

Good Earth Project offers help on wastes

by Elise J. Scott
for the Tundra Times

The Alaska Native Health Board and the Alaska Health Project are working together in a new program called "The Good Earth Project," which is designed to help villages concerned about hazardous materials in their communities.

The project will provide technical assistance and free and confidential hazardous materials counseling to anyone interested in this issue.

ANHB, the health committee of the Alaska Federation of Natives, has been working to promote the health of Alaska Natives since 1968.

The Alaska Health Project is a private, nonprofit organization that has provided information about hazardous materials in the home, the workplace and the community since 1980. Together, ANHB and the Alaska Health Project created the Good Earth Project.

The three components to the project are:

- Free hotline numbers, established for anyone to call with questions about hazardous materials. The numbers are: at the Alaska Health Project — 800-478-2864, and at the ANHB — 800-478-2426.

- Detailed village assistance. One village in each of five regions will be selected for individual assistance over the next five years. Good Earth Project staff will work with residents from these villages to address their concerns about dangerous materials and toxic wastes, as well as map out a plan for solving the problems within their communities.

- Workshops given by local leaders that will focus on how to handle hazardous waste within the community, disposal of waste oil, abandoned military or industrial dumpsites, emergency spills and contamination of Native lands and subsistence foods.

The next workshop will be in Bethel Nov. 15-16.

Manuals available from the Good Earth Project include:

- How to identify dangerous materials within a community.

- How to plan ahead for chemical emergencies.

- How to get information about chemicals, dumpsites, drinking water and waste disposal.

- How to form a village committee to address hazardous materials concerns.

Those who want more information about workshops or to obtain free copies of the manuals may contact either hotline number.