

Arctic Adventure Inspires Legislative Lessons

By Matt Davidson

Sometimes it takes a new perspective to better understand something you are close to. For me, a summer trip down the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge's Hula Hula River brought fresh insights into working as a conservationist with the Alaska State Legislature. The lessons I learned during the two week trip in a one-person raft are helping me to identify new opportunities and a better route through the often tumultuous legislative process.

Lesson 1: Have Good Allies

As the least experienced river runner, I often relied on my cohorts, Matt and Jeff, for guidance through rapids. This teamwork is no different than the close alliances the conservation community builds and maintains to be effective in legislative efforts.

ACV shares concerns with healthcare professionals, hunters and fishermen, local governments, and individuals in both political parties. Our position on the University Lands bills, for example, carries more weight when coupled with the concerns of the local communities and other public land advocates. Working together can be humbling and sometimes cumbersome, but teamwork helps us all negotiate the session.



ACV Legislative Director Matt Davidson rafts along the Hula Hula River.

Lesson 2: Hunker Down when Necessary

Racing down a scree-topped peak amid bolts of lightning from a sudden storm is not an experience I seek to repeat. Our retreat and subsequent days spent tentbound, however, highlight the need to be strategic about how we spend our energy during the session. It's tempting to confront every legislative challenge, but standing exposed to the elements of a legislative (or Arctic) tempest is ill-advised and taps our reserves for other times when we are most effective.

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Citizen Activism in Alaska's Capital

Curious how the Legislature really works? Want to promote conservation in Alaska? The annual ACV Legislative Fly-In is a great opportunity to learn effective advocacy skills and promote conservation legislation in face-to-face meetings with lawmakers. This year's Fly-In will occur in mid- to late March 2005. Look for announcements soon, or contact Matt@akvoice.org to express your interest in attending the 2005 Fly-In.

Anchorage Municipal Election Preview

By Kay Brown

Anchorage voters will decide whether to approve construction of a new convention center and will elect of six Assembly members and two SchoolBoard members in the April 5 elections. Several bond issues also are expected to be on the ballot, including bonds for roads and drainage, emergency medical services and, possibly, a public transit bond. The Anchorage Assembly will finalize the ballot propositions by mid-February.



As of January 18, five candidates had registered or filed letters with the Public Offices Commission to challenge Assembly incumbents. However, Tim Bridgemam, who had announced his intention to challenge South Anchorage incumbent Dick Tremaine, withdrew January 11, and no new candidates have filed for that seat.

In West Anchorage, Matt Claman is seeking the seat

now held by Assemblyman Dan Sullivan. Assemblyman Brian Whittle is challenged by Paul Bauer for the East Anchorage seat. Whittle beat Bauer in a runoff in 2002.

In Midtown Anchorage, Troy Maulden is running against Assembly Chairman Dick Traini. In Eagle River, Jeffrey Allen Johnson is running against Assemblywoman Anna Fairclough. Downtown Assemblyman Allan Tesche remains unopposed.

No candidates had yet filed to run against School Board incumbents Mary Marks and John Steiner.

The filing period for Assembly and School Board runs from Jan 27 - Feb. 11. ACV Political Committee Chair Scott Anaya said ACV would evaluate the candidates, make endorsements by late February, and work to elect ACV's endorsed candidates. For more information about ACV's specific plans, contact Scott at 277-4808. ✓

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Lesson 3: Bask When You Can

It's a rare day in the Legislature and (it turns out) the Arctic, when you can bask in the glow of your accomplishments. We must take advantage of those occasions by drying out gear, reviewing plans, or falling asleep in the sun. During the 120-day legislative session, it's difficult to take time out, but we all need time to reflect and ready ourselves for more challenges.

Lesson 4: Plan Ahead, Be Flexible

I am thankful for my Arctic teammates' pre-trip preparation. Despite these efforts, damaged gear and changing circumstances sometimes dictated adjustments, which in our case required repairing a paddle with willow branches and duct tape. Our legislative plans to focus on, say, pesticide regulation or land giveaways are backed by sufficient experience and resources to address any other challenges the administration or legislature throw our way.

The start of the 24th Legislature is an exciting time for conservationists and Alaska. The conservation community is building and maintaining alliances, acting strategically, preparing for the expected, and hoping for time to rest and review. While the route of the session is still unclear, I'm already planning for my next Arctic lesson.



Teammate and ACV Board member, Jeff Jessen, repairs broken paddle.

Three New Faces in Juneau

By Kay Brown

The election of three new pro-conservation legislators to the Alaska State House could mean a slightly improved atmosphere for conservation issues. Overall, though, the public policy landscape remains bleak with anti-conservation forces still controlling the executive branch and both houses of the legislature.

All the incumbents seeking re-election to the legislature this fall won their races. Two Republican incumbents former - Reps. Dan Ogg of Kodiak and Beverly



Rep. Woodie Salmon picked up an interior House seat.

Masek of Willow - were defeated in the August primary. Supported by ACV, Republican Gabrielle LeDoux ousted Ogg. In the Senate House, former Rep. Albert Kookesh stepped up from the House to retain Georgianna Lincoln's huge Interior/Rural Southeast seat. Another new face in the Senate will be Charlie

Huggins, whom Gov. Murkowski appointed to replace former Mat-Su Senator Scott Ogan, who resigned in September rather than face a recall election.

Sen. Bettye Davis, whose entire East Anchorage district ACV canvassed door-to-door, retained her seat comfortably.

In the State House, Democrat Berta Gardner picked up an open seat in a fairly hostile district in midtown Anchorage. Democrat Woodie Salmon won an open Interior seat formerly held by Republican Carl Morgan, who ran for the Senate and lost to Kookesh. ACV backed both Gardner and Salmon. ACV sent 95,000 pieces of mail and made more than 15,000 phone calls on be-



Rep. Gabrielle LaDoux won a seat in Kodiak.

half of endorsed candidates.

Close losses included the downtown Fairbanks House seat, where city councilman Scott Kawasaki lost to incumbent Jim Holm by 52 votes. Tim June lost the open rural Southeast seat vacated by Kookesh by 76 votes.

Ballot Measure 4, which called for special elections to fill U.S. Senate vacancies, and which the Alaska Conservation Alliance supported, passed easily, although it apparently did not influence Alaskans' choice in the U.S. Senate race, where Sen. Lisa Murkowski defeated former Gov. Tony Knowles by 9,568 votes (about 3%).

The passage of the constitutional amendment, Measure 1, will make it harder to garner signatures for ballot initiatives. Both the marijuana legalization and the anti-bear baiting initiatives failed. Local election results were more encouraging. Sixty-nine percent (9 of 13) of the local candidates ACV endorsed won their elections, including:

- Fairbanks Borough Assembly: Luke Hopkins was elected to an open seat and incumbent Hank Bartos was re-elected;
- Juneau Borough Assembly: Jeff Bush beat incumbent Jeannie Johnson;
- Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly: incumbent Pete Sprague was re-elected;
- Mat-Su Borough Assembly: Lynne Woods beat incumbent Bruce Bush;
- Anchorage Assembly: Pamela Jennings won an open seat; Janice Shamberg was re-elected;
- Anchorage School Board: Jake Metcalfe and Tim Steele were re-elected. ✓



Rep. Berta Gardner won an Anchorage House seat.



Legislative Hot Issues

Natural Gas Pipeline Negotiations

With pipeline construction proposals from several parties, the Legislature will spend considerable time reviewing the Administration's state ownership proposal. This thorny issue and tariff rates will likely dominate debate.

University Lands

The Murkowski Administration has re-engaged in discussions with the University of Alaska about giving the university 250,000 acres of state land. The scheme is for the university to make money off clearcutting, mining or other uses, so that the state won't have to spend as much money on higher education. Negotiations will likely result in a bill this session.

Pesticide Public Notice

Representative Kevin Meyer is sponsoring the newest pesticide right-to-know legislation. The bill should contain public notice provisions akin to those the Municipal-

ity of Anchorage approved last summer, as well as registration fees to support additional monitoring and public education.

Mixing Zones

With the Department of Environmental Conservation considering regulations that would allow toxic mixing zones in salmon spawning areas, look for legislative proposals to permanently safeguard salmon habitat from state-permitted pollution. ✓

MISSION:
Alaska Conservation Voters works to protect Alaska's environment through public education and advocacy, and supports pro-conservation candidates for public office.



PO Box 100660
 Anchorage, AK 99501-0660

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