

MEDIA ADVISORY

Link TV

Your Connection to the World

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**AMERICA'S LAST REFUGE THREATENED BY NEW ENERGY BILL—
"Refuge at Risk" Explores Monumental Struggle to Save the Arctic Refuge,
Airs September 17th on Link TV**

(San Francisco, September 13, 2003)—Spanning a breathtaking 19.5 million acres of pristine wilderness, Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is home to one of the greatest variety of plant and animal life of any conservation area and host to more than 180 resident and migratory birds. It is also one of few remaining ecosystems on our planet unaltered by human impact—a place where true wilderness can still be experienced. Yet, the fate of the Arctic Refuge and the oil that lays beneath it, are currently at the center of an historic fight pitting multinational oil giants and the Bush Administration against the region's indigenous peoples, conservationists and advocates for renewable energy. At this very moment, Congress is, once again, linking drilling in the Arctic Refuge to the new energy bill.

On September 17th Link TV will air **Refuge at Risk**, an exploration of this dramatic struggle to save the Arctic Refuge.

Hosted by Doug McConnell, host of the popular television series, *Bay Area Backroads*, **Refuge at Risk** is part talk show, part artistic journey. It assembles a panel of environmental and energy experts, naturalists and conservation activists against a backdrop of stunning photographic portraits of the Arctic landscape.

A collaborative project of Sierra Club Productions, *Oil on Ice* documentarians Dale Djerassi and Bo Boudart, and Link TV, a nationwide satellite network dedicated to presenting a multi-faceted global perspective on news and current events to American audiences, **Refuge at Risk** is a live call-in show that encourages nationwide audience participation. As Link TV President Kim Spencer points out, "Global environmental issues are among the most critical of the day. Link TV is committed to educating and activating Americans to take part in the struggle to preserve our environment for future generations."

To this effect, **Refuge at Risk** begins by examining the tranquil, untrammelled beauty of the Arctic Refuge through a powerful mix of photographs, videotape and thoughtful discussion by people who understand the variety and richness of the region's delicate and complex ecosystems. As visually stimulating as it is informative, **Refuge at Risk** utilizes two powerful, artistic projects as visual accompaniments to the story of Arctic wilderness.

The first is a photographic expedition of the region, *Seasons of Life and Land* by Subhankar Banerjee, an award-winning photographer who devoted two years of his life to documenting the Arctic Refuge's land, wild species, and its Native peoples. The book provides us with exquisite photographs that make the case for leaving the area intact in all its beauty and importance to the survival of its unique ecosystem. So compelling are these photographs that Senator Barbara Boxer of California displayed Banerjee's book on the Senate floor as she rallied opposition to a vote to open the refuge to oil exploration.

A second key visual component of **Refuge at Risk** comes from its collaborating producers, Dale Djerassi and Bo Boudart, who provide clips from their work in progress. Their documentary, *Oil on Ice*, is an intimate portrayal of the native Gwich'in Indians taking on powerful global energy interests to prevent invasive oil operations threatening the Refuge's fragile caribou calving grounds on which the Native people's subsistence has always depended. Compelling and thought-provoking, this struggle over the sacred land that the Gwich'in call "the place where life begins" vividly brings home how our energy decisions—both individually and as a society—critically impact the future of our global economy, wildlife, and the environment as well as the survival of an extraordinary traditional culture. *Oil and Ice* is a multi-faceted media project that consists of a one hour documentary for broadcast, a Web DVD for home distribution, a website www.oilonice.org and an outreach campaign.

Joining the host in the first segment of the show are: Carl Pope, Executive Director of the Sierra Club; Adeline Peter Raboff, writer and activist, a Neets'ain Gwich'in Indian from the Arctic Village and Subhankar Banerjee.

Later in the show, **Refuge at Risk** explores alternative and renewable energy sources. According to *Sierra Magazine*, three of the wind-rich states—North Dakota, Kansas and Texas—have enough harnessable wind energy to satisfy all the nation's electricity needs. Adding some levity to the show's coverage of alternative energy sources is footage from the Michelin Group's Challenge Bibendum, which demonstrates the ingenuity of the auto industry when properly motivated to solve emissions and fuel problems. Guests include Severin Borenstein, E.T. Grether Professor in Public Policy and Business Administration Haas Economic Analysis and Policy Group and Director of the University of California Energy Institute; and electric car enthusiast and technology reporter, Richard Hart.

Refuge at Risk is funded by The Sierra Club Foundation, which since 1960, has advanced the preservation and protection of the natural environment by empowering the citizenry, especially democratically-based grassroots organizations, with charitable resources to further the cause of environmental protection. To accomplish this mission, the Foundation funds large-scale public education projects, training of activists and litigation to enforce the laws that protect our environment.

About Sierra Club Productions

Sierra Club Productions is the Emmy-Award winning film and television division of the Sierra Club, America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. For more information about the Sierra Club, go to www.sierraclub.org.

About Link TV (formerly WorldLink TV):

Founded in 1999, Link TV is the first U.S. network offering a global perspective on news, current events and culture, presenting viewpoints seldom covered in the U.S. media.

Seen nationwide via satellite on DIRECTV Channel 375 and on DISH Network channel 9410, Link TV is accessible to more than 20 million households in the U.S. Link TV's programming, combined with its innovative use of two-way digital link-ups and a participatory web site, deepens audience engagement and encourages active participation. Link TV is a national non-commercial channel funded by viewer contributions and grants from major foundations. For complete program scheduling and Internet streaming, go to <http://www.linktv.org/>.

About Refuge at Risk Participants:

Doug McConnell is the popular host of "Bay Area Backroads", the highest rated locally produced television program in the Bay Area. The show focuses on travel in northern California. Under Doug's leadership, "Bay Area Backroads" has produced over fifty stories on California State Parks.

Subhankar Banerjee is an award-winning photographer who devoted two years of his life to documenting the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge—the land, its wild species, and its Native peoples. With Inupiat guide Robert Thompson, Banerjee traveled 4,000 miles through the refuge on foot and by raft, kayak, and snowmobile during all four seasons. His book, *Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: Seasons of Life and Land*, published in March 2003, has received critical acclaim. With hundreds of breathtaking color images, he made this case: Leaving the refuge intact in all its mysterious beauty is vital to the survival of this unique ecosystem.

Dale Djerassi is the Producer/Director of *Oil on Ice* and President of Djerassi Films, Inc. from 1977 to present. His documentary film productions include: "Nothing Will Be As It Was", about the return of Brazilian jazz musicians, Flora Purim and Airto Moreira, to their homeland.

Richard Hart is an electric car enthusiast and one of the world's most widely recognized hosts of technology programs. He has reported on technology for NBC, CBS, Discovery Channel, Sci-Fi Channel and USA Network. Richard Hart created and hosted The Next Step, the Discovery Channel's highest rated technology series and is the only broadcaster to win a DuPont-Columbia Journalism Award for investigative reporting (one of the highest honors in journalism) and Emmy awards for comedy writing and producing. The National Association of Television Arts and Sciences awarded him a CableACE award for his ability to explain new and complex technology in an understandable and entertaining way.

Carl Pope is the Executive Director of the Sierra Club. A veteran leader in the environmental movement, Mr. Pope has been with the Sierra Club for nearly thirty years

and was appointed director in 1992. In that time he has served as Associate Conservation Director, Political Director and Conservation Director.

During Mr. Pope's tenure as Executive Director, Sierra Club added 150,000 new members, growing to 700,000 of your friends and neighbors. The Club's importance extends beyond numbers, though. The Aspen Institute, after surveying every member of Congress and key federal officials, named the Sierra Club as the most influential environmental organization in Washington, D.C.

Under Mr. Pope, the Sierra Club has helped protect nearly 10 million acres of wilderness and has continued to hold the line in protecting the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from oil drilling.