RE-2 Employee Post Travel Disclosure of Travel Expenses

Date/Time Stamp

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Post Travel Filing Instructions: Complete this form within **30 days** of returning from travel. Submit all forms to the Office of Public Records in 232 Hart Building. **This form is a public disclosure. The form and all attachments will be made publicly available.**

Certification: *In compliance with the Regulations Governing Privately Sponsored Travel, Senate Rule 35, and the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007, I certify that I accepted the following gift of privately sponsored travel:*

Private Sponsor(s):
American Lands Project

Travel Dates:
08/13/2024 to 08/20/2024

Name of accompanying family member (if any):

Relationship to Traveler:

Expenses

Transportation Expenses	Lodging Expenses	Meals Expenses	Other Expenses (Amount & Description)
$7,970.45	$887.00	$287.90	$2,866.67

I also certify that attached to this form are all required documents for post travel disclosure, including:

- **The final Employee Pre-Travel Authorization** (Form RE-1)
- The final **Private Sponsor Travel Certification Form** with all attachments
- The final invitation
- The final approved itinerary

Finally, I certify that all trip information reflected in the attachments above accurately reflects the travel that I accepted. If there were any changes to the trip after I received approval from the Committee, the changes are described in ATTACHMENT 1.

9.13.2024
Date

REYNALDO BENITEZ
Printed Name of Traveler

Signature of Traveler

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING MEMBER/OFFICER

I have made a determination that the expenses set out above in connections with travel described in the Employee Pre-Travel Authorization form, are necessary transportation, lodging, and related expenses as defined in Rule 35.

9.13.2024
Date

Signature of Supervising Senator/Officer

ATTACHMENT 1 – CHANGES FROM APPROVED PRE-TRAVEL

Note: Material changes to a trip that occur after the Committee has issued an approval letter may invalidate the Committee's approval. Please contact the Committee with any questions regarding changes to an approved trip.

Were there any changes to the pre-approved travel expenses? (Transportation, Meals, Lodging, Other)?

● Yes ○ No

Expense Change	Revised Amount	Explanation
Transportation	$7,970.45	Air taxi expenses were less than initial estimate, and a rental vehicle was used an extra day for ground transportation (see final itinerary). Final transportation costs are as follows: Commercial round trip airfare to FAI- $1411.90, Air Taxi flights- $6394.83, Ground transportation- $163.72
Lodging	$887.00	Due to weather-related concerns and an abundance of caution from the group's guide and air-taxi pilot, the group exited the Arctic Refuge a day earlier than initially planned and based out of Fairbanks for the final day. This created additional lodging costs for a hotel in Fairbanks. Final lodging costs are as follows: $125 for tent and sleeping bag rental in the Arctic Refuge, $762 total for 3 nights hotel in Fairbanks ($254/night).
Meals	$287.90	Reflecting final meal costs: $220 total for backcountry meals provided by guide service in the Arctic Refuge, $67.90 total for two meals in Fairbanks

Were there any changes to the pre-approved itinerary?

● Yes ○ No

Explanation: Please see the revised itinerary ALP provided to Senate Ethics via email. On Aug 16th, poor visibility from fog and cloud cover prevented a safe air-taxi pickup and the group did not move locations as initially planned. On the 17th, due to an anticipated storm front projected to arrive on Aug 18th and an abundance of caution from the group's guide and air-taxi pilot to avoid the prospect of being stuck on the ground for 2-3 additional days, the group exited the Arctic Refuge a day earlier than expected. This left the group based out of Fairbanks for the final day of the trip (Aug 18th). In an effort to continue the pre-approved trip itinerary as much as possible, the trip continued its immersive educational programming through a visit to Denali National Park. * Note: Carlos Sanchez, who was ill, remained in Fairbanks to seek medical attention and did not join the trip to Denali National Park.

Were there any additional changes to the pre-approved trip?

○ Yes ● No

Explanation: There were no additional changes to the pre-approved trip.

RE-1 Employee Pre-Travel Authorization

Date/Time Stamp

Pre-Travel Filing Instructions: Complete and submit this form at least 30 days prior to the travel departure date to the **Select Committee on Ethics in SH-220.** Incomplete and late travel submissions will **not** be considered or approved.

Name of Traveler:
Reynaldo Benitez

Employing Office/Committee:
OSSOFF, JON

Private Sponsor(s):
American Lands Project

Destination(s):
Fairbanks, Alaska N/A, Alaska Fairbanks, Alaska

Travel Dates:
08/13/2024 to 08/20/2024
NOTE: If you plan to extend the trip for any reason you **must** notify the Committee.

Explain how this trip is specifically connected to the traveler's official or representational duties.

This trip will give me the opportunity to learn about Arctic natural systems, land management history, local and national economic drivers, and the impact this region has on the rest of the country. This knowledge will help me better advise the Senator on these important issues.

Do you have an accompanying family member or spouse on this trip?
No

Name and Relationship to Traveler:
N/A

I certify that the information contained in this form is true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge.

7.12.2024
Date

Signature of Employee

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING MEMBER/OFFICER
(President of the Senate, Secretary of the Senate, Sergeant at Arms, Secretary for the Majority, Secretary for the Minority, and Chaplain)

I Jon Ossoff hereby authorize Reynaldo Benitez
(Print Senator's/Officer's Name) (Print Traveler's Name)

an employee under my direct supervision, to accept payment or reimbursement for necessary transportation, lodging, and related expenses for travel to the event described above. I have determined that this travel is in connection with his or her duties as a Senate employee or an officeholder, and will not create the appearance that he or she is using public office for private gain.

I have also determined that the attendance of the employee's spouse or child is appropriate to assist in the representation of the Senate.

☐ (signify "yes" by checking box)

7.12.2024
Date

Signature of Supervising Senator/Officer

American Lands Project: August 13th - 19th Arctic Refuge Fact-Finding Trip

REYNALDO BENITEZ

Title:
None

Employing Office/Committee:
OSSOFF, JON

Duty Station:
WASHINGTON,DC

Destination(s):
Fairbanks, Alaska
N/A, Alaska
Fairbanks, Alaska

Explain how this trip is specifically connected to the traveler's official or representational duties:

This trip will give me the opportunity to learn about Arctic natural systems, land management history, local and national economic drivers, and the impact this region has on the rest of the country. This knowledge will help me better advise the Senator on these important issues.

Name of accompanying family member (if any):
Not Entered

Name and Relationship to Traveler:
None

Organization Information

Organization Name
American Lands Project

Is your organization classified as a §501(c)(3)?
● Yes ○ No

§501(c)(3) Organization Type
Public Charity

Address
1904 3rd Ave

Address 2 (Optional)
Suite 406

City, State Zip
Seattle, Washington 98101 United States

Phone Number
5097604217

Organization URL

History of Congressional Travel

American Lands Project (ALP) has organized a variety of sponsored travel opportunities for Senate and House members and staff over the last few years to locations such as Southeast Alaska, America's Arctic, and the Owyhee Canyonlands. 2023 saw ALP host three trips to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for House Members and Senate staff, and two trips to the Tongass National Forest for a Senate Member and Senate and House staff.

Educational Activities

American Lands Project conducts educational briefings for decision-makers in Washington, DC and works in coalition with diverse organizations engaged with policies surrounding the use and management of America's public lands and waters.

Lobbyist and Foreign Agent Registration Information

Lobbyist Registration Status: *I certify that the sponsor is not a federally registered lobbyist and do not retain or employ a federally registered lobbyist.*

Foreign Agent Registration Status: *I certify that the sponsor is not an agent of a foreign principal and do not retain or employ an agent of a foreign principal.*

Foreign Government Involvement

Foreign Agent Registration Status:

- ● I certify that the sponsor is not a foreign government.
- ● I certify that the sponsor is not an entity that is owned or operated by a foreign government.
- ● I certify that the sponsor does not receive funding from a foreign government.

Comments

None Entered

Signature Page

The signature page is below.

Purpose and Details

Provide a brief description of the trip.

Fact-finding trip to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to experience the landscape firsthand and learn about its importance to Alaska Natives, Arctic natural systems and history, and land management plans.

Explain how the purpose of the trip relates to your organization's mission.

American Lands Project seeks to inform discussions regarding important public lands in our nation, in part by facilitating fact-finding travel centered on place-based education. This trip will provide history, context, and understanding for guests in support of their responsibilities related to public lands in Arctic Alaska.

Is your organization the only sponsor for this trip?

- ● Yes
- ○ No

Grantmaking Organizations (Optional)

There are no grantmaking organizations.

With or Without Regard for Congressional Participation

The trip is arranged or organized specifically with regard to congressional participation.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Involvement in Planning, Organizing, Requesting or Arranging

- ● The trip will not in any part be planned, organized, requested, or arranged by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal, other than de minimis involvement.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Financing

- ● The trip will not be financed in any part by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal.
- ● No funds or in-kind contributions were earmarked directly or indirectly for the purpose of financing this specific trip from a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal or from a private entity that retains or employs one or more registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Accompaniment

Complete if all sponsors are §501(c)(3) organizations

- ● The trip is limited to three days (for trips inside the continental United States) or seven days (for trips outside the continental United States), and no lobbyist or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee at any point throughout the trip
- ○ The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and **one** overnight stay) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip
- ○ The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and **two** overnight stays) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

Complete if any of the sponsors is not a §501(c)(3) organizations.

- ○ The trip is limited to three days (for trips inside the continental United States) or seven days (for trips outside the continental United States), and no lobbyist or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee at any point throughout the trip
- ○ The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and **one** overnight stay) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip
- ○ The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and **two** overnight stays) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

Certification of No Recreational Activity and No Alcohol

- ● Travel expenses paid for will not include expenditures for recreational activities.

Travel expenses paid for will not include expenditures for alcohol, except as permitted by the Regulations Governing Privately Sponsored Travel.

Invitees

Members and staff from the House of Representatives **will not** receive invitations.

The list of invitees is below.

Travel Details

Trip Start Date/Time:
08/13/2024 @ 11:00 AM

⇄

Trip End Date/Time:
08/20/2024 @ 12:59 AM

Will the traveler be accompanied by a family member for whom the sponsor will pay travel expenses?

○ Yes ● No

Itinerary

The itinerary is below.

Transportation (Per Member/Officer/Employee: $8,797.23 | Accompanying Family Member: $0.00)

Transportation Type	Class	Amount
Airfare	Coach	$1,411.90
Note Round trip commercial airline flight from DCA-FAI		
Airfare	Coach	$7,315.33
Note Share of round trip air taxi cost from Fairbanks to basecamp location in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge		
Ground Transportation	Coach	$70.00
Note Share of ground transportation and rental vehicle in Fairbanks for transportation between airport, hotel, and dinners.		

Lodging (Per Member/Officer/Employee: $633.00)

Check-In	Check-Out	Facility	City	State	Country	Nights	Cost/Night	Cost Exceed Per Diem
08/13/2024	08/14/2024	Best Western Plus Chena River Lodge	Fairbanks	Alaska	United States	1	$254.00	No
08/14/2024	08/18/2024	Tent Basecamp in Arctic National Wildlife Refuge	N/A	Alaska	United States	4	$31.25	No

Check-In	Check-Out	Facility	City	State	Country	Nights	Cost/Night	Cost Exceed Per Diem
08/18/2024	08/19/2024	Best Western Plus Chena River Lodge	Fairbanks	Alaska	United States	1	$254.00	No

Meals (Per Member/Officer/Employee: $246.65)

Date	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidentals	Total	City	State	Country	Cost Exceeds Per Diem
08/13/2024	$0.00	$0.00	$40.00	$0.00	**$40.00**	Fairbanks	Alaska	United States	No
08/14/2024	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$33.33	**$33.33**	N/A	Alaska	United States	No
08/15/2024	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$33.33	**$33.33**	N/A	Alaska	United States	No
08/16/2024	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$33.33	**$33.33**	N/A	Alaska	United States	No
08/17/2024	$0.00	$0.00	$40.00	$33.33	**$73.33**	N/A	Alaska	United States	No
08/17/2024	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$33.33	**$33.33**	N/A	Alaska	United States	No

Reasonable Miscellaneous Expenses (Per Member/Officer/Employee: $2,866.67)

Expense Type	Amount	Notes
Other (Backcountry Guide Service Charges)	$2,866.67	Share of backcountry guide service charges for time spent basecamping in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

Additional Attachments

Document Name
There are no additional attachments.

PRIVATELY SPONSORED TRAVEL

SPONSOR SIGNATURE PAGE

I hereby certify that the information submitted in connection with the trip listed below is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Trip Name: August 13th - 19th Arctic Refuge Fact-Finding Trip

Travel Date(s): Aug 13 - 19, 2024

Travel Destination(s): Fairbanks, AK and Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, AK

Sponsor: American Lands Project

Armando Rojas	Program Manager
(printed name of sponsor representative)	*(title)*
(signature of sponsor representative)	06/27/2024 *(date)*

AMERICAN LANDS PROJECT

Aug 13th - 19th Arctic Refuge Fact Finding Trip

Senate Invite List:
Mike Henry - Chief of Staff, Senator Kaine
Joel Kelsey - Chief of Staff, Senator Blumenthal
Rey Benitez - Chief of Staff, Senator Ossoff
Carlos Sanchez - Chief of Staff, Senator Lujan
Alison MacDonald - Chief of Staff, Senator Shaheen

AMERICAN LANDS PROJECT

Rey Benitez
Chief of Staff
Senator Ossoff
303 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Rey,

The American Lands Project (ALP) appreciates your interest in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The 19.6 million-acre Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is an exceptional and unique landscape. The Iñupiat and Gwich'in people have been stewards of this land from time immemorial, and both groups still depend heavily on the region's subsistence resources. The Arctic Refuge provides critical habitat to polar bears, caribou, musk ox, and hundreds of species of migratory birds.

Land use policy for the Arctic Refuge has varied significantly for many decades. In January 2015, the US Fish & Wildlife Service announced its revised Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Arctic Refuge that recommended a Wilderness designation for the Coastal Plain area. Later in 2017, legislation was passed that instead opened the Coastal Plain to oil and gas development, and a lease sale was completed in January 2021 with a second lease sale mandated to be held by December of 2024.

We believe a fact-finding trip to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge would provide you a valuable opportunity to see and experience first-hand this remote arctic landscape and better understand the dynamic human and natural systems at play in this area.

We would like to invite you to join ALP for a trip to the Arctic Refuge from August 13th - August 19th, 2024 (On the ground in the Arctic Refuge from August 14th - August 18th). The trip will be fully sponsored by ALP, including all travel, lodging, and meals. Attached is an itinerary for the trip, which includes opportunities to experience some of the most remote country in the United States and learn about Alaska Native communities, natural systems, economic opportunities, energy and climate issues, and the history and land use policy of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

We hope that you will consider joining us for this trip to the Arctic and would be happy to connect by phone or video conference with you to provide additional information and answer any questions you may have. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Armando Rojas
Program Manager

American Lands Project

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
2024 Fact-Finding Trip Itinerary

Tuesday, August 13, 2024

- Travel from Washington DC or home district to Fairbanks, AK
  - **8:00 a.m.** Depart DCA, Alaska Air #1, **10:49 a.m.** arrive SEA
  - **12:06 p.m.** Depart SEA, Alaska Air #106, **2:51 p.m.** arrive FAI

- **3:15 p.m. - 3:30 p.m**. Ground transportation from airport to Best Western Plus Chena River Lodge, 1255 Tvsa Way, Fairbanks, AK

- **6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.** Working dinner at Lavelle's Bistro- 575 First Ave, Fairbanks
  - Meet with Staff/Board of the Gwich'in Steering Committee to learn about their work and connections between the Gwich'in and Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.
  - *Attendees: Joel Kelsey (Chief of Staff, Senator Blumenthal), Rey Benitez (Chief of Staff, Senator Ossoff), Mike Henry (Chief of Staff, Senator Kaine), Carlos Sanchez (Chief of Staff, Senator Lujan), Alison MacDonald (Chief of Staff, Senator Shaheen), Jason Paulsen (Board Member, American Lands Project)*

Wednesday, August 14, 2024

Attendees: Joel Kelsey, Rey Benitez, Mike Henry, Carlos Sanchez, Alison MacDonald, Jason Paulsen, Cynthia Merrow (Guide assigned by Arctic Treks)

- Travel from Fairbanks, AK to Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, AK
  - **7:00 a.m.** Ground transportation to airport
  - **8:00* a.m.** Depart FAI, Everts Air, **10:00* a.m.** Arrive at landing strip and staging area outside of Arctic Refuge (location dependent on weather and conditions) to access the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
  - **10:30* a.m.** Depart staging area, Coyote Air, **11:30* a.m.** Arrive at Arctic National Wildlife Refuge basecamp location.

- **12:00 p.m. – 12:30 p.m.** Set up camp

- **12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.** Camp orientation by Arctic Treks guide to review location and safety, and additional context of the trip and the group's location within the Arctic Refuge.

- **1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.** Review maps of Alaska's North Slope to become oriented with respect to the tribal, state and federal lands and land management designations in the Alaskan Arctic, and their relation to conservation, resource development, research, and subsistence uses.

- **2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.** Discussion: History leading up to and following the first designation of the Arctic Refuge. Established in 1960 as the Arctic National Wildlife Range, in the 1980s it was expanded to its current size of 19 million acres and was

~~*(* All flight times and specific basecamp destinations in the Arctic Refuge are subject to change based on weather)*~~

renamed as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Guests will gain knowledge on the background that led to these designations, and how these changes affected management.

- **3:30 p.m – 6:00 p.m.** Guided hike to observe the Coastal Plain of the Arctic Refuge and discuss its importance to the Porcupine Caribou Herd as well as numerous other wildlife species. The Porcupine Caribou Herd uses the area as its summer calving ground, after completing the longest land migration of any land mammal, covering over 1,500 miles every year and spanning the Alaska-Yukon border. Discuss the complexities of managing the health of the herd across the US-Canadian international border, and how groups such as the Porcupine Caribou Management Board navigate these issues.

- **6:00 p.m – 7:00 p.m.** Working Dinner: Review the geologic and ecological differences among the three major public land management units comprising Alaska's North Slope: the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, National Petroleum Reserve- Alaska (NPR-A), and State of Alaska land, and how these differences influence land management in each area. Also discuss the management structures unique to each area, and how the US Fish and Wildlife Service (Arctic National Wildlife Refuge), Bureau of Land Management (NPR-A), and State of Alaska (including Prudhoe Bay) each play a role in overseeing lands and resources on the North Slope.

Thursday, August 15, 2024
Attendees: Joel Kelsey, Rey Benitez, Mike Henry, Carlos Sanchez, Alison MacDonald, Jason Paulsen, Cynthia Merrow

- **8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.** Breakfast

- **9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.** Discussion of fossil fuel resources in the Arctic, and history of development. Use maps to examine the geography and chronology of energy and infrastructure development on the North Slope of Alaska. Discussion will also cover recent assessments of fossil fuel resources on the North Slope, the 2017 Tax Act and subsequent mandated lease sales, and offshore drilling in state and federal waters. This will help guests better understand Alaska's fossil fuel resources, and how their extraction and use relate to the nation's energy and climate goals.

- **10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.** Discussion of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA): Review the history and key elements of ANCSA, which extinguished aboriginal land title in Alaska, divided the state into 12 regions based on the common heritage and shared interests of the Alaska Native people within each geographic area, and mandated the creation of for-profit entities, which Congress termed "Alaska Native Corporations," tasked with promoting the social, cultural, and economic advancement of Alaska Native people and communities. A thirteenth Native Corporation was later created for Alaska Natives who no longer resided in Alaska.

- **12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.** Lunch

- **1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.** Discussion: Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). Guests will learn about the history and landscape-shaping impact of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) of 1980. ANILCA designated most of the National Park Service units in Alaska, as well as wilderness areas, national

~~*(* All flight times and specific basecamp destinations in the Arctic Refuge are subject to change based on weather)*~~

wildlife refuges (including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge), and national monuments across the state. It also established a priority for subsistence uses of fish and wildlife resources for rural residents during times of scarcity. ANILCA is the foundation of federal land management in Alaska and is essential to understanding current discussions surrounding resource management and utilization in Alaska.

- **3:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.** Guided hike from basecamp to observe geologic features of the Arctic Refuge and view permafrost soils and other features of the tundra landscape. During the hike, overview oil and gas exploration practices, including seismic surveying, ice roads, and directional drilling technologies.

- **6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.** Dinner

Friday, August 16, 2024
Attendees: Joel Kelsey, Rey Benitez, Mike Henry, Carlos Sanchez, Alison MacDonald, Jason Paulsen, Cynthia Merrow

- **8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.** Breakfast

- **9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.** Discussion: Additional overview of Indigenous community connections to America's Arctic, and discussions that have occurred between the Iñupiat and Gwich'in regarding their roles in land protection and management.

- **10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.** Discuss evidence of melting permafrost and saltwater intrusion from the coast into freshwater systems due to rising Arctic temperatures, trends in these impacts over time, and how they affect wildlife and North Slope communities. Review how communities are considering adaptation of infrastructure and practices to deal with these changes, and how the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act of 2021 works to address this, including its investments in a new Tribal transition and relocation assistance program with approximately $216 million in funding to support planning and voluntary, community-led transitions for those Tribal communities which are most vulnerable to accelerating climate-driven impacts.

- **11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.** Working Lunch: Overview of subsistence use and how it supports rural Alaskans. Federal law defines subsistence use as "the customary and traditional uses by rural Alaska residents of wild, renewable resources for such direct personal or family consumption as food, shelter, fuel, clothing, tools or transportation; the making and selling of handicraft articles… for barter or sharing for personal or family consumption; and for customary trade."

- **1:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.** Break down camp.

- **2:00* p.m. - 3:00* p.m.** Travel from first basecamp to a second basecamp location within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge via air-taxi flight from Coyote Air. Discussion enroute with Dirk Nickisch, pilot/owner of Coyote Air re: recent weather events, recreational use of the Refuge and changes observed over the past 20 years which are necessitating changes in business operations.

~~*(* All flight times and specific basecamp destinations in the Arctic Refuge are subject to change based on weather)*~~

- **3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.** Set-up camp at a new location within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and break time to get oriented in the new landscape.

- **5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.** Working dinner: Overview of the North Slope Borough and its villages. Most of the Borough's approximately 11,000 permanent residents live in eight communities: Anaktuvuk Pass, Atqasuk, Kaktovik, Nuiqsut, Point Hope, Point Lay, Utqiagvik, and Wainwright. Utqiagvik (formerly Barrow) serves as the Borough seat of government. Maps will be provided to help guests understand the size and location of these communities.

Saturday, August 17, 2024
Attendees: Joel Kelsey, Rey Benitez, Mike Henry, Carlos Sanchez, Alison MacDonald, Jason Paulsen, Cynthia Merrow

- **8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.** Breakfast

- **9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.** Review the background and history of the National Petroleum Reserve- Alaska (NPR-A), including initial designation in 1923 as an emergency oil supply for the U.S. Navy, Navy management of the land until the area was conveyed to the Department of the Interior in 1976 in accordance with the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act, and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) management from that conveyance until present day. Discuss the seven Special Areas designated within the 23-million-acre landscape and the ecological importance of each as important habitat for polar bears, seals, walrus, birds, and caribou herds that have sustained the Native people of Alaska's North Slope for over 10,000 years.
  Also review the recent announcements that the Department of Interior has made regarding the NPR-A, including the approval of new oil and gas development projects such as the Willow Oil Project, and rulemaking that formalizes regulations for the NPR-A.

- **10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.** Discussion of the role that public lands in Alaska play in our nation's carbon management. Alaska contains one third the country's federally managed lands, but stores an even larger share of terrestrial ecosystem carbon stocks-- 62% of all carbon contained in the soils and terrestrial ecosystems of federally managed land is held in Alaska.

- **11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.** Working Lunch: Review estimates on the quantity of methane stored in permafrost in the Arctic along with recent scientific studies analyzing the climate inputs associated with a warming Arctic. Arctic landscapes are a major reservoir of this greenhouse gas, and rising temperatures have been accelerating release from existing stores in the permafrost. View physical examples near basecamp of the slumping of surface soils due to the melting of permafrost and observe changes in the local plant community due to warming in the Arctic.

- **12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.** Guided hike from basecamp to observe wildlife and plants and discuss how natural systems function in this arctic tundra landscape, and the use of the Arctic Refuge by migratory birds, caribou, polar bear and other wildlife.

- **2:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.** Break

~~*(* All flight times and specific basecamp destinations in the Arctic Refuge are subject to change based on weather)*~~

- **5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.** Working Dinner: Overview of the major caribou herds of the North Slope located outside the Arctic Refuge, including current population data and trends, and management history with a focus on the Western Arctic Caribou Herd and its associated Working Group. Overview of the role of the latest survey data on caribou population counts and fluctuations over time. The Working Group is composed of subsistence users, other Alaska hunters, reindeer herders, hunting guides, transporters and conservationists, with agency staff, biologists and natural resource managers serving in an advisory capacity. The Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group meets annually to evaluate the health of what until recent years has been Alaska's largest caribou herd, and also works to identify concerns, request information, and advocate for actions that will conserve and benefit the herd.

Sunday, August 18, 2024
Attendees: Joel Kelsey, Rey Benitez, Mike Henry, Carlos Sanchez, Alison MacDonald, Jason Paulsen, Cynthia Merrow

- **8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.** Breakfast

- **9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.** Discussion of Trans-Alaska Pipeline. Guests will learn about the 45 year history of the $8B Trans-Alaska Pipeline authorized by President Nixon in 1973, its construction, role in North Slope development, and its role in catalyzing the Alaska Permanent Fund.

- **10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.** Discussion: Overview of the Alaska Permanent Fund. The Permanent Fund was created in 1976 via an amendment of the state constitution to help manage the growing state income from oil and gas development. It mandates that at least 25 percent of all mineral lease rentals, royalties, royalty sale proceeds, federal mineral revenue sharing payments and bonuses received by the State be deposited into the Fund. The Permanent Fund also allows for the distribution of dividend checks to Alaska residents.

- **11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m** Break down camp

- **12:00* p.m.** Depart Arctic Refuge basecamp, Coyote Air, **1:00* p.m.** Arrive at Arctic Village, an Alaska Native village (Gwich'in) at the southern border of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Arctic Village also functions as a staging point to access or depart the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.
    - During the flight and waiting time, discuss international Arctic politics and collaborative efforts beyond Alaska, including the Arctic Council, which was created as an intergovernmental forum to foster cooperation in the circumpolar Arctic. Overview the United States' role as an Arctic Nation, the 6 permanent participants in the Arctic Council, and impacts of increased shipping in the Arctic as a result of melting sea ice. Management of the circumpolar Arctic and the role(s) and governance of Indigenous Arctic Peoples outside the United States will also be explored.

- **1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.** Working lunch with the Arctic Village Council to discuss their priorities and connections to the Arctic Refuge.

~~*(* All flight times and specific basecamp destinations in the Arctic Refuge are subject to change based on weather)*~~

- **2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.** Tour of Arctic Village. Learn more about the history of Indigenous people in Arctic Alaska, dating back more than 10,000 years, and learn about the Village, its people, and their connections to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for spiritual, cultural, and subsistence needs.
    - Additional Attendees: Sarah James- Spokesperson for Arctic Refuge (Arctic Village Council and Native Village of Venetie Tribal Governments)

- **4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.** Return to Arctic Village landing strip and review main topics of trip. Answer any additional questions.

- Return to Fairbanks, AK.
    - **6:00* p.m.** Depart Arctic Village, Everts Air, **8:00* p.m.** Arrive FAI
    - **8:20 p.m.** Shuttle from airport to Best Western Plus Chena River Lodge, 1255 Tvsa Way, Fairbanks, AK

Monday, August 19, 2024

- Travel from Fairbanks, AK to Washington, DC
    - **7:00 a.m.** Depart FAI, Alaska Airlines #236. **11:41 a.m.** arrive SEA.
    - **1:54 p.m.** Depart SEA, Alaska Airlines #2. **9:59 p.m.** arrive DCA.

~~*(* All flight times and specific basecamp destinations in the Arctic Refuge are subject to change based on weather)*~~