

# Chickaloon Village to host dual meets

by Tricia King

Special to the *Tundra Times*

---

Native peoples from all regions of the world will soon be gathering at a campground north of Palmer, to share their ideas on issues affecting indigenous peoples worldwide, as part of two international conferences being hosted by Chickaloon Village Traditional Council.

"Nana Soo Nenna Nat Ska Gon Den" (We are the ones who repair the land) is the theme of the two back-to-back conferences. The theme adapts words from a traditional Athabascan song which tells a story of restored vision, describing a time when the eyes of a blind man were healed by a benevolent swan.

The sixth annual "Protect Mother Earth" Conference of the Indigenous Environmental Network will take place Monday-

Thursday, June 19-22 to be immediately followed by the 16th International Indian Treaty Council Conference, which begins the evening of Thursday, June 22, and continues through Sunday, June 25.

The two events will focus on finding solutions to the problems of environmental degradation and toxic contamination faced by indigenous communities worldwide, and will include in depth discussions of treaties between indigenous peoples and national governments. United Nations treaty expert Dr. Miguel Alfonso Martinez will be present for the entire week, to take testimony from Native peoples regarding treaties and governing mechanisms currently in force worldwide.

It is hoped that representatives from all tribes and regions in Alaska will be present to speak to

Dr. Martinez, who is compiling information which will be presented to the UN in 1996, said IITC Executive Director Andrea Carmen. Indigenous representatives from El Salvador, Argentina, Guatemala, Chiapas, New Zealand, Hawaii and the lower 48 will also be attending the conferences, which are open to all who are interested in attending.

The two conference sponsoring organizations, the Indigenous Environmental Network and the International Indian Treaty Council, are both centered in a "traditional perspective of preserving our original relationship of balance with the earth, and challenging development strategies, whether they're promoted by Native or non-Native, that will cause destruction to the natural environment," Carmen said.

The first Protecting Mother

*Page 12, please*

# Chickaloon Village to host dual conference . . .

*Continued from page 1*

Earth conference was hosted by the Dine CARE organization (Navajo), in Dilkon Arizona. Subsequent gatherings have been held in Bear Butte, South Dakota; Celilo Village on the Columbia River, Oregon; Sac and Fox Nation, Oklahoma; and Mole Lake, Wisconsin (Sokoagon Chippewa Community).

"These gatherings empower our peoples to organize around their issues and to see effective ways that other communities have been successful at taking on the corporations that are exploiting our lands," said James Main Sr., of the Gros Ventre Nation in Montana, whose community is fighting toxic cyanide contamination in their drinking water, caused by nearby mining operations.

This year's IEN conference will begin with focus on issues of particular concern to Alaskans, including oil and gas development, mining, nuclear and radiation experimentation on Native peoples, clearcut logging, military impacts, and tribal disposal of waste and sewage. Sustainable economic development, biological diversity, and potential solutions and strategies will be discussed during the four day conference, which also features youth activities and evening cultural and social events.

Beginning Thursday evening, June 22, the 16th International Indian Treaty Council Conference will focus on international developments, particularly the significant advances and opportunities for indigenous peoples' involvement at the United Nations.

"Our rights have become a major factor in international politics," said Carmen. "I think the fact that we have a decade officially called the Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples effectively creates a focus of international attention on all of the different issues and concerns of indigenous peoples in a way that we've never had before internationally. It was hard to even dream of that five years ago."

The IITC, an organization of Indigenous Peoples from North, Central, South America and the Pacific, founded in 1974, has had consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council since 1977. Its focus is sovereignty, human rights, land rights and treaties, and the defense of Indigenous Peoples' sacred lands, cultures, and ways of life.

Presentations and discussions at the conference will include the UN Draft Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples which began in December 1994, and the United Nations Study in Treaties, Agreements and other Constructive Arrangements with Indigenous Peoples. Formal testimony from Alaska Natives will be heard by Martinez, the official UN representative, on Friday, June 23rd.

The two conferences are camp-out events, and will be held at the Elks Youth Camp at mile 58 of the Glenn Highway, north of Palmer. Although a few cabins will be available for elders and handicapped, all other participants should be prepared to camp out,

and bring tents, bedding, and eating utensils.

Food will be provided, and although there is no charge for the conference, persons planning to attend are urged to pre-register, in order that food needs may be adequately met. Further information and pre-registration can be accomplished through the Alaska Indigenous Environmental Network Conference Office at (907) 745-0505, or the IITC Alaska Office at (907) 745-4482, or by fax to (907) 745-0606.

"May our Creator guide your path to these gatherings so we may unite for the Protection of our Mother Earth and future generations," say representatives of the two sponsoring organizations and the Chickaloon Village Traditional Council.