



THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

J. Willard Marriott Library

MEDIA RELEASE

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University of Utah Library Brings the Arctic to the Desktop

*Mark 50th Anniversary of Arctic National Wildlife Refuge with a Visit
Via the Digital Western Soundscape Archive*

December 2, 2010 – SALT LAKE CITY -- American conservation took a major step forward 50 years ago—the establishment of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. The Refuge has preserved a unique piece of American wilderness and wildlife for future generations.

Fortunately the natural sounds of this remote landscape have also been preserved for future generations in the digital Western Soundscape Archive, which resides at the J. Willard Marriott Library at the University of Utah and can be accessed at www.westernsoundscape.org

The Archive hosts over 2,000 recordings representing more than 95 percent of the West's bird species, all of the region's frogs and toads, and more than 100 mammals and reptiles.

The collection also includes almost 60 hours of audio recordings from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge carefully collected by a team of researchers in June 2006.

During that time of year, the birds and other animals call throughout the day and night, taking advantage of the constant daylight that occurs in northern latitudes during this season. The result is one of the world's premier natural soundscapes. Below is a sample of sounds available through the Arctic collection:

Arctic Fox: <http://content.lib.utah.edu/u/?wss,650>

Northern Pintail: <http://content.lib.utah.edu/u/?wss,802>

Coastline: <http://content.lib.utah.edu/u/?wss,856>

Sandhill Cranes: <http://content.lib.utah.edu/u/?wss,799>

Spring runoff: <http://content.lib.utah.edu/u/?wss,819>

“These extraordinary recordings remind us of why we preserve places like the Arctic,” said Jeff Rice, research librarian. “Most of us will never be able to visit the Refuge, but when we hear these sounds we instantly recognize our heritage. This is the voice of a still wild and pristine environment—something we have lost in too many places throughout the world. Preserving these sounds makes that wildness accessible to everyone with a computer.”

The team that made the Arctic recordings included Kevin Colver, a medical doctor and leading expert of western birdsongs from Payson, Utah, as well as Bernie Krause and Martyn Stewart, both experts in the art of natural soundscape recording. An interview with Stewart, who led the expedition to the Refuge, is available here:

<http://tiny.utah.edu/arctic>.

The Marriott Library, a major research library in the west, is actively archiving many primary source materials digitally in order to preserve heritage and knowledge of many kinds, in many forms. Go to the library’s website to view a wealth of digital collections:

www.lib.utah.edu.

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