

## **SPEAK YOUR MINDS AT VILLAGE D-2 MEETINGS**

Although we have not yet taken an editorial stance on how the federal land in Alaska should be classified or managed, we have attempted to keep rural Alaskans informed on this critical issue. Our forthcoming special supplement on the full range of d-2 problems, we hope, will contribute significantly to a better understanding of the developmental and preservationist forces that Natives are being asked to respond to.

We have also reported that the Congressional crowd will trek to Alaska in August to hear the views of the Alaskan people on what to do with the National Interest Lands. The House Subcommittee on General Oversight of Alaska Lands has agreed to hold informal town meetings in two villages in each of the twelve regions of the state. Although these town meetings apparently will not be full-scale hearings, they are still crucial opportunities for you, the rural Alaskan Native, to explain to these people what subsistence means to you, how you feel about development and the hopes you have for your children in the years to come.

In order to help you prepare for these meetings, we would like to offer several suggestions:

- Find out where the meetings are going to be held in your region; contact your regional corporation or non-profit Native association;
- Give some thought to your testimony. Just like in the old land claims days, it might be a good idea to draw a map or sketch to show the Congressman where you travel to hunt and fish. It is sometimes difficult for outsiders to understand how much open land it takes to subsist;
- If you can, prepare a tape or written copy of your testimony. We do not know at this time if the congressmen will bring clerks or secretaries and your voice will have more lasting effect if they can have something to refer to. Keep a copy for yourself for future reference. Perhaps your village corporation or regional association can help you with this.
- If you cannot be at the meeting, make sure your village mayor, city councilman, or other representative knows how you feel about subsistence, development and the National Interest Lands.

If you feel strongly about these things, but know very little about the actual d-2 proposals, don't worry. Hopefully, many of your questions will be answered by our supplement, to be published by the end of this month. If you still have questions, we will have a list of people to contact for further information.

We look forward to hearing to voices of rural Alaska at these important meetings in August.