

Federal bill to aid in timber management

The Senate recently passed legislation to assist Indian tribes and Alaska Natives in managing their timber resources, according to Sen. Frank Murkowski, R-Alaska, a co-sponsor of the bill.

The purpose of the bill, the National Indian Forest Resources Management Act, is to improve the management of Indian forest lands and to promote the sustained yield production of forest resources in perpetuity on Indian lands.

Murkowski, a member of the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs,

authored a provision of the legislation authorizing up to \$3 million annually for the secretary of the Department of the Interior to establish a program of technical assistance for village and regional corporations established under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

The technical assistance program is intended to increase the capability of the Native corporations to manage their forest resources on a sustained yield basis and to maximize opportunities for local processing and other value added activities, Murkowski

said.

"Under this provision, nonprofit corporations such as Copper River Native Association and the Tanana Chiefs would be able to contract with the BIA to provide programs of technical assistance in forestry management to the village and regional profit corporations, as well as to Native allotment holders," Murkowski said.

The legislation also includes authorization for the establishment of Indian and Alaska Native forestry education assistance programs, which

The educational provision authorizes \$3 million a year for forestry scholarships. . .

Murkowski said will "enable more Alaska Natives to be able to manage the lands they own."

The educational provision authorizes \$3 million a year for forestry scholarships, internship and continuing education programs to improve the capacity of Native people to manage their forest resources.