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Resource Review

January 1990

### RDC gears up to lead Alaska wetlands effort

The Resource Development Council has formed an Alaska Wetlands Action Coalition to spearhead a statewide effort to convince decisionmakers in Washington, D.C., to accommodate Alaska's unique position in the shaping of a national wetlands policy.

The Resource Development Council supports a national strategy to protect American wetlands, but stresses that any federal policy on wetlands must recognize Alaska's unique situation.

While the majority of Lower 48 wetlands have been altered by agriculture, urban and industrial uses, over 99.95% of Alaska's wetlands remain intact, even with world-class energy and minerals development. According to a recent estimate, Alaska wetlands cover over two-thirds of its non-mountainous land area. The result is that wetlands form the bulk of the developable land in the state

The Council is concerned that strict implementation of a federal "no net loss" policy would require that wetlands acreage used for development would have to be compensated for by purchase, restoration or preservation of equivalent wetlands acreage. Such a requirement would jeopardize many proj-

(continued on page 5)

# Alaskans attack new wetlands agreement

Memorandum of Agreement should be revoked

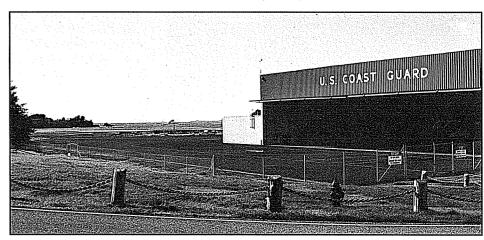
The Resource Development Council is asking the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to rescind a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) which essentially implements a highly controversial "no net loss" wetlands policy for Alaska.

Application of the MOA was delayed recently when EPA Administrator William Reilly agreed to hold off on the policy until mid-January to consider possible alternatives for Alaska. The MOA has also come under strong attack from Alaska Governor Steve Cowper, the state's congressional delegation, various cities and villages and the state's major industries. All agree that to bring Alaska, some two-thirds of which is considered wetlands, under the "no net loss" policy would bring even modest development to a halt.

In letters to Reilly and Robert Page, Assistant Secretary of the Army, RDC Executive Director Becky Gay said the MOA has been promulgated without opportunity for public comment or interagency review, in violation of the Administrative Procedures Act

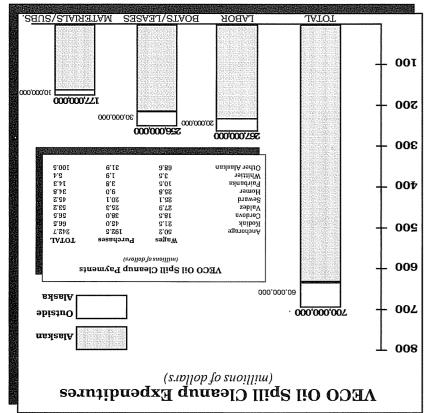
"While the agencies maintain that this MOA is merely a clarification of existing policy, it represents a significant change from the current mitigation requirements

(continued on page 4)



Many Alaska communities and military installations are built on wetlands. The U.S. Coast Guard base at Sitka is built on filled coastal wetlands.

# Oil spill cleanup provides economic boost



supplies, boat leases and subcontracmillion in wages and \$433 million for mid-1970s. Veco had paid out \$267 level since pipeline construction in the employment rate dropped to its lowest had been employed, and Alaska's unkans from more than 125 communities

mobilization of the mammoth effort. plan. The task which remained was dethan anticipated by Exxon's original line had been treated, about 50% more results. More than 1,000 miles of shore-But the massive effort had achieved

and categorized into a computer data All equipment is being winterized

erative efforts of the AGC, Veco and Francisco earthquake through the coopdispatched to aid the victims of the San large shipment of medical supplies was base for deployment in an emergency. A

ment to the remote sites to do the job." effort was getting the people and equiptics of the shoreline. The magic of this the condition of the oil and characterisrything we could at the oil depending on worked," Leathard said. "We threw eve-There was no one magic item that niques have changed little in years. fort, Leathard notes that cleanup tech-Looking back at the summer's ef-

> Millions of trash bags were also on rubber boots. sets of rain gear and 65,000 pairs of 100,000 pairs of safety glasses, 160,000 the purchases were 20,000 duffle bags, placed through Alaska vendors. Among hausted. Orders were immediately rubber boots and goggles were ex-Alaska supplies of gloves, hardhats, Within days of the oil spill, all available

> time by Veco or its subcontractors. Alas-

had been employed for some period of

September 15, more than 15,000 people

China, Finland and Norway," Leathard

half dozen foreign countries, including

ment to meet the demand along with a

million pounds of food were dispatched

board motors and generators. Twelve

500 zodiaks and skiffs and 1,000 out-

equipment, 175 pickups and vehicles,

miles away. The trucks carried heavy

from Anchorage to Valdez, some 380

loads of equipment were dispatched

lasted about two weeks," said Veco pur-

the supply list. "We figure a million bags

chasing manager Alan Hardison.

In May alone, more than 600 truck

to workers during the cleanup.

"In all, 33 states supplied equip-

When the cleanup concluded on

son team at the Port of Anchorage.

contracted with Norcon, a union con-

Veco, a non-union company, sub-

Native shareholders many of whom lived corporations to train and employ Alaska Agreements were signed with native in 14 communities to recruit workers. ployed. Hiring centers were established and non-union workers would be emstruction company to ensure both union

said Veco President Pete Leathard.

vendors and local boats would be used,"

whenever possible, local people, local

subcontractors to follow, was that,

"Our policy, which we also expected our

nomic benefits from the cleanup effort.

spill would receive the greatest eco-

that the people most impacted by the

turn Exxon's paper cleanup plan into

mally retained as the prime contractor to

Company to Exxon, and Veco was for-

ferred from Alyeska Pipeline Service

responsibility for the cleanup was trans-

Exxon to implement the cleanup, the

rated, the prime contractor hired by

five years to plan. But for Veco, Incorpo-

project of that magnitude requires up to

hours had been expended. Normally a

in September, more than 17 million man

the Exxon Valdez oil spill was completed

When the human cleanup effort of

luxury of planning time didn't exist.

Within 48 hours after the spill, the

In choosing Veco, Exxon ensured

in villages impacted by the spill.

an hour was paid to both union and non-The prevailing wage rate of \$16.69

jor factor in the good morale and har-"We believe the wages were a maunion workers.

safety record," Leathard said. major role in the project's excellent mony on the project which played a

approached 12,000 at one time includin support roles. The broad work force the beaches and another 9,000 worked About 3,000 people directly cleaned

than 2,000 vessels were leased to either on ships and barges. At the peak, more housed offshore near the cleanup sites community of Valdez, workers were To alleviate pressure on the local ing both Veco and Exxon personnel.

were enormous. More than 60 aircraft The logistics of the cleanup effort Veco or Exxon.

personnel daily. were employed to transport supplies and

supplies was coordinated by a 60-per-The procurement and shipment of

Carl Portman e eccue race Writer & Editor

> Director the Executive



being done right.

Message from

At the beginning of the 1990s, hindsight can demonstrate

many things but one thing especially—Alaskans are a resilient

and hardy lot.

Phenomena of all kinds ran wildly across our citizenry last

which has separated the producers from the consumers. RDC

array of individual perceptions and will bridge the age gap

understanding about Alaska in a variety of ways, across an

revenues from the resource sector, and we know it can and is

Alaskans are employed directly as producers, or get their

rule and speculate from afar. Furthermore, the majority of

land and what it provides is unmatched by those who would

people. We live, work and recreate here and our love for the

come, great potential, great (or at least big) weather, and great

is, Alaska is a land of great contrasts, great hurdles to over-

average tourist is worthy of the experience anyway? The truth

draws the average tourist to our great state, but who says the

doubt, it is no wonder that Alaskans look forward to the new

ended with a big bang, the eruption of the volcano Mt. Re-

day, 21-day and 30-day records all in the same month), and

spill, the most rainfall ever recorded (surpassing the 3-day, 7-

record, the highest barometric pressure reading ever, the oil

The media focus on Alaska has not been of the sort which

In the upcoming decade, RDC plans to pierce the void of

After a year which started with the coldest January on

Material in the publication may be reprinted without Shelby Stastny 0700, RDC is located at 807 G Street, Suite 200, 100516, Anchorage, Alaska 99510 - (907) 276гецу саидьтал tion of the Resource Development Council, Box Easy Gilbreth Resource Review is the official monthly publica-John Forceskie

permission provided appropriate credit is given.

of coal as it does oil and gas reserves in terms of equivalent energy.

are practically untapped at this time. Alaska has 50 times the amount

economic standpoint," Lawson said, referring to huge reserves that

contribution that Alaska coal can make is very significant from an

important because of the emerging Pacific Rim markets. "The

at RDC's 10th annual conference, Lawson said Alaska coal is particularly

Richard L. Lawson, president of the National Coal Association. Speaking

Alaska is "the heart of our long-term future for coal," according to

producers and consumers recognize their vital relationship vis

economy, which in turn, will lead to a better world where

your help and guidance, RDC will help lead the way to a better

geographic, climatic, political, economic, or man-made. With

and constraints we encounter, real, geologic, meteorologic,

the most part, seem to understand and rise to the challenges

drome from becoming the next "Ugly American" attitude which

plight of the planet. Do what you can to stop this MIMBY syn-

one of the most self-centered attempts at obfuscating the

order to avoid the appearance of exploiting finite resources is

resources to help whet its appetite. Exporting pollution in

much of the world's resources is unwilling to utilize its own

place, as citizens, is to help the rest of the world to follow our

earth for being able to set that agenda and pursue it. Our

learn to produce better. America is still the greatest country on

of and we can get on with making this a better world in which

dream are valid, which means the basic needs are taken care

Alaska's standard of living somewhat close to the American

challenges Alaska faces. The choices we have made to bring

where out there are citizens who believe in and appreciate the

energy, we have given. Of fisheries, we have given. Some-

prosperous economy. Of Wilderness, we have given. Of

that a healthy environment is dependent on a healthy and

vironment" at its onset. ADC looks forward to making the case

private property pales in the tace of government-owned propunfailingly stand by private property rights in a state where

on intelligent solutions to our many problems. ADC will

to the nation's, and hopefully, entice intelligent people to work

convince policy-makers that Alaska's economic health is key will elevate the global perspective on resource development,

The upcoming decade is billed as the "Decade of the En-

lead and make their countries a better place to live.

It is unconscionable to expect that a country which uses so

Consumers will learn to conserve more and producers will

Face it, everything comes from somewhere. Alaskans, for

a vis the health of this great planet Earth.

makes the world disdain our people.

Heather Hall Projects Coordinator.. Debbie Reinwand Kimberly R. Duke Member Services/Admin Asst. Carl Portman Public Relations Director. Becky L. Gay Executive Director

"Saka coal is "heart of future"

Past President

Vice President

Executive Committee Officers

broad-based, diversified economy while protecting

ral resources in an orderly manner and to create a

ment organization working to develop Alaska's natu-

largest privately funded nonprofit economic develop-

The Resource Development Council (RDC) is Alaska's

Vice President .10e Usibelli, Jr.

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## "szol fan on" no AOM aht of savitsnraflA

Alaska in establishing wetland development formulas. consideration the millions of acres of federal Wilderness in range of alternatives is a banking system which would take into

Alaska to draw on its "credit" or "banked" land - - land that has loss" concept. A system should be outlined that would allow any further restrictive development policies such as the "no net percentage of its public lands, and that should be factored into restricted land classifications. Alaska has warehoused a large in conservation system units (158 million acres) and in other Alaska would be given credit for land that has been set aside Under the banking system or development credit formula,

differences which set Alaska wetlands apart from those in quality benefits. This approach recognizes the fundamental wetlands that actually provide vital fish and wildlife and water concentrating on classification and protection of productive eistinguishing between "high value" and "low value" wetlands, Another approach would be to more carefully define wetlands, loss" policy until the threshold has been met or exceeded. than 5% - 20% to be excluded from provisions of the "no net would allow states in which cumulative wetland losses are less means to respond to Alaska's unique position. This approach The adoption of a threshold approach is another possible been set aside and essentially restricts development.

fair and flexible wetlands policy for Alaska. position. The MOA does not advance the cause of shaping a deserves a flexible wetlands policy that recognizes its unique rest of the country and this must be recognized. Alaska ered. The wetlands issue in Alaska is not the same as for the actions regarding wetlands in our state be carefully consid-It is critical that the MOM be rescinded and that any future

> Pete Nelson President from the Thoughts



net loss" policy. should be viewed as such during discussion of a national "no Alaska and its wetlands represent a unique situation and The Resource Development Council strongly believes that

problem where it exists — in the Lower 48 states. Alaska wetlands will do nothing toward solving the wetlands have a wetlands loss problem. And thwarting development in tional "no net loss" policy will be in the one state that does not parts of the country. Ironically, the greatest impact of a naand not punished for the problems that have resulted in other Alaskans should be rewarded for keeping their wetlands intact, course of history. As good stewards of the land, RDC believes state's wetlands have been lost to development over the considered wetlands, less than one half of one percent of the While two-thirds of Alaska's non-mountainous area is

"no net loss" policy to a threshold approach. Included in the alternatives range from a complete Alaska exemption from the of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency. The the Memorandum of Agreement between the U.S. Army Corps advanced several alternatives to Washington, D.C., regarding ADC has been very active on the wetlands issue and has

### Wickwire said that Alaska has aldeal with the facts you get a good retound that once you can get people to very important," Wickwire said. "I have contribution to the nation's well-being is "Alaska's story is impressive, its Changing America's perception of Alaska

James Wickwire

the public opinion in the Lower 48 about editorial boards which shape much of cymakers, members of Congress and

it doesn't work with everyone, Wickwire public education is very expensive, and Unfortunately, this approach to

about the state. dealing with inaccurate perceptions facts has worked best for Alaska in However, he said that sticking to the

> native, land and resource issues. ney with extensive experience in Alaska says James Wickwire, a Seattle attor-Alaska is an extremely difficult task, changing America's impressions about mation and factual inaccuracy. And are frequently marked by gross misintorcans have about Alaska and its people Many of the perceptions that Ameri-

Eskimos do not live in igloos is to take convince people that the North Slope that the only effective and quick way to November in Anchorage, Wickwire said Addressing RDC's conference last

personal observation and direct discuscide the major issues on the basis of "Bring people to Alaska. Let them deexposure to reality," Wickwire noted. rate perceptions are best changed by "Preconceived notions and inaccuthem there to see for themselves.

been used extensively with polipeople who are "open minded." It has This approach has worked well with

sions with Alaskans."

"S noitation?" Gomer Jones, "Why the constant

economic growth." "We need good wildlife research

"Our ultimate goal has to be to get Jones suggested that the United

begin now to work together."

afford this same research, management must generate the wealth needed to environment; and that development

nity which is able to sustain national come from a healthy industrial commufunding for vital research is going to like or acknowledge the fact, most of the not the majority of environmental groups 'hands-on' scientists. And, whether or Jones added. "We need more practical and good environmental research,"

enough oil to sustain itself and its allies. forced to move quickly to produce ei noiten eht ti gninnslq lstnemnovivne major conflict could preclude lengthy international emergency brought on by a wildlite sateguards. He warned that an has time to employ environmental and and the Outer Continental Shelf while it velop promising oil prospects in Alaska States move to carefully explore and de-

"But for that to happen, we need to common objectives," Jones concluded. ness community to recognize some the environmental community and busi-

nomically deprived as some third world

fact that parts of the state are as eco-

suggested Alaska be candid about the

zen, the grassroots level, is also very

delegates. "The average American citi-

well-being," Wickwire told conference

sible for determining Alaska's future

members of Congress who are respon-

convey to Americans through the mass

"It is not just the President or

".Jnatroqmi

On the social welfare side, Wickwire

been enough Wickwire said. Alaska has been effective, but it has not monitor and lobby issues of concern to nent office in the nation's capital to state government. The state's perma-

needs would be a good message to meeting the nation's growing energy lieves the contribution Alaska makes in strengths. For example, Wickwire beaddress Alaska's other economic be more imaginative, but also need to seafood and tourism industries need to ing programs that have promoted the He said one-dimensional advertis-

Developers and environmentalists

Why the constant confrontation?

entific fact," Jones said. an entrenched position rather than scition which is often based on defense of

sources in case of a world emergency," ties with our allies to provide vital renities, and for the need to uphold treadomestic use, for employment opportugrowth, for increased energy sources for into account the need for economic dustry, Jones warned. "They do not take environment that would totally stifle inare advocating measures to protect the Some conservation organizations

pear to be insurmountable." makes the challenges that face us approgress over the past twenty years knowledge the accomplishments and their case," Jones noted. "To not acthese accomplishments would weaken friends say that to recognize any of tecting the environment. "My activists good performance by industry in promental activists find it difficult to credit Jones complained that environ-

it has to do with funding the organiza-From the environmentalist side, much of Why the constant confrontation?

"Threats of crises and calamity raise tion, Jones believes.

the need for lawyers, not scientists. in the legislative arena which creates these threats also result in confrontation money," Jones said. "Unfortunately,

imposed to ensure the safety of the management activities and controls velopment, there must be research and Jones continued. "Because of that deeconomic and industrial development," of environmental funding comes from "Make no mistake about it, the bulk

> mitment to both sustained economic de-There is a need for a balanced com-

> more and more of our natural resources, tinue to manipulate, urbanize and utilize "While it is clear that we will con-Institute for Urban Wildlife. Gomer Jones, President of the National ronmental protection, according to velopment as well as responsible envi-

> done by industry environmentalists." best wildlife enhancements have been and do coexist well, that some of the ment and environmental protection can Jones. "The good news is that developwildlife and our environment," said ways that minimize adverse effects on the challenge before us is to do this in

they tend to affect the bottom line." try, and within the company because community because they work for indusa 'black hat' - both in the environmental the nation's best environmentalists wear too 'good' to work for industry. Some of perception that everyone on our side is that too many environmentalists have a an effective capacity. It seems to me ronmental scientists to work together in the chances for our biologists and envimental community may be, in fact, killing the environment, we in the environ-Jones said that "in our zeal to protect Council in Anchorage last November, ence of the Resource Development Addressing the 10th annual confer-

unnecessary, unproductive confrontamunities grows higher. "We witness the environmental and industrial comthe economy tightens, the wall dividing National Audubon Society, noted that as the National Wildlife Federation and the Jones, a former vice president of

### Changing America's perception. . .

wire said. ment to the land and its wildlife," Wickalso share a reverence for and commit-(continued from page 2)

political process." critical junctures of the legislative and zens who travel to Washington, D.C. at occasional airplane full of prominent citipeople are "far more effective than the The Seattle attorney said these

to build and enhance the credibility of on important state and national issues is for getting Alaska's point of view across Another suggestion Wickwire had

(9 egad no beunitnos)

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need jobs and development, but they

through the stereotypes. They want and

who have strong aspirations. They break

who have experienced hardship and

effective because they are real people

entrepreneurs and oil crew roustabouts

ing and fishing guides, small business

include Alaska natives, fishermen, hunt-

"real people," according to Wickwire,

its real people," Wickwire said. These

ambassadors, more often than not, are

deal with its problems. "Alaska's best

ambassadors to Washington, D.C., to

ways done well when it sends its best

to name a few.

"These kinds of representatives are

# MOA poses grave threat to Alaska

(continued from cover)

under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act," Gay noted. She explained that Section 404 does not call for compensation in its mitigation requirements and has not previously been interpreted to do so. Yet the MOA sets up a mitigation decisionmaking process that includes compensatory mitigation, resulting in a very significant change in the way projects are permitted.

"The MOA is not a clarification of existing policy, but is, in fact, a new policy directing agencies to achieve no net loss of wetlands," Gay said. "It is inappropriate to adopt the goal of no overall net loss of wetlands through the MOA process prior to any resolution of the issue by the Administration or Congress."

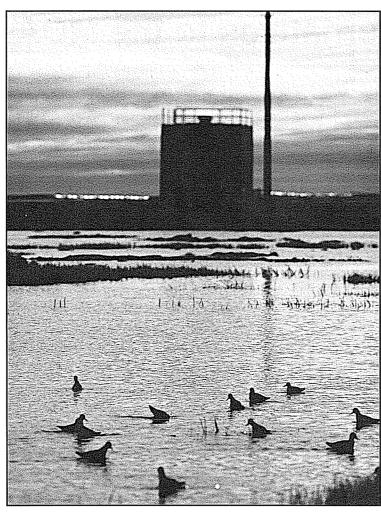
"This is an extremely serious issue for nearly all Alaska communities and industries," Gay stressed. "The MOA, which does not advance the cause of shaping a flexible wetlands policy for Alaska, should immediately be revoked."

In a letter to President Bush, Governor Cowper asserted that the guidelines set forth in the MOA "provide only unrestrainted discretion at the local-agency level." Cowper said "this is not an expression of national wetlands policy, it is an example of ad hoc decision making. As such, it will have a chilling effect on community expansion and economic development."

According to Vicki Masterman, an environmental attorney from Chicago, "the most blatant departure for the existing laws and regulations in the MOA is the statement that 'compensatory mitigation will be required for unavoidable adverse impacts remaining after avoidance and after minimization."

Speaking before RDC's recent 10th annual conference, Masterman took exception to the Corps position that the MOA doesn't change the current laws and regulations. "That's baloney, it's a change, and they have to say that if they attempt to defend it legally," Masterman asserted.

Speaking to the overall "no net loss" controversy, Masterman said "it is naive to think that EPA and the environmental



Since virtually all of the energy-rich Alaska North Slope is considered wetlands, the "no net loss" policy would preclude further development of promising oil and gas prospects vital to Alaska's economic well-being and the nation's energy security. North Slope oil fields provide 25% of U.S. domestic oil production, yet less than 0.02% of Alaska's wetlands have been disturbed by energy development.

community will let any definition of no net loss work. Delay is a victory for them. The ultimate victory for them is to inject enough hurdles into a permit process to make projects die before they get to the end of the process."

Alaska does not have a wetlands problem, Masterman insists. "If the Lower 48 states had Alaska's wetlands management record, there would have been no National Wetlands Policy Forum, there would probably be no Section 404 (of the Clean Water Act), and we certainly wouldn't have a no net loss proposal."

Development has disturbed or altered about 80,000 acres of wetlands in Alaska, leaving 99.95% of the state's wetland base intact. In fact, Alaska's total wetland loss over the course of its history is less than one-third of the amount that is lost every year in the Lower 48.

Eighty-seven percent of the losses in the southern states are attributed to

agricultual development which is exempt from Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Only eight percent of wetland losses were from urban development, but most surface development in the Lower 48 occurred before the Section 404 program.

While many local, state and private officials view the emerging "no net loss" policy as the "last straw," a small non-profit organization in Juneau working on behalf of the homeless is also feeling the squeeze.

The St. Vincent de Paul Society in Juneau is building a \$350,000 shelter for homeless families, but to get an occupancy permit the Society must pave a 40-foot by 190-foot vacant lot next door that it bought for parking. Surrounded by paved streets, that lot has a tendency to collect water during heavy rain. As a result, the Corps considers the lot a wetland, requiring a permit before any filling and paving can occur.

(continued on page 5)

# RDC coalition targets "no net loss"

(continued for cover)

ects because of enormous offsite mitigation costs.

RDC is organizing community, native and industry leaders under its wetlands coalition to confront the great threat posed by "no net loss." The Council has written directly to President George Bush and William Reilly, Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It has also assisted local communities in developing and advancing resolutions urging President Bush to not subject Alaska to a blanket policy that fails to consider the state's unique position in the wetlands issue.

The Alaska Council of Mayors, Alaska Municipal League, the Southeast Conference, the Kenai Peninsula Borough, the Municipality of Anchorage, the Northwest Arctic Borough, the Bristol Bay Borough and other communities, including Seward, Cordova and Nome, have passed resolutions. Resolutions expressing concern over the impacts of the proposed federal policy to Alaska are pending in a number of other communities.

RDC has published a detailed brochure focusing on Alaska wetlands and what the "no net loss" concept means to the state's economy. The brochure has been widely circulated throughout the state and has been distributed to key public officials in the Lower 48. In addition, the Council has featured indepth reports of the wetlands issue in its monthly publication, the *Resource Review*, as well as distributing editorials to newspapers across the state.

RDC is working closely with the state and the legislature to adopt a strong unified position on wetlands. A major priority of its 1990 legislative agenda is to secure a definitive and strong position from the Legislature that

articulates special consideration for Alaska in any federal "no net loss" wetlands policy. In the new year, RDC also plans to travel throughout the state to give wetlands presentations to affected communities.

In December, RDC sent out a "Red Alert" to its priority list of members asking them to send telegrams and letters to President Bush requesting that a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Environmental Protection Agency and the Corps of Engineers on permits under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act be withdrawn. The MOA represents a significant change from the current mitigation requirements of the Clean Water Act and sets up a new decisionmaking process that includes "no net loss" mitigation.

RDC has also published a five-page briefing paper on the issue. The report was mailed to the membership in early December.

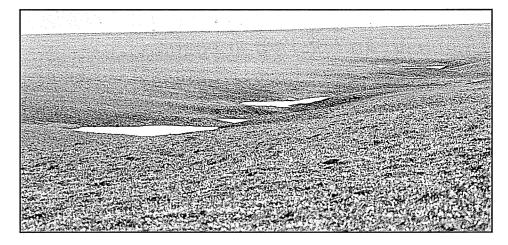
Editor's Note: Readers of the Resource Review are urged to write a brief letter requesting that the EPA/Corps MOA be rescinded and that any future actions regarding wetlands in Alaska be carefully considered. The letters should be addressed to: Robert Page, Assistant Secretary for Civil Works, Department of the Army, The Pentagon, 2E570, Washington, D.C. 20310; Nancy Maloley, Office of Policy Development, Old Executive Office Building, 17th Street & Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Room 227, Washington, D.C. 20500; Bob Grady, Office of Management and Budget, Old Executive Building, 17th Street & Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Room 260, Washington, D.C. 20500; Michael Deland, Council on Environmental Quality, Executive Office of the President, 722 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20503.

### Wetlands...

(continued from page 4)

The Society is fearful that the Corps will invoke "no net loss" and require it to find land elsewhere to restore in compensation. Essentially, the non-profit organization would be paying twice for the parking lot. The Society paid \$35,000 for the lot and paving costs will add substantially to that tally.

"I am afraid that with the Corps of Engineers we won't be able to get a certificate for occupancy simply because we don't have a paved parking lot," said Society Executive Director Paul Paradis.



Alaska's North Slope is considered to be 99% wetlands, despite an annual precipitation level of only 5 to 7 inches. Permafrost conditions in the arctic trap spring snowmelt and summer rain on the surface.