

Native directions during D-2 implementation crucial

An Unsacred Trust: a series of articles about threats to Native Ownership of land in Alaska, based on speeches and discussions recorded at the 1980 AFN convention by Paula Schiller. Schiller produces "Chinook" a statewide radio program on Native affairs.

Part Three: Three Steps Forward, One Step Back

Far less readable and longer than *Gone With the Wind*, the d-2 bill which awaits President Carter's signature is approximately 450 pages thick. It's so bulky, that Jerry Gilliland, Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Interior, Alaska, had a hard time containing it in one hand as he held it above his head. He was showing it as exhibit number one in his presentation on the d-2 panel at last month's Alaska Federation of Native convention. At that time, the Senate had passed the Tson-gass version of the d-2 bill and the House was expected to vote soon. The House acted more quickly than many thought possible, and passed the same bill shortly after the November fourth election.

Gilliland said the Alaska lands bill could be one of the most complicated acts that ever passed Congress. From Gilliland's perspective, "the major thrust of the bill is the creation of new parks, park preserves, wildlife refuges and wild and scenic rivers in Alaska." Panel moderator, John Shively, d-2 lobbyist and Vice-president of Operations for

the NANA Development Corporation, would probably agree that the designation of national interest lands is important, but he likes to point out that more than half the d-2 bill is taken up in what's being called the "Native amendments." Both speakers made the point that, if the bill and amendments are to succeed for Natives, there is still a great deal of work to be done.

Most Natives and almost all Alaskans live within or near the new land designations or are affected by them, and "they may or may not change your lives," Gilliland said. And just when you might think things are settling down, Gilliland said the hardest part of the job is yet to come. "We're really just beginning the Alaska lands issue," he said, and he made it clear that Natives have a crucial stake in determining how the new units are to be managed.

As to living with the new designations, Gilliland said that for the most part, rural Alaskans will be able to do everything in them that they have done, as long as it's done in the name of subsistence. Traditional subsistence activities will be allowed, along with subsistence use of boats, snow machines and airplanes. Gilliland said it was a tremendous battle to make sure those rights were preserved, but subsistence is now an integral part of the creation of the new units.

The effectiveness of the subsistence title in the d-2 bill depends on things like how the

wildlife is managed and how subsistence rights are enforced. Gilliland there is a whole long list of such questions to be answered in a "whole passel of regulations on how these new units will be administered." He said there will be general plans, comprehensive plans and regional and local advisory boards. "We are going to do our damndest to make sure you have the opportunity to have your say."

More than an opportunity, Native involvement in the planning process is seen as a necessity if rural Alaska is going to see the benefits of the apparent gains made on its behalf. Gilliland summarized some other provisions in the d-2 bill that require Native participation if they are to fulfill their promise.

There are provisions to waive civil service requirements to allow the hiring of local residents, provisions to allow the corporations to become landlords to federal agencies and for them to cooperate in visitor centers, and preference is given to Native corporations which want to provide such consumer services as tours, food and accommodations.

Gilliland anticipates resistance to these provisions when it comes time to implement them. He repeated the need for Natives to become involved in the process saying the regulations and plans, "will only be as good as you, the state, the feds, and everybody working together, make them."

(Next week: John Shively picks up this theme where Gilliland left off.)