

# Filmmaker to show wrongs of Alaskan drilling

Filmmaker Jeff Barrie unites with Alaskan native Daryl Charlie to help show detriments of oil drilling

By **Natasha Chilingirian**  
Pulse Reporter

On Feb. 2, President Bush included oil drilling in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in his budget.

But Nashville-based filmmaker Jeff Barrie is determined to prevent oil companies from entering the animal and vegetation-filled wilderness. He will present a free evening of storytelling, film clips and slide shows Friday at 7 p.m. in the EMU Walnut Room.

Alaskan Gwitchin native Daryl Charlie will also share a personal perspective of why the refuge should be preserved.

"I want to show that although (the refuge) is painted as a barren wasteland, it is a beautiful place and there is nowhere in the world like it," Barrie said.

Barrie first felt concern for the refuge when he saw a traveling slide show about the issue in 1995. He then went to the potential drilling site in northern Alaska with a group of teenagers and created "Arctic Quest: Our Search for Truth," a documentary film which has since aired on PBS stations across the nation. The film includes images of the Gwitchin communities, which reside near the refuge, and interviews with energy experts who cite what they view as better methods to acquiring extra energy than drilling in the refuge.



Courtesy Alaska Coalition

Gwitchin native Daryl Charlie will discuss why the caribou, which give birth on the potential oil-drilling site, are important to his community.

After finishing the film in 1997, Barrie bicycled from Los Angeles to Washington, D.C., over the course of five years, showing his documentary and collecting more than 1,500 letters asking Congress to refrain from developing oil in the refuge.

"I'll do whatever it takes to raise awareness to save the refuge," Barrie said.

In tomorrow's presentation, he will discuss why he got involved in rescuing the refuge and the past

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**Daryl Charlie**  
Alaskan native/activist

political battles relating to the issue. He will also show video clips from his documentary and bicycle tour. Finally, Charlie will provide a Gwitchin native's perspective on the importance of the refuge. The Gwitchin community has a connection with the caribou (a large Alaskan deer), who give birth on the prospective oil development site.

"The climax of the whole evening will be hearing a Gwitchin native talk

about why the caribou are important," Barrie said.

Barrie feels that the refuge should be preserved because it only holds a six-month supply of oil, adding that the United States should work to conserve more energy by developing more efficient modes of transportation.

"We need to use more energy-efficient vehicles," he said. "And that goes beyond saving a wilderness. It would save us money and improve our health."

Alaska Coalition organizer Ellen Hawkey set up Barrie's current Oregon tour, which will last for two weeks. She said Oregonians need to be informed about this complex issue.

"We need to raise awareness with a strong message in Oregon," she said. "The political history about the refuge is so complicated."

Alaska Coalition's West Coast organizer Patrick Shannon said Oregonians need to convince Sen. Gordon Smith, R-Ore., to vote against drilling in the refuge.

"Smith voted against drilling in the refuge, but he is getting pressure to change his vote," he said. "People need to keep calling him and telling him to stick to his vote."

He also said Oregon citizens should see the presentation because it offers a chance to comprehend the beauty of the refuge.

"They're bringing in the beauty of the place," he said. "Charlie is bringing in a cultural perspective. It's important because most people won't get to visit the place."

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