



## *Natives triumph with consensus*

The Alaska Native community — under fire from many quarters on the potentially divisive and chaotic subsistence situation in Alaska today — has once again shown what true leadership can accomplish.

Just as historically whenever a very divisive issue has pressed down upon the state's indigenous population, Alaska Natives earlier this month once again have shown that consensus can result, no matter how hot the debate.

We must stress, however, that this process is not magical. What happens in order for groups with very different goals to find a middle ground is that people start working even before they get to the meeting. Once gathered, they negotiate, they express different points of view, they work hard on the floor and in caucus and they are willing to make concessions.

The *Tundra Times* is printing in this issue the entire text of the Subsistence Summit Conference resolutions. We hope all our readers take the time to study them. The key thing to remember is that underlying every word is the idea that subsistence priority will be pursued as a Native right.

People at the summit spoke passionately — and rightly so — explaining that it's not necessary to make a request to the state of Alaska for subsistence. It is a Native right, and it is at the core of Native self-esteem.

The key points of the resolutions adopted by the 700 people attending the meeting are:

- An amendment to the Alaska Constitution will be supported as a means of maintaining state control of fish and game resources in Alaska and bringing the state into compliance with federal law.

- A thorough review and analysis must be made of how subsistence works in Alaska. Who gets hurt? What changes need to be made? How can the system be more fair?

- If the Legislature fails to act or if voters turn down a constitutional amendment and a federal takeover of fish and game management on federal lands becomes necessary, strong opposition will be voiced if the federal government attempts to shirk its responsibility by contracting the management back to the state.

- A statewide educational campaign on subsistence will be started.

- A concerted campaign will be undertaken to get voters registered if an amendment is put on the ballot.

- As a long-term goal, Alaska Natives will work toward the protection of subsistence rights for Alaska Native tribal members, as well as regulation by tribal entities.