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The Arctic Refuge

by Cindy Shogan

“Not only do we need to protect the refuge from becoming a massive oil field, but we are now facing the challenge of climate change.”



Left: Polar bears are the only bear species to be considered marine mammals because they depend on the ocean for their food and habitat. They spend far more time at sea than on land. This polar bear is negotiating ice floes in the Beaufort Sea while hunting for seals. Florian Schulz

Above: The rock ptarmigan is a tundra bird that changes color between seasons to blend in with its surroundings; it's brilliant white in winter and mottled dark-and-white during the rest of the year. Researchers are studying how these specialized birds are responding to climate change. Florian Schulz

In a land that is experienced by some and only dreamt about by others, the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge exists as a narrow piece of ground harbored between sea and mountains. It is an area that is sacred to the Gwich'in people who have lived off its lands for time immemorial. It is a place that each year is bursting with new life and beginnings—a birthplace to polar bear cubs, caribou calves, arctic fox kits, grizzly cubs and over 200 species of migratory birds. It is a place where life is at risk, yet where life is precious. It is one of our greatest natural treasures: the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and its embattled coastal plain.

For decades the coastal plain, known as the refuge's biological heart, has been in political limbo, at best, and nearly at the tip of a drill bit, at worst. As the executive director of Alaska Wilderness League, I have watched the political landscape shift—from one of “drill, baby, drill” to one of “some places are too special to drill.” This year is an important one for the Arctic Refuge: There is hope. President Obama has recommended that the refuge and its coastal plain be designated as wilderness.

In 1960, President Dwight Eisenhower created the first protections for the Arctic Refuge by setting aside lands known as the Arctic National Wildlife Range. For nearly five decades, we have fought for this iconic landscape—an ideal of wilderness, and one that we want to leave for future generations. Today, we could make long-lasting protections possible. Once and for all, we could shift the political reality for the refuge to one of protection. It is time to make this land whole—time to protect it from the forces of development that would encroach upon it. Just outside of the refuge lies the Trans-Alaska Pipeline and Prudhoe Bay—frequent oil spills, smoke-covered skies and areas littered with pipelines characterize the land. We don't want this to happen to our refuge.

Not only do we need to protect the refuge from becoming a massive oil field, but we are now facing the challenge of climate change. On the forefront of climate change, Alaska is bearing its terrible effects twice as hard as any other state in our nation, and some Alaskan communities are literally falling into the sea.

Contrast the Prudhoe Bay development with the refuge's coastal plain. The coastal plain is an oasis in the northeast corner of the state and arguably one of the most unique places on Earth. Climb the highest vantage point in the refuge—you see no buildings, no masses of people, no cars and feel none of the chaos of everyday urban life. Instead, you may see a field of poppies splashing through the tundra of the refuge, experience a herd of caribou with their moans and grunts and clicking feet, catch a glimpse of a wolverine, or take in the sight of a herd of musk oxen leaning on each other for shelter.



The refuge, like the Grand Canyon and Yosemite, is deserving of protection. It is wild, it is free, and it is ours to protect. And there is a long history of people working to protect it. The We Are The Arctic campaign is a diverse movement across the nation that is engaging more advocates to support the refuge—not only for its iconic wildlife, stunning landscapes and mountain peaks, but also for its people, the Gwich’in.

The Gwich’in have lived on the Arctic Refuge continuously for thousands of years. They refer to themselves as “caribou people,” as their life and culture are intertwined with the fate of the caribou. Even without oil development, the Gwich’in are already feeling the threats of food insecurity due to climate change, which has shifted the migration routes of the caribou and diminished the supply of salmon in community streams. Protecting the refuge is about human rights, and about conserving the last best places in America for future generations.

After all of these decades, I am ready to protect this special place once and for all. Join us to raise our collective voices for this special place and finally get the strongest possible protections for the refuge, which it so richly deserves.

Cindy Shogan is the executive director of the Alaska Wilderness League, which leads the effort to preserve Alaska’s wild lands and waters.

Above: A bill to protect the coastal plain as wilderness has been introduced in every Congress since 1986. Efforts to open the Arctic Refuge to oil and gas drilling have been just as persistent. This drill pad is at the edge of the Arctic Refuge, just west of the Canning River delta. Florian Schulz

Right: Morning fog rises from the Hulahula River as it flows north from the Brooks Range toward the Arctic Ocean. The Arctic Refuge is one of the nation’s most treasured and pristine lands. At more than 19 million acres (roughly the size of South Carolina), there are currently no roads or trails within or leading into the refuge. Florian Schulz



It's Time to Act.

Patagonia and the Alaska Wilderness League are standing in solidarity with the Gwich'in people to ask President Obama to designate the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as a national monument.

Stand with us and over a million other Americans by going to patagonia.com/arctic and signing the petition now.

Left: The refuge was designated as wilderness in 1980 but we need to permanently protect it against development, including the 1.5-million-acre coastal plain, the biological heart of the refuge.





The Photographer

“The Arctic Refuge has always been a mysterious place for me. Wild and remote, it allows me to time travel back into a wholesome world that predates the settlement of the West.

“Politicians have called the Arctic landscape a ‘flat, white nothingness’ or ‘a barren wasteland.’ These statements spurred me on to document what I would really find. Fourteen months later, I now carry with me some of the most memorable wildlife encounters of my life: tens of thousands of caribou moving across the coastal plains, the birth of a musk ox calf during 20-degrees-below-zero weather, polar bear mothers and cubs arriving on shore as the sea ice disappears.

“I can only hope we have enough wisdom to protect this last great wilderness forever. On this ever-busier planet, it is not only a refuge for wild things, but also a refuge for the soul.”

Florian Schulz is a professional photographer who spends over eight months a year in the field working on long-term conservation photography projects that focus on the protection of entire ecosystems. His photographs have appeared in many international publications.

Left: The Porcupine caribou herd returns to the Arctic Refuge during their annual migration. The refuge coastal plain is important to calving success and calf survival; there are fewer predators there than in the nearby foothills and mountains, as well as abundant plants for hungry new mothers. Florian Schulz

Inset: Florian Schulz filming caribou on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge coastal plain. Salomon Schulz



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- 6 Insulated Fjord Flannel Jacket \$169.00 | 27640 | XS-XXL | Regular fit
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- 8 Straight Fit Cords \$89.00 | 55930 | 28-40/even + 31, 33, 35 | Slim fit
- 9 Fisherman's Rolled Beanie \$29.00 | 29105 | One size
- 10 Classic Retro-X® Vest \$149.00 | 23048 | XXS-XXL | Regular fit
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3 Lightweight Synchronia® Snap-T® Hoodie \$139.00 | 25462 | XS-XXL | Regular fit
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Men's Reversible Bivy Down Vest

\$189.00 | 27587 | XXS-XXL | Regular fit | jacket available online



Musk oxen have been around since the Pleistocene era; along with caribou, they are the only hoofed animals that survived the end of that era (10,000 years ago). Today, they roam the open tundra of the Arctic Refuge in search of vegetation growing under or above the snow. Florian Schulz







The Arctic Refuge is often called “America’s Serengeti” because it supports 45 species of land and marine mammals, 36 species of fish and more than 200 species of birds from six continents. There are more than 160 rivers and streams flowing through the refuge. Kahlil Hudson



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A waterproof/breathable jacket with a removable hood; insulated with Traceable Down.

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Previous spread: Climate change is a pressing issue for mammals in the Arctic Refuge, including the arctic fox. They are well-adapted to cold, ice and snow; warming temperatures are allowing the boreal forest to move northward, bringing the larger red fox—a competitor for food and territory. Florian Schulz





Kids'

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Girls' Down Sweater

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\$129.00 | 60492 | 6M, 12M, 18M, 2T, 3T, 4T, 5T | Regular fit



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Women's Bivy Hooded Vest

\$179.00 | 27746 | XS-XL | Regular fit | jacket available online



Members of the Porcupine caribou herd crossing the Hulahula River in the Arctic Refuge. Caribou travel in groups and migrate at different times: Pregnant females, some yearlings and barren cows are the first to travel north toward the coastal plain, followed by males and the rest of the juveniles. Florian Schulz





The Arctic Refuge offers unparalleled wilderness opportunities, including backpacking, camping, climbing and fishing. It has no phone service, cell phone coverage, campgrounds or ranger stations within its boundaries. Because of its remote nature and potentially extreme conditions, self-reliance is essential and the experience of true adventure is guaranteed. Florian Schulz



The snowy owl is the largest owl (by weight) in North America. They typically spend summers in the Arctic where they hunt for lemmings and other small prey in the 24-hour daylight; they may fly south during extreme winters and can be seen along the border states of the northern United States. Florian Schulz



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- 4 **Better Sweater™ Gloves** \$49.00 | 34673 | XS-L



5 Insulated Prairie Dawn Parka \$249.00 | 28290 | XS-XL | Regular fit

6 Waffle Henley \$65.00 | 54315 | XS-XL | Slim fit

7 Micro D™ Gaiter \$29.00 | 28891 | One size

8 Merino Waffle Crew \$129.00 | 50535 | XS-XL | Regular fit

9 Corduroy Pants \$89.00 | 55060 | 24-32/even + 25, 27, 29, 31 | Regular fit

10 Classic Retro-X® Vest \$149.00 | 23083 | XXS-XL | Regular fit

11 Black Hole™ Pack 25L \$129.00 | 49296

12 Long-Sleeved Micro Cord Shirt \$79.00 | 53870 | 0-14/even | Regular fit

13 Straight Jeans \$99.00 | 55100 | 24-32/even + 25, 27, 29, 31 | Regular fit

Women's Fleece

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3 Classic Retro-X® Vest \$149.00 | 23083 | XXS-XL | Regular fit
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4 Los Gatos Jacket \$129.00 | 25211 | XS-XL | Regular fit
Made with a luxurious deep-pile, double-faced polyester fleece, this lined jacket has simple style lines and contoured seams in the back for a refined look and fit.

5 Re-Tool Snap-T® Pullover \$119.00 | 25442 | XXS-XL | Slim fit
This warm, deep-pile pullover with feminine seaming is made with Polartec® Thermal Pro® polyester fleece.





Close to 200,000 animals strong, the Porcupine caribou herd returns to the Arctic Refuge every year. In midsummer the caribou gather by the tens of thousands and move across the land like a river. Florian Schulz





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- 3 Black Hole™ Duffel 90L \$149.00 | 49346 | 1,417 g (3 lbs 2 oz)
- 4 Black Hole™ Wheeled Duffel 120L \$349.00 | 49386 | 3,912 g (8 lbs 10 oz)
- 5 Black Hole™ Cube - Large \$49.00 | 49370 | 246 g (8.7 oz)
- 6 Black Hole™ Pack 25L \$129.00 | 49296 | 680 g (1 lb 8 oz)





Men's Wearable Equipment

Whether you're craving a quick taste of the backside bowl or lapping your favorite stash, you'll want gear that works. Our layers regulate warmth, spill heat when needed and pack down small when you're peeling them off. View the entire collection and layering options at patagonia.com. Imported.

In a Gwich'in creation story, the original people of the Arctic used to be caribou. When they separated, the caribou kept a bit of the human heart and the human kept a bit of the caribou heart. They made an oath that the caribou would always take care of the Gwich'in as long as the Gwich'in would always take care of the caribou. Florian Schulz

Archival print signed by the photographer available in Patagonia® retail stores.

- 1 **Capilene® Midweight Crew** \$59.00 | 44425 | XS-XXL | 190 g (6.7 oz)
- 2 **SnowDrifter 40L** \$199.00 | 48200 | S/M, L/XL | 1,814 g (4 lbs)
- 3 **PowSlayer Jacket** \$699.00 | 30304 | XS-XL | 610 g (21.5 oz)
- 4 **Nano-Air® Hoody** \$299.00 | 84260 | XS-XXL | 385 g (13.6 oz)
- 5 **PowSlayer Bibs** \$599.00 | 30323 | XS-XL | 573 g (20.2 oz)
- 6 **Capilene® Thermal Weight Bottoms** \$89.00 | 43687 | XS-XXL | 133 g (4.7 oz)
- 7 **R1® Hoody** \$159.00 | 40074 | XS-XXL | 364 g (12.8 oz)
- 8 **Powder Town Beanie** \$39.00 | 29187 | One size | 173 g (6.1 oz)
- 9 **Lined Beanie** \$45.00 | 28765 | One size | 94 g (3.3 oz)





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A Porcupine caribou may travel more than 3,000 miles over the course of a single year. Archaeological evidence reveals that the caribou herd has used the Arctic Refuge coastal plain as a calving area for more than 2 million years. Florian Schulz

- 1 Capilene® Midweight Zip-Neck \$69.00 | 44455 | XXS-XL | 167 g (5.9 oz)
- 2 Capilene® Thermal Weight Bottoms \$89.00 | 43692 | XXS-XL | 139 g (4.9 oz)
- 3 Nano-Air® Jacket \$249.00 | 84255 | XS-XL | 292 g (10.3 oz)
- 4 Untracked Pants \$449.00 | 29911 | XS-XL | 581 g (20.5 oz)
- 5 Lined Knit Headband \$35.00 | 28760 | One size | 62 g (2.2 oz)
- 6 Untracked Jacket \$599.00 | 29877 | XS-XL | 746 g (26.3 oz)
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- 1 Women’s Nano-Air® Jacket \$249.00 | 84255 | XS-XL | 292 g (10.3 oz)
- 2 Men’s Nano-Air® Hoody \$299.00 | 84260 | XS-XXL | 385 g (13.6 oz)
- 3 Women’s Nano Puff® Jacket \$199.00 | 84217 | XS-XL | 283 g (10 oz)
- 4 Men’s Nano Puff® Jacket \$199.00 | 84212 | XS-XXL | 337 g (11.9 oz)
- 5 Women’s Down Sweater Hoody \$279.00 | 84711 | XS-XL | 371 g (13.1 oz)
- 6 Men’s Ultralight Down Hoody \$349.00 | 84767 | XS-XXL | 297 g (10.5 oz)

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Down







The Gwich'in and the Caribou: A Way of Life

by Michele Bianchi

Every other July, hundreds of Gwich'in people travel to remote villages in Canada and the United States. This year they gathered in Arctic Village, Alaska, a small town that sits on the Porcupine caribou migration route. The village is home to the Gwich'in people who live a subsistence lifestyle and rely on salmon, whitefish, moose, waterfowl and berries to survive.

People gather, as they have for thousands of years, to participate in the biennial Gwich'in Gathering. It's a time for rejuvenation and renewal, for bringing together family and friends, and for planning the future together. They also hunt for caribou, as they have for over 20,000 years.

The trek to Arctic Village is one Bernadette Demientieff has made twice before. Bernadette is the executive director of the Gwich'in Steering Committee. This year she took her 7-year-old daughter and 18-year-old son to the gathering so they could better understand their responsibility to protect the land of their ancestors.

"We need for our kids to understand the Arctic Refuge," she says. "The range is part of the land but it's also who we are. It's our identity."

What's at stake—and has been for a while—is the heart of the Arctic Refuge: the coastal plain. It's the calving site for the Porcupine caribou herd that travel there every April.





“We’ve always treated that land as sacred,” explains Bernadette. “Even when my people were starving, they never went there. As a mother you understand that. When you’re in labor you don’t want people walking in and out of your hospital room.”

The disturbance of the coastal range through proposed oil drilling would alter the behavior of the caribou that depend on the area for food and protection from predators during the calving season. This disturbance could cause a displacement or major population decline that would impact the way of life for the Gwich’in.

There’s much at stake and Bernadette spends a lot of time trying to convince lawmakers and nonnatives to help protect their land and way of life.

“It’s frustrating to have to ask your government that you deserve to live, and your children deserve the right to live the Gwich’in life.”

She also speaks for the Porcupine caribou herd. “Caribou are our life,” she says. “Just because they don’t talk doesn’t mean they don’t have a right to live.”

The connection between her people and the caribou is something she finds difficult to explain to people who don’t live there, but it’s painfully simple.

“If they go,” she says, “we go.”

Above: Hundreds of Gwich’in come together every two years to reconnect, reaffirm their commitment to their position and listen to teachings from elders. And every night ends with jigging. Kahlil Hudson

Left: The Gwich’in Nation flag hangs at the gathering. The Gwich’in people live in an area extending from northeast Alaska to the northern Yukon and Northwest Territories in Canada, and have done so for over 20,000 years. Tyler Huguen

Previous spread: Young members of the Gwich’in Nation prepare for a traditional dance ceremony at the 14th Gwich’in Gathering in Arctic Village, Alaska. Kahlil Hudson



Top: Bernadette Demientieff's 7-year-old daughter, Lexine, looks out over the refuge. Bernadette wants her children to understand the connections between the Gwich'in people, the land and the caribou. **Kahlil Hudson**

Left: Donald Tritt gets his face painted before a traditional dance at the 2016 Gwich'in Gathering. **Kahlil Hudson**

Above: The Chandalar River is the boundary between Arctic Village and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The banks of the river serve as both hunting ground and playground for the Gwich'in. **Kahlil Hudson**

Right: Bernadette Demientieff, Gwich'in Steering Committee executive director, and Princess Daazhrai Johnson, former executive director, at the 2016 Gwich'in Gathering. **Kahlil Hudson**



The Refuge

Watch Princess and Bernadette as they travel up to the Arctic Village Gwich'in Gathering. *The Refuge* is available to watch at patagonia.com/arctic.



Top: Archaeological evidence indicates that the Arctic Village area may have been settled as early as 4500 B.C. The village became a permanent settlement around 1900. Kahlil Hudson

Left: The hope is that the next generation of Gwich'in won't have to take up the fight against Big Oil to protect the caribou and their sacred land. Tyler Hughen

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Cover: With temperatures on the rise, Arctic sea ice is rapidly disappearing and polar bear populations are decreasing. The U.S. Geological Survey projects that two-thirds of polar bears will disappear by 2050. This polar bear mother and her two cubs find refuge on the shores of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Florian Schulz

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Women's Re-Tool Snap-T® Pullover
\$119.00 | 25442 | XXS-XL | Slim fit



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