shut down part of Alaska.²

Morris Udall and other congressional environmentalists knew that the incoming conservative majority in the new Congress would not accept many of the environmental protections that national conservation groups sought in Alaska. Two weeks after the election, they reluctantly accepted the political reality and quickly moved a compromise bill through the Senate. By November 12, Secretary Udall, House leaders, and the environmental lobby reluctantly urged the House to pass the Senate bill that protected 104 million acres, a compromise to be sure and one that would not likely be available again. A crestfallen Udall announced after the bill passed that "neither I nor those who support me consider this legislation to be a great victory for the cause," but he acknowledged that it was better than nothing.³

When President Carter signed the ANILCA bill on December 2, 1980, he hailed the bill as "one of the most important pieces of conservation legislation in the history of

² Rebecca Wodder, "The Alaska Challenge Ahead," *Living Wilderness* (1981), 13; Edgar Wayburn, "All Quiet on the Alaska Front?" *Sierra* (May-June 1981), 59; Robert Cahn, "Paper Parks," *Audubon* (September 1981), 24-26.

³ "Monument in the Wilderness [editorial]," *New York Times*, November 14, 1980, A30; "Ah, Wilderness! Ah, Development!" *Time* 24 (November 1980), n.p.; Seth King, "Carter Signs a Bill to Protect 104 Million Acres in Alaska," *New York Times*, December 3, 1980, A20. By contrast, the president said of the compromise bill, "Passage of a balanced Alaska lands bill has been my highest environmental priority since the beginning of my Administration, and the bill approved today closely resembles the proposals I sent to Congress more than three years ago." Seth King, "Compromise Bill to Preserve Alaskan Lands Approved," *New York Times*, November 13, 1980, 1.

our country” and announced, “Never before have we seized the opportunity to preserve so much of America’s natural and cultural heritage on so grand a scale. . . . With this bill we are acknowledging that Alaska’s wilderness areas are truly this country’s crown jewels.”⁴ Carter’s next statements illustrated the remarkable gap between his own environmental vision and that of the incoming president:

We cannot let our eagerness for progress in energy and technology outstrip our care for our land, water and air and for the plants and animals that share them with us. Every time we dig out minerals or drill wells or ignore erosion or destroy sand dunes or dam a wild river or dump garbage or create pollution, we are changing the living earth. We are affecting the air we breathe and the water we drink. We have nothing more precious than life, nothing more valuable than health. We must not forget these in our pursuit of progress.⁵

And with this, and the stroke of a pen, the president doubled the size of the National Park System in the country by creating ten new national parks and adding to three existing parks for a total of 43.6 million acres of new national parklands. In addition, nearly fifty-four million acres became new wildlife refuges, and of the federal conservation units created by ANILCA, almost fifty-seven million acres would become designated wilderness, tripling the size of the National Wilderness System. Segments of twenty-five free-flowing rivers were added to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System with portions of twelve others designated for study as potential additions.⁶ The act also revoked the national monument withdrawals and approved the state’s own land selections—a process which had been on hold since Secretary Stewart Udall’s 1966 land freeze. This

⁴ Betty Mills, “Alaska Land Bill Becomes Law,” *Anchorage Times*, December 2, 1980, 1; Duscha, “Alaska Act,” 4-9.

⁵ Seth King, “Carter Signs a Bill to Protect 104 Million Acres in Alaska,” *New York Times*, December 3, 1980, A20.

⁶ Naske and Slotnick, *Forty-Ninth State*, 235.

effectively ended the 9-year struggle that began with ANCSA's Section 17 (d)(2); however, it did not make either side very happy. Environmentalists regretted the last-minute compromises, and after the signing ceremony, Senator Stevens warned, "We are not finished, Mr. President, we're just getting started. The time will come when those resources being protected by the new law will be demanded by other Americans" [Figure 32].⁷

The speech that Secretary Udall delivered on the day of the ANILCA signing reflected the enormous pride he felt in the accomplishment and the relief he felt that the struggle was finally over. Near the end of his speech, he told the people of Alaska that although they may not think so then, they would someday appreciate what was being done by Congress:

I've been through legislation creating a dozen national parks, and there's always the same pattern. When you first propose a park, and you visit the area and present the case to the local people, they threaten to hang you. You go back in five years and they think it's the greatest thing that ever happened. You go back in twenty years and they'll probably name a mountain after you.⁸

A few days after the vote, Udall received a letter from an angry Alaskan who said he had seen Udall's televised remarks and had concluded that the congressman was "a blockhead." Enclosed with the letter was a photograph of a lofty, snowcapped mountain, below which the author had written, "With regard to your comments about our naming a mountain after you—you asked for it, you've got it. MOUNT BULLSHIT—named in

⁷ Cahn, "Paper Parks," 24; T.H. Watkins, "The Perils of Expedience," *Wilderness* (Winter 1990), 29-30.

⁸ Morris K. Udall, *Too Funny to Be President* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988), 77-78.

honor of Morris Udall, and his programs which so well reflect the name of this mountain.”⁹

It is unclear how much Alaska’s anti-park protestors and rural residents near the new national parks understood the many provisions of the 156-page land management law. As with the package of regulations issued for the national monuments in 1978, it took time for Alaskans to learn about and absorb the rather complex new legal framework. When they did, they found that ANILCA contained quite a bit to accommodate Alaskans who needed and wanted to use the land. For example, the act recognized the right of Alaska Natives to use park and preserve lands (including designated wilderness areas) for subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering. In a departure from federal practice that represented a substantial compromise, non-Native rural residents in communities surrounding the new parks were also permitted to use protected lands for subsistence. Congress excluded from the conservation units lands with known commercial value, and it allowed sport hunting, fur trapping, and limited mining under a new conservation designation—the national preserve. The 2.5-million-acre Yukon-Charley River National Preserve was one example of a designated preserve. Portions of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, and other Alaskan parks were also designated as preserves. The result was that sport hunting and guided hunting were allowed in roughly forty percent of Alaska’s national park system. Ultimately, only about ten percent of all Alaska lands was excluded from commercial use.¹⁰ These accommodations, however, did not resolve the

⁹ Udall, *Too Funny*, 78.

¹⁰ Runte, *National Parks*, 256; Naske and Slotnick, *Forty-Ninth State*, 237.

underlying frustration that many Alaskans had about restrictions on the use of federal lands—and they were not alone.

ANILCA became law at an unusual moment in the nation’s history, when the role of federal management of public lands was being challenged throughout the American West. Most historians trace the origins of the so-called Sagebrush Rebellion—a political movement by state legislatures in the West to obtain more control over federal lands—to anxieties that followed in the wake of Federal Land Policy Management Act, the same legislation that Andrus used to orchestrate much of the withdrawals in Alaska during the monument period.¹¹ While the Federal Land Policy Management Act required that the Bureau of Land Management plan for “multiple use” of its lands (accommodating ranching, grazing, mining, and recreational users), it also introduced formal processes to consider land preservation under a wilderness designation. Western land users and commercial interests regarded this as a federal land grab that ignored the needs of Westerners when the government still owned more than half of the land in the thirteen Western states.

The state legislature in Nevada took the lead in the rebellion by enacting a law that asserted a claim to the title of lands within the state’s boundaries administered by the Bureau of Land Management. Before long “sagebrush rebels” in New Mexico, Washington, Wyoming, Utah, and Arizona were passing laws laying claim to millions of acres of federal lands, demanding greater access to federal timber and grazing lands, more federally financed water projects, and the repeal of unpopular laws like the 55-mile-

¹¹ Brad Knickerbocker, “Public Land Issue Heats in West,” *Christian Science Monitor*, April 30, 1979, 3; “The Sagebrush Rebellion,” *U.S. News and World Report*, (December 1, 1980), n.p.

per-hour speed limit that Carter had implemented to conserve gasoline.¹² Although most were defeated in the courts, Reagan was overheard saying during his presidential campaign, “Count me in as a [sagebrush] rebel!” After the election, the president-elect telegraphed the national Sagebrush Rebellion conference and declared, “I renew my pledge to work toward a Sagebrush solution.”¹³

In July 1980 the Alaska state legislature followed other Western states into the Sagebrush Rebellion by passing a resolution creating the Alaska Statehood Commission, whose single mission was to “study the status of the people of Alaska . . . and to consider and recommend appropriate changes in the relationship of the people of Alaska to the United States.”¹⁴ Although some viewed the commission as a first step toward secession, others described it as a “face-saving measure” that allowed Alaskans who supported wide-scale economic development to “harmlessly to trumpet their resentment of the exercise of federal power in the state.”¹⁵ This provocative resolution was followed by two more resolutions sponsored by Commonwealth North, a lobbying organization headed by former Alaska governors William Egan and Walter Hickel. The first urged

¹² R. McGregor Cawley, *Federal Land, Western Anger: The Sagebrush Rebellion and Environmental Politics* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 5. See also, David Helvarg, *The War Against the Greens: The “Wise-Use” Movement, the New Right, and Anti-Environmental Violence* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1994), 63-65.

¹³ Cawley, *Federal Land*, 3. See also, C. Brant Short, *Ronald Reagan and the Public Lands: America’s Conservation Debate, 1979-1984* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1989), 41-48.

¹⁴ Session Laws and Resolves, “An Act Creating the Alaska Statehood Commission,” State of Alaska, 11th Legislature, January 15, 1980 to June 6, 1980, Juneau, Alaska (effective date, July 2, 1980).

¹⁵ Haycox, *American Colony*, 299; Haycox, *Frigid Embrace*, 125-126; “Look Who Wants Out [editorial],” *Louisville Times*, July 6, 1981, n.p.

Alaska Governor Hammond to file a “friend of the court” brief supporting Nevada’s legal challenge to federal control. The second was a simply a declaration of support for the Nevada position. A related senate bill (S.B. 334) passed overwhelmingly, requiring legislative approval of federal land purchases “not covered by the U.S. Constitution.”¹⁶ By 1982, Alaskan voters had passed their own statewide “Tundra Rebellion” initiative asserting a claim to over half of the seventy-two million acres of land administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Alaska.¹⁷ It was in this atmosphere that ANILCA was born, and for a time it seemed that everyone from the president to the protestors in rural communities wanted to undermine or dismantle the new law.

Each of the parties involved in creating ANILCA recognized that passing the act was only the first step and that its implementation would determine the future of Alaska’s many federal conservation units. For the National Park Service this challenge began almost immediately. In the first weeks of his presidency, Reagan fulfilled his promises to Western states by replacing Cecil Andrus with self-proclaimed “sagebrush rebel” James Watt.¹⁸ Watt was everything that Reagan wanted for the Interior Department, a conservative Christian who believed that the nation’s resources should be opened for use

¹⁶ “Sagebrush Turns to Muskeg and Tundra as Lands Rebellion Moves North,” *Legislative Digest* 4 (1980): 1; “Commonwealth North Urges State to Aid Nevada Sagebrush Rebellion,” *Alaska from the Inside* (August 1, 1979), n.p.; “Alaska Moves to Support ‘Sagebrush Rebellion,’” *Alaska Economic Report* (February 14, 1980), 5; “‘Alaska Rebellion’ against Federal Government Approved on House Floor,” *Legislative Digest* 16 (1980), 1.

¹⁷ Haycox, *American Colony*, 299; Cawley, *Federal Land*, 2.

¹⁸ Ron Wolf, “God, James Watt, and the Public’s Land,” *Audubon* 83 (1983), 58-65; Charles Clusen, “Beyond Compromise: ANILCA at the Mercy of Expedience,” *Wilderness* 47 (Spring 1984), 11-24; Daniel Nelson, *A Passion for the Land: John F. Seiberling and the Environmental Movement* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2009), 178.

by private, deregulated industry.¹⁹ When the president-elect interviewed Watt, they agreed on five points: opening more public lands to multiple use, reducing the country's dependence on foreign oil, establishing a strategic minerals policy, giving concessionaires a larger voice in the management of the national parks, and marginalizing the environmental organizations that had been influential under Carter.²⁰ Together they campaigned to reverse many of the environmental regulations of the previous two decades. "I want to open as much land as I can," Watt said. "The basic difference between this Administration and the liberals is that we are market-oriented, people-oriented. We are trying to bring our abundant acres into the market so that the market will decide their value."²¹

Six months after ANILCA became law, Watt had hired Vern Wiggins of Citizens for Management of Alaska Lands as his special assistant for Alaska. As the former head of the largest anti-park organization in Alaska, Wiggins told reporters, "I think it's going better than some of us expected, than a lot of Alaskans expected. The primary reason is because of the people implementing the bill." Wiggins went on to declare that "many Alaskans will never learn to live with the law. Their livelihood and life style is affected."²² On March 12, 1981, Watt held a summit meeting with Alaska's top elected

¹⁹ Ron Wolf, "New Voice in the Wilderness," *Rocky Mountain Magazine* (1981), 29-34; Nelson, *A Passion for the Land*, 178.

²⁰ Ron Arnold, *At the Eye of the Storm: James Watt and the Environmentalists* (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1982), 55.

²¹ Philip Shabecoff, "U.S. Plans Biggest Land Shift since Frontier Times," *New York Times*, July 3, 1981, 1.

²² Betty Mills, "On First Anniversary, Alaskans Learning to Live with d-2," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, November 28, 1981, 1; Betty Mills, "Andrus: D2 Being

officials that he said would “free Alaska from the oppressive actions of the Interior Department.” After an hour-long closed meeting, Watt, Hammond, Stevens, Murkowski, and Young signed an “Alaska Cooperative Policy Statement” with full media coverage. According to Watt, the policy statement was designed to develop “common sense federal policies” that would “defuse the Sagebrush Rebellion in Alaska.”²³

Calling Alaska’s representatives “the most progressive state delegation that I’ve had a chance to work with,” Watt delighted in announcing the agreement’s proposals that would make resource exploitation easier in Alaska. The proposals included expediting oil and gas leasing in Alaska, halting negotiations on a caribou migration treaty with Canada, allowing aerial wolf-hunting on Bureau of Land Management lands, halting surveying of Bureau of Land Management lands for wilderness designation, and making the more development-oriented U.S. Geological Survey responsible for drafting guidelines for oil exploration on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.²⁴ Under the pretext of preserving traditional lifestyle practices and access to mineral claims and cabins, Watt also suggested regulations that would permit snowmobiles and aircraft in many parts of national parks and wildlife refuges where they had been prohibited. The proposed regulations, admitted one Interior Department official, “let you take a D-9 [Caterpillar

‘Dismantled,’” *Anchorage Times*, April 29, 1982, 1; Charles Mohr, “Bill Seeks to Reopen Alaska Parks to Hunters,” *New York Times*, August 16, 1982, D12.

²³ Nancy Shute, “State Leaders Laud Watt Land Directives,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, March 12, 1981, 1.

²⁴ Betty Mills, “Watt: Policies Will ‘Free’ Alaska,” *Anchorage Times*, March 12, 1981, 1; George Bryson, “Watt, State Leaders Sign Land Deal,” *Anchorage Daily News*, March 13, 1981, 1.

bulldozer] through a national park.”²⁵ Although the Reagan administration’s policies and Watt’s approach delighted many development-minded Alaskans, the new regime was a crushing blow to environmental activists in Alaska and across the nation. When the Interior Secretary visited Alaska in 1981 he was greeted in Juneau by a group of environmentalists angered by Watt’s support for unlimited logging in Alaska’s national forests. In an impressive display of street theater, the protestors wielded chainsaws in a “21-chain-saw salute” on the steps of the capitol building and presented a sign that read, “Dump Watt: It’s a Clearcut Issue.”²⁶ By the following year, the Interior Secretary’s policies prompted Massachusetts Senator Paul Tsongas to complain,

Under the guise of implementing the law [ANILCA], the secretary is, in fact, undoing the law. Through calculated use of the budget, selective enforcement of some provisions of the law but no enforcement of others, and by suspect interpretation of statutory provisions—the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act is being transformed into the Alaska National Interest Lands Development Act.”²⁷

In August 1982 another effort to undermine ANILCA appeared in a bill sponsored by Representative Young and Senators Stevens and Murkowski which was designed to legalize hunting by urban sportsmen in expanded portions of the parklands created in 1980. The bill would achieve this by adding approximately twelve million acres as national preserves so that thirty-one million acres would then be open to sport hunting for Alaska residents and others not living in the “resident zone communities” near the parks.

²⁵ Cahn, “Paper Parks,” 24-26; Betty Mills, “Andrus: D2 Being ‘Dismantled,’” *Anchorage Times*, April 29, 1982, 26.

²⁶ “21-Chain-Saw Salute, Circa 1981 [photograph],” *Juneau Empire*, March 7, 2006, 3.

²⁷ Watkins, “Perils of Expedience,” 30. See also, The Wilderness Society, “Failure in Alaska: The Reagan Administration’s Five-Year Record” (December 2, 1985).

The change would also appease hunting guides who argued that some of the best areas for Dall sheep and other large mammals had been closed to hunting. The Alaska congressional delegation hoped that the bill would attract the attention of hunters outside of Alaska, so that the issue might become national rather than simply an Alaskan issue. “We’re not suggesting opening areas such as old McKinley Park, where hunting has not been permitted for years and the number of visitors is high,” Stevens argued. “We foresee little or no conflict between hunters and other recreational users [in the proposed hunting areas].”²⁸ The issue prompted the Alaska Coalition to organize once again to face this new threat, and the group’s spokesman warned that opening more parklands to sports hunting would set a dangerous precedent. A spokesman for the Sierra Club labeled the bill, “the most bald-faced, wholesale assault on our National Park system in its history.”²⁹

In mid-August 1983, in the midst of the debate over the new hunting bill, Representatives Udall and Seiberling and nine of their fellow House representatives arrived in Alaska on an ANILCA fact-finding mission.³⁰ After visiting Denali National Park and Preserve, the delegation arrived at Elmendorf Air Force Base near Anchorage,

²⁸ Charles Mohr, “Bill Seeks to Reopen Alaska Parks to Hunters,” *New York Times*, August 16, 1982, D12; John Lindback, “Stevens Gives Foes Warning,” *Anchorage Daily News*, August 17, 1983, C1; David Ramseur, “Murkowski Appeals for Hunting Amendment Backers,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, August 17, 1983, 3.

²⁹ Philip Shabecoff, “Group Opposes Bill for Sports Hunting in Alaska Parkland,” *New York Times*, April 11, 1983, A26.

³⁰ Betty Mills, “House Delegation to Flee D.C. for Alaska Junket,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, July 5, 1983, 2. The other members of the congressional delegation were: Abraham Kazen (D-AZ), James Clarke (D-NC), Robert Lagomarsino (R-CA), Tom Bevill (D-AL), Anthony Beilenson (D-CA), Wyche Fowler, Jr. (D-GA), James Howard (D-NJ), William Ford (D-MI), and Matthew Rinaldo (R-NJ).

where Udall gave a speech in which he commented that he had seen no picketers or protestors telling them to go home—in sharp contrast to what happened in aftermath of Carter’s national monument proclamation just five years before. “We were hung in effigy, and some would have gone farther,” Udall commented, and he went on to explain that “The differences of opinion are still there, but the venom is gone.”³¹ Nonetheless, the visiting congressmen were upset by an editorial that appeared in the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* the day they arrived. It charged that that opponents of ANILCA were receiving “cursory treatment” from the visiting delegation and that the “the trip appears to be more of a vacation than a fact-finding junket.”³²

At a press conference in Fairbanks, Seiberling took offense to the suggestion that they were wasting taxpayer money and that they were ignoring the opponents of ANILCA, pointing out that time had been allotted to visit with supporters of the law and opponents. Representative James Howard, a Democrat from New Jersey, responded to the argument that Alaskans were better prepared to address the state’s needs than the federal government by saying, “We don’t really know that because Alaska hasn’t done that for quite some time,” adding finally, “Alaska is the largest welfare state in the United States.” Speaking as chairman of the House Public Works and Transportation Committee, Howard explained that “For every dollar Alaska pays in federal taxes, it receives \$12 back in highway improvements, which is about four times as much as the

³¹ Craig Medred, “National Interest Land Advocates Return to Alaska,” *Anchorage Daily News*, August 16, 1983, B1; A.J. McCanahan, “Key Congressmen OK Concept of Land Swap,” *Anchorage Times*, August 16, 1983, B1;

³² “Restoring Alaska’s Balance [editorial],” *Anchorage Times*, reprinted from *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, August 16, 1983, 6.

next highest recipient.”³³ After this heated exchange, Representative Udall tried to calm the crowd, explaining that their purpose in coming to Alaska was to familiarize the congressmen with the state and the issues surrounding ANILCA implementation because for most of the group this was their first visit to Alaska.

When the delegation arrived in Glennallen the next day, they were confronted by angry residents at the local bar. Representative William Ford, a Democrat from Michigan, found himself listening to a registered hunting guide named Mel Gillis who complained that arbitrary park boundaries had taken a bite out of his pocketbook “for no sensible reason.” Gillis told the congressman that he wanted the preserve portion of the Wrangell-St. Elias park expanded to give his hunters a crack at the Dall sheep that fell under protection of the national park portion after 1980. Pointing to Mt. Drum in the background, the man explained that he agreed with state biologists that the number of animals taken should be limited. He did not want to eliminate the sheep—he only wanted to be able to take a few each year. “What difference would it make if I took one sheep off that mountain?” he asked, to which the Michigan Democrat, himself a life-long hunter, responded that opening even some of the park to hunting would break with a long tradition of national parks being sacred wildlife sanctuaries. The representative explained that Congress had never opened national park lands to hunting.

Standing near Gillis, four more men describing themselves as out-of-work hunting guides grumbled about an encounter they had had with former Interior Secretary Udall. Two of the men, Don Bedrick and Jim Smolen, wore T-shirts that declared, “Strike a Blow for Freedom. Kill a Parky.” They had confronted Udall in the lobby of

³³ Susan Fisher, “D.C. Group Here to Study the Issues,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, August 15, 1983, 1.

the hotel, telling him to go back to Arizona with his park plans. The exchange lasted a couple of minutes, before Udall told the men he would be willing to discuss the issue with them but only if they had not already made up their minds. He then walked away. “He wouldn’t talk to me,” Bedrick complained, and he accused Udall and Ahtna Inc., the Glennallen-based regional Native corporation, of conspiring to keep sport hunters out of the area where only subsistence hunters, many of them Alaska Natives, were allowed to operate. “Eventually,” Bedrick said, “it’s going to be Natives and parkys and that’s it.”³⁴

In the first years after ANILCA became law, National Park Service staff in the new Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve kept a low profile, and they ignored many minor infractions such as small-scale mining and guiding without a permit until they could develop a better rapport with residents living in and around the park.³⁵

Although the agency had made some progress since the heated days following the monument proclamation, emotions remained high. One way unhappy residents expressed themselves was to submit unfavorable comments during the 1982 consultation process for the park’s new General Management Plan. Chitina resident J. Sesky, for example, questioned not only the management plan but the very basis of federal authority:

The draft is, and the park is, unconstitutionally and illegally imposed on our citizens. Likewise ANILCA and the National Park Service were unconstitutionally imposed on our citizens. The American Revolution was fought against similar tyranny that Congress and the Federal government impose on our docile (as yet) citizens and I’m sure you’ve already felt that the NPS is unwelcome here.³⁶

³⁴ Craig Medred, “Congressmen Lobbied by Hunters, Guides,” *Anchorage Daily News*, August 17, 1983, 1.

³⁵ Lappen, “Whose Promised Land?” 177-178.

³⁶ Bleakley, “Contested Ground,” 41, 42.

Local chapters of Alaskans Unite objected to more specific park proposals, including the agency's plans for writing new park regulations and constructing additional facilities to serve park visitors. Some challenged the federal presence in other ways. A building near Jack Lake that the park leased to use as a ranger station was burned down by an unidentified arsonist, and a public-use cabin on the McCarthy Road suffered a similar fate. Far to the south in the coastal town of Yakutat, the park's airplane was vandalized as it sat overnight at the local airport.³⁷

Residents frustrated with management of the park often focused their ire on plans to require a permit for use of trespass cabins, to limit grazing sheep and horses, to charge guides fees based on their gross revenue, to restrict all-terrain vehicle use, and to place tighter restrictions on mining. The agency's placement of the park's radio antennas on top of mountains was also a controversial topic.³⁸ Park officials argued that the radio "repeaters" enhanced public safety by establishing a communications link between the park staff and nearby communities, but residents protested that they were denied access to the radio frequency. Others objected to their installation on purely aesthetic grounds, arguing out that the repeaters were more of an eyesore than many of the restricted activities that concerned the National Park Service. Some inholders insisted that the park was a private "playground" for agency staff, and they complained about the government's use of helicopters, a means of access denied to private citizens in the area. Area residents were particularly outraged by the National Park Service policy of asking

³⁷ Bleakley, "Contested Ground," 42.

³⁸ "Park Service Regulations: Inholders Fight to Maintain Freedom and Individual Rights," *Resource Review* (September 1985), 4, 5.

cabin-users for proof of ownership. Users unable to provide evidence of ownership faced eviction and the structures were often advertised as public-use cabins.³⁹

During the 1980s, most of the vocal critics of the National Park Service's management of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve were the owners of private lands located within the park boundaries. When the park was created, it contained over a million acres of these inholdings, creating the most complex patchwork of public and private land of any park unit in the country. Three local Native corporations owned approximately 875,000 acres; the State of Alaska had chosen about 70,000 acres under the terms of the Statehood Act; the University of Alaska held an additional 8,200 acres; and finally, the park encircled approximately 11,400 acres that were originally patented under the terms of the Mining Law of 1872.⁴⁰ When ANILCA was passed, few of these parcels were still being mined; however, many of the owners used the land as bases for guiding operations, seasonal living arrangements, or simply as recreation sites for families.

The most strident protests emerged from a group of inholdings in the northeast quarter of the park known as Chisana, where the residents claimed the plans were in the works to eliminate homes and commercial interests in the park by buying out inholders or restricting them through the use of access regulations and the expansion of designated wilderness areas. They complained about confusing subsistence laws, rules limiting aircraft and motorized vehicle use, and requirements for permits to operate businesses

³⁹ "Park Service Regulations: Inholders Fight to Maintain Freedom and Individual Rights," *Resource Review* (September 1985), 4, 5. See also, Bleakley, "Contested Ground," 42.

⁴⁰ Bleakley, "Contested Ground," 67.

within the park. Some inholders even claimed the park's new radio repeater system was being used to spy on them while they conducted legitimate business operations. One inholder, Terry Overly, owned eighty acres inside the park and had been operating a hunting lodge and guiding operation he called Pioneer Outfitters since 1961. According to Overly, the park was illegitimate, and he told reporters, "They are trying to destroy our lifestyle and our livelihood."⁴¹ Park officials, meanwhile, denied that they could afford to buy out inholders even if they wanted to. They also denied they had plans to condemn property under eminent domain or to force land trades, as some inholders had charged. As for structures built on park property, a park representative explained that the agency had little flexibility: "Where anything has been built in trespass on national parkland, we do have to treat it as property belonging to the American public."⁴² Speaking for other Chisana property owners, Overly described feeling resigned that the fight was ultimately a losing one:

They've got all the time and money and regulations in the world. The National Park Service are professionals. It's not just haphazard what's happening out here. It's psychological warfare. They push as hard as they can, and as soon as someone stops them, when they've pushed too hard, then they'll back off and wait. We've been fighting a long time, and it goes on so long and gets expensive and so emotional, that it drains you. Then you quit or back off.⁴³

⁴¹ John Quinley, "Turmoil Grips Tranquil Valley," *Anchorage Times*, October 6, 1985, B1.

⁴² Mary Scarpinato, "Park Service: We Won't Push Out Holders of Land in Wrangell-St. Elias," *Anchorage Times*, October 6, 1985, B3; Sam Bishop, "Wrangell-St. Elias Inholders Say Life in National Park Isn't a Lark," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, September 1, 1985, H7; Bleakley, "Contested Ground," 72-74.

⁴³ John Quinley, "Chisana Residents Sought Rustic Life, Now See Park Service Encroachments," *Anchorage Times*, October 6, 1985, B3.

During the 1980s, the managers of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve confronted problems related to cabin use, permitting, and access to inholdings, even though the rules governing a preserve were often less strict than those applied to a national park. In the case of Yukon-Charley Rivers, one of the most dramatic examples of conflict between preserve officials and inholders involved the part-time gold miner Joe Vogler. Since the mid-1970s, Vogler had pursued his personal political project—the secession of Alaska from the United States. Although he often claimed to detest politics, he founded the Alaska Independence movement in 1973. Three years later he launched a civil suit claiming that the federal government had violated the Alaska Statehood Act. His view of citizenship, which he shared with anyone who would listen, was “I’m an Alaskan, not an American. I’ve got no use of America and her damned institutions.”⁴⁴ By 1978, Vogler and his fellow secessionists had founded the Alaska Independence Party, and during the mid-1980s, Vogler ran for governor and lieutenant governor and was regarded as both a crackpot and folk hero for disgruntled Alaskans.

Although most of his income came from Fairbanks real estate, Vogler was a gold miner at heart, and he enjoyed telling people “I have always believed in three things: land, gold, and Caterpillar equipment.”⁴⁵ Since the 1960s, Vogler owned over two hundred acres of mining claims along the Yukon River at Woodchopper Creek, land that had since been encircled by Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. There he ran a

⁴⁴ Tom Snapp, “Vogler Spearheading Drive for Alaska Independence,” *Pioneer All-Alaska Weekly*, February 16, 1973, 1; Tom Snapp, “Vogler Plans Suit Alleging Breach of the Statehood Act,” *Pioneer All-Alaska Weekly*, April 16, 1976, 1. See also, Tricia Brown, “An ‘Unfit American’ Wraps Himself in the Constitution,” *Alaska 53* (October 1987), 51-66.

⁴⁵ Richard James, “Angry Alaskans Say Smokey Bear Has Mailed Paw,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 4, 1980, 1.

small placer mining operation during the summer. Like many Alaskans, Vogler hated the idea that he would have to comply with environmental regulations imposed by government “posey sniffers.” To make his point, he refused to file a discharge permit as mandated by the Environmental Protection Act and the Mining in Parks Act. Vogler’s conflicts with the National Park Service came to a head in 1984 when he decided to move a D-8 bulldozer and a load of mining supplies to Woodchopper Creek. To accomplish this, he and three associates planned to drive the bulldozer and a large six-wheeled vehicle called a Delta 3 transporter to Vogler’s mine using an old trail first established by miners using horse-drawn wagons and dog sleds in the 1930s. In mid-July, Vogler and his crew drove the two pieces of heavy equipment from Circle (at the end of the area’s road system) and eighteen miles into the preserve to a small Yukon River tributary called Webber Creek. Before he could advance any further, they were stopped by park officials who arrived by helicopter and served Vogler with a temporary restraining order [Figures 33-34].⁴⁶

As an inholder, Vogler was afforded “reasonable access” to his property under ANILCA; however, park officials objected to the deep ruts and gouges caused by his heavy equipment. They estimated, moreover, that he had inflicted damage to the tundra in the amount of \$20,000 to \$25,000 per mile. Under the tundra was the frozen ground called permafrost, which turned into a quagmire when heavy equipment disturbed the insulating blanket of vegetation above it. The agency feared that the old trail would

⁴⁶ Susan Fisher, “Vogler Lands in Court for Taking D-8 in Park,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, July 18, 1984, 3; Susan Fisher, “Court Halts Vogler’s Equipment Move,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, July 19, 1984, 3; Susan Fisher, “Vogler Refuses to Apply for Mine Access Permit,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, July 20, 1984, 3; Sam Bishop, “Court Keeps Vogler Mining Work Halted,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, February 15, 1985, 5.

become a broad, eroded mess as others followed Vogler's lead and each subsequent driver expanded the damage by fanning out to avoid the muddiest areas. As the controversy advanced toward court, park superintendent David Mihalic insisted that the National Park Service was not trying to prevent Vogler from mining; they merely wanted him to obtain a permit and to avoid unnecessary environmental damage by using the trail in winter, as had been the custom for miners in earlier decades. From his perspective, Vogler was at war with the federal government, and he welcomed the opportunity to engage the National Park Service in rhetorical combat. Although he had never practiced law as a profession, Vogler used his training as a lawyer to argue that he had a right to use the historical trail under an 1866 mining law later known as House Resolution 2477. The law read simply, "The right-of-way for the construction of highways over public lands, not reserved for public uses, is hereby granted." Although H.R. 2477 law was repealed in 1976, many in Alaska and across the American West argued that historic rights-of-way (those established before 1976) were still valid. "I've got a right—that's a public highway," Vogler declared during an interview for a Fairbanks public television special called *Battle at Webber Creek*. "I don't have to get a permit to go out on a public highway. You can be going down to rob a bank and you've got a right to use that road."⁴⁷

The agency feared that if the courts agreed with Vogler, their rulings might be used to open hundreds of other roads in Alaska's national parks. For the moment,

⁴⁷ Dan Joling, "State Wants Trails Left Out of Park Plans," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, February 15, 1986, 1; Lou Brown, "Road Schemes Based on Century-Old Statute," *Northern Line* 15 (March 26, 1993), 12. See also, Robert Hooper, dir., *Battle at Webber Creek*, KUAC-TV, 1985, available at Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, Alaska.

however, they simply wanted Vogler to obtain a permit to travel in the preserve and to remove his equipment, but he was not prepared to do either. “Either I can move it [the vehicles] out of here without any permits, without any red tape, or it can set here and rust into the ground,” he told the filmmaker for *Battle at Webber Creek*. He then made his most famous declaration:

If I’m wrong in my belief that the federal government cannot retain sovereignty here, my bones won’t rot under the American flag, I tell you. I’m going to Whitehorse [Canada]. I’m going to buy a burial plot. If I don’t win this lawsuit, lock, stock and barrel, if I’m wrong in my concept of what America meant when it started out, I don’t want to lie under their flag.⁴⁸

More than six hundred Fairbanksans showed up at a fundraiser in 1985 to help Vogler battle the National Park Service, and for several years Vogler’s stranded heavy equipment remained as a mute reminder of the clash between an independence-minded Alaskan and a federal agency.⁴⁹ Vogler continued to agitate against what he viewed as federal abuses for another ten years before he mysteriously disappeared in 1993. After over a year of searching for the 80-year-old Alaskans for Independence founder, authorities learned that he had been murdered by an acquaintance after negotiations for the sale of some plastic explosives went sour.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Robert Hooper, dir., *Battle at Webber Creek*, KUAC-TV, 1985, available at Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, Alaska. See also, Dan O’Neill, *A Land Gone Lonesome: An Inland Voyage along the Yukon River* (New York: Counterpoint, 2006), 202-206.

⁴⁹ “Vogler Supporters Pack Fund Raiser,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, April 28, 1985, 1.

⁵⁰ “Remains of Alaska Separatist Are Identified,” *New York Times*, October 15, 1994, n.p. See also, Kat Ripley, “Gone without a Trace,” *Alaska* 60 (March 1994), 35-39, and Frenchy DeRushé, *Where Is Joe Vogler?: How, Where, When Will We Find the Alaskan Independence Party Chairman?* (Fairbanks: Yukon/Alaska Publishing Company, 1993).

During the mid-1980s, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Alaska's second largest park, was also the cause of considerable controversy. The push to complete a General Management Plan for the park attracted a great deal of criticism, and the public hearings in Bettles attracted angry guides such as Jerry Stansel who maintained a base camp on the North Fork of the Koyukuk River for the hikers and rafters. The draft management plan specifically called for the dismantling of the camp because the Wilderness Act prohibited commercial enterprises within designated wilderness. "It's really frustrating when you spend half your life building something up and then it's taken away by the very government you fought for in Vietnam," Stansel told reporters.⁵¹ Other local residents objected to a proposal from park officials to build a cabin for public use along the Noatak River and to put radio repeaters on some mountaintops. Members of the Subsistence Advisory Commission and Alaska Native groups responded to the draft by saying that they wanted the entire park declared a traditional use area, rather than restricting subsistence activities to "traditional use zones" within the park. They also objected to the suggestion in the draft that the National Park Service should acquire Native allotments and other inholdings because they were "incompatible with park purposes."⁵²

After becoming the first Bettles resident convicted of illegally trapping in the park, one local trapper complained to reporters, "One of these days there're going to run

⁵¹ Sam Bishop, "Plan Is a Threat to Guide's Way of Life," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, May 5, 1985, 6; Dermot Cole, "Guides, Sport Hunters Say They're Hurt Most," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, December 3, 1985, 6.

⁵² Sam Bishop, "Arctic Gates Draft Plan Ignites Land-Use Controversy," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, May 5, 1985, 6; "Native Groups Comment on Park Service Plan for Gates of Arctic," *The Council* (August 1985), 6; Tom Kizzia, "Visitors Threatening Valley," *Anchorage Daily News*, June 6, 1985, 1.

everybody out and it will be just a government town.” This sentiment was echoed by Eric Miller, a Bureau of Land Management firefighter stationed in Bettles for the summer fire season: “Part of their problem is the park rangers walk around here looking like South American generals.”⁵³ Bettles residents dissatisfied with the General Management Plan process circulated a petition that was signed by about eighty-five percent of the town’s registered voters. The petition targeted park superintendent Richard Ring for “neglecting to support the positions and feelings of Bettles residents.” The petition said that Superintendent Ring had “proven to be unfit” because of what critics called his stance against subsistence use in the park and attempts to take over state, private, and Native land within park boundaries.⁵⁴

The flap over the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve management plan was not an isolated controversy. Issues of subsistence and park regulations also caused anxiety further north in the Nunamiut community of Anaktuvuk Pass. The Nunamiut had allowed themselves to become encircled by the new park boundaries in a bid to protect their traditional caribou hunting lands from outside hunters and commercial development. ANILCA was written to accommodate the use of snowmobiles, motorboats and “other means of surface transportation traditionally employed for such purposes by local residents.”⁵⁵ Until the 1950s, the Nunamiut were one of the last

⁵³ Tom Kizzia, “Bettles Endures as Door to Brooks,” *Anchorage Daily News*, June 17, 1985, 1.

⁵⁴ Sam Bishop, “Residents Dislike Gates Park Plan,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, May 14, 1985, 3; Kathi Berry, “Subsistence Hunters’ Park Access Discussed,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, February 1, 1986, 3; Dan Joling, “State Unhappy with Parks Proposal,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, February 14, 1986, 1.

⁵⁵ Kathi Berry, “Subsistence Hunters’ Park Access Discussed,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, February 1, 1986, 3.

nomadic people in North America when they abandoned their nomadism and settled in Anaktuvuk Pass. Traditionally, groups of Nunamiut packed up their camps and followed caribou herds across the North Slope and the Brooks Range, but after settling down they could no longer relocate for seasonal hunts and hunters had to travel longer distances to kill caribou and bring them back to Anaktuvuk Pass. The first motorized vehicles arrived in the village in 1962, when two teachers brought snowmobiles with them. During the 1960s and 1970s, the people of Anaktuvuk Pass began using snowmobiles, four-wheeled all-terrain vehicles, and the six- or eight-wheeled vehicles known as Argos. The Argos allowed the villagers to traverse the bumpy and marshy landscape and return with as many as five caribou carcasses at a time. During the first years after ANILCA, the park's rule against the use of all-terrain vehicles generated little controversy because it was not enforced.⁵⁶ Hunters from the village would set out in an Argo and travel fifty miles in any direction in search of game, crossing Native allotment lands, land owned by the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, and wilderness lands that were part of the national park.

The official agency position was that snowmobiles were allowed because they were used in the winter when the landscape was covered with a thick layer of snow and the permafrost was frozen. Four-wheeled all-terrain vehicles and Argos were not allowed because in summer they damaged the tundra by creating muddy trails that widened each year. Furthermore, park officials determined that all-terrain vehicles were not a "traditional" means of transportation because they had only been in use by Anaktuvuk Pass residents for a little over a decade. The issue came to a head in 1983 after a land

⁵⁶ Norris, "Alaska Subsistence," 138-139.

exchange was negotiated between the federal government and the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation. The exchange gave approximately 100,000 acres around the village to the National Park Service, while the corporation received similar acreage on Barter Island, part of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge located off the Arctic Coast.⁵⁷ One of the most heavily used subsistence hunting grounds for Anaktuvuk Pass was near Chandalar Lake, located about thirty miles to the northwest. Although the National Park Service tried to allow Anaktuvuk Pass hunters to reach Chandalar Lake by delineating easements along which village hunters could travel, the plan was ill-conceived. The easements forced the hunters to stay within fifty feet of a river that flowed from the lake, but the villagers found that rocks and heavy brush near the river route impassable.

Suddenly the residents felt hemmed in, trapped between the financial interests of the regional corporation (Barter Island promised oil and gas) and the National Park Service, which wanted to prevent any human damage to the land. The agency responded to the complaints of villagers by stating, "Our charge is to maintain the undeveloped characteristics of the park and wilderness, and to provide for its recreational use. . . . We also seek to provide the opportunity for continued subsistence use by the people of Anaktuvuk Pass." The Nunamiut began to doubt this assertion when the travel restrictions made it almost impossible to reach their prime sheep, caribou, and moose hunting grounds.⁵⁸ Meanwhile, park managers funded a \$150,000 study to determine

⁵⁷ George Bryson, "State Might Offer Brooks Range Land," *Anchorage Daily News*, July 15, 1982, 1; "Brooks Range Land Plan [editorial]," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, August 13, 1982, 4; "Brooks Range Land Belongs to Us All [editorial]," *Anchorage Daily News*, July 16, 1982, 3.

⁵⁸ Bill Hess, "Regulations Hamper Subsistence," *Tundra Times*, September 5, 1984, 1; Steve Kakaruk, "Park Service Restricts Subsistence in Anaktuvuk," *Tundra Times*, October 21, 1985, 10.

whether “repeated and random” use of all-terrain vehicles damaged the natural environment. Park researchers asked village residents to fill out forms describing where they went on their Argos, the duration of their hunting trips, and how much gear they carried. Elsewhere, researchers planned to retrace the routes, examining the vegetation and soil along the way to determine if the vehicles caused significant damage. In other areas, the researchers planned to block off sections of trail to study how quickly vegetation recovered.

The study caused anxiety among Anaktuvuk Pass villagers because they felt they were being watched as they roamed in their homeland. “They [the researchers] start getting so deep into the really private areas of our lives,” a local hunter told reporters. “If I went to Fairbanks how would you like me to ask you always how much you carried in the back of your truck or where you went?”⁵⁹ In 1986 the park superintendent granted villagers temporary permission to continue what they had been doing all along—following the caribou and other animals—even if it meant driving across designated wilderness. The studies and bad feelings continued throughout the decade, even after park officials proposed an arrangement whereby the National Park Service would de-authorize 75,000 acres of wilderness near the village and allow the Nunamiut “wandering rights” over 159,000 additional acres of park land. In exchange, 18,000 acres located elsewhere in the park would be designated wilderness, and the Nunamiut would give up development rights on 93,000 acres of their own land. The negotiations dragged on until the early 1990s when at last President Clinton approved the land exchange as part of a

⁵⁹ Kathi Berry, “Environmental Concerns May Rob Village of Its ATV’s,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, June 29, 1986, D2.

package of Alaska land trades.⁶⁰ Twelve years after the Anaktuvuk Pass residents and park officials began negotiations, the issue was finally settled to the satisfaction of both parties.⁶¹

Less than one year after ANILCA passed, the editor of the *Anchorage Daily News* wrote an editorial acknowledging that the National Park Service was trying to adapt to Alaskan circumstances and asserting that the wounds over the lands debate were slowly healing. “Twenty years from now,” the editor asked, “how well will we remember the white-hot battle over Alaska National Interest Lands legislation?”⁶² This diagnosis seemed premature to many Alaskans, and the controversy over land use issues continued. In the 1990s, disgruntled residents continued to protest and to resist the National Park Service’s presence and its management policies. However, there were forces coming into play, forces set in motion by the national parks, which deflected to some degree the arguments over hunting restrictions and subsistence rights. Starting in the mid-1980s, Alaska’s new national parks had begun to change the state’s economy in dramatic ways.

⁶⁰ David Foster, “ATVs Churn Up Controversy in Pristine Park,” *Anchorage Daily News*, September 4, 1989, C1; David Whitney, “Clinton Signs Parks Bill, Alaska Land Trades,” *Anchorage Daily News*, November 13, 1996, 1; Catton, *Inhabited Wilderness*, 211-214.

⁶¹ Frank Norris, “Alaska Subsistence,” 195-197; David Hulen, “A Compromise in the Wilderness,” *Anchorage Daily News*, December 26, 1990, 1; David Whitney, “Park Service May Give Land to End Conflict,” *Anchorage Daily News*, December 11, 1992, 1; Steve Rinehart, “Deal at Gates: Proposal Helps Native Hunters, Allows Visitors Passage to Park,” *Anchorage Daily News*, June 22, 1994, 1; David Whitney, “Accord Reached on ATVs,” *Anchorage Daily News*, September 22, 1994, B1; A.B. Stoddard, “Land Exchange Fight Focuses on Wilderness,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, August 5, 1994, 1; David Whitney, “Congress Expected to Resolve ATV Park Land Use,” *Anchorage Daily News*, October 8, 1994, B1.

⁶² “Parks in Place; Wounds Healing [editorial],” *Anchorage Daily News*, July 1, 1981, 4.

Several Alaskan parks had become popular tourist destinations, and the dollars tourists spent in the state altered the economic landscape. This new prosperity quieted some protestors, but others in Alaska's near-park communities experienced even more anxiety and upheaval.

CHAPTER 7

TOURISM AND ALASKA'S NATIONAL PARKS, 1989-2000

D-2 passed but the sky did not fall.

—*Anchorage Daily News* editor, 1989

While it's true that there aren't too many copies of Amy Vanderbilt's 'Etiquette' up here, I know of no park ranger who has ever been shot. I do however know of scores of Alaskans whose businesses have been ruined and whose rightful land, property and access have been regulated out of their hands.

—Gakona resident, 1994

One of the principal arguments against national parks in Alaska had always been that parks "locked up" land needed to make Alaska prosperous. Beginning in the late 1980s, tourists began to arrive in Alaska in ever increasing numbers, many coming specifically to see Alaska's national parks. Denali National Park and Preserve had always attracted the largest number of visitors, and Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, well known since John Muir's day, was now attracting large numbers of glacier-seekers aboard enormous cruise ships. However, Alaska's more remote, less developed parks also began to attract visitors in greater numbers, providing local residents with opportunities to start businesses and to find jobs in communities where little employment existed before. In 1989, the managing editor of the *Anchorage Daily News*, Howard Weaver, wrote a short piece reminding Alaskans that before the environmental devastation of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, many national park opponents were already predicting the end of the world: "With so many millions of acres 'locked away' from strip mines and oil derricks, Alaska would be strangled to death on environmentalism, the argument went. There wouldn't be an honest dollar to be made if

the ‘posey sniffers’ and ‘Outside environmentalists’ had their way.”¹ Instead, Weaver pointed out, the d-2 land withdrawals had stimulated the economy in many areas and the tourism sector in particular. Weaver concluded, “Specifics can surely be debated, but the larger premise seems well settled by now: d-2 passed but the sky did not fall.”² Not everyone agreed, however. There were still protests, and in some quarters the debate was as angry and bitter as ever. Even so, when President Carter returned to Alaska for a brief visit in 2000 to celebrate the 20-year anniversary of ANILCA, many more Alaskans had embraced the idea of national parks in their state.

Beginning in the 1960s, National Park Service planners had promised skeptical locals that national parks could attract visitors to the fledgling state and would therefore create a revenue stream that would never be exhausted. It was not until after ANILCA passed, however, and people around the world became aware of the new parks that this promise was fulfilled. In 1985, regional director Boyd Evison wrote an article for the *Pioneer All-Alaska Weekly* that explained the growing value of parks to still-skeptical Alaskans:

Many Alaskans recognize the growing wealth we have in national parks. They are, in effect, capital assets whose value will grow, as long as they are not depleted by unwise use. As nonrenewable resources dwindle, the parks—if kept unimpaired—will continue to attract visitors to the state and contribute increasingly to the long-term health of the Alaskan economy.³

¹ Howard Weaver, “D-2 Passed, But the Sky Did Not Fall [editorial],” *Anchorage Daily News*, December 31, 1989, E2; Sam Bishop, “For Better or Worse, Lands Act Changed Alaska,” *Northland News* (January 1986), 19.

² Howard Weaver, “D-2 Passed, But the Sky Did Not Fall [editorial],” *Anchorage Daily News*, December 31, 1989, E2.

³ Boyd Evison, “National Parks: Growing Value to Alaskans,” *Pioneer All-Alaska Weekly*, November 1, 1985, 20.

Evison pointed out that although the agency in Alaska had been “cautious” about developing new facilities inside parks, many local residents were doing business in or near the parks and that some 250 companies were authorized to operate on lands administered by the agency. He added that “most are ‘mom and pop’ businesses, established by Alaskan sourdoughs who guide people into the lands they love.” Evison acknowledged, however, that even with the unusual access and use provisions written into ANICLA, some residents and inholders were having difficulty with the new regulations. He argued that despite this lingering friction “far greater numbers of people living in or near the national parks are finding the National Park Service a good neighbor.”⁴ Even Senator Stevens, once he understood the economic potential of the state’s parklands, began to push for the construction of visitor facilities in parks and to promote an advertising campaign to bring more tourists to the state. Although he had been an ardent park opponent for years, he cynically attempted to take credit for key decisions and claimed “Alaska is finally getting the attention it needs to realize the vast potential of the federal conservation units.”⁵

One of the Alaska communities to benefit most from the rising tide of tourism was Seward, a fishing town located on the Kenai Peninsula on Alaska’s south-central coast. In 1975, when the fight over the Alaska lands act was still raging, the Seward City Council passed a resolution opposing the proposed creation of the Kenai Fjords National Park in a 580,000-acre landscape of fjords and tidewater glaciers just a few miles south of

⁴ Boyd Evison, “National Parks: Growing Value to Alaskans,” *Pioneer All-Alaska Weekly*, November 1, 1985, 20.

⁵ Ted Stevens, “It Takes Hard Work to Realize Our Potential [editorial],” *Anchorage Times*, December 4, 1987, 4.

the town. At the time, Seward had lost nearly all of its shipping business to the new Port of Anchorage, and the community was struggling to rebuild its economy as a staging area for mining and logging and as a port to ship minerals and timber overseas. In 1978, John Madson wrote about Seward for *Audubon* magazine, suggesting that local resistance to the park was diminishing:

For a while, Seward residents were leery of a proposal that would earmark a big piece of their local area and ‘lock it up,’ but mostly, they just didn’t want any more federal government around than they already had. Such feeling has moderated, and the majority of Seward residents are evidently in favor of a Kenai Fjords National Park—or if not actually in favor of it, they’re at least getting used to the idea.⁶

A national park, with all the development restrictions it would bring, appeared to many in Seward as a major economic barrier.⁷ However, the park soon caused a tourism boom that prompted the city council to rescind its anti-park resolution in 1985. During the next five years, park visitation doubled and tour boats and hotels in Seward were full all summer long. Soon, as Tom Kizzia with the *Anchorage Daily News* observed, it was “hard to find anyone in the bustling little town with a bad word for the federal bureaucrats they once maligned.”⁸

City leaders gave much of the credit for the reversal in attitudes to the cooperative attitudes of agency employees assigned to Seward. And, while it was true that the area proposed for the park had few of the hunting and mining conflicts that stirred opponents

⁶ John Madson, “Kenai Fjords: National Park in Waiting,” *Audubon* (1978), 61.

⁷ Linda Cook, “A Stern and Rock-Bound Coast: Kenai Fjords National Park Historic Resources Study” (Anchorage: National Park Service, 1998), 370-371; Craig Medred, “Creation of National Park a Boon for Seward,” *Anchorage Daily News*, April 17, 2005, F1.

⁸ Tom Kizzia, “The Tide Turns in Seward: Park Wins Over Town,” *Anchorage Daily News*, December 24, 1990, 1.

of other parks, Seward in the 1970s was not immune to the anti-federal-lockup feelings that swept the state. The town had been vying for petrochemical development using the North Slope crude oil that arrived in nearby Valdez through Trans-Alaska Pipeline, and some city officials feared a nearby national park would mean tight air pollution restrictions. Others feared that park officials would ruin the pristine coast with picnic areas and marinas. Senator Stevens had tried to interest Congress in a less restrictive National Recreation Area designation, but during the 1990s local business owners were becoming aware that even that would have been a mistake. According to Kizzia, “residents say the music of ringing cash registers isn’t the only reason for their unexpected affection for the park. There are more subtle changes, some say—such as restored pride in a town once famed as the steamship gateway to Alaska.”⁹

At the beginning of the 1980s, about 500,000 visitors arrived in Alaska each year, but only a few of them were traveling to Seward for whale-watching and to marvel at the park’s magnificent glaciers. But, by the mid-1990s, that number had doubled as Alaska shed its reputation as a cold and forbidding place where only the most adventurous would dare travel. Instead visitors from all around the world were flocking to see its wilderness marvels, and tour companies were attempting to expand their operations beyond the traditional Inside Passage cruises that took visitor to Ketchikan, Juneau, Sitka, and Skagway. In 1992 park officials at the Kenai Fjords headquarters in Seward counted 108,000 visitors during the short summer season, and within two years, that number jumped to over 210,000. By 1994 over one million tourists visited Alaska, and over one

⁹ Tom Kizzia, “The Tide Turns in Seward: Park Wins Over Town,” *Anchorage Daily News*, December 24, 1990, 6.

hundred cruise ships docked in Seward alone.¹⁰ Anchorage and Fairbanks also benefited as transportation hubs and as stepping stones to Denali National Park and Preserve. From Fairbanks, the visitors could reach Eagle and Dawson City in the Yukon Territory by road. Those with backcountry experience might float in rafts down the Charley River or along the Yukon through Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. From Anchorage, they could hire a pilot for flights over Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve and land in McCarthy or travel north to Bettles on their way to fly over the Brooks Range in Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve.

Even though it seemed that Alaska had entered a new era of prosperity in the 1990s, fueled largely by the global popularity of the state's national parks, some in the state continued to fight old battles. In 1993, for example, Alaska governor Walter Hickel sued the federal government to recover the revenues he claimed the state had lost due to ANCSA's d-2 provision and ANILCA's sweeping reorganization of Alaska's public lands. During the 1960s, Hickel had been Alaska's second governor, but had he served less than two years before becoming Nixon's Interior Secretary. As governor Hickel proved to be a tireless booster, pushing hard to open Alaska to resource development. One of his most famous schemes was a plan to extend the Alaska Railroad into the Arctic, which he later abandoned in favor of a winter-only bulldozer road to the Prudhoe Bay oil fields. The ill-planned road-building project was an environmental

¹⁰ Jeanne Woodring, "Tourism Burns Bright," *Alaska Business Monthly* 11 (May 1995), 60; Paula Dobbyn, "National Parks Rake in Big Bucks," *Anchorage Daily News*, November 26, 2003, F1; "National Lands Boost State Economy," *First Alaskans Magazine* (Summer 2005), 26-27; Tim Bradner, "Increase in Park Visitors Spurs Business, Access Questions," *Alaska Journal of Commerce* (March 13, 2005), A2; Craig Medred, "Natural Monopoly on Park Places," *Anchorage Daily News*, September 3, 2006, K1.

embarrassment, and the strip of mud and melted permafrost it left behind became known as the “Hickel Highway.”¹¹ In 1990, Hickel managed to beat the two major-party nominees by running as a third-party candidate on the Alaska Independence Party ticket. Mid-way through the campaign, he distanced himself from the party’s secessionist message and expanded his base of support. According to surveys of voters leaving the polls, his support came from people who believed he would bring industry to the state and create jobs, cut the size of the state bureaucracy, and stand up to the federal government.¹²

During the early 1990s, Hickel became an enthusiastic advocate of recreating Alaska as an “owner state,” meaning that the state and private land owners would take control of the state’s abundant natural resources by becoming the majority landowners. He also spoke in the language of the “neglect thesis” when he repeatedly accused the government of treating Alaska like a distant colony. Hickel proposed a variety of schemes to open Alaska for further oil and natural gas development, to build highways and railroads in designated wilderness, and to pipe Alaskan water to California.¹³ In the third year of his governorship, Hickel announced that the State of Alaska had filed a lawsuit against the federal government, charging that the United States had violated the terms of statehood with the d-2 provision in ANCSA and had deprived the state of its

¹¹ Allan, “Hickel Highway,” 4-7.

¹² Richard Mauer, “On Fourth Try, a Victory for Ex-Governor of Alaska,” *New York Times*, November 13, 1990, n.p.

¹³ Robert Reinhold, “Alaska Offers Californians an Additional Water Spigot,” *New York Times*, August 15, 1991, D23; Terrence Cole, “Wally Hickel’s Big Garden Hose,” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 86 (Spring 1995): 59-71. See also, Walter J. Hickel, *Who Owns America?* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971).

ability to raise revenue.¹⁴ In the suit, Alaska officials said that if the state had been allowed to select its land before the Alaska Natives and before the federal government selected conservation units that the state could have sold mineral leases worth at least \$29 billion. Although many agreed that the suit was merely “a political statement,” rather than a serious attempt to seek compensation and that the governor’s rhetoric was an anachronism dating back to pre-statehood days, for others Hickel was a hero defending an embattled Alaska.

During the 1990s, Governor Hickel was not the only Alaska politician still fighting old battles. In 1995 Senator Murkowski called for a series of field hearings of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources to determine whether Alaskans wanted to revise ANILCA, although from the beginning it was clear that he already had revisions in mind. At the first hearing in Anchorage, Murkowski announced that he had called the hearings because he had received many complaints that federal land agencies were not following the intent of ANILCA, and he said that he was looking for “horror stories” about federal lands being mismanaged in Alaska. When the law was passed, he said, there were clear assurances that people could still cross the land, whether for hunting, mining, or other traditional activities. “As the years have passed, some federal land managers have lost sight of those guarantees,” Murkowski insisted, adding, “We are not unraveling ANILCA, we are evaluating it.”¹⁵ Although the senator gave the

¹⁴ Timothy Egan, “Alaska Governor, Once Pro-Secession, Sues Over Federal Land,” *New York Times*, July 24, 1993, 16; “Alaska Accuses U.S. of ‘Taking’ Park Lands,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 24, 1993, 6; Haycox, “Owning It All,” 179-180.

¹⁵ Steve Rinehart, “Murkowski Hears ANILCA’s Critics,” *Anchorage Daily News*, June 1, 1995, D1.

impression the hearings were open to the public, they were actually organized as an invitation-only event.

During a three-hour period, Murkowski and others on the panel heard from various park inholders and business owners who had been unable to reach satisfactory agreements with the National Park Service or with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Although they were barred from entering, approximately fifty critics of the event made themselves heard by carrying protest signs outside the museum where the event was held. The protestors accused Murkowski of gathering evidence to support a decision he had already reached—to open ANILCA to a broad range of amendments that would make it easier for loggers, miners, and park inholders to use conservation lands. Although there were a few pro-development signs calling for jobs and condemning “Environmental Extremists,” the majority of picketers were clearly pro-park, with signs reading, “Save Our Parks” and “Protect the Tongass.” After Anchorage, the hearings moved to Wrangell in southeastern Alaska and then, two days later, to Fairbanks, where Murkowski promised the attendees that Alaskans would not be allowed to drown in a “permit lifestyle” because of federal bureaucracy. “Some folks feel the Park Service is requiring permits for some things as a prelude to eliminating those activities in the future,” Murkowski told a crowd of around three hundred people. “There’s more and more paperwork and bureaucracy. Alaskans don’t accept that and they were led to believe they won’t have to accept that.”¹⁶

As in Anchorage, protestors were ready with signs outside the conference center. Some supported Murkowski’s battle against a “permit lifestyle” (“ANILCA Locked Up

¹⁶ Tim Mowry, “Murkowski to Fight ‘Permit Lifestyle,’” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, June 3, 1995, 1.

Alaska” and “Federal National Park Maggots Go Home”), while others believed Murkowski was intent on gutting the law (“Hands Off ANILCA” and “We Love Our Parks and Preserves”).¹⁷ When Celia Hunter, the founder of the Alaska Conservation Society and a 30-year conservation activist, got the opportunity to speak, she started by denouncing the proceedings as a “carefully orchestrated production” to support a decision already made to amend ANILCA. “The latest congressional election did not give members of this Congress a mandate to dismantle our nation’s system of parks and refuges and public domain,” Hunter told the panel. Hunter’s testimony prompted Murkowski to respond that before amending the law, he would give the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management a chance to change how they implement the law. “We want common sense,” he assured the audience. In the end, the hearings did not result in any changes to ANILCA, but they did reveal that the meaning of “common sense” had changed over the previous decade and a half. Even though the senator’s hearings had been by invitation only, it was obvious that ANILCA’s supporters were gaining ground on its detractors as evidenced by the large number of pro-park picketers who showed up at the events.

Outside of Alaska’s urban centers, the new land-use regime imposed by ANILCA and the economic realities of becoming a gateway community for national parks created a range of reactions in Alaska’s rural areas. Bettles, for example, once a hotbed of anti-park protest, became relatively quiet in the 1990s as the economy of the tiny town entered a slow decline despite the airplane traffic related to tourism in Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. Locals complained that instead of free-spending hunting

¹⁷ Steve Rinehart, “Senator Listens to Lecture—Murkowski Warned Not To Harm Parks,” *Anchorage Daily News*, June 3, 1995, D1.

parties, the backpackers who used Bettles as their point of entry for the park arrived fully outfitted and tended to camp near the airfield rather than renting local accommodations. Even so, the town's shrinking population was due in large part to the transfer of several Federal Aviation Agency families to other locations in the country.¹⁸ In Anaktuvuk Pass to the north, a steady trickle of adventurous river rafters arrived to begin their trips at the headwaters of the John River, and villagers continued to celebrate the land exchange that made it possible for them to reach all of their most important hunting grounds. Their lands—made up of acreage owned by the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, the local Nunamiut Corporation, and by individual residents—amounted to a sizeable enclave of non-park lands inside park boundaries, and they put to rest any notion that the National Park Service and the Anaktuvuk Pass residents would manage park lands cooperatively.¹⁹

Along the Yukon River, resentment of the National Park Service presence remained, at least among some influential local residents. Beginning in 1991, a group of angry Eagle residents led by James Scott, a retired Bureau of Land Management district manager, and his wife Elva, who was active in the local Eagle Historical Society, began agitating for the agency to leave town. Together they led a letter-writing campaign and circulated a petition demanding that National Park Service not locate its employees or the park headquarters in the town. At the time there were six park employees stationed in Eagle, but according to Scott, the place was overrun by the people he called “Them, in their uniforms, running up and down the river in their damn boats.” This was a common refrain from locals who believed that they had been invaded, and their complaints had

¹⁸ Kathi Berry, “Bettles’ Tourism Boom Never Came,” *Northland News* (January 1986), 16.

¹⁹ Mathews, “Study of a Homeland,” 179-181.

changed little since the first Alaska Task Force rangers arrived in 1979. The Scotts and their fellow anti-park activists charged that the presence of National Park Service personnel pushed up rents in Eagle and that their government salaries were a waste of taxpayer money when, particularly given the small number of visitors the preserve received each year. “I’m not against the parks at all,” Elva Scott told reporters, “It’s just the waste of our money here is unbelievable.”²⁰

Another complaint was that park officials wanted to build a headquarters office and housing for employees and that they wanted to acquire a historic building in downtown Eagle to use as a visitor center. According to Elva Scott, this plan amounted to a hijacking of Eagle’s historical values. The presence of a park headquarters and visitor center in the downtown area, she argued, would suggest to visitors that Eagle was a federal town, a notion she and others found anathema. In December 1991, the Eagle City Council passed a resolution approved by “majority roll call vote” and signed by the five council members present, including James and Elva Scott. The resolution asserted that the “majority of residents of Eagle have expressed by petition and other means their adamant opposition to the Yukon Charley Rivers National Preserve’s presence, programs and proposed acquisition within Eagle City.” It went on to say that the park’s headquarters should be located in Fairbanks and that the General Management Plan be changed so that the Eagle would not be included in any of the park’s program or plans. After the resolution became official, Dennis Layman, a 25-year resident and owner of the Eagle Trading Company, told reporters,

²⁰ “Land Stewards Getting on the Locals’ Nerves,” *Anchorage Daily News*, December 15, 1991, 5; Wendy Hower, “In Eagle, Park Debate Goes On,” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, July 6, 1993, B2; James Scott, “Weary of Insensitivity [letter to editor],” *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, July 6, 1990, 4.

Most people come here for the freedom. Green shirts and badges, we don't need that here. I think, basically, most people feel it interferes with their freedom. They came here to escape regulations and rules. All of a sudden, you have this authority breathing down your neck. It's a form of harassment.²¹

According to the Scotts and other resentful residents, it would be best if the park employees simply packed their bags and left; however, the anti-park stance was no longer the consensus.

As early as 1990 the National Park Service's headquarters in Fairbanks and in Anchorage began receiving letters from Eagle residents expressing support for both the preserve and for park employees working in Eagle. Some were business owners who had profited from the increase in visitors to the town, while others viewed the agency's personnel as a valuable addition to the civic life of the community. This letter is typical of the numerous letters that were copied and circulated among surprised park managers:

As a 14-year resident of Alaska and property owner at Eagle, I'm writing to commend the National Park Service staff at Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. Of course in Eagle, as in many other rural Alaska communities, there will always be a segment that continues to resent any form of bureaucracy or regulatory agencies. But the NPS staff in Eagle have been exemplary neighbors and active participants in community affairs.²²

Striking a similar chord, an Eagle resident named Dennis Mott decided to take a step back from the anti-National Park Service campaign in this letter:

I would like to withdraw my name from the petition sent to you by Elva Scott; I signed that over a year ago and feel it has no meaning now. . . . As a council member I would say that the NPS here has more support than it has ever had, and

²¹ Paul Jenkins, "Park Service Finds Eagle a Rough Ride," *Anchorage Daily News*, September 3, 1993, E9.

²² C.F. Brown to Secretary Lujan, July 6, 1990, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Park and Preserve Collection, Fairbanks Administrative Center, National Park Service, Fairbanks, Alaska.

a move at this point could be destructive to any ground that has been made in the last 10 years. I support Yukon-Charley.²³

Mott had also taken it upon himself to issue a petition in support of the National Park Service in Eagle because he had come to believe that Elva Scott and her husband were on a personal crusade to whip up anger against all federal entities. Over forty individuals put their signatures to this counter-petition to combat what many believed had become a one-woman campaign that was dividing the community. To explain his change of position, Mott wrote to Boyd Evison, the agency's regional director:

Yukon Charley is not a Yellowstone Park. But has a lot of natural resources that need to be preserved for future generations. Just as Elva Scott feels that she needs to preserve the historical value of Eagle, which I can see no interference with N.P.S. This community and surrounding area is about to experience a boom with oil and mineral exploration that is growing each year around Eagle. I would rather see N.P.S. in Eagle than industry. There are other people in this community who feel the same way.²⁴

One resident who believed that the anti-park resolution itself needed to be repealed made an eloquent, if awkwardly spelled, plea to the members of the City Council:

Repeal the resolution made 12-10-91 that was made agenst [sic] the United State Park Service. Open positive lines of communication and cooperation with Yukon Charley Preserve. Work for a positive future for Eagle, and quite [sic] running the kids off, by lack of work. . . . Promote enterprise; connected with resort, and Park Preserve, and culture. Change will come; every one of you have caused change in Eagle. When I came their [sic] were 17 adults and kids here. Repeal the resolution, and serve the best intress [sic] of humanity: crate [sic] work, thru [sic] free Enterprize [sic], and Tourist promotion.²⁵

²³ Dennis Mott to David Ames [NPS Acting Regional Director], August 3, 1990, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Park and Preserve Collection, Fairbanks Administrative Center, National Park Service, Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁴ Dennis Mott to Boyd Evison [NPS Regional Director], February 11, 1991, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Park and Preserve Collection, Fairbanks Administrative Center, National Park Service, Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁵ S. Edginton to City of Eagle, March 4, 1992, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Park and Preserve Collection, Fairbanks Administrative Center, National Park Service, Fairbanks, Alaska.

The issue of tourism was a difficult one for Eagle because some residents feared being overrun by outsiders and losing the sense of privacy they coveted. In most cases, the issue of tourism had little to do with visitors to the nearby national preserve, though some “floaters” in canoes and rafts came through Eagle on their way downriver to visit the preserve. By 1998, the 104-passenger catamaran *M/V Yukon Queen II* began carrying tourists from Dawson to Eagle, where they could visit the town and continue to Fairbanks aboard a bus. In an orchestrated move, passengers arriving by bus from Fairbanks would in turn board the river ferry and continue their tours in Dawson. The process took only two or three hours during midday, leaving the town otherwise undisturbed. Nevertheless, throughout the 1990s, local residents continued to face difficult questions about whether to encourage tourism and risk bringing change to Eagle or to leave well enough alone.²⁶

In the communities surrounding Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, there had been years of steady improvement in the relationship between National Park Service and local residents, due in large part to the agency’s efforts to involve local residents in the decision-making process for the park and the participation of park officials in the Copper Valley Chamber of Commerce. Several businesses promoted the park as the area’s primary attraction, and the Chamber of Commerce called the Glennallen area “the Gateway to Wrangell-St. Elias.”²⁷ However, a group of homesteaders near the northwest corner of the park remained steadfastly opposed to National Park Service management of the land they were accustomed to using. The tiny community of Slana had existed as little more than a roadhouse and a handful of

²⁶ Allan, “Save Fort Egbert,” 37-38.

²⁷ Bleakley, “Contested Ground,” 43.

homesteaders until 1983, when the Bureau of Land Management offered free land to Alaskans willing to settle the area. Approximately 350 eager land-seekers claimed their own 5-acre sites under this plan, believing that the land was suitable for farming, that wild game could be readily hunted in the area, and that local employment would provide them with some income until their land flourished. However, the land was poorly suited for agriculture or subsistence living because it consisted primarily of a black spruce bog with permafrost underneath.²⁸ When this reality set in, some of the newcomers began to collect on welfare to make ends meet, and many Alaskans criticized the federal government for creating a “welfare community” in the Slana area. During the 1990s, a few of these frustrated settlers remained and would become some of the most vociferous anti-park protestors.

In 1992 the Slana Ranger Station, a cabin structure used seasonally by park employees, burned to the ground in the middle of the night. The building represented years of work and considerable investment, and park employees were stunned by its loss. Although the cause of the fire was not determined, park officials strongly suspected arson and damages were estimated at \$100,000.²⁹ Unable to identify their tormentors, park officials headquartered in Glennallen simply began seeking money to rebuild. However, the threat of arson now haunted the staff, and some park employees were understandably reluctant to work in the Slana area. Less than two years later, the relationship between park employees and local residents suffered another blow when Superintendent Karen

²⁸ William Hunt, “Mountain Wilderness: Historic Resource Study for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve,” (Anchorage: National Park Service, 1994), 179.

²⁹ “Slana Fire,” *Copper River Country Journal*, November 18, 1992, 31.

Wade testified before Congress as an official of the Association of National Park Rangers.

Wade's speech was intended to convince Congress to allocate additional funds to Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve by describing the difficulty of managing the nation's largest national park with a staff of seven. Wade explained that there were one million acres of dispersed inholdings in the park, that some commercial activities threatened park resources, and that the designated wilderness portion of the park was riddled with potential R.S. 2477 rights-of-way claims. However, it was the description of daily patrols in the park and the challenges of living in a remote area that caught the attention of park area residents when her words were reprinted in the *Anchorage Daily News*:

In order to protect park resources, these rangers need trained backups to ride shotgun while they patrol for poachers and contact locals with frontier mentalities who scoff at rules and regulations; they need other rangers who'll take their places when they need weekends off to buy groceries 200 miles away in Anchorage or take vacations.³⁰

The list of urgent needs continued, but local residents had heard enough. Editorials appeared immediately in "Voice of *The Times*," the conservative segment of the more liberal *Anchorage Daily News*. The authors protested the suggestion that local residents were "dangerous, 'frontier mentality' assassins," and they countered that "If you're like me and mistakenly thought that that kind of elitist, 'conquer-the-savages' attitude had

³⁰ Dennis Fradley, "Park Service Rangers: Living Among Savages," *Anchorage Daily News*, Voice of *The Times*, March 9, 1994, C7.

become a thing of the past—Ranger Wade proves the mentality is still very much alive for the National Park Service in Alaska.”³¹

The anger that had only recently begun to subside, rose quickly to the surface as residents sent letters to the region’s newspapers. One writer from the community of Gakona commented facetiously that the National Park Service had “gone so far as to start telling the truth” about how they felt about him and his neighbors:

While it’s true that there aren’t too many copies of Amy Vanderbilt’s ‘Etiquette’ up here, I know of no park ranger who has ever been shot. I do however know of scores of Alaskans whose businesses have been ruined and whose rightful land, property and access have been regulated out of their hands by Ranger Wade and her predecessors.³²

The controversy provided park critics with a forum for complaining about various agency activities. They charged that National Park Service aircraft “harassed” wildlife and hunters; inholders said they feared “federal condemnation” of their properties; and others criticized the fact that park employees refused to shop at the grocery stores in Glennallen. One Anchorage writer, however, could not resist weighing in on the controversy by pointing out that Alaskans “do tend to be a lawless breed” who often “wish it was 1894, not 1994.” The writer offered this as a dose of self-criticism:

I think Karen Wade showed a great deal of restraint by merely noting that Alaskans have a frontier mentality. She could have added that we’re misogynists—how dare a woman criticize us. She should have mentioned that

³¹ Dennis Fradley, “Park Service Rangers: Living Among Savages,” *Anchorage Daily News*, Voice of *The Times*, March 9, 1994, C7.

³² Will Sherman, “Park Ranger Wade vs. Frontier Thugs,” *Anchorage Daily News*, Voice of *The Times*, March 16, 1994, C7; Will Sherman, “Karen Wade’s Long Distance Sell-Out of Alaskans and Future NPS Relations [letter to editor],” *Copper River Country Journal*, March 17, 1994, 14; “Karen Wade and ‘Voice of *The Times*’ Editorial Cause Community Uproar,” *Copper River Country Journal*, March 17, 1994, 4; Kenneth Roberson, “More From The ‘Savages’ [letter to editor],” *Anchorage Daily News*, Voice of *The Times*, March 19, 1994, C7.

we're hypocrites—we take more money from the federal government (per capita) than any other state in the union, then whine about federal regulations that merely ask us to conduct ourselves like rational human beings.³³

This sentiment did not resonate in Slana, however, where the local chapter of Alaskans Unite decided to organize once again. In the *Copper River Country Journal* they took out a large advertisement that read:

Slana Alaskans Unite was founded in 1978 because the National Park Service has one agenda: erase your lifestyle and freedom. The problem isn't just over Karen Wade; it is the mentality and aggressive policies of the Agency she represents. Stand up—be counted . . . Unite with your neighbors and fight Park Service propaganda [Figure 35].³⁴

Within two months of this announcement, park officials organized an open house for the newly completed Slana Ranger Station, a log structure in keeping with the style and materials common to the area. Because Superintendent Wade had been recently reassigned to another park, District Ranger Sean McGinnis attended the ceremony and tried to emphasize a growing spirit of cooperation between the park administrators and area residents. A number of local residents showed up and engaged in what was described later as “frank talk” about how their lives had been changed by the park. Representatives of Slana Alaskans Unite also arrived with a large sign that they posted outside the building before entering to join in the discussion. Although the exact wording of the sign has been lost, a Slana local told reporters that it was “a nice sign,” and she paraphrased its message:

As Alaskans Unite, we're a group, and we're going to be noticed. It was a friendly deal. They're not going to go away—and we're not going to go away.

³³ David Smith, “Neanderthals Unite [letter to editor],” *Anchorage Daily News*, Voice of *The Times*, April 11, 1994, B7.

³⁴ “Public Notices and Legal Advertisements,” *Copper River Country Journal*, April 7, 1994, 31.

We let it be known that we're still an active group. We get along with them as long as they treat us like we're citizens of the United States. We're taxpayers. We help pay for the building at the Park Service—and that's our attitude. We were satisfied.³⁵

Although at first McGinnis and other park personnel feared that the sign-posting was the beginning of a demonstration by park opponents, the event concluded without disruption. By the following year, the park had a new superintendent, Jon Jarvis from Craters of the Moon National Monument in Idaho. In addition to planning to build a new visitor center in Copper Center along the western boundary of the park, Jarvis proposed two projects that would change conditions in the town of McCarthy. Jarvis advocated improving the road from Glennallen to McCarthy and acquiring the remaining buildings from the historic Kennecott Copper Mine.³⁶

In many ways the residents of McCarthy had the most to lose and the most to gain from the creation of a national park in their backyard. Many of the town's dozen or so residents owned land within park boundaries. McCarthy hunting guides had lost access to some important hunting territory. Miners had found themselves under new restrictions. And, some residents living in trespass cabins had been asked to leave. Even so, tourism was the issue that seized the foreground during the 1990s. Because of the way the boundaries of the enormous park were drawn, McCarthy was located at the end of a very rough sixty-mile state-owned gravel road deep inside the park. Visitors determined see the park had few options except to go through McCarthy, either after traveling by road or by flying into McCarthy's airstrip. That made the tiny town the

³⁵ "Slana Residents Strike a Truce with NPS at Ranger Station Dedication," *Copper River Country Journal*, June 2, 1994, 15.

³⁶ "Park Superintendent Wants 'Partnership,'" *Copper River Country Journal*, February 16, 1995, 4.

ultimate “gateway community,” a term usually applied to towns near the country’s most popular parks, such as West Yellowstone, Montana or Jackson Hole, Wyoming.³⁷

The town’s residents had varying reactions to the prospect of thousands of new visitors passing through their community. Bob Jacobs, the 41-year-old owner of St. Elias Alpine Guides, had ties to McCarthy that stretched back to the late 1970s. He explained that when he first arrived, there was “little difference between McCarthy and the wilderness; the boundary wasn’t distinct.” After the park was created, he felt a sense of loss because he felt his seasonal home had become “just another end-of-the-road Alaska town.” “Instead of McCarthy’s soul being connected to the land, it’s being torn away,” Jacobs charged. “I always figured McCarthy would someday become a tourist attraction and everything that implies. But to see it happening so quickly, so completely, is sad. So now, we sit around and moan about the good old days.”³⁸ In the mid-1990s there were signs of change everywhere in McCarthy. A cluster of new businesses was growing in the downtown area, and lines of visitors waited—sometimes for an hour or more—to cross the Kennicott River on the hand-operated tram that connected McCarthy to the state’s road system. There was even an espresso bar serving “McCarthy mochas” and “Kennecott cappuccinos” to the caffeine-hungry visitors.

In 1988 an estimated 5,000 people entered the Wrangell-St. Elias park via the McCarthy Road; by 1992, the number had jumped to 20,000 and parking at the end of the road was tight. Tourism-oriented facilities in the town were also expanding to include a

³⁷ Kurt Culbertson, “National Park or Bust: Gateway Communities Cope with the Crowds,” *Planning*, November 1, 1997, n.p.; Jim Howe, Ed McMahon, and Luther Provost, *Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1997).

³⁸ Bill Sherwonit, “No Going Back,” *Alaska* (November 1993), 38.

lodge, complete with bar and restaurant, a hotel, a bed and breakfast, a pizza parlor, two air-taxi operators, two shuttle-bus services, a backcountry guide outfit, and the espresso bar. Up the four-mile road at the ruins of the copper mine was the 25-room Kennicott Glacier Lodge and a second wilderness-guide operation. This was quite a transformation for a town with a resident population of between twenty and thirty people. Tourism had existed in the McCarthy area since the 1950s, but in those early decades the road was still a defunct railroad track and all visitors arrived by plane. When the national monument was created in 1978, many residents felt alienated and predicted that the park would ruin the area's authentic frontier feel. By the 1990s, however, some of the residents who at first were most opposed to the park and to the National Park Service's presence had become deeply involved in tourism. The pilot Kelly Bay, for example, held a flight contract with the agency despite some nasty confrontations with park officials a decade or more before. "There's two ways to look at the Park Service," he explained to reporters. "The problem is that it's managed by people in D.C., who don't know what the heck is going on there. But if you're talking about the crew working in Wrangell-St. Elias, 99 percent are nice people; I like working with them."³⁹

Other residents, perhaps the majority, remained less sanguine and still nursed grudges. Their complaints usually focused on a desire to control tourism and to prevent the town's backcountry esthetic from changing. Two of the loudest park critics were Rick and Bonnie Kenyon, who moved to the McCarthy area in 1977 and began publishing the *Wrangell-St. Elias News* in 1992. The Kenyons accused the agency of hypocrisy and of changing the region by attracting large numbers of visitors:

³⁹ Bill Sherwonit, "No Going Back," *Alaska* (November 1993), 43.

The Park Service has lied; they say they don't want another Denali here, but apparently they want something even worse, another Yellowstone or Yosemite. For years, they've said they don't promote the park, but that's exactly what they've been doing.⁴⁰

Park officials were clearly caught between their mandate to make the park available to visitors and local residents who feared a loss of privacy and community integrity. Most McCarthy residents opposed federal acquisition of the privately-owned Kennecott mine ruins, fearing that federal ownership would mean more rangers and, perhaps, more restricted access to the ruins because of liability concerns. Besides, they argued, it was hypocritical for the National Park Service to spend millions of dollars running miners out of business, only to then turn around and manage the Kennecott mine as a ghost town.⁴¹

Because of the bottlenecks that kept people waiting before they could cross the river, most residents agreed on the efficacy of building a footbridge. A bridge would mean more people, but they would still have to walk a mile or so into town. Residents were also concerned about state plans to widen the McCarthy Road in 1995. This prospect caused some McCarthyites to imagine a paved highway that would greatly increase outside pressure for a vehicular bridge over the river. Ed LaChapelle, a retired professor and glacier researcher who had been living seasonally in McCarthy since 1987, explained:

There's a fear of getting run over by outside forces. I prefer the tourism we have in McCarthy today, where visitors from all walks of life can afford the experience. Once you open it to big-time, industrial tourism, you close it off to the general public. And the profits don't stay locally. So far, local businesses

⁴⁰ Sherwonit, "No Going Back," 43.

⁴¹ "Park Superintendent Wants 'Partnership,'" *Copper River Country Journal*, February 16, 1995, 6.

have been able to meet the needs of increased tourism. But once the road is upgraded, who knows?⁴²

The responses to change in McCarthy were varied, as they were in other the near-park communities. The owner of the Clear Creek Coffee Company, for example, predicted that the community would develop a reputation as “Alaskan chic,” and she positioned herself to profit from the change. Others lamented the “boom mentality” and the antagonisms that had developed as local business owners competed with each other.

Jacobs expressed both sorrow and resignation:

It’s important to remember McCarthy has had numerous definitions in its past. What’s happening now is that the definition is changing again. I think at some level, we all knew McCarthy was going to change someday. We need to grieve what’s been lost and move on. It’s like any relationship; it’s not something static but always changing.⁴³

During the 1990s, all the hotbeds of anti-park protest were undergoing the same transformation but in differing degrees. In Bettles, the town’s residents found that being a gateway to Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve was not as lucrative as they imagined; it did not translate into new residents and new jobs, and their town continued a slow decline until the public school was forced to close. In Eagle, the population remained stable, and tourism changed the town very little, though it sustained local businesses and provided opportunities for local jewelers and craftspeople to make a modest summer income. In McCarthy, the change was more dramatic, as more people flocked to see the park’s glaciers by plane, to climb mountain peaks, and to visit the dramatic Kennecott mine buildings that were largely unchanged since the mine closed in

⁴² Sherwonit, “No Going Back,” 45.

⁴³ Sherwonit, “No Going Back,” 47.

the 1930s. In 1998, the National Park Service acquired the former copper mine and began interpreting the mine ruins as part of the park's cultural landscape.⁴⁴

In August 2000 former President Carter visited Alaska in part to celebrate the 20-year anniversary of ANILCA. As in the past, he found himself walking through crowds of Alaskan residents, but this time they were not shouting obscenities nor burning him in effigy. Instead, the people who greeted him treated him as a hero and a visionary. In a speech before a crowd of six hundred in Anchorage, Carter observed, "A lot of predictions were made that Alaska would go to hell if this much land was taken away from gas and oil development, but Alaskans have done well. Tourists come here to find a solitude, a beauty, sites that are not available to a Georgian or someone from Ohio or Maine."⁴⁵ The speech drew several standing ovations. The *New York Times* article describing the event mentioned that in the 1970s and 1980s Alaska's "political and business elite" viewed ANILCA as a betrayal of the state and blueprint for economic ruin. But instead of ruin, the lands act had helped to create a \$1 billion annual tourist economy, a sum greater than the money the state earned from fishing or timber. At a roundtable discussion of ANILCA at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Carter told the audience that Alaska's parks were an experiment with worldwide implications: "I think it should be a great source of pride to every Alaskan that here in Alaska is a global test

⁴⁴ Steve Rinehart, "Mine Added to Park," *Anchorage Daily News*, June 17, 1998, 1; Craig Medred, "Stabilizing State History," *Anchorage Daily News*, July 1, 2007, K1.

⁴⁵ Timothy Egan, "Alaska Changes View on Carter after 20 Years," *New York Times*, August 25, 2000, A14; Mike Doogan, "Jimmy Carter is Simply the Best Ex-President We've Ever Had," *Anchorage Daily News*, August 25, 2000, B1.

about the environment versus development and jobs. . . . Alaskans don't comprehend how what you have done here affects the rest of the world.”⁴⁶

The former president was prompted to visit Alaska not only because of ANILCA's anniversary but because the question of petroleum exploration and drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge had been left unresolved when ANILCA was passed. Carter was determined to convince then-presidential candidate Clinton to declare the refuge a national monument, knowing full well that the move would undoubtedly make some Alaskans angry. It also raised the question of whether or not the Antiquities Act of 1906 provided the president with unlimited power to withdraw public lands and whether (after the election) President Clinton would act right away or wait until the last days of his administration to make such a proclamation.⁴⁷ As for Carter, visiting Alaska brought back memories of the tremendous opposition to his support for conservation units in Alaska and to him personally when he returned to the state for a brief visit in 1981: “When I left the White House, I thought that it was all over, that I could come back to Alaska and relax, but the word got out that I was coming, and I faced perhaps the largest and most vociferous group of anti-Carter demonstrators I've ever seen in my life.”⁴⁸ In an anecdote he would tell many times, he described the local response after his visit:

⁴⁶ Elizabeth Manning and Liz Ruskin, “Carter Praises ANILCA,” *Anchorage Daily News*, August 25, 2000, B1.

⁴⁷ Ben Spiess and David Whitney, “ANWR: Rumor and Desire,” *Anchorage Daily News*, August 24, 2000, 1; Elizabeth Manning, “Ex-President Asks Clinton to Declare Monument Status,” *Anchorage Daily News*, August 24, 2000, 1; Paula Easley, “Alaska Warming Up to Carter?” *Resource Review* (September 2000), 7.

⁴⁸ “ANILCA Roundtable with Former President Jimmy Carter [VHS],” produced by University of Alaska and Alaska Mobile Productions, August 24, 2000, available at Alaska Public Lands Information Center, Fairbanks, Alaska.

Later I heard that at the state fair in Fairbanks the Junior Chamber of Commerce had accumulated a large pile of empty bottles. For a fee the fairgoers could throw them at photographs of me, Secretary Andrus, Congressman Mo Udall (a key sponsor of the legislation), and the Ayatollah Khomeini. I never did know for sure who won this ‘popularity’ contest, but I was told that my pile of broken bottles was a little larger than that of the Ayatollah.⁴⁹

The former president also recalled that a month after he left office, he stopped in Anchorage on his way to Japan, and the Secret Service urged him not to leave Elmendorf Air Force base for fear of what angry Alaskans might do to him.⁵⁰

In spite of the former president’s assurances that protected lands were a good investment, the booming tourism industry also brought its own problems. Southeastern Alaska received a growing number of cruise ships, which transformed the waterfronts and business districts of some communities into tourist traps. And, in the national parks, which were normally some of the loneliest places on the planet, the number of visitors had doubled since 1990, causing the managers of certain parks to wonder if high visitation might threaten the very thing that drew visitors in the first place—the sense of wilderness. Many Alaskans, both those for and against national parks, began to talk about “industrial tourism” as a new kind of colonialism, financed almost entirely from

⁴⁹ Jimmy Carter, *An Outdoor Journal: Adventures and Reflections* (New York: Bantam Books, 1988), 116. Udall offers a slightly different take on the results: “In 1979, at the height of Jimmy Carter’s unpopularity due to the gasoline shortage and the hostage crisis in Iran, the Jaycees [at the Tanana Valley Fair in Fairbanks] came up with a foolproof scheme for raising money. They constructed a backdrop with three faces emblazoned on it; Ayatollah Khomeini, Carter, and Morris Udall. For a dollar, you got three chances to throw a long-necked beer bottle into a hole below one of the three faces. By the time the fair ended, the heap of broken shards beneath my face, much higher than that below the Ayatollah or J.C., irrefutably demonstrated that I was the chief villain in Alaska that summer.” See, Udall, *Too Funny to Be President*, 75-76, and Carson and Johnson, *Morris K. Udall*, 193.

⁵⁰ Timothy Egan, “Alaska Changes View on Carter after 20 Years,” *New York Times*, August 25, 2000, A14.

outside and siphoning profits away from the state. Worst of all, said the small operators, the visitors were not given the chance see the real Alaska, leaving the state in danger of becoming “Disneyfied.”⁵¹ The tourism boom prompted some journalists to ask if the frontier was gone, and some Alaskans wondered the same thing: Was the “last frontier” a reality, a state of mind, or a thing of the past? Writing for the *New York Times*, Carey Goldberg observed a shift in land-use attitudes and the enduring questions surrounding Alaska’s public lands:

The time is gone, the argument goes, when untouched land was seen as a challenge to be conquered, and now the world is moving toward an ethic that the land must instead be preserved. If there is a central conflict underlying much of Alaskan politics today, it is this question of frontier versus park, of whether various chunks of Alaska’s natural beauty should be developed or protected.⁵²

Whatever side of the issue they found themselves on, residents knew that Alaska was changing, and Carter’s visit highlighted the big questions about oil development and the future of protected lands. For the state’s rural residents, few in number though they were, these changes were even more immediate. Even though some of them were running their own tourism-related businesses, they were still not sure if the National Park Service vision of the world was a world in which they wanted to live. Some had even taken jobs with the National Park Service, but the anger of feeling ignored and of the bitter ideological battle against national parks remained fresh in their memories.

⁵¹ Timothy Egan, “A Land So Wild, It’s Getting Crowded,” *New York Times*, August 20, 2000, S10.

⁵² Carey Goldberg, “Alaska Revels in Frontier Image Though Frontier Slips Away,” *New York Times*, August 14, 1997, A1. See also, Sherwood, “End of Wilderness,” 197-209.

CONCLUSION

In 1985 the *New York Times* reported that although ANILCA had thwarted a few fishing and hunting guides and had prevented some small-scale placer miners from mining, most Alaska residents understood that the world oil market and the number of salmon in the state's waters had much more influence on the economy than national parks and other conservation units. "The overall impression Alaskans give," the reporter wrote, "is that the lands act has so far had relatively little practical impact on most people's lives or their ability to earn a living." He went on to say, however, that "economic effects or no resentment and anger are never really out of view."¹ More recently, National Park Service employees have managed to build alliances and make friends in Eagle, Bettles, Glennallen, McCarthy, Anaktuvuk Pass and other near-park communities. In a few cases, former opponents of the parks have even accepted jobs at their local park headquarters. The memory of the anti-park protests of the 1970s and 1980s, however, remains vivid in the minds of long-time residents and has become a point of pride for former protestors. The legacy of anti-federal and anti-park resentment has also shaped the attitudes of newcomers, often turning them against National Park Service managers and the park concept in Alaska. In the meantime, the dramatic story of Alaska's anti-park protests has remained largely undocumented because historians writing about the period have focused their attention on environmentalist victories and congressional debates rather than analyzing local unrest.

¹ Philip Shabecoff, "Alaskans Are Deeply Divided on Federal Role in Land Use," *New York Times*, August 4, 1986, A11.

This study is intended not only to resurrect this neglected chapter in Alaska's history but also to explore whether or not applying a theoretical framework to the phenomenon of Alaska's anti-park protests can help to explain their broader significance. Until recently, few historians have used such a framework to examine Alaska's past, preferring instead to rely on the uncomplicated "tourist history" of pioneering settlers and rugged frontiersmen or the obsolete "neglect thesis" popularized by Ernest Gruening and others in Alaska. In 1994 Canadian historian Kenneth Coates lamented the absence of theory in the fledgling field of Northern Studies, and he called the North "very much a conceptual wasteland," a condition he argued that has handicapped the academic study of the primary issues of Northern life. As an antidote, Coates outlined an intellectual paradigm that identifies trends in the history of remote, northern communities, and it appears to explain much about Alaska's anti-park protests. The ideas that Coates presented have since been adopted by Alaska historian Stephen Haycox, who applies the Canadian observations of Coates to an Alaskan context and offers his own conceptual tools to further illuminate the relationship between Alaskans and their environment.²

Coates begins by challenging the widespread belief in the North's exceptionalism, the idea that northern history and culture exists outside traditional conceptual frameworks and are therefore *sui generis* or unlike that of any other place.³ Instead he insists that the

² Kenneth Coates, "The Discovery of the North: Towards a Conceptual Framework for the Study of Northern/Remote Regions," *Northern Review* 12/13 (Summer/Winter 1993/1994): 15-43.

³ Coates, "Discovery of the North," 16; Haycox, *American Colony*, 160. After serving eight years as director of the National Park Service, George Hartzog wrote this about Alaska's exceptionalism: "An oft-repeated shibboleth of park opponents is that Alaska is so different its resources must not be locked up in the parks. Horse feathers! Substantially, the same argument has been advanced against every park carved from the

history of the North can be explained by observing “organizing patterns of behavior” that guide the evolution of regional events. For example, Coates observed that in northern communities dominated by non-indigenous residents daily life is often characterized by “a short-term outlook on opportunities” and a high rate of transiency: residents come and go seasonally or leave either after employment dries up or after they have accumulated enough money to satisfy short-term goals. Both of these traits exacerbate what he calls “the North’s tendency toward ‘get rich quick’ schemes and boom-and-bust developments.”⁴ When addressing dynamics in the political realm, Coates states, “political power is gained by attacking outside interests, not by praising or promising to work with them.” “In most regions,” he continues, “this is revealed as a deeply-ingrained sense of grievance, one that seems to be inherited very quickly upon taking up residence in the area.” These newcomers, Coates observes, often exhibit a powerful sense of distinctiveness that is rooted in popular culture. “The self-generated image of the Northerner, one that rarely has much to do with the reality of Northern existence,” explains Coates, “is often marked by the zeal and bravado of the frontier and an intense sense of individualism.” This self-image of the “modern-day frontiersman” thrives despite the fact that most Northern residents live in urban areas and exhibit a tendency to “reproduce Southern reality” in the North.⁵

Coates’s proposals for understanding the history and culture of the non-Native North culminate with a “culture of opposition,” a phenomenon he traces back to the early public domain lands of the American West.” See, Hartzog, *Battling for the National Parks*, 222.

⁴ Coates, “Discovery of the North,” 27-28.

⁵ Coates, “Discovery of the North,” 29, 31.

history of European occupation of northern environs. Coates argues that the physical struggle of whites against the natural world and against indigenous inhabitants subsequently expanded over time to include battles with climate and distance, Southern governments, corporate influences, and popular conceptions of Northern realities. “With the oppositional approach rooted in historical events and perpetuated by contemporary influences,” Coates explains, “Northern regions have maintained and internalized a culture of antagonism and struggle.”⁶ He concludes that this Northern cultural trend is both internally destructive and ultimately self-defeating for a number of reasons. The most damaging of these is an erosion of sense of community and common cause, values that are replaced by excessive individualism, a persistent sense of grievance, and a grotesquely disproportionate sense of regional importance. This trend, he contends, is particularly evident in the rhetoric generated by Northern politicians:

One repeatedly hears of strong, assertive statements from Northern representatives that are not in keeping with the regions’ relative irrelevance on the national scale. Sustained by a culture of conflict that rewards and highlights strident demands for attention to regional interests, Northern leaders are encouraged to take strong, confrontational stances. . . . Although among the most heavily subsidized societies in the world, the Northern regions nonetheless project an image of constant grievance and abuse by external agencies and forces.⁷

The “culture of opposition” that Coates describes helps to explain the anti-federal attitudes that developed between the American purchase of Alaska and the push for Alaskan statehood in the 1950s and the evolution of the “neglect thesis” in Alaskan historiography. It also describes the frontier-styled individualism and the aggressive political style of Alaska’s congressional delegation and gubernatorial representatives, and

⁶ Coates, “Discovery of the North,” 41.

⁷ Coates, “Discovery of the North,” 41-42.

it suggests a regional origin for some of the anger that resulted in anti-park protests in Alaska.

Soon after Coates proposed a new approach to interpreting Northern history, Alaska historian Stephen Haycox embraced his ideas and applied them to the Alaskan context.⁸ Like Coates, Haycox challenges what he calls the “operative myth” of Alaska residents and declares, “the Alaskan myth of rugged, pioneer independence is inconsistent with the realities of the Alaskan past.”⁹ Haycox finds that rather than acknowledging the important role of federal assistance in the development of Alaska and in its present-day economy, Alaskans insist upon describing themselves as victims of a unjust and duplicitous government, mirroring the interpretations of Ernest Gruening, Walter Hickel, and Joe Vogler. He points out that the “federal brigade” in Alaska is vast, including the military, various public land agencies, Alaska Native service agencies, and civic affairs agencies like the Federal Aviation Association. Federal spending is the second highest source of state income after petroleum, he notes, and it has been historically high, particularly when compared to the Canadian government’s spending in that country’s northern territories.¹⁰ He explains the persistence of a sense of persecution (what he calls the “victimization paradigm”) by citing Alaska’s high transiency rate, lack of public school education in Alaska history, and the short-sighted views of residents determined to obtain quick profits from resource exploitation. In short, Haycox

⁸ Stephen Haycox, “Unmasking the Dead Hero: History and Myth in Alaska,” in *Society: An Alaskan Perspective*, ed. Sharon K. Araji (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 1996), 57; Haycox, “Alaska and the Canadian North,” 141-147, 155-157.

⁹ Haycox, “Alaska and the Canadian North,” 146.

¹⁰ See, Coates, “Controlling the Periphery.”

concludes that the “culture of opposition” described by Coates is a near-perfect fit for Alaska and one that he finds particularly lamentable given its effects on the natural environment.¹¹

When addressing the resentment generated by the creation of national parks in Alaska, Haycox finds that most non-Native residents arrived in the state “poorly informed” about the relationship between state and national government articulated in the United States Constitution, and, as a result, they have “chafed mightily under federal sovereignty.”¹² Haycox suggests that many Alaskans are “locked in time back in the 1950s,” and he offers readers a brief civics lesson:

In the American constitutional system, federal sovereignty is supreme; it takes precedence over states’ rights. . . . When Alaska was purchased in 1867, then it was owned by the federal government, on behalf of all the people of the nation; it was not owned by the people who might then reside or come to reside in the territory. It was the federal government’s to do with as it might wish. Moreover, the Congress is not constitutionally bound by any act which it might pass at any point in time.¹³

For this reason, Haycox explains, the statehood bill does not represent an “unbreakable compact” as Gruening, Hickel, and others have argued. Therefore, he argues, Alaskans were not victimized when the federal government sought to settle Alaska Native claims with ANCSA in 1971 and to accommodate the “national interest” in Alaska’s public lands with ANILCA in 1980. Frequently citing Governor Hickel’s attempt to sue the government for \$29 billion as an example of this willful misperception, Haycox suggests that Alaskans need a “better constitutional understanding” and that they should learn to

¹¹ Haycox, *Frigid Embrace*, 15; Haycox, “Alaska and the Canadian North,” 155.

¹² Haycox, *Frigid Embrace*, 10.

¹³ Haycox, “Owning It All,” 182; Haycox, “Unmasking the Dead Hero,” 62.

appreciate the land they were granted rather than complaining about what they were denied.¹⁴

The unflattering portrait that Haycox offers of Alaska residents does not end here. He describes the state's slavish dependence on petroleum revenues and the ways residents jealously defend the "permanent fund" of oil money they receive each year, and he concludes greed should be added to Coates's "culture of opposition" to explain the fundamental dynamics of non-Native Northern life.¹⁵ "Distrust of government, partly a function of a jaundiced view of federal sustenance of Alaska and stemming partly from ignorance of the nature of the federal/state relationship under the U.S. Constitution," Haycox argues, "seems to have focused the attention of the citizenry on what they can get for themselves."¹⁶ After acknowledging the utility of Coates's ideas for interpreting history in the northern latitudes, Haycox concludes that "Given the transiency which characterizes high latitude settlement, and the reliance on government support and subsidy, greed may be as useful a conceptual tool for understanding northern history as opposition or remoteness."¹⁷

While attempting to debunk the myth of Alaskan exceptionalism, Haycox asserts that Alaska has always been economically, politically, and culturally similar to the United

¹⁴ Haycox, "Unmasking the Dead Hero," 61, 62; Haycox, "Owning It All," 179-180. See also, *Frigid Embrace*, 150-151, and Haycox, *American Colony*, 314-315.

¹⁵ Note: The Permanent Fund Program was established in 1976 to redistribute interest accumulated by the state government from petroleum revenues. Every year since it was established the fund has distributed up to \$2000 to each Alaska resident who can prove their residency extends over one year.

¹⁶ Haycox, *Frigid Embrace*, 18; Haycox, "Alaska and the Canadian North," 156-157.

¹⁷ Haycox, "Alaska and the Canadian North," 157.

States and that most Alaskans are willing to remain only if they can enjoy the amenities and comforts of modern American culture. Noting that three-quarters of residents live in towns and cities, Haycox explains, “a primary drive of the majority of its people [Alaska residents] has been to reduce distinctions from the rest of America and to re-create U.S. culture as thoroughly and quickly as possible.”¹⁸ Settlers in Alaska are “not interested in alternative lifestyles” (e.g., living in the woods, hewing their own wood, and carrying their own water) but instead, he continues, they came for the money and stay only so long as they can avoid living the difficult and dangerous life of a frontiersperson.¹⁹ According to Haycox, migrants to Alaska have embraced the idea of wilderness and its many romantic associations, but they have resisted becoming wilderness residents and conserving the wild areas around them. The wholesale pursuit of profit from natural resources, explains Haycox, has caused Alaskans to view national parks and other conservation units as impediments to economic development, even though most such conservation efforts have excluded known mineral deposits and other profitable resources. Nonetheless, he observes, “development-minded Alaskans [have] singled out the National Park Service for particular abuse on environmental issues.”²⁰

Applying Coates’s “culture of opposition” as a conceptual framework and incorporating Haycox’s observations about the behaviors of Alaskans helps to explain the resistance many residents showed toward the to creation of national parks in Alaska. The trend began as undifferentiated animosity toward the federal government, and it later

¹⁸ Haycox, *American Colony*, 160-162, 317.

¹⁹ Haycox, “Alaska and the Canadian North,” 156.

²⁰ Haycox, *Frigid Embrace*, 159.

evolved into a more focused scapegoating of the National Park Service. As far back as the 1911 Cordova Coal Party, for example, Alaska residents were acting out the role of rebel colonists opposing a tyrannical regime when they shoveled imported coal into the water and burned Gifford Pinchot in effigy for attempting to conserve natural resources for the good of the nation. Alaska's earliest national monuments and national parks also inspired protest from residents, whether their concerns were local, like the homesteading farmers near Glacier Bay, or territory-wide, like Governor Bone who wanted to abolish the parks and open the land for commercial purposes. After Alaska was granted statehood, the rise of Alaska Native political awareness and the environmental movement threatened non-Native Alaska residents, who hoped that statehood would empower them to direct their own economic destinies by gaining control of Alaska lands. White Alaskans felt particularly aggrieved when ANCSA not only approved Alaska Native land selections but also, with the d-2 provision, applied the national land conservation agenda to Alaska.

The opposition of Alaska residents to the National Park Service began in earnest during the d-2 land debate of the 1970s when it became evident that much of the "national interest" lands would be managed by that agency as national parks and preserves. At first, residents directed their anger at politicians such as Interior Secretary Udall and Representative Seiberling and at the conservation organizations that made up the Alaska Coalition. It was the National Park Service, however, that would manage the parks once they were created. During the public hearings on the d-2 land issue in 1973 and 1977, it became clear that a wide chasm separated Americans who viewed Alaska as the nation's last wilderness and Alaskans who viewed conservation as an economic death

sentence. Development-minded Alaskans argued against Alaska being “locked up,” and they demanded that the proposed parks be reduced in size, that the wilderness designation should be kept to a minimum, that “multiple use” agencies should manage them, and that more time was necessary to study the situation. When President Carter intervened to protect the proposed parks and other conservation units with his Antiquities Act proclamation, Alaska exploded with street-level protests fueled in part by the inflammatory rhetoric of Alaska’s political leaders. The National Park Service rangers who stepped in to enforce national monument regulations found themselves caught between the national will and angry local residents determined to somehow undo what had been done far away in Washington D.C.

It appears that the anti-park protests fit neatly into the conceptual framework proposed by Coates and Haycox. Each of the elements in their conceptual framework are present: the self-identified neo-frontiersmen and women battling the elements and suffering the neglect of a distant government, the focus on external enemies, the denial of the role of federal support in the state’s economy, the flawed constitutional arguments over sovereignty, and even indications that greed plays a role in Alaskan history and politics. However, the framework proposed by Coates and Haycox does not explain the history of Alaska’s anti-park protests in every case. After the furor over President Carter’s national monument proclamation had died down in Alaska’s cities, the main thrust of the anti-park movement in Alaska took place in some of the state’s smallest communities—the near-park communities that became hotbeds of opposition to the National Park Service’s presence and the national park concept. In Eagle, Bettles,

McCarthy, Glennallen and elsewhere, protest organizers and local residents acted in ways that fall outside of the Coates/Haycox framework.

For example, the residents of Eagle and their neighbors living along the Yukon River may indeed have viewed Alaska as the last best place to live out a history of “self-reliant, self-improving, independent individualism” (as described by Haycox). They did not, however, adopt this attitude as a thin façade, concealing an urban life of strip malls, fast food, and multiplex movie theaters.²¹ Eagle residents and those in Bettles, McCarthy and other near-park communities existed without road access to the outside world for much of the year. They survived without medical facilities, large grocery stores, or indoor plumbing, and as such, they pursued a way of life that diverged from the American mainstream. Nor were these backcountry residents transient in the sense that Coates and Haycox describe. They often came and went seasonally to find employment, but rather than returning to live in the Lower 48 states, they returned to their rustic homes at the edges of Alaska’s large wilderness parks. The concerns expressed by residents of Eagle and McCarthy also show that many who lived near national parks remained deeply ambivalent about the arrival of tourism in their communities, despite the opportunity to make money from the visitors. Coates and Haycox point out that job-seekers migrating north are usually pursuing “get rich quick” schemes, but this is not the case for the Slana homesteader or the Bettles fur trapper or the Glennallen hunting guide. Even small-scale gold miners like Joe Vogler knew that striking it rich was unlikely, seeking instead to earn enough to buy supplies and continue operations the following year. For these rural Alaskans, the goal was not to “replicate Southern realities,” as Coates and Haycox

²¹ Haycox, “Alaska and the Canadian North,” 145.

propose, but to pursue an existence that puts human beings in direct contact with their surroundings, whether this means dog-sledding along backcountry trails, cutting a year's worth of firewood, or killing a moose to feed a family for a winter. For these Alaskans, greed was not a theoretical construct that explained their behavior.

To be fair, Coates and Haycox accurately describe most northern transplants, who live lives of urban convenience while portraying themselves as rugged adventurers. While advancing their broad theoretical framework, both historians acknowledge that motivation and rationalization are elusive, personal, and dynamic and that "habits of mind cannot be proven with satisfaction."²² Nevertheless, it appears that their analysis fails to take into account a population of Northerners who have proven themselves the exception. Although they are a tiny minority, the residents of Alaska's near-park communities played a critical role in the anti-park protests. As one commentator noted, the protestors were, for the most part, "little guys" and "not big corporation executives."²³ These near-park residents confronted profound changes to the management regime of the lands on which they hunted and trapped, built homes, pursued various economic ventures, recreated, and found refuge from the complications of the modern world. In short, these backcountry residents believed that they would ultimately be evicted from their homes. For this reason, they contributed their own grassroots, populist flavor to the protests, and they sustained their acts of defiance long after the agitation in the cities subsided.

²² Haycox, *Frigid Embrace*, xi.

²³ "Editor's Corner: Alaska Stands Up," *Ketchikan Daily News*, December 15, 1978, 3.

In a 2005 article in the *Pacific Historical Review*, geographers Lary Dilsaver and William Wyckoff observed that national parks function much like a nation-state in that “its leaders will fight to maintain territorial integrity, attempt to influence neighbors, and control alien interests within its boundaries.”²⁴ The researchers studied three national parks—Yellowstone National Park, Glacier National Park, and Mojave National Preserve—and concluded that the parks established long ago (Yellowstone, for example) tended to be “free of inholdings and non-park uses.” Newer parks, however, frequently incorporated private lands, encircled lands still used by local groups, and faced more legal challenges to their management authority. The most contentious national park boundaries, they observed, were superimposed while making “no adjustment to existing settlement and economic patterns.” While older parks continue to face external threats, Dilsaver and Wyckoff observe that these threats “pale by comparison to those posed for units superimposed on an area of private property, extant mining claims, and a host of preexisting and incompatible land uses.”²⁵

Whereas Coates and Haycox suggest that Northern history can be understood by examining its residents, drawing an analogy between national parks and nation-states focuses attention less on the behaviors of local residents and more on the behavior of the National Park Service as a land management agency. Although the National Park Service played a relatively minor role in Alaska’s early history, the agency’s influence surged during the 1960s and 1970s, and it crested with the establishment of national monuments and national parks during the Carter administration. Despite the provisions

²⁴ Lary Dilsaver and William Wyckoff, “The Political Geography of National Parks,” *Pacific Historical Review* 74 (May 2005): 237.

²⁵ Dilsaver and Wyckoff, “Political Geography,” 238, 239.

in ANILCA intended to protect inholders and subsistence users, many park officials from the Lower 48 states brought with them an agency tradition of absorbing inholdings and restricting or eliminating uses of park lands viewed as incompatible with the agency's original mission. Although ANILCA offered Alaskans land-use options unknown in national parks elsewhere—including subsistence rights, sport hunting in the new national preserves, access to inholdings, and use of some motorized vehicles—the rhetoric and acts of defiance employed by anti-park protestors indicate that Alaskans, both urban and rural, felt they were suffering a grave injustice. Furthermore, many local people in communities near the newly created parklands regarded the arrival of National Park Service rangers and park administrators as a foreign invasion that threatened their way of life. If indeed, national parks function like nation-states, some rural Alaska residents living in or near new national parks were for a time insurgents in an occupied land.

FIGURES



Figure 1: Great Denali-McKinley Trespass, January 13, 1979.



Figure 2: Paul Revere at Great Denali-McKinley Trespass, January 13, 1979.



Figure 3: Overnights at Great Denali-McKinley Trespass, January 14, 1979.



Figure 4: Angry residents hold "Cordova Coal Party," May 4, 1911.

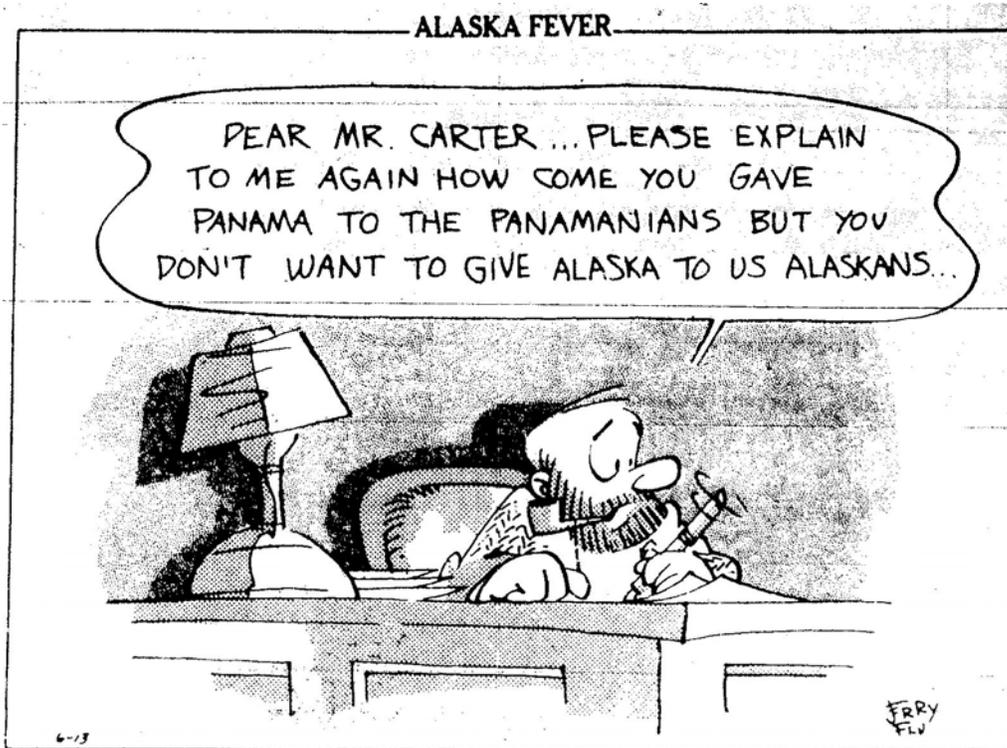


Figure 5: Alaska Fever cartoon, June 13, 1978.

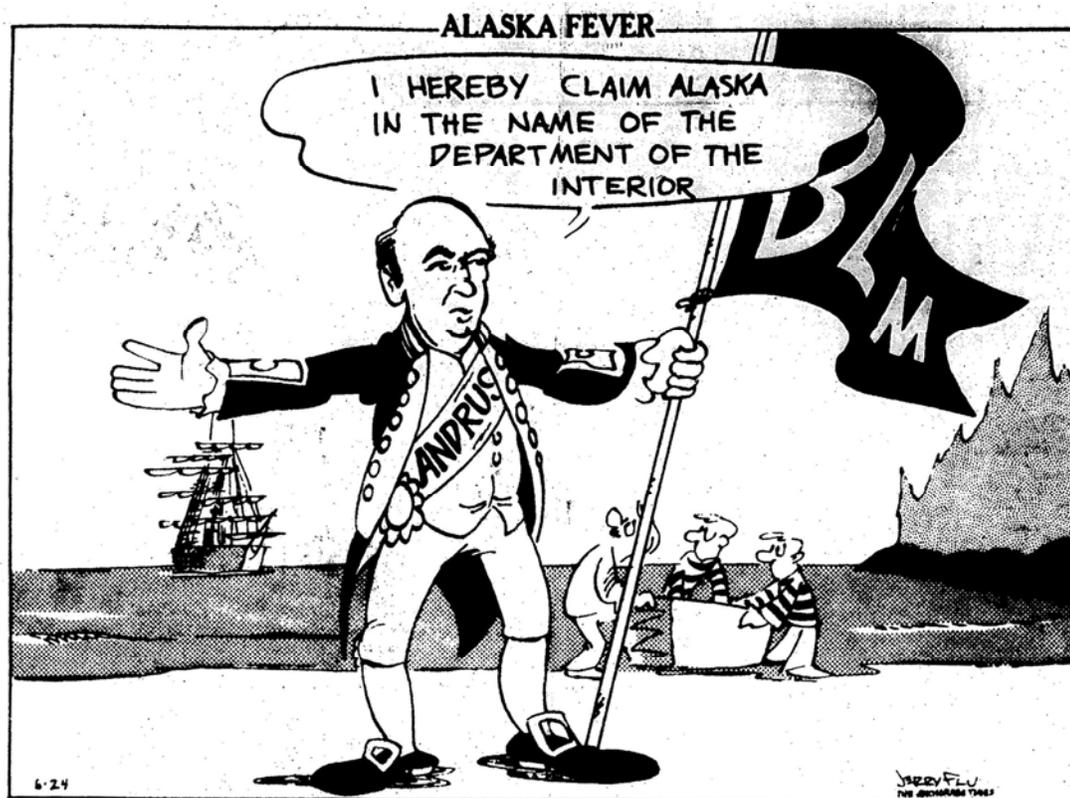


Figure 6: Alaska Fever cartoon, June 24, 1978.

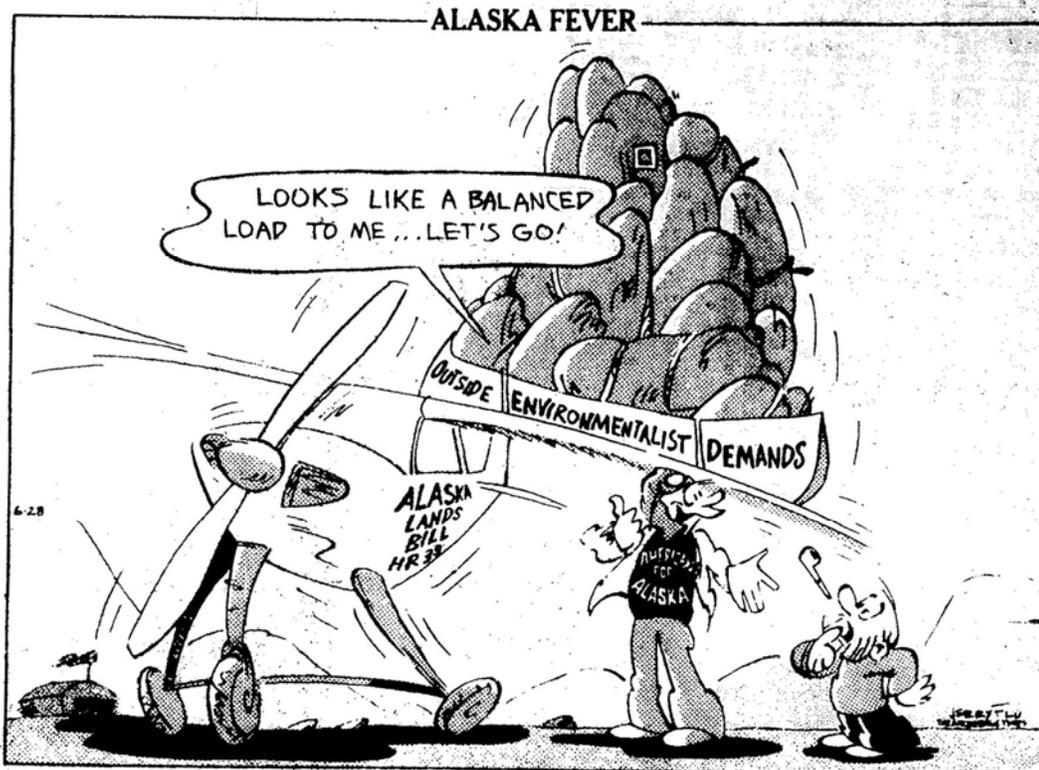


Figure 7: Alaska Fever cartoon, June 28, 1978.

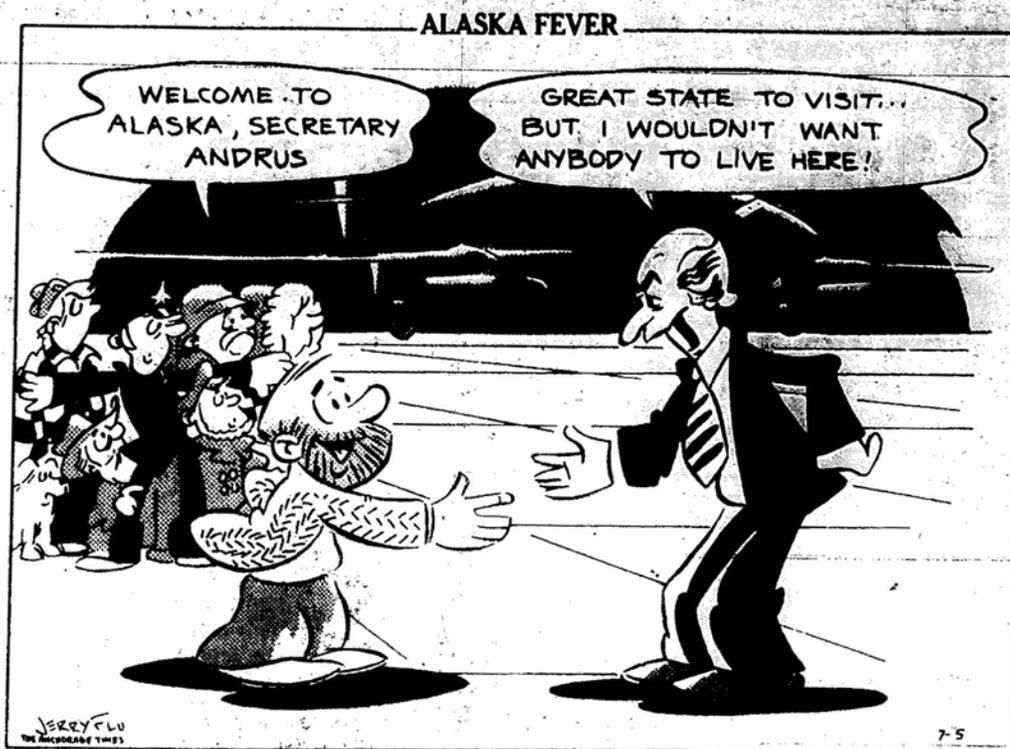


Figure 8: Alaska Fever cartoon, July 5, 1978.

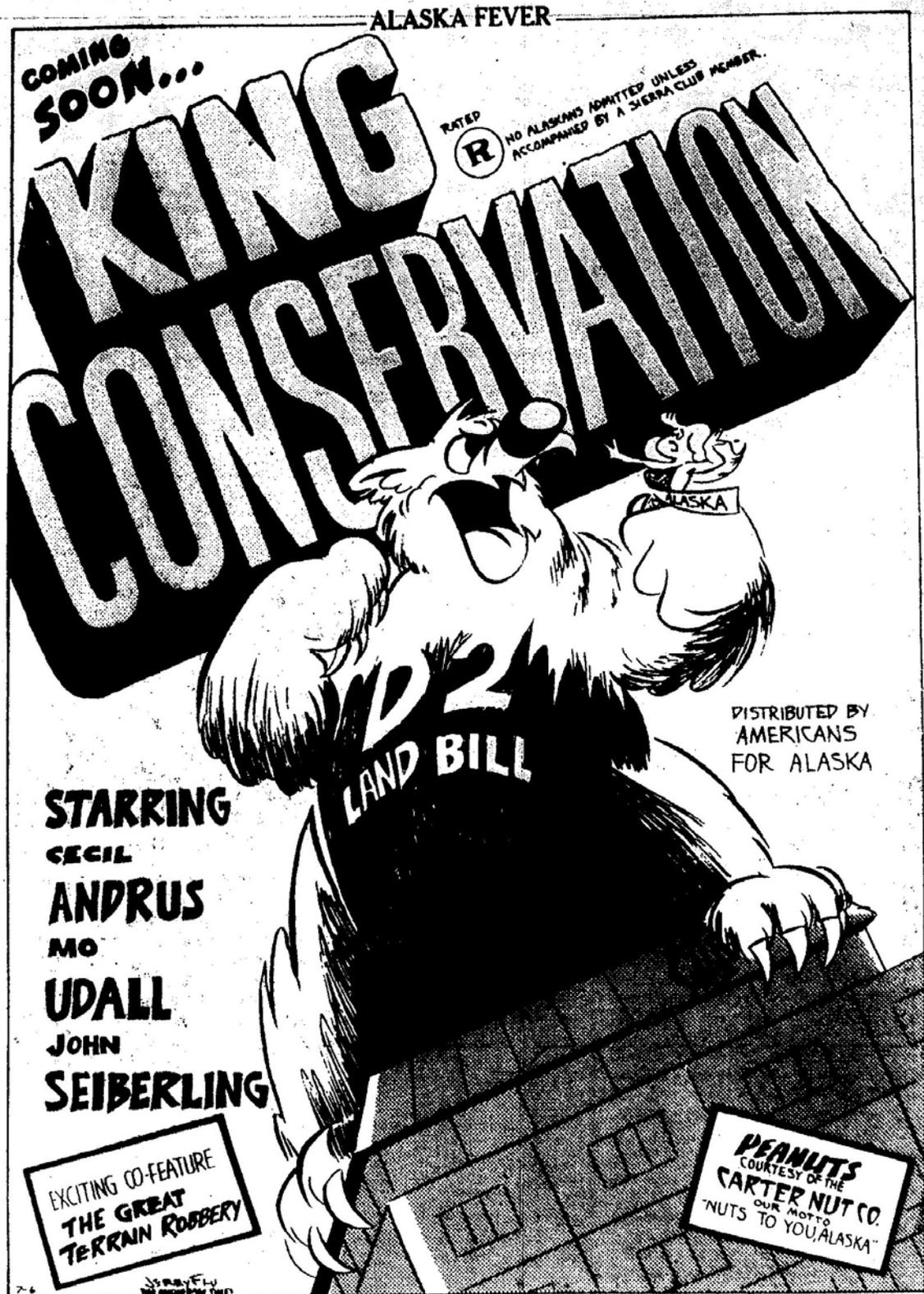


Figure 9: Alaska Fever cartoon, July 6, 1978.



Figure 10: Antiquities Act protest, Fairbanks, December 6, 1978.



Figure 11: Antiquities Act protest, Fairbanks, December 8, 1978.



Figure 12: Burning President Carter in effigy, Fairbanks, December 11, 1978.



Figure 13: Antiquities Act protest, Fairbanks, December 12, 1978.



Figure 14: Antiquities Act protest, Fairbanks, December 12, 1978.



Figure 15: Antiquities Act protest, Fairbanks, December 12, 1978.



ADOLPH CARTER'S
SALT AGREEMENT:

**S teal
A laskans'
L and
T oday**

Join the protest march tomorrow
at the downtown Post Office 12:00 Noon

Interior Wildlife Association
Box 60255, Fairbanks, Ak. 99706
Conservation: Wise USE of Resources

Figure 16: Advertisement for protest march, December 15, 1978.

ALASKANS UNITE!

Don't be misled — the issue is not
Development vs. Conservation — the
major issue is Self Determination
vs. Big Government.

Help roll back the Federal Bureaucracy,
take part in the
Statewide "Strike" against the Antiquities Act
11 a.m. - 12 Noon, Friday, January 12th

Downtown Post Office

Memberships Needed, Contact ALASKANS UNITE, c/o Pete Haggland, Chairman, Box 81469, Fbks., AK.

Figure 17: Advertisement for retail strike, January 11, 1979.



Figure 18: Mike Hartman during hunger strike, Fairbanks, January 16, 1978.

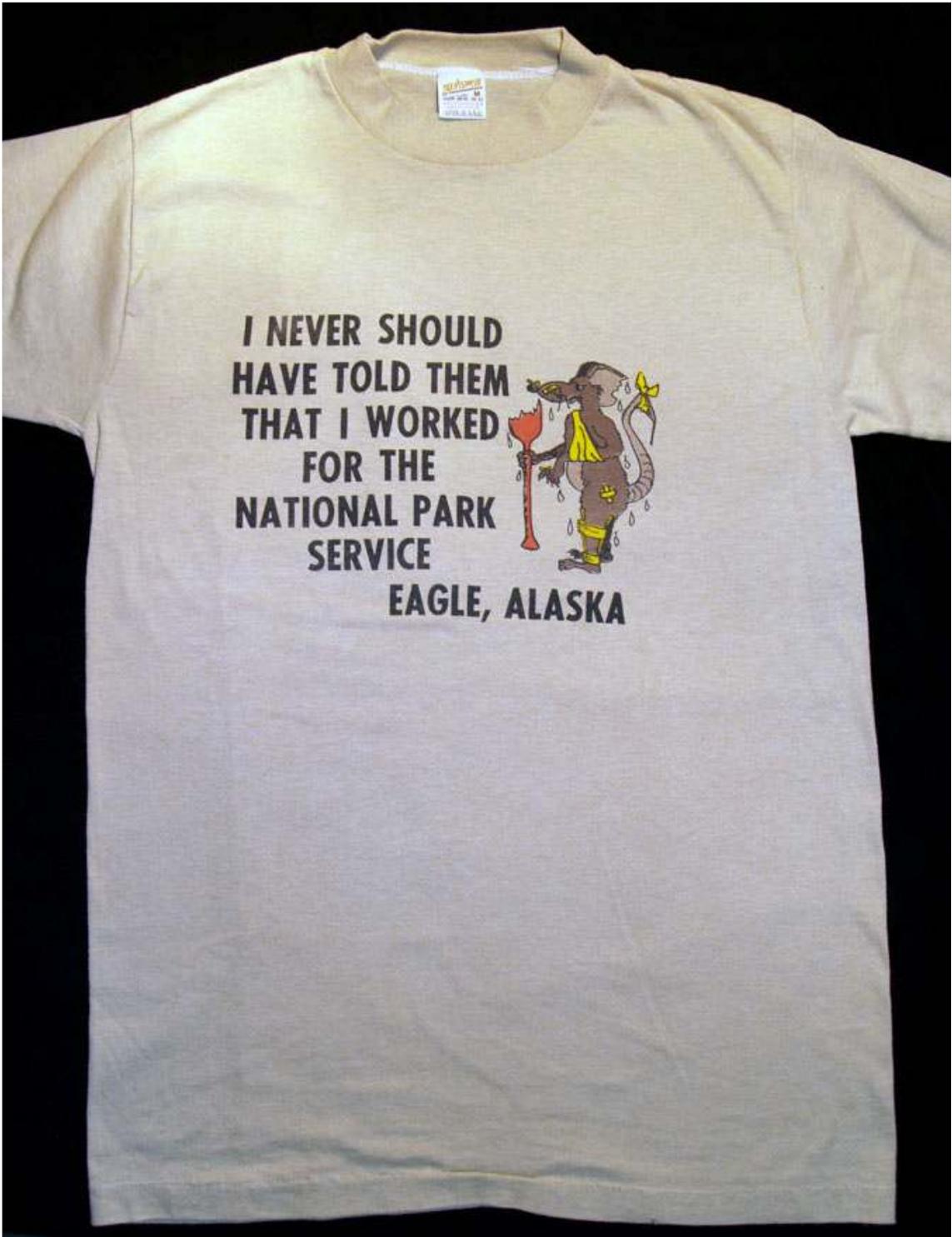


Figure 19: Eagle Action Together protest T-shirt, circa 1979.



Figure 20: Protest sign, Eagle, circa 1979.



Figure 21: Protest sign, Eagle, circa 1979.



Figure 22: Protest sign, Eagle, circa 1979.



Figure 23: Protest sign, Eagle, circa 1979.



Figure 24: Protest sign, Eagle, circa 1979.



Figure 25: Protest sign, Eagle, circa 1979.



Figure 26: Protest sign, Eagle, circa 1979.



Figure 27: Protest sign, Eagle, circa 1979.



Figure 28: "Acceptable Monuments," Eagle, circa 1979.



Figure 29: Alaska Fever cartoon, September 19, 1979.

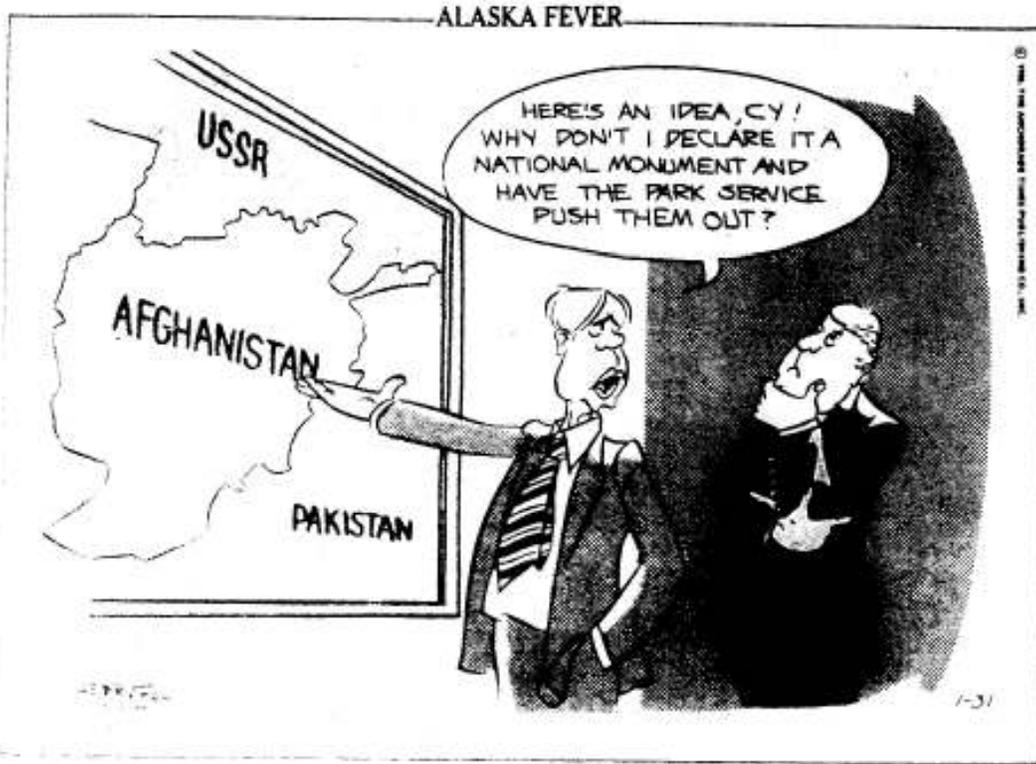


Figure 30: Alaska Fever cartoon, January 31, 1980.



Figure 31: Alaskan Alpine Club erects protest sign, January 12, 1980.



Figure 32: President Carter signs ANILCA, December 2, 1980.



Figure 33: Joe Vogler's bulldozer in trespass, August 1984.



Figure 34: Joe Vogler's Delta 3 transporter in trespass, August 1984.

WE HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN, HAVE YOU?

Slana Alaskans Unite was founded in 1978 because the National Park Service has one agenda:

erase your lifestyle and freedom.

The problem isn't just over Karen Wade; it is the mentality and aggressive policies of the Agency she represents.

STAND UP - BE COUNTED

Write or call your state and federal representatives now! ! Ask them to officially object to this flagrant misrepresentation of our community and lifestyle. Let them know you are personally insulted.

Unite with your neighbors and fight Park Service propaganda.

Slana Alaskans Unite will not submit. Why should you?

**Slana Alaskans Unite
Box 821
Slana, Alaska 99586**

Figure 35: Slana Alaskans Unite call for renewed support, April 7, 1994.

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APPENDIX A

“D-2 to You Too” by Matt Hammer and June Allen, released 1979

For years Alaska was forgotten
Just a stepchild of old Uncle Sam
Until the whole world got hold of the news of the gold
Soon everybody gave a damn

When the gold petered out
So did the interest
Alaska was once more on ice
Till d-2 and oil made some plans start to boil
Now everyone is giving us advice

Chorus:

Oh, Alaskans can handle Alaska
We know what we're doing don't you see
We can drill, dig, and toil and we don't have to spoil our fragile ecology

Well, we all love this land that we live in
And we're proud to say the land of the free
And we know we can care for those acres out there
If those federal boys would just let us be

Well, we'd like to get on with state business
And we'd like to attend to our land
Without the noise from those Outside boys
'Cause everybody out there's got a plan

Oh, Alaskans can handle Alaska
We know what we're doing don't you see
We can drill, dig, and toil and we don't have to spoil our fragile ecology
We can drill, dig, and toil and we don't have to spoil our fragile economy.

APPENDIX B

“Free Alaska” by Matt Hammer; lyrics by June Allen, released 1979

They heeded the call of the Gold Rush craze
Hordes of men in the early days
Enduring the ache and the bitter cold
For fantasies of creeks of gold

They shot the moose and wore the skin
Loved the land like their next of kin
Chose to stay until their dying years
To be Alaskan pioneers

Chorus:
And they were free Alaska
They were free Alaska

And the outside world changed from green to grim
Grime and dust made the cities dim
But the North stayed pure, clean, and grand
Alaskans loved their frontier land

And the politicians turned their smog-rimmed eyes
Toward the unspoiled northern skies
They said, “Don’t hunt and don’t trespass
On this federal land without a pass.”

Where is the statehood that was promised long ago?
Where did our rights and freedoms go?

A man, his land in sovereignty like those that died for liberty
Don’t let them lock up the lands that we need to satisfy their bureaucracy
Can’t you hear the song ring true, if they take our land they’ll take yours too

And the caribou graze in the midnight sun
The snap of ice makes the dog teams run
The bull moose stands and squints his eyes
Cries for the northern paradise

Is it free, Alaska?
Is it free, Alaska?
Will you free Alaska?