

# Akiak council closes Kisaralik

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for the Tundra Times

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Akiak Native  
cil has closed  
rtion of the

came from an  
representatives

of the Akiak City Council, the IRA Council and the village's Kokarmuit Corp., according to Mike Williams, vice chairman of the group.

The closure, affecting village corporation lands adjacent to the river as well, results from the desire to save the area from widespread abuse by

weekend campers who get drunk, leave trash on village corporation and Native allotment lands and destroy personal property there, Williams said.

"I'm concerned about the environmental health of the river and use of jet boats," Williams said. "It af-

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fects everything when the land is not taken care of. We're not used to seeing the river as it is."

Akiak Mayor Lillian Lliaban said it's time to step in.

"The Kisaralik is like our backyard, and they are throwing trash in our backyard," she said.

The offenders are mostly non-Natives from Bethel, according to John Jasper, who represented the Kokarmuit Corp. at the meeting. Sports fishermen disrupt salmon-spawning grounds with their jetboats, discharge firearms, play loud music and leave beer cans, paper and even human waste on the beach, Jasper said.

The issue is not one of Native sovereignty, but one of health, said Owen Ivan of the village IRA council.

"Ever since I've been knee high,

I've been in the river. I drank the water and ate berries, caught fish and watched salmon spawning," he said. But the river had changed when he returned late last month, he said.

"While picking berries, I went up to drink water below where the human waste was. It's disturbing. It made me sick."

The Native community hopes the village police will be able to enforce the ban, but if they cannot, the community will seek help from the U.S. Marshall's office, said Frank Demantle Jr., chief executive officer of the Native Community of Akiak.

The State Troopers can help enforce the ban, provided the village corporation posts the proper no-trespassing signs and provided the troopers have the time and personnel available, said a trooper spokesman in Bethel.