



U.S. ARMY GARRISON FORT WAINWRIGHT QUARTERLY UPDATE FOR ALASKA NATIVE TRIBES

January 2012, Issue 27

This is a quarterly update on United States Army Garrison Fort Wainwright activities and issues of interest to federally recognized tribes in Alaska.

Gerstle River Training Area Wildlife Research Project Results Being Reported

In partnership with the tribal government of Healy Lake Village, Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), USAG FWA Environmental Division staff have been studying moose movements and investigating potential contaminants in various species around Gerstle River Training Area since late 2009.

The mission of the research project has been multifold. USAG FWA biologists were interested in addressing concerns about potential past contamination on the Gerstle River Training Area (GRTA) and its long-term impact on fish populations in the nearby Gerstle River and moose that graze on the training land. Additionally, they sought typical wildlife management data—population numbers, information about the variety of species found at GRTA, etc. Fish species were enumerated. And on land, USAG FWA set up motion-triggered cameras to record types and numbers of animals passing through GRTA. They analyzed the images to look for repeat visitors, potential physical anomalies, and other characteristics of interest.

The Healy Lake Village government was concerned with the safety of these subsistence resources and their potential effects on tribal citizens who hunt, gather, and fish in the area. They participated by identifying traditional hunting areas for the tribe and tribal members assisted with the samplings. Additionally tribal members provided valuable information about animal traffic and hunting practices that would assist the researchers in refining their sampling methods.

The ADFG partnered on this project to assess the nutritional condition of moose in hunting unit Southwest 20D and to get a broad overview of moose movements relative to the GRTA and Healy Lake Village's traditional hunting area. They weighed calves to assess weight gain. They measured the racks of the bulls, took hair and blood samples for further study, and determined the age of each animal from tooth rings.

The USFWS engaged in the contaminant testing, analyzing test results from the collected hair and blood samples and performing background research on past military activity in the area. They are providing the expertise regarding contaminant sources and associated effects. Additionally, USFWS collected samples from whitefish for potential contaminants.

To accomplish the project, 42 bulls, 18 cows, and 31 calves were sedated and radio-collared. Their movements were observed and plotted twice a month from October 2009 through June 2011. Moose were collected from various areas in and around GRTA and the Healy Lake traditional hunting area. Prior to this study, very little information was available on moose movements and ranges in this area.

ADFG results on movement were analyzed by gender, geography, and season. The quantity of data allowed researchers to track where the moose spent their time during rut, calving, and hunting times. Additionally, their dispersion during summer versus early and late winter was charted. Once blood and hair sampling data is analyzed, the group of researchers will be able to collectively interpret the results to gain a better picture of resource health in the area. Spatial use of the landscape by moose—what habitats they prefer during what seasons, food choices, and lifecycle practices—will be reviewed. Any found contaminants will be addressed, as will sampling data illustrating a lack of contaminants.

Kalin Seaton of ADFG has written a report on the results of that agency's portion of the project. A summarization of the report was delivered to tribes attending the 13th quarterly meeting of USAG FWA representatives and Upper Tanana tribes (see page 2). USFWS will be submitting research results to Fort Wainwright personnel once hair and blood sample results are ready. Agency participants will be analyzing results and producing a report of the findings that includes data collected by USAG FWA personnel and collective data interpretation from the researchers. Once prepared, the study results will be available to tribes. Watch for announcements in future newsletters.

Joint Pacific Area Range Complex (JPARC) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) update: Alaskan Command is currently preparing to release the Draft EIS for public comment on March 30, 2012. For more information contact Alaskan Command Public Affairs at 907-552-2341 or read more at www.jpisceis.com.

USAG FWA and Upper Tanana Tribes Meet at Dot Lake

The 13th quarterly meeting of USAG FWA representatives and Upper Tanana tribal leaders and staff occurred at Dot Lake Village on January 23. Although the temperatures were cold, the group came together to have lunch and exchange information about recent initiatives. During his first meeting with tribal representatives under his current command, USAG FWA commander Colonel Ron Johnson expressed his desire to partner with tribes for mutually beneficial outcomes and tribal representatives shared ideas for potential projects of benefit to their communities.

In addition to future project discussion, meeting time was spent reporting on the study of moose movement and potential species contamination (see page 1) cooperatively executed by USAG FWA, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The meeting was rounded out with discussions on the topics of current NEPA projects (see JPARC, Future Force 2020 and CRTC articles) and Cultural Resources Management projects including the progress of site monitoring in the Battle Area Complex at the Donnelly Training Area and the development of Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) protocols and government-to-government Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs).



Dot Lake tribal council President Bill Miller and COL Johnson



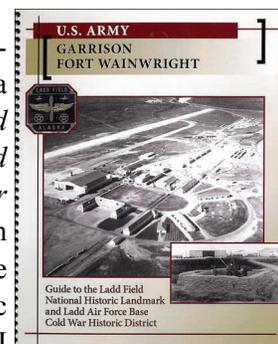
Fort Wainwright Driving Tour Guide Available to the Public

The USAG FWA Cultural Resources section has developed a driving tour *Guide to the Ladd Field National Historic Landmark and Ladd Air Force Base Cold War Historic District*, both found within the Fort Wainwright Main Post. The guide contains current and historic photographs, general World War II and Cold War histories, individual building histories, and driving directions to view the historic buildings on Post. This guide was developed as mitigation for the demolition of a Cold War era building, and it is part of the Cultural Resources section's public outreach component.

If you would like to receive digital or hard copies please contact USAG FWA Native Liaison Elizabeth Cook at 907-361-6323 or elizabeth.a.cook80.ctr@mail.mil. Access to Fort Wainwright for purposes of the self-guided driving tour may be obtained by presenting a driver's license, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance to the Main Gate Visitor Center.

Cold Regions Test Center Releases PEA

The Cold Regions Test Center (CRTC) has released its *Programmatic Environmental Assessment: Army Testing, Infrastructure Improvement and Enhanced Procedures, Donnelly Training Area, Fort Wainwright and Fort Greely* document. It has been prepared to consider the potential environmental effects of these continuing activities by CRTC at these locations. Some tribes were asked for input during scoping and draft comment phases of this document. The document is available at the CRTC command website, www.yuma.army.mil/mhub_documents.shtml and the Fort Wainwright Environmental Division website, www.wainwright.army.mil/env/.



Have You Seen the NEPA Citizen's Guide?

Are you looking for more information to help your tribal staff better understand the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process?

A handy guide exists that provides an explanation of NEPA, its implementation, and how to participate in the process. You can obtain a copy of the publication, *A Citizen's Guide to the NEPA: Having Your Voice Heard*, at: http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/Citizens_Guide_Dec07.pdf, or contact Elizabeth Cook, USAG FWA Native Liaison, 907-361-6323 for a copy. It was developed by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)— the body within the Office of the President of the United States that oversees the implementation of NEPA. The guide was designed to help citizens and interested entities, including tribes, who are concerned about the environmental effects of federal decision-making to effectively participate in Federal agencies' NEPA reviews.

Future Force 2020 Programmatic EA

Restructuring the nation's military has been receiving a large amount of press lately. After ten years of war, it is time to re-prioritize defense budget spending in balance with changing military needs and structure to ensure an agile and effective fighting force for the future. The Department of the Army is preparing the *Future Force 2020 Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA)* to analyze environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with actions required to achieve the Army's desired configuration and end-strength by 2020. The proposed actions include unit deactivations, troop realignments, force reconfigurations, and new unit stationings.

One focus of the PEA is Brigade Combat Teams (BCT), such as the 1-25 Stryker BCT at Fort Wainwright and the 4-25 Airborne BCT at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER). Fort Wainwright and JBER are two of the 22 installations being evaluated in the NEPA document. In addition to the No Action alternative, the PEA will consider: 1) implementing force reductions of the BCTs between fiscal years 2013 and 2020; and 2) Implementing that force reduction and restructuring the BCTs by adding additional combat maneuver battalions and engineer battalions.

This PEA is being prepared at the national level, but U.S. Army Garrison, Fort Wainwright staff will keep tribes apprised of the document's release and any scheduling changes associated with that release. The PEA is currently scheduled to be available for public comment on March 30, 2012 with the comment period running until April 30, 2012. The PEA and draft FONSI will be available online at <http://aec.army.mil/usaec/nepa/topics00.html>.

USAG FWA Staff Takes G2G Training

Members of the USAG FWA Environmental staff participated in a Native American Consultation webinar on January 25. The workshop was given by the National Association of Environmental Professionals (NAEP) and discussed the necessary steps toward achieving effective consultation, potential pitfalls to avoid, and opinions and questions from other participants— nationwide— about their experiences.

This workshop reinforced the USAG FWA Environmental Division staff's understanding of proper consultation procedures with Alaska Native tribal governments and provoked productive in-house conversation to make USAG FWA's process better. The workshop also provided a continuing education opportunity for our environmental professionals.

Meet the New CSM

What's a CSM? In the Army's hierarchy, a Command Sergeant Major is the senior enlisted adviser to a commanding officer of a battalion-sized or larger unit. For USAG FWA, the CSM is the senior non-commissioned officer in the garrison's command team. He advises the garrison commander and serves as an advocate for all other enlisted personnel.



CSM Harry (Wayne) Jeffries assumed responsibility for his position at Fort Wainwright on November 22. He enlisted in the Army on November 23, 1982 in Beckley, West Virginia. He attended basic training at Fort McClellan, Alabama and advanced individual training at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama where he graduated as a Forward Area Alert Radar Repairer. During his 29 years of service he has served in every leadership position from squad leader through command sergeant major.

He has served at Fort Hood, TX; Fort Bragg, NC; Lodi, CA; Redstone Arsenal, AL; Fort Stewart, GA; Bitburg, Germany; Camp Sears, Korea; and Camp Mobile, Korea. CSM Jeffries' deployments include Operation Iraqi Freedom I, 07-09, and 10 and Operation New Dawn with 703rd Brigade Support Battalion. He also deployed with 1st COSCOM in OIF III as the G3 Sergeant Major.

His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star (3rd OLC), Meritorious Service Medal (4th OLC), Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal (4th OLC), the Noncommissioned Officers Professional Development Ribbon (Numeral 4), the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon (Numeral 6), Global War on Terrorism Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, Iraqi Campaign Ribbon (4 Stars), Presidential Unit Citation, Meritorious Unit Citation (2OLC), Basic Airborne Wings, the Army Gold Recruiter Badge, the Drill Sergeant Badge.

He holds degrees in General Education and Electronics and a Bachelor of Science in Math. His military education includes: Warrior Leader Course, Advanced Leader Course, Senior Leaders Course, Airborne School, NBC NCO Course, Recruiting School, Drill Sergeant School, and the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy Class 54.

CSM Jeffries and his wife Michelle have five children.

Alaska Native Veterans Outreach Update— Prepare for Your (Civilian) Future

contributed by Al Grunin, VA Outreach Specialist

As 2012 gets under way, the nation will see an increase in our nation's veteran population. Alaska is no exception, and the state's veteran-supporting organizations are well aware of the changes ahead.

With the drawdown in Iraq, the redeployment of units in Afghanistan, and the nation's budgeting woes, many active-duty military personnel will be joining the ranks of the civilian workforce. Our concern is to ensure that veterans are aware of and taking advantage of services and benefits that they have earned. Although personnel are required to receive briefings regarding transition to civilian life, some brand new veterans still have questions about life and career choices. Even with time allowed to *outprocess* and *clear* from post, time flies and there does not seem to be enough time to prepare.

For veterans in Alaska's rural communities, the challenges are great when seeking employment, using their benefits (such as education), and receiving services. We see rural Alaska Native veterans utilizing Indian Health Services as shareholders/enrollees and non-shareholders receiving limited services, provided they have private insurance. If you are a new veteran, having served recently in the Middle East, contact the Fairbanks Vet Center or myself. There may be health and service benefits available you, but with time limitations.

With all the changes a veteran has to face, the challenges seem insurmountable. If you are a veteran, or a family member of a veteran, make sure you are registered with the Veteran's Administration. This can be done on-line and is extremely important in determining your eligibility for benefits and services. If you need a copy of your DD-214, that can be requested via the internet also.

On a recent trip to Fort Yukon, I was impressed by the hospitality and the high regard the community had toward its veterans. I encourage veteran representatives in rural communities to contact me at agrunin@caduceushealthcare.com or (907) 388-7589. I would like to meet and speak with as many Alaska veterans as possible. If you have any questions about eligibility, enrollment, services or benefits, you can also contact the Fairbanks Vet Center at (907) 456-4238. The Center is staffed with counselors and staff dedicated to supporting interior Alaska's veterans.

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