

Natives lead joint land plan effort

AFN plan for task force wins

State, Federal agreement

At the prompting of the Alaska Federation of Natives Board of Directors, a one-year task force to plan for cooperative management of Alaskan land has been formed. The agreement to establish the Alaska Land Managers Cooperative Task Force was signed by AFN President Byron Mallott, Alaska Governor Jay Hammond, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Cecil Andrus, and Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland, according to an announcement Tuesday by the Office of the Governor.

The Task Force represents a voluntary effort of the agencies to begin the cooperative planning process pending passage of d-2 legislation by the U.S. Congress, says Janie Leask, executive vice president of AFN.

The Task Force has the following objectives under the agreement:

- to identify general concerns deserving cooperative efforts and principles for developing specific cooperative agreements. These concerns might include such interests as subsistence resources and watershed protection.

- to identify specific geographic areas requiring early co-

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operative planning and management.

- to initiate and facilitate development of specific cooperative agreements and projects.

- to identify groups and agencies with planning authority or resources that can aid the land managers and to involve these groups and agencies in an advisory capacity to identify existing cooperative planning mechanisms and to recommend their use or modification.

- to serve as a focal point for involvement of the land managers with the planning efforts of other groups.

- to serve as a forum for the

discussion of land use/resource allocation issues and voluntary resolution of conflicts.

The effort to form this task force was initiated by the AFN Board in January, after Mallott expressed the need for a joint effort at interim management of future d-2 lands. Mallott wanted a three-fold plan, according to Leask: "a declaration that protection of natural resources for subsistence users was a first priority; a declaration that to the extent compatible with subsistence use, the principles of multiple-use would apply; and a policy that significant involvement of subsistence users in development and implementation of natural resource management plans in geographic areas of subsistence use would be a priority."

Mallott says, "There was no question that Secretary Andrus was supportive of the idea, and of course Governor Hammond was very enthusiastic. There's no question that Governor Hammond has been one of the leading proponents of cooperative land use planning in Alaska. As a matter of fact, our suggestion made directly to

the Secretary was an effort to try to get a federal response to please that had come from the State and other land owners in Alaska for some time."

"The Task Force will be in operation before the d-2 land issue is settled and hopefully will be an integral part of whatever d-2 legislation is passed," Hammond said. The final resolution of the d-2 lands issue itself is now awaiting a fierce

battle in the U.S. Senate, where Alaska's delegation has promised to filibuster if necessary to keep the bill from passing this year.

Hammond emphasizes that cooperation in the group is very flexible and voluntary. He explained that the State will enter into each agreement individually and is not mandated by the establishment of the group to place any stipulation for particular land use in an area. The Governor says the entire concept

will operate on mutual interest and voluntary agreement.

The Task Force has a one-year life under the agreement signed. Continuation of the Task Force after the first year will require the agreement of all four parties.

The Governor's office says that at present, no request for funds from the legislature is contemplated in order to implement the agreement.