

Den Nena Henash - Our Land Speaks

Ut Kah neek - Informing and Reporting

Yupit Kaniautciat - The Way Eskimos Talk

Unangan Tunukun - The Aleuts Speak

Inupiat Paltot - People's Heritage

Outrage, shock over spill

To the editor:

I am a Haida Indian woman who has spent years of my life furthering the hopes, dreams and needs of our Native people and myself.

I am absolutely sickened by the unconscionable spilling of 11 million gallons of oil by Exxon into our Alaska's majestic waters and shoreline.

I am from Hydaburg, however, I spent years in Juneau working for Native legislators from 1969 to 1982. Five of those years were working for Rep. Alvin Osterback, D-Sand Point, who was House Resources chairman and Bush Caucus chairman. One of our greatest concerns was that our Native land be protected from violation by oil or exploitation by the United States or anyone else who could possibly abuse our Mother Earth and her oceans!

I am outraged, shocked, and I feel like our land has been brutally violated by Exxon. How dare they hire a captain who had a history of alcoholic conduct. Nature will suffer the consequences of his actions for all time!!

Obviously, Exxon did not care who they had running a tanker with the magnitude of the *Exxon Valdez*. Obviously, they have no respect for Alaska Natives.

I was right beside John Sackett, Emil Notti, Willie Hensley, John Borbridge and many other Natives who at one point said, "Take our land, take our life," to the U.S. government during the Alaska Native claims fight.

How will this tragedy, this horrendous oil spill affect our seals, our salmon, our whales, our livelihoods in the villages? Our lives have been polluted by oil. Our worst fear is and will be realized for all time!

Exxon should be sued for billions

of dollars by the Native corporations for the state and the U.S. government have no relationship to the land or to her ocean life. We Natives who have occupied the land since time immemorial have.

We have loved our land. We have not abused her, nor taken wantonly of her. Now she has been violated by an act of treason against her.

The news even says that the cleanup is desperately "minimal." Where are the corporate towers of Alaska, Native corporation leaders? Are they so docile and latent they cannot speak?! Awake from your lethargy and speak for your Mother Earth and her ocean.

Go to Washington, bring the "big gun lawyers" and make *sure* this *never* happens in Alaska again!

At one point we Natives were so strong we threatened to withdraw to the Brooks Range and die for our land because we did not want a 900-mile pipeline built without the guarantee that the oil would never destroy our lands, our tundra or our wildlife. Now, 1989, our ocean, our fisheries will be destroyed. Our subsistence food will be gone. Our waters have been polluted for all time, and Native leaders are silent.

Native leaders I challenge you. I call on you to sue them for billions. Let this incident serve as a *deterrent* to further negligent oil companies that they cannot get away with the destruction of Native waters or land.

I have been away from my Alaska Native people working on a doctorate at Stanford University and am finishing here in the Twin Cities. The silence from the Native leaders echoes to me here in the Twin Cities.

Thank you,
Diann L. Morrison (*Kil-Sly*)
St. Paul, Minn.