

CULTURAL CENTERS —

Interested Villages Should Contact Park Service Now . .

By LYNN CHAMBERS

If you would like to have a Cultural/Heritage Center in your village and/or region write to Harold Gronroos, National Park Service, 334 West 5th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99510.

For several years now the Park Service has been talking about Cultural Centers in Alaska. This year they are beginning to develop a staff to work on them as well as to assist in recreational plan development. The staff will be under the National Park Service Alaska State Director, Stanley T. Albright. The Native Assistance Program will be directed by Harold Gronroos assisted by Mickiet Baxter.

The first additions to their staff will be three park planners possessing expertise to meet anticipated demands. Further additions could be made either on a full time or contractual basis as needs arise from your requests for special assistance.

In October 1967, the Park Service Director prepared a briefing book for the State Governors. Among these ideas was "Native Cultural Centers."

During the summer of 1968,



a team of researchers from the Park Service visited 27 villages spread over much of Northern, Central, and Southeastern Alaska to obtain first hand information for a statewide preservation program.

Since that time National Park Service policy as expressed by Secretary of Interior Roger C. Morton and former Secretary Hickel is "to further the economy of Indian Reservations and Alaska Native's by developing their recreational and cultural

resources.

In many cases the development of recreation and historic sites represents the area's only potential for economic improvement. Corollary to this is the need for greater American Indian and Alaska Native involvement in the planning and approval of projects."

This winter, a proposed program was drawn up by the Anchorage Office and accepted in theory by the Washington D.C. Office for Alaska Heritage Centers. The plan basically suggests staffing to give technical assistance in planning and developing village, regional and state cultural heritage centers.

The plans suggest the following, but you are by no means limited to them:

"The Village Center oriented toward that particular village's specific resources and interests."

"The Regional Center, one or more in each regional corps area, more or less centrally located and accessible, oriented equally to regional residents and tourists." And can include craft competitions, exhibits of the area's finest workmanship, displays of student efforts, etc., as well as displays of artifacts and recordings of stories and dances.

And one or more State Centers representing all regions of Alaska and would be primarily tourist oriented.

The plan also suggests the functions of the centers "would be to collect, document, and preserve local artifacts and to display them in a meaningful, organized manner. It would provide education and enjoyment for young and old and insure preservation of information and traditions now being lost as the older generations die."

The Park Service will not come to you and suggest that you open a Heritage Center. It is up to you to contact them. If you want a center in your village and/or region talk to your village and regional corp and tell them to write to the Park Service, or you write personally and ask the Park Service to send a representative to our area to assist you in planning and developing your center.

The Park Service plans on acting as the catalyst to help start the centers, train local people to manage and operate them, then leave the center to the local people to own and continue.

The Service is currently developing a priority list of projects, if you want to be included at the top of this list, get your requests in now.

Also, the Park Service will respond to requests for assistance in recreational development planning on Native Lands. This can include, but is not limited to, the tour industry in the form of camp grounds, sports and other recreational facilities and accommodations.

Let the Park Service know what you would like in these areas and they will give you the assistance you require, or put you in touch with someone who can.