

Native coalition charts strategy

by the Alaska Native Coalition

for the Tundra Times

The Alaska Native Coalition met with more than 30 members of national organizations in Washington, D.C., recently to achieve legislative amendments to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in the upcoming session of Congress.

The coalition was organized in February 1986 by tribal groups and villages from across Alaska, seeking to promote their mutual interests.

The membership seeks to protect Native ancestral lands, strengthen tribal governments and protect the subsistence way of life. This growing movement is in response to the provisions of ANCSA which the coalition believes threaten Native communities and their ancestral lands.

The strategy meeting in Washington, D.C., on Dec. 11 was successful and drew participants from the following organizations:

- Americans for Indian Opportunity.
- National Congress of American Indians.
- Friends Committee on National Legislation.
- Catholic Indian Missions.
- Association on American Indian Affairs.
- Indian Law Resource Center.
- Rural Coalition.
- Phelps-Stokes Fund.

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Mailing planned for new year

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- Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs.

- American Friends Service Committee.

- National Tribal Chairman's Association.

- National Indian Education Association.

- Native American Rights Fund.

Four members of the Alaska Native Coalition were present at the meeting, as well as individuals from the State of Alaska's Washington, D.C., office; several Washington, D.C., based attorneys; a representative from the Navajo Nation; and several Senate staff aides.

The result of the meeting was the assignment of various tasks, ranging from development of a media strategy to fundraising. The most significant decision was to create a national coalition

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tion open to all organizations and any individuals who support the efforts of the Alaska Native Coalition.

Friends of Alaska Native Governments was the name proposed for the national coalition. However, this will be taken up for discussion by the Alaska Native Coalition membership at its next teleconference.

One of the first events that will take place is a briefing session for Senate and House staffers to educate them

about the issues facing the Alaska Native community and the goals of the coalition.

A mailing also will be done early in the new year to solicit membership for the national coalition and to seek further assistance from other organizations and individuals.

Tribes are encouraged to adopt resolutions supporting the efforts of the Alaska Native Coalition. Those who would like further information about positions and specific amendment language are asked to contact the coalition's legislative committee members or the Native American Rights Fund Alaska Office.

"We have established priorities for the short-term objectives of the ANC, however, we need to keep in mind the long-term work that will be required to fully secure our rights to our land, self-determination and resources," spokesmen said.