

Cape Newenham Refuge Slated for Village Discussion

Public meetings are being held this week on September 9 in Goodnews Bay and Tooksook Bay and September 10 in Hooper Bay and Emmonak to discuss the establishment of the Cape Newenham National Wildlife Refuge and the enlargement of the Clarence Rhode National Wildlife Refuge.

The meetings are being conducted by a study team consisting of representatives of the State Government, Bureau of Indian Affairs; Geological Survey; and a representative of the Secretary of Interior's Office.

At the meetings the land withdrawals will be explained and specific points of conflict will be identified.

Dick Shepherd, Interior Coordinator in Alaska said, "These areas have unique values of national significance for the conservation of migratory birds and other wildlife.

The withdrawals leave the land open to the mining and mineral leasing laws and they do

not affect valid existing rights. They specifically recognize any legal or aboriginal claim or right of the natives to use the lands."

Mr. Shepherd continued, "The Department of the Interior recognizes that in withdrawals of this type boundaries are not precisely drawn and modifica-

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tions may be necessary. Before any general public hearings this study team will be reviewing the withdrawals with the people on the ground.

The team is meeting in the villages to define the problems and identify the conflict areas. Following these meetings we will prepare a report and recommend to the Secretary of the Interior whether formal public hearings should be held."

The establishment of the Cape Newenham and the enlargement of the Clarence Rhode National Wildlife Refuges came as a result of actions taken by Secretary of the Interior Stewart U-dall on January 20, 1969.