Red Dog Supports Winter Bear

Red Dog’s Community Investment partnered with other local organizations to provide funding to support hosting a play called The Winter Bear, in three villages (Kivalina, Kiana and Kotzebue). Written by playwright, Anne Hanley, The Winter Bear is a play that tells the story of an Alaska Native teenager who rises above his past traumas to become a leader with the help of mentor, Sidney Huntington. winterbearproject.com

This year, Red Dog provided funding for this important project. The Project’s mission is to “change the climate of fear and hopelessness that breeds suicide, by broadening awareness, stimulating dialogue, and promoting healing through the performing arts.” With Red Dog’s support, a combined total of 480 people attended four performances in three days, approximately 58% of the attendees were youth. Two performances were held in Kotzebue, a morning and an evening show. After the play, in Kivalina and Kiana, 92 participants attended workshops. The workshops were designed to build self-esteem and encourage students to stretch themselves physically and mentally through performing arts-related activities.

About the visit to our region, Ms. Hanley commented, “Everywhere we went, students were engaged and enthusiastic. The schools and communities went out of their way to

Message from Interim General Manager

By John Egan

After a rough start for safety and production in the first four months of 2018, we achieved safe production in May and set new production records for June with no reportable injuries. Thank you for all your hard work so far this year, especially for the efforts to work safely through challenging weather and mining snow!

Our Courageous Safety Leadership (CSL) journey continues with CSL1 and CSL3 combined into a new version called “Introduction to CSL”. This was combined with CSL4, where crews and supervisors work together to create a safer working environment. These initiatives will support us as we strive towards our goal of “everyone going home safe and healthy every day”.

2018 and 2019 will be two of the busiest years Red Dog has ever seen. Big projects include dam lifts to provide tailings capacity for all the softer-baritic ore we are processing, the VIP2 project which prepares the mill for harder ore coming in the next few years, and regional exploration work that is being staged out of Red Dog.

Even with the addition of two temporary camps and an extension to the PAC, rooms, flights, lockers, cafeterias and exercise areas will be at capacity. I ask for your patience and support while the work is completed to get the PAC extension up and running. However, if you have suggestions to improve life in the camps, please discuss them with your supervisor or Human Resources and we will do what we can during this busy period.

Teck Alaska and NANA are supporting the “Stand for Alaska” campaign, Vote NO on Ballot Measure 1, which opposes the “Stand for Salmon” ballot initiative. The ballot measure proposes regulatory changes that will make it difficult for Red Dog Operations to renew permits for our existing deposits and to obtain permits for any future deposits. This could have profound implications for Red Dog, so please review additional information in the article in this newsletter.

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Red Dog Supports Winter Bear

make us feel welcome. Terrific attendance in all locations and the play stimulated some soul-searching discussion.”

Brian Wescott, who plays mentor Sidney Huntington shares, “It’s hard to play ‘favorites’ with the incredible communities we visit on Winter Bear tours, but I have to say that my experience in Kivalina was one of the most powerful ones I’ve had in nine years with The Winter Bear Project. (Note: Since its first production in 2008, The Winter Bear has reached over 10,000 people in 43 communities across Alaska.)

Brian, who is Yupik and Athabascan, grew up in Crooked Creek on the Kuskokwim River and spent his summers in McGrath. During Q&A opportunities after the performances, many of the youth lit up when they learned that an Alaskan native from a small village was able to work in a creative profession that had taken him to Los Angeles and back up to Alaska to bring theatre to rural villages.

In addition to bringing a positive, uplifting message of hope to rural Alaska, The Winter Bear brings art to communities, and opens doors to possibilities that might not otherwise be realized.

“It shows there is always a way.”
- Age 16

“Helped me see suicide isn’t the answer. Very helpful for me as that’s something I struggle with.”
- Age 22

“Love the storytelling that shows ways to connect young people to ancestors and culture.”
- Age 36

“The play presented a complex issue in multilayered art.”
- Age 70

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Message from the General Manager

Les Yesnik has been appointed General Manager, Red Dog Operations, and will start August 13, 2018. Please join me in welcoming Les to the Red Dog family. A bulletin with more information about Les and his background will be posted shortly.

We are now on-track to exceed plan metal production in 2018, but that is only part of the job. Please work with your team to focus on recognizing and mitigating hazards so safety and production both improve. Though it is nice when the Sivulliqsi bonus payout can increase, it is more important that everyone goes home safe and healthy every day!

Quyaana

Thank you to all who contributed to our newsletter.

To submit topic ideas or an article about your work, a coworker spotlight, a special project or life at Red Dog, contact Managing Editor, Verna Westlake at verna.westlake@teck.com or communityrelationsRDOG@teck.com
Dear Red Dog Employee,

In February of this year, Red Dog Operations joined Stand for Alaska, a campaign opposing a dangerous ballot measure that would impose a radical new permitting scheme in Alaska. If passed, this measure would negatively impact virtually every type of project in the state and it poses a direct threat to Red Dog Operations. The ballot measure also has negative implications for our communities, jobs, and the Alaska way of life.

What’s the problem?
Outside environmental groups say the intent of this measure is to simply update Alaska laws protecting fish habitat. However, their misleading campaign ignores Alaska’s excellent track record of both protecting fish and developing our state. Our coalition opposes the ballot measure because it would overhaul an already successful regulatory system, seriously threatening Alaska’s economy with no added benefit to the environment.

Existing mines, oil and gas facilities, roads, hydropower, ports, and wastewater plants would have been difficult, if not impossible to permit if this ballot measure had been in place when they were developed. Imagine Alaska without Prudhoe Bay and Red Dog. The ballot measure will cause delays, add cost, and stop future projects. It will jeopardize jobs and contracting opportunities and worsen the state’s budget problems.

How does it impact Red Dog Operations?
Supporters of the ballot measure claim it will not impact existing operations. This is false. The ballot measures’ so-called “grandfather clause” ignores the fact that many permits need to be renewed on a regular basis and that expansions require new permits. This means there is no grandfathering and our operations will not be able to continue to operate or expand under this unnecessary scheme.

What can you do?
Learn more about the issue and tell others how it threatens Alaska’s communities, economy, and jobs.

1. Join the coalition: www.standforak.com/signup
2. Follow Stand for Alaska on Twitter and Facebook to show your support and get updates on the campaign www.facebook.com/standforalaska/
3. VOTE NO on BALLOT MEASURE 1 during the General Election on November 6, 2018

Paid for by Stand for Alaska, 200 West 34th Avenue, PMB 1219, Anchorage, AK 99503. Marleanna Hall, chair, Aaron Schutt, co-chair, Jaelleen Kookesh, co-chair, Joey Merrick, co-chair, and Sarah Lefebvre, co-chair, approved this message. Top contributors are BP, Anchorage, Alaska; Teck Alaska, Anchorage, Alaska; and ConocoPhillips Alaska, Anchorage, Alaska.

Red Dog Community Shows Up For A Fundraising Cause
By Frank Bertling

Thank you to EVERYONE at Red Dog, family, and friends outside of Red Dog who supported this fundraiser for our coworker and friend, Eugene Monroe and his family.

Red Dog, including contracted employees, banded together in a supportive show of generosity and friendship, and raised a total of $15,245! This will be a great help for Eugene, and shows how much all of us can achieve when we come together as a team to support each other in a time of need.

Thanks to Thurston Mitchell, Gabe Schaeffer, Jason Anderson, Adam Turner, Tyler Mc-Mickell, Dan Helms, Randy Williams, Shawn Rangitsch, and many more.

Congratulations Winners!

1. Backpack- Ken Shuster (donated by HE crew)
2. VHF Radio- Richard Sanchez (donated by HE crew)
3. VHF Radio- Carla Nelson (donated by HE crew)
4. Range Finder- Jason Lee (donated by HE crew)
5. Knife- Sidney Cleveland (donated by Thurston Mitchell)

6. Binoculars- Joe Cook (donated by HE crew)
7. Scope- Chuck Barger (donated by Dan Noy)
8. Mukluks- Ken Shuster (donated by Nicole Shellabarger)
9. SOG Safari Kit- Joe McCue (donated by Sidney Cleveland)
10. .22 Riffl- Brenton Savikko (donated by HE crew)
11. .270 Riffl- Anthony Walton (donated by Tyler McMickell)
12. .45-70 Vee Venters (donated by HE crew)
13. Ivory Earrings- Ned Foxglove (donated by Virgil Schumacher)
RDIA: Off to a Great Start!
By Chris Van Arsdale

In just a few short months of RDIA (Red Dog Improvement Action), the employees of Red Dog have put some great ideas into action. Each one of these ideas makes Red Dog a better place — and we want to congratulate those who put in the hard work to make them happen! Here are a couple examples of some of the great work going on.

Jason Anderson and Robert Haviland took the initiative to improve the fuel island hose. Operators had commented on the hose not having a swivel, making it difficult to use. Jason and Robert decided to make that improvement, but also added a break-away fitting. The value of putting these ideas in to action makes fueling easier, allows for more flexible fueling if equipment is down, and reduces the chance of a spill. This results in increased safety for operators by reducing their strain, improving productivity by increasing our operational flexibility, and protecting the environment by preventing spills. Great work!

You may have noticed that things tend to freeze around Red Dog! Marquay Nelson recognized that the glycol transfer pump for the Joy compressor’s Alfa Laval cooling system would freeze at times. He took the initiative to install a drain system to prevent the pump from freezing. The value of installing the drain includes operators not fighting frozen equipment and the prevention of downtime to the mill should the frozen system keep the compressors from operating. Another great idea in action!

Do you have great ideas that can make Red Dog better? Get your supervisor’s approval and make them happen. You could win an iPad or a seat in First Class on Alaska Airlines on crew change day for your efforts! Most importantly, you’ll be making Red Dog better!

The Red Dog Road Dust Study of 2018
by Johanna Salatas

Dust is a common sight along any gravel road in summer months. Road traffic on the Port Road and around the Mine and Port sites creates visible road dust. Red Dog Operations (RDO) works diligently to lessen road dust because it can reduce visibility and cause hazardous driving conditions, compromise road surface integrity through the loss of fine particles, and can also impact vegetation in surrounding areas.

Every spring and summer the Red Dog Surface Crew dedicates a lot of hard work to keep the road dust down by applying calcium chloride as a dust suppressant and by watering the roads. The calcium chloride is hygroscopic material, meaning it attracts moisture from the atmosphere and environment, and therefore keeps dust down and resists evaporation. At the same time, the Heavy Equipment Shop

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The Red Dog Road Dust Study of 2018 continually focuses effort to keep equipment running for the surface crew, so that water and calcium chloride can be applied to the roads.

Although calcium chloride is a standard and well-known dust suppressant, Red Dog Operations is continually on the quest to “Improve” [Remember the PIC Motto! Red Dog PICs the Environment = Prevent | Improve | Comply]. However, calcium chloride does have some downsides; for example, the chlorides can be destructive to vehicles due to corrosion. The road also requires repeated watering, especially on stretches of dry days when the road hasn’t been exposed to rainfall.

To attempt to improve upon the calcium chloride currently used, RDO is conducting a trial with a dust suppressant called Envirokleen (Midwest Industrial Supply Inc.). Envirokleen is a synthetic organic dust control stabilizing agent, a polymer that binds the road surface particles together. The product has been successful at stabilizing gravel runway surfaces in the Canadian Arctic. It is Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) verified safe for people and the environment. The synthetic organic fluid meets the criteria by the U.S. EPA for sediment and aquatic toxicity, is oil-sheen free, does not contain PAHs, and is biodegradable.

The benefits of Envirokleen at other sites have included reduced maintenance costs, increased road strength, smoothness and surface stability, and savings on future aggregate and applications due to preserved gravel and fines. Also, the product has been certified non-corrosive by Boeing, using the most stringent corrosion standard in the United States, in contrast with the calcium chloride which is highly corrosive on vehicle parts.

In 2017, RDO purchased product for a road trial of Envirokleen. Although successful at other sites, it remains to be seen if this product is a good match for the type of road material and weight and frequency of vehicles we utilize at Red Dog. Most importantly, the goal of this study is to determine how well this product reduces dust on the tundra areas, and to determine how the product can stabilize the road.

During this trial, the Environmental Department will collect data through Fall 2018 using dustfall jars and high-volume air samplers staged at the trial area (between Mile Markers 28 and 31.5) and compare that to data collected from the control area where calcium chloride is used (between Mile Markers 36 and 39.5). The two areas of the road being utilized for this study are both relatively straight, and haul trucks can pick up speed on both these sections. The increased speeds and weight of the vehicles on these stretches of road will allow for a demanding test of the product. The data collected will be used to determine if this product will work well at some of our operational areas. Results will be available in winter 2018.

Annual Spring Cleanup
By Carla Nelson

Thank you to the Red Dog employee volunteers who participated in the annual spring cleanup on June 26. Thank you to the departments pitching in and cleaning up around their work areas and to those who participated in picking up trash in outlying areas.

For our safety, Environmental Technicians used the helicopter to do an aerial sweep to make sure there were no bears in the areas we cleaned.

Also, a big “thank you” to Surface crew for lending us a bus for the entire day, shuttling our cleanup participants and for collecting the filled trash bags around the campsite.

Suvisi (Sü-vi-see) in the Iñupiaq language means:

“What are the many people doing?”
The winter of 2018 started like any other winter for Red Dog, clear and cold. Maybe not as cold as other years, but cold enough. January had very little snow or wind and that carried on into February. Then, with very little notice, the night of February 11th was Red Dog's 1st day of 45 days of windy and snowy weather highlighted by a documented recorded wind gust of 97 knots!

The winter barrage took us into April and left Red Dog Operations (RDO) in grid lock because of accumulated and drifted snow. There were many aspects of Operations that were impacted by this long stretch of winter weather, starting with the inability to complete regional and Anchorage crew rotation change travel as scheduled. During this time, dozens of regional flights and nine Anchorage Alaska Airlines jet flights were canceled due to weather conditions at RDO. On crew change days during winter months, we can have 200-220 employees traveling on the jet and regional flights combined.

The impact didn't stop there. During this time, RDO went 18 straight days without a freight plane landing. This created a back log of over 300,000 pounds of food and supplies in Anchorage. The lack of freight delivery limited food options served for breakfast, lunch and dinner in our camps. Most noted was the dramatic taste difference between fresh eggs and powdered eggs. The weather also affected the ability to fly in explosives needed for mining, causing delays in mine blasting and haulage.

Another operational impact was the inability to haul concentrate from the mine site to the port. NANA Lynden concentrate haulage was stopped for 10 days in February and 7 days in March, and a reduced haulage on 12 days during those two months. On a normal operations day, NANA Lynden hauls about 30 truckloads in a 24-hour period. The lack of concentrate haulage resulted in the mill throttling back production and eventually shutting down the mill for 10 days because the Mine Concentrate Storage Building (CSB) was at full capacity.

Red Dog has always had winter storms. The difference in 2018 was that the duration and frequency of the storms didn't allow crews to “dig out” the snow to resume normal operation. In fact, there was so much snow in such a short period of time that Operations had to use mining equipment like 993k loaders, 777 haul trucks and D10 dozers to “dig out” the yards and the roads.

When it was all over and we made it through another challenging winter, there was no better feeling than being able to watch all the snow melt away into spring and recognize that RDO can safely operate in the harshest conditions on earth.
In April of 2018, Red Dog’s Community Investment team provided financial support to a program called OPT-in Kiana. The program was formed in 2014 by local teens as a response to prevalent substance abuse, suicide, and bullying in their community. The group holds teen nights and hosts an annual youth conference to encourage themselves and their community to do “One Positive Thing” every day.

The program depends on grants and fundraisers for necessary finances. Teck Alaska, Red Dog Operations, supported OPT-In Kiana again this year and was the biggest funder! Teck also supported the Alaska Perseverance Theatre appearance at the Conference to perform a professional production of “The Winter Bear”. Kiana having experienced a suicide in October, “The Winter Bear” was a powerful and meaningful addition to the Conference.

In addition to the financial support, Teck donated a dinner for all the Conference attendees and community members attending the performance. Since the Conference relies on volunteers for all meals and food, this dinner enabled them to double the number of attendees. In addition to food, Teck also provided the paper products and drinks for the meal. There was nothing left out, right down to napkins and trash bags.

While not requested or expected, perhaps Red Dog Operation’s biggest contribution is their belief and investment in our youth who are building their future now!

OPT-In Kiana is a community-based, all-inclusive, youth-founded youth group in Kiana. OPT-in Kiana provides youth-directed, safe, and empowering leadership opportunities and community building activities for young people in Kiana with the intention of creating a sense of belonging and belief in the future, and building youth empowerment and leadership skills.

The 2018, 3rd Annual Youth Conference theme was “Our Voices, Our Choices, Our Futures”. Youth began developing plans for the Conference in November 2017 at Lead On for Peace and Equality, a yearly youth empowerment summit sponsored by the Alaska Network for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

The youth outlined their perceptions of Kiana and their vision for Kiana in the future. They chose goals, identified deliverables, resources, obstacles and chose their focus activity. Planning continued at home, while working on grants, fundraising and selecting presenters. Youth helped set-up, emcee and clean-up for the Conference. Each year, their involvement in the development and production of the Conference increases.

Editors note: Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus is a mentor for OPT-In Kiana and mother of founder, Ivory Gerhardt-Cyrus. At 15 years old, Ivory attended Lead on for Peace and Equality in Anchorage and wrote a grant for weekly teen nights for youth to have a safe place to go. The gatherings started at her home and grew to include an annual conference, fundraising and activities for youth 12 years old and up. An OPT-In Junior group was also started for youth under 12 years old.

“OPT-In makes a better village to be in. It is really fun to do.”
- Kiana Youth
Red Dog Community Investment proudly sponsors this traditional, cultural community event that takes place each year in April.

The Kobuk 440 Racing Association is dedicated to enhancing and perpetuating the Inupiaq tradition of distance dog mushing in the Arctic.

The event shines a spotlight on local mushers and attracts racers from all over Alaska and beyond. The Kobuk 440 Racing Association works to engage community members throughout the race communities.

The Racing Association also trains the next generation of mushers in the NANA Region. Volunteer crews work with youth ages 5-18 to get them their first experience on a dog sled, or in their first race. Each race official, time keeper, trail maker, cook, and child play a part in keeping the mushing heritage of Northwest Alaska alive.

The Kobuk 440 dog sled race starts in Kotzebue, runs through Selawik and along the Kobuk River communities of Noorvik, Kiana, Ambler, Shungnak and Kobuk.
Welcome, Greta Schuerch
Senior Government Relations Coordinator

Where are you from? Kiana, Alaska, one of our 11 villages in the region.

What is your role at Red Dog? As Senior Government Relations Coordinator, I am responsible for monitoring and analyzing legislation that could pose impacts to Red Dog Operations and its workforce. In doing so, I work closely with the company’s lobbying firm in Juneau as well as with NANA to forecast and respond to policy matters that have implications for Red Dog, to influence favorable outcomes. I also work with Teck Resources headquarters to advance federal-level issues that impact the company, its operations and the industry. I represent Red Dog in various trade associations and coalitions including the Council of Alaska Producers, the Alaska Miners Association, the Resource Development Council, and Stand for Alaska.

Any highlights or mention of past role(s)? I’ve worked as Legislative Aide at the Alaska State Legislature, as a consultant for the Inuit Circumpolar Council of Alaska, the City of Kiana and managed the North Slope Borough/Northwest Arctic Borough joint-partnership. Prior to coming to work for Teck, I worked in External/Government Affairs at NANA.

What is your history, if any, with Red Dog and any entity in the region? I started working at Red Dog immediately after graduating from high school as a core splitter/laborer in the Geology department. When that job ended, I worked in temporary positions as a MatMan Clerk and an Environmental Technician before ultimately landing in Human Resources where I performed a variety of tasks including administering employment and education programs, assisted in recruitment, benefits administration, new hire orientations and community outreach.

What do you find remarkable about Red Dog? I think that Red Dog’s very existence is remarkable. I think that the backstory of how Red Dog came to be is super fascinating and is a testament to the forward-thinking leaders of the area. This incredible operation in the remote Arctic has had an immeasurable impact on the lives and careers of many. I like to remind people of the far-reaching benefits that the development of the mine has provided throughout Alaska; such as careers for individuals, NANA’s revenue sharing requirement with other Alaska Native Corps, as well as toll payments to the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority for use of the haul road and port site.

Do you want to share about your heritage? I want to share an excerpt from a 2010 article which was published in an edition of Salmon & Steelhead Magazine written about my Dad who is a former Red Dog employee and fishing guide: “His passions include trapping wolves and immersing himself in the steep tradition of the Inupiat culture… He’s fiercely loyal to his heritage and swells with pride for his Native culture. What really struck me, however, was the obvious joy he gained from sharing the many treasures of the Kobuk Valley.” I can’t say it any better than that. I am “my father’s daughter” and that quote also reflects who I am, through and through. If there is one thing people should know about me it is that I am fiercely loyal to my heritage and am a relentless advocate for my communities.

What were you like growing up? My parents like to tell the story of gifting me a new bicycle on my 5th birthday, which is in February. I was determined to learn to ride it without training wheels. So, on the snow-covered road in Kiana, I practiced all day until I got it down. So I would say I’m determined. Outgoing. Friendly.

What makes you happy? I really, really love being out in the country, engaging in subsistence activities with the people that I love. I especially enjoy being on the Kobuk River and spending time in the area where generations of my family have lived, hunted, and thrived for thousands of years. It’s a place to which I have a deep spiritual connection and I appreciate being able to share these experiences with others.
Business Improvement and Data
By Chris Van Arsdale

Much of the work the Business Improvement (BI) team does starts with data. And at Red Dog, we have lots of data. But the data is not always easy to get to and can be difficult to quickly get value out of all that information. That’s where Power BI comes in.

Power BI is a Microsoft product that allows for easy data analysis of multiple data sources, providing up-to-date data that can be actively filtered, sliced-and-diced with a click of the mouse. The BI team has successfully set up a Power BI test server on-site at Red Dog. Led by Preston Miller with help from many people here at Red Dog and across Teck, the new server will be a step change in how we can manage, analyze, and extract value from the massive amount of information generated here.

The goal is to create one source of truth for our data, reducing the time spent collecting and reporting data, and increasing the time available for higher-value work of analyzing and gaining insight into the business.

So what does this mean to you? Many of us enter data as part of our jobs; we record times, order parts, and so much more. Our data is only as good as you make it. The phrase “Garbage In, Garbage Out” applies to our data too! While it can be a tedious part of your work, data entry is important, especially as we use it more and more. Make sure your entries are correct! For those of you that use the data, if you haven’t learned about Power BI, come visit the BI team and we’ll show you what we’re up to. Start thinking of ways you can reduce the repetitive parts of your work to free-up time for higher-value efforts. Look at how you handle data and we can work on making our data systems more robust.

Data has always been important to operating our business and it continues to increase in importance. The BI team wants to lead Red Dog to a better future and better use of our data will be crucial in that journey.

Aidan Vasquez: No Wasted Action

Aidan, the on-site Project Manager with Waste Management Sustainability Services, is responsible for eco-friendly diversions of waste from Red Dog Mine. Specifically, waste destined for the Red Dog landfills and incinerators. Aidan, originally from Texas, managed a hazardous waste transfer facility. For a job and adventure too exciting to pass up, he moved to Alaska in late 2016 where he began his journey at Hecla Greens Creek Mine in Juneau. Aidan resided in Juneau for a year and a half before basing in Anchorage to take on the Red Dog challenge.

Aidan loves to hike, kayak, trail run and sky run. While living in Juneau, he frequently ran mountain ridges higher than 4,000 feet. “The higher, the steeper, the better!”, Aidan says.

Aidan boasts a record of continuous professional self-improvement which has given him the understanding of dedication at all levels of operations, from ground support to upper decision-making tiers. With continuous client communication, availability and affability, he correlates the successes of clients with his own.

Aiden shares, “I believe in, and incorporate the need to help employees, colleagues and customers stay and feel connected to one another. The personal and professional openness to change has led me to become more tuned-in to trends in our industry and acceptant to new ideas. As with any process, there is always a better way and successful execution is the key to providing a change target that is exciting, worthwhile and essential to its future success. While unique environmental sustainability challenges of managing mine projects are present, they don’t discourage me from trying new things. I possess the courage to challenge existing powerbases and norms, and in turn can sustain the commitments I have made to the client. While I don’t welcome failure, I don’t fear it, and this builds credibility with the people I work with. While I certainly am responsive to top leadership inspiration, I don’t wait for it before moving into action.”
Teck Alaska Selected as a National U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Champion in 2017!

Did you know that for the past 10 years, Red Dog Operations (RDO) has contributed significant in-kind support to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) Marine Mammals Management Program for Chukchi polar bear research? Since 2008, a Fish & Wildlife Service team of four people has staged their two-month spring research camp at the RDO port. RDO’s contributions include lodging, meals, labor, equipment, a warm indoor area to work on samples, and most importantly, as Port Supervisor, John Tobin says, “a safe landing zone and fueling system and operators. The Fish & Wildlife Service provides its own helicopter and fuel; we provide the ISO storage tank and fueling system. We also take care of their research gear — they have a lot of gear.”

For nearly a decade, John Tobin and his staff have provided critical support to the Service’s Chukchi Sea polar bear research program. By helping coordinate shipping of capture gear to the mine, providing accommodations for our staff, and troubleshooting any issues that arise during the capture season, Tobin and his team have always been willing to assist in our research needs. Tobin’s commitment to our research program has enabled us to collect invaluable information on bears in the Chukchi Sea, including polar bear ecology and how the animals are responding to sea ice loss. The research Tobin has supported allowed for the first estimate of the population’s size in over two decades, which is critically needed to inform sustainable levels of subsistence harvest in the region. Additionally, the information gained on polar bear habitat use in the Chukchi Sea will be vital for ensuring that offshore activities can be conducted with minimal impacts to the population.

In a congratulatory email to Tobin and team, Fish & Wildlife Service Wildlife Biologist, Michelle St. Martin wrote, “I’m excited to tell you that Teck Alaska Inc. has been selected as the National U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Champion for your important contributions to polar bear conservation. This award is the agency’s way of saying thank you for all you’ve done for us over the years. We couldn’t do what we do out there without your support, and we appreciate the partnership we have.”

Tobin shared, “I want to thank everyone who was involved, including NMS (catering/housekeeping) for clean rooms and beds and warm meals; the environmental group, and our maintenance team for labor support and equipment and repairs.”

The below announcement was published in the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Endangered Species website: https://www.fws.gov/endangered/what-we-do/recovery-champions/index.html

May 18, 2018

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced recipients of the 2017 Recovery Champion award, which honors Service employees and partners for outstanding efforts to conserve and protect endangered and threatened species of fish, wildlife, and plants. Altogether, 18 individuals were honored as Recovery Champions for work to conserve species ranging from the Atlantic salmon, to the Miami blue butterfly, to the polar bear.

Recovery Champions are U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff and their partners whose work is advancing the recovery of endangered and threatened species of plants and animals in the United States.
Red Dog Supports Noatak Student and Community Van Driver Program

In 2016, Red Dog’s Community Investment team awarded funding to the Native Village of Noatak (Tribe) to fund a part-time position of van driver. This important program has helped Noatak improve school attendance rates for youth and provides transportation to Elders in the community.

In the 2016-17 school year, the Tribe sought grant funding from Red Dog to provide steady and reliable transportation employment and income rather than having to rely on volunteers. Since then, Red Dog Community Investment has contributed each school year to this important endeavor.

School Principal Stan Vanamberg shared, “IRA van transportation has impacted our school in many positive ways. We’ve seen overall school attendance increase. Students are safer getting to and from the school and it provides transportation for student sports travel. I very much appreciate the partnership with the school and what it means for our students!”

Noatak Tribe Administrator, Jeff Luther said, “We use it [the van] to pick up Elders at their homes and bring them to the store, clinic, post office or to the school for community/sporting events. We also use it to bring students from school to the clinic and back for medical appointments. We use it to pick up out of town students that are coming in for sports events (basketball, volleyball, NYO), and then we take them from the school to the local store and back to the school while the Native store is open. This van is very beneficial and it adds great value for the community.”

Editor’s note: Congratulations to Principal Stan who just retired at the end of the 2017-18 school year after 25 years in Noatak, the last 5 of which he was the school Principal!

Before the van driving effort, student attendance in 2012/13 was 88.5%. After the Van Driver Program, the current school attendance is at 93.2%!

For Current Job Vacancies (or opportunities)

Please go to www.teck.com and/or www.nana.com and apply on-line. (Paper applications or letters of interest are no longer accepted.)