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NORTH STAR NEWS

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Your Voice.*

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2020 Wins for Wild Alaska

By: Adam Kolton, Executive Director

Two words we can't say often enough at Alaska Wilderness League: "Thank you!"

It is entirely because of you, our members, willing to join in the fight for wild Alaska, that we near the end of 2020 having ensured that the inspiring places and the wildlife, people and communities that depend on them remain largely unscathed despite the most unrelenting assault we have seen from Big Oil, timber and mining allies in decades.

Yes, some key areas lost legislative and administrative protections they have long enjoyed, and some abhorrent new policies have been adopted. But never once did you give up. You donated, you took action and you made your voice heard. And as a result, we remain in a position to potentially reverse many of the Trump administration's actions, restoring critical protections and keeping some of the wildest and most cherished landscapes free from industrialization, privatization and extraction.

Here are seven examples of the victories you made possible this past year:

1. No Arctic National Wildlife Refuge lease sale.

You did it. For the three years since passage of the 2017 Tax Act, you stayed steadfast for protection of this

iconic landscape and for the rights of the Gwich'in people. Together, we have not only thwarted a Trump administration lease sale, but prevented convoys of seismic vehicles from invading this most important denning habitat for polar bears and calving grounds for caribou.

2. Banking blitz. You pressured the big banks and investors to balk at financing Arctic oil development. This past year, Wells Fargo, Citigroup, JPMorgan Chase, Royal Bank of Canada and others joined more than two dozen U.S. and international financial institutions in pledging no more financing for Arctic oil projects.

3. For the birds. You defended several critical havens for migratory birds and waterfowl including Teshekpuk Lake in Alaska's western Arctic where 30 percent of the entire population of Pacific brant molt, and the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge that supports the world's entire population of Emperor geese.

4. Protecting Prince William Sound. You ensured that the Chugach National Forest, America's second largest national forest (behind the Tongass), retained its roadless protections, which in turn help sustain brown bears, moose, sea otters and some of the best outdoor recreation opportunities in Alaska.

5. Pushing back on Pebble Mine.

You contributed to a broad coalition effort that saw both the Trump administration and the Alaska congressional delegation flip flop on the Pebble Mine, a massive mining proposal threatening the headwaters of the Bristol Bay Watershed. The result: the unsurpassed salmon fisheries of the region remain safe.

6. Taking on Timber. Your investment supported a legal victory blocking the largest-ever proposed timber sale on Prince of Wales Island in Southeast Alaska, as well as passage of legislation in the House stopping subsidized old-growth clear-cutting, and a public mobilization effort that generated tens of thousands of comments in defense of the Tongass National Forest and its wolves, bald eagles and more.

7. Building power. Thanks to you, Alaska Wilderness League grew its ranks of advocates for wild Alaska, with thousands joining us online to view our Geography of Hope series events, 82,000 online actions taken, more than 2,800 people using our new online tool-kit and nearly 64,000 people now following us on social media. *



Adam Kolton
Executive Director

Alaska Wilderness League is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation founded in 1993 to further the protection of Alaska's incomparable natural endowment. Our mission is to galvanize support to secure vital policies that protect and defend America's last great wild public lands and waters.

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Cover photo: Members of the Porcupine caribou dot the landscape of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, beneath the looming Brooks Mountains. © Florian Schulz/FlorianSchulz.org

House Committee Holds Forum on Climate Change and the Arctic

By: Corey Himrod, Senior Communications Manager

The headlines are frightening and predictions are dire, based on trends showing continued warming of our planet, continued disappearance of sea ice and continued acidification of our oceans. And yet the Trump administration continues to hand over control of the Arctic to Big Oil. Democrats on the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources hosted a forum on Monday, October 5, to learn how the higher temperatures are wreaking havoc on wildlife, fisheries and humans who have called the Arctic home for generations.

Alaska Wilderness League staff work diligently to cultivate Arctic champions on Capitol Hill, and we're so thankful to have congressional champions like Representatives Alan Lowenthal (D-CA) and Jared Huffman (D-CA), who led the House forum entitled *The Melting Arctic: Climate Change Impacts on People and Wildlife*, as well as Representative Raul Grijalva (D-NM) who chairs the House Natural Resources Committee.



Representative Jared Huffman (D-CA) (pictured) and Representative Alan Lowenthal (D-CA) hosted *The Melting Arctic: Climate Change Impacts on People and Wildlife*.
Alaska Wilderness League

The forum featured Bernadette Demientieff, executive director of the Gwich'in Steering Committee, former League tribal liaison Rosemary Ahtuanguak of the Native Village of Nuiqsut, and Maka Monture Paki of the Alaska Conservation Foundation, among others.

The Arctic is ground zero for the devastating impacts of climate change, warming at three times the rate of the rest of the world. Sea ice is disappearing, permafrost

is melting and coastal villages are watching the land beneath them erode into the sea. Meanwhile, the current administration has continued to push to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge up as the next oil frontier, while the western Arctic already has substantial fossil fuel exploration and extraction operations, and newly permitted and planned oil projects underway. All of this is being done, however, without up-to-date data on how the cumulative impacts will affect wildlife, water, people or our climate.

Oil and gas exploitation are already causing impacts to fish, wildlife, water quality, air quality and traditional uses in Arctic Alaska, as both Bernadette and Rosemary eloquently pointed out. The League will continue to work with our partners in Alaska, in Congress and across the country to protect our wild lands and waters, and the people and wildlife that depend on them, from the threats of climate change and fossil fuel extraction. *



Arctic sea ice has been steadily declining, and could disappear entirely during summer months by 2035.
NASA Goddard Space Flight Center and National Snow and Ice Data Center

Alaska Wilderness League Continues to Adapt to a Virtual World

By: Monica Scherer, Director of Outreach



Representative Kim Schrier (D-WA) (bottom) and myself (top right) enjoy a constituent's photo of a halibut caught in the Tongass National Forest.

Alaska Wilderness League

At Alaska Wilderness League, the phrase *Your Land, Your Voice* is one of our guiding principles. But this year, in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, our challenge has been to support, engage and inspire all of you from afar. To that end, during the last few months we have worked hard to find new ways to elevate your voices and concerns to the decision-makers that matter, even as the Trump administration has continued its attacks on Alaska during COVID-19.

While we might not be able to gather in Washington, D.C., for an energetic lobby day fly-in or

hold in-person meetings at your local district offices, we can still get our message heard by your local representatives... online! In August, more than 60 League volunteers joined us for our first virtual lobby day, meeting with congressional representatives and their staff to advocate for the Roadless Area Conservation Act, a bill that would permanently codify roadless protection for our national forests into law.

Thanks in large part to those virtual meetings, I'm so pleased to announce that in October we secured our 100th cosponsor, Representative Kim Schrier of

Washington. We look to continue to build on this strong showing of support for protecting old-growth areas in Alaska's Tongass National Forest and key areas throughout our National Forest System.

In addition to holding virtual lobby days and due to overwhelming positive feedback from our supporters, we've also continued our Geography of Hope series that initially launched back in May. We set out with a goal to provide a sense of community, share unique stories and access to our public lands and waters in Alaska, and provide opportunities for action. Through authors, photographers, filmmakers

and adventurers with firsthand experience in these lands and waters, we have now held 11 different Geography of Hope events over the last six months, creating opportunities to engage with thousands of our members and volunteers.

Our most recent event featured Florian Schulz, acclaimed photographer and videographer who has worked tirelessly to capture the beauty and uniqueness of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Hundreds of members joined Florian online as he shared amazing photos from the Arctic and the stories behind capturing them, as well as a behind



Photographer and League friend Amy Gulick in the Tongass National Forest.

© Amy Gulick/[AmyGulick.com](https://www.amygulick.com)

the scenes look at his upcoming IMAX film, *The Arctic: Our Last Great Wilderness*.

If you missed Florian's presentation, you can still watch a recording at AlaskaWild.org/Geography-Of-Hope. And stay tuned in 2021 when we will be sharing information on its official public release!

Based on the great interest and participation in the Geography of Hope events in 2020, we are hoping to continue the series in 2021. Thank you to everyone who has joined us for these virtual events, signed petitions, contacted your members of Congress on behalf of wild Alaska and have donated to support our efforts. *



Florian Schulz joined us via Zoom to talk about the Arctic Refuge and his upcoming IMAX film, *The Arctic: Our Last Great Wilderness*.

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Porcupine caribou on the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

© Florian Schulz/[FlorianSchulz.org](https://www.florianschulz.org)

Help Wild Alaska While Saving on Your Taxes

By: Chris Konish, Director of Development

Given the challenges and distractions of 2020, it would be easy to overlook some of the new tax benefits that became available this year to people who give to public charities like Alaska Wilderness League. The CARES Act signed into law in March, is one such instance that included several provisions that incentivize charitable giving in ways that decrease your tax liability.

If you don't itemize your taxes (or are unsure of your tax plans), you can still deduct up to \$300 of your charitable donations for 2020. This means that you could claim the standard deduction in 2020 and reduce your adjusted gross income when donating up to \$300 to public charities.

If you do plan to itemize, you can now deduct donations equaling your entire adjusted gross income to charities like Alaska Wilderness League. This increases the previous cap of 60% and is applicable only for donations made to 501(c)3 public charities but not private

foundations or donor-advised funds.

For retirees, more immediate savings was applied in the form of lifting the mandatory distribution mandate for retirement accounts in 2020. While these accounts can serve as tax-wise options for charitable giving when healthy, this relief effort was aimed at allowing these accounts to recover should the account holders be facing financial burdens due to the coronavirus pandemic.

You can find more information by visiting us at AlaskaWild.org/CARES or by reaching me at Chris@AlaskaWild.org or 202-266-0415.

*Note: The information contained herein is offered for general informational and educational purposes. The figures cited in the examples and illustrations are accurate at the time of writing and are based on federal law as well as IRS discount rates that change monthly. State law may affect the results illustrated. You should seek the advice of an attorney for applicability to your own situation. **

Honoring Senator Tom Udall and Meeting (Virtually) with our Leadership Council

By: Chris Konish, Director of Development

This September, Alaska Wilderness League was proud to host a virtual event to recognize Senator Tom Udall (D-NM) for his extraordinary leadership in carrying on the Udall family's great Alaska conservation legacy during his tenure in Congress, which has included multiple terms in the House and Senate. Invitees

heard from many of the senator's supporters, as well as Senator Udall himself as he shared how Alaska conservation fits into his efforts to protect 30 percent of our nation's lands and waters by 2030.

We were grateful that so many good friends could join us for this special occasion, which was bookended by two days of robust discussion and briefings as part of our annual Leadership Council meeting and fly-in (held virtually this year, of course). Those two days — which included a briefing from our sister political affiliate Alaska Wilderness League Action, updates on recent litigation and a look ahead at planning for a potential transition in power — brought together

10 council members and a few guests to learn and exchange ideas about the future of wild Alaska conservation. Since its inception in 2019, the League's Leadership Council — composed of advisors, philanthropists and advocates with diverse business, scientific, fundraising and political expertise — has helped assess the League's direction and practices while seeding innovative and productive activities.

Learn more about the Leadership Council including its current roster at AlaskaWild.org/Leadership-Council. And reach out to Chris@AlaskaWild.org for information on how to get involved and possibly joining as a guest for a future Council meeting. *



Senator Udall accepts an award from the League.
Alaska Wilderness League

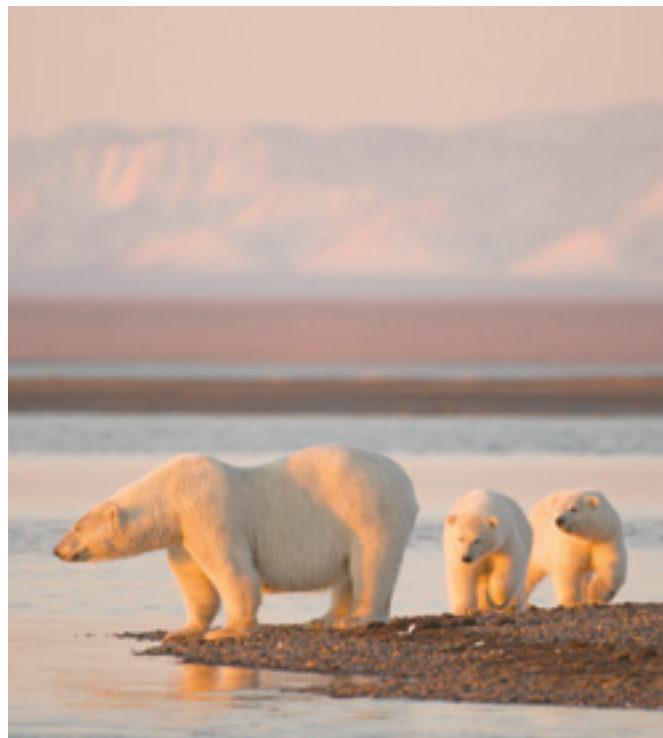
Ted Roosevelt IV Speaks Out for Alaska's Wild Lands

By: Corey Himrod, Senior Communications Manager

The Roosevelt name carries immeasurable weight in the world of conservation and the outdoors thanks to the legacy of Teddy Roosevelt — after becoming president in 1901, Roosevelt established 150 national forests, 51 federal bird reserves, four national game preserves, five national parks and 18 national monuments on more than 230 million acres of public land.

Roosevelt's legacy lives on in his grandson, Ted Roosevelt IV, who highlighted the need for bipartisanship in conservation in an essay reprinted on our blog. Mr. Roosevelt is board chair of the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, secretary of The Climate Reality Project, a member of the Governing Council of the Wilderness Society, and a trustee for the American Museum of Natural History. The essay was initially written in the first quarter of 2020 and pulls no punches about where we are and where we need to get to:

This administration has the least interest in conservation or the environment of any prior administration. I am not certain that Trump can change, but we can. We can open the door to better conversations with one another and with Congress. We are not a people who sacrifice what endures for what is ephemeral. We can stand with ranchers and the health of the high plains; we can stand with the Gwich'in people as



A mother polar bear and her cubs on the coast of the Arctic Ocean, in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

© Steven Kazlowski/LeftEyePro.com

they follow the world's longest migration; we can stand with what we love and what has always inspired us: the great sweeping places that once built greatness in us.

One additional note on bipartisanship and conservation: Recently, a new monument was unveiled to honor President Dwight Eisenhower in Washington, D.C. It was Eisenhower's administration who originally set aside the Arctic Refuge — then the Arctic National Wildlife Range — as well as Alaska's Izembek National Wildlife Refuge nearly 60 years ago on December 6, 1960. Later, it was the Nixon administration that created the Environmental Protection Agency. It hasn't always been that you could determine a politician's stance on conservation, or climate, or environment protection, simply by looking at whether they had an "R" or "D" next to their name. Mr. Roosevelt's piece is a reminder that for most Americans, conservation, clean air and water, and enjoying the outdoors cuts across political lines, and we should all be able to get behind protecting our wildlife and wide open spaces.

You can find Mr. Roosevelt's piece on our blog at: AlaskaWild.org/blog/a-bipartisan-need-for-conservation. *



An Arctic fox investigates a caribou antler in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

© Peter Mather/PeterMather.com





Celebrate with Wild Bristol Bay Salmon this Holiday Season

Whether you are spending the holidays with loved ones virtually or in-person this year, a new Alaska Wilderness League gift box in partnership with Eva's Wild can help ensure you have a very wild holiday season! Enjoy new and classic books on Alaska public lands, a collection of gifts for all ages and two wild Bristol Bay salmon filets shipped frozen to your door.

To find out more including how your purchase will support Alaska Wilderness League, visit EvasWild.com/AWL.

Let's keep it wild this holiday season!

 Printed on recycled paper and recyclable. 

Bret Greenheck, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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