

# AFN forestry workshop held

On February 19 and 20 the AFN sponsored a forestry management workshop in the Windsor Room of the Sheffield House in Anchorage.

The welcoming address was presented by Morris Thompson, AFN president, and the keynote address by John Osterwise, of E.F. Hutton.

The first panel was on choices of action and had representatives from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Tanana Chiefs Conference, U.S. Forest Service, Koncor, Inc., Keane-Harper-Pearlman-Copeland, and Duncan-Brown-Weinberg-Palmer, P.C.

Other panels included during the two-day seminar were ones on state policy, marketing, services and types of assistance, and finances and taxes.

During the workshop summary

on February 20, a four-man panel composed of Roger Lang, Sealaska Corporation; Karl Armstrong, executive director of Koniag; Les Anderson, Koncor, Inc.; and Dave Wolf of Keane, Harper, Pearlman, Copeland, addressed an audience of about 50 people.

Les Anderson said in respect to small woodland owners, "In the U.S. the greatest per centage of wood fiber inventory is held by individual, small owners. It's a real problem in the U.S. trying to figure out how to get these small owners together so that it can be utilized for the nation's economy. But you can get it alone, staff accordingly, whatever your needs will be as an independent operator or you could just up and hire help utilizing consultants."

Koncor, Inc. is an example of a solution as they work together as a cooperative.

Mr. Anderson was concerned with certain restrictive controls being placed on the forestry industry. He wondered about the State Forests Practice Act, Coastal Zone Management Act and how these entities are going to be able to impose regulations on us from local government, "such as the Kodiak Borough, that's a frightening thing, the Kodiak Borough being able to zone us out of business."

He also commented, "it's a buyer's market not a sellers," and that assistance is none or limited at best.

Concluding his talk, he said, "why would any ten village corporations want to fight battles alone when they could be a cooperative like Koncor." As

an analogy he described the changes that have evolved in farming, the little farmers have been replaced by large cooperatives and forestry needs to be viewed somewhat similar.

Dave Wolf offered some valuable advice and said that the times are changing rapidly and corporations must be big enough to hold off merger corporations in 1991, otherwise a larger one may offer shareholders more and boy you out. You must become strong enough to fight this attempt.

Concerning pricing he said that you should negotiate a floor you can live with and tie price to index so if the market goes up your price for timber will go up. And require a minimum monthly payment regardless if timber harvesting is underway or not and watch payment sched-

ule on extensions. You have to live together on long contracts that may be 40-50 pages long.

Karl Armstrong was the third speaker and discussed the Japanese involvement on Kodiak, saying that 85 per cent of the waterfront is under Japanese ownership. He said the Japanese don't have free enterprise system, they have something weird, maybe we don't even have free enterprise here.

Mr. Armstrong said he wouldn't be happy leaving the seminar until they organize and spotlight this problem. They need to investigate the nature and extent of Japanese and Korean investments in Native affairs such as elections. "Perhaps by spotlighting the problems we'll be able to use legislation to stop it," he said.

Roger Lang was the final panelist and he made some important comments. He said the most glaring thing is that there is no state policy for state timber in any of this planning and the worst forest practices acts happen on state lands. The second thing is they didn't give us a state policy on land taxes, not on timber, but on developed land.

"In southeast we recognized that individually no one had timber enough to impact the world, no village or Sealaska," he said. At Sealaska we have an estimated one to eight billion dollars worth of timber, and given that amount there's no way we can impact the market. Anywhere you go you're going to deal with Japanese, so the game is big. Returns are going to make you so rich or kill you so fast that we're not going to be able to recover from our first move.

If Walter Hickel, Elmer Rasmuson and old man Cuddy had our Native lands split among themselves, the day after tomorrow they would be merged into one entity that would eventually control Alaska. And there's no reason we have to do it differently because we're Indians, Aleuts or Eskimos. The only limitation on this whole adventure, timber, gas, bottom fisheries, whatever you want to get into, is our own imagination. The claims act was beginning not an end. It can end very quickly, village by village, region by region. 1991 is a dangerous day to look at.

Mr. Land concluded, "I'm glad we had this exercise and if nothing else we should put our minds together on marketing and management. If you're scared to throw your timber in at least get together on this."



**AFN FORESTRY WORKSHOP SUMMARY PANEL (left to right) Les Anderson, Koncor, Inc; Dave Wolf, Keane, Harper, Pearlman and Copeland; Roger Lang, president of ANF; and Karl Armstrong, executive director of Koniag.**

— Photo By Harold Schetzle