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## **Administration Has Golden Opportunity to Do What is Right for America's Arctic**

WASHINGTON – Former Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt today celebrated the 105th anniversary of the Antiquities Act, what he called “a great American innovation,” by asking President Barack Obama to do more to protect our nation’s wild lands and waters – particularly in America’s Arctic.

**Following is a statement from Cindy Shogan, Executive Director, Alaska Wilderness League:**

“In prepared remarks for today, former Secretary Babbitt said that ‘critics who complain that we already have too much Wilderness have it all wrong. We have too little designated Wilderness.’ The administration has many opportunities to do what is right for Wilderness in the Arctic, including the upcoming Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (Arctic Refuge) and area-wide plan for the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (Reserve). The Arctic Refuge is a place that was set aside 50 years ago for its ‘unique wildlife, wilderness, and recreational values.’ Teeming with life, the Arctic Refuge is one of our greatest natural treasures. In 2012, the new area-wide plan will be announced for the Reserve, which spans 23.5 million acres across the North Slope of Alaska and is the largest single unit of public lands in our nation. We strongly encourage the administration to consider Wilderness within these processes and to protect America’s Arctic for future generations.

In his remarks, former Interior Secretary Babbitt also said that ‘offshore drilling in Arctic waters poses high risks that must be mitigated with strong conservation measures’ and called for a National Monument for Bristol Bay. We strongly agree and call on the administration to ensure the strongest possible protections for America’s Arctic Ocean and Bristol Bay. America’s Arctic Ocean is home to one-fifth of the world’s threatened polar bears, as well as seals, migratory birds, endangered bowhead whales, several other species of whales, Pacific walrus and much more. Bristol Bay, a world-class fishery and a place that was called ‘too special to drill’ by the administration, contains some of our nation’s greatest public treasures.”

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