

# COMMENTS ON LAND USE

*(Comments on the Land Use Planning Commission of the Kenai National Moose Range Study)*

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As a young boy and young man until the later part of the 1940's, I remember life on the Kenai Peninsula as happy and peaceful. There was an abundance of fish and game. Our Native people were independent and self-sustaining and no one was on relief. In the late 1940's, homesteaders began to appear on the peninsula. Our people helped them to select land and taught them how to live on our land, how to fish and hunt, preserve their game, and grow vegetable gardens. This continued into the 1950's and early 1960's in spite of bad treatment such as ridiculing our lifestyle and exploitation. The fishing sites that were owned almost entirely by our Native people are gone. Now perhaps less than 5 per cent of the total fishermen that own commercial fishing sites and reasonably good boats are Natives. The rest are owned by outsiders, homesteaders, teachers, lawyers, and politicians.

The protection of land and wildlife has always been practiced by our people and always will be.

Although our villages are situated along the coast of Cook Inlet, historically all of the Moose Range was occupied and its resources used continually by our Native people of the Tanaina.

Our Native peoples' subsistence way of life is hard to give up and simply not understood by some of our older people.

We have always taken fish and game as needed, never wasting but sharing with others.

It is painful to learn that four of my village people with families have been arrested for taking moose out of season and have been sentenced to spend one to three months in jail. While on the other hand the very people we have helped to get established on our lands are using snow machines and planes and when caught, receive a light fine and suspended sentence.

Regarding the moose in the Moose Range, it has been my experience that grazing and calving activities by moose varies with seasons and the weather. During summer, fall, and light snow conditions, the moose are in the foothills and during heavy snow periods, moose are along the banks of Cook Inlet, highways, oil operation areas, and in village areas.

Regarding mention of the need for further scientific studies of the Moose Range, these have been conducted since 1941, and further studies may or may not be needed. However, I would like to see some recommendations made as to when we will begin rebuilding and restocking our wildlife and salmon resources that have been so effectively exploited and depleted.

The mention of preservation of archeological remains pursuant to the Antiquities Act, that the range is rich in archeological resources and that field studies will contribute to the present knowledge concerning the activities of early Native peoples should indicate clearly to all that our claim to this land is just and right.

## COOK INLET REGION & VILLAGE LAND NEEDS

1. Provide a just and equitable settlement for Cook Inlet Region.

2. To satisfy requirements under the Act - Provide land that is reasonably similar in character to our villages.

3. To provide opportunity for resident, commercial and other considerations near places where our people live.

4. To provide opportunities for financial independence and self-sufficiency.

5. To relieve a population roadside pressure on the Moose Range.

6. Remove Point Possession, Swanson River Oil Field, and most of the oil industry from the range.

7. Enable the establishment of a refuge consistent with current needs.

8. Allow the harvest of beetle-infested trees.

9. Provide an opportunity for expansion and allow social and economic growth for all inhabitants of the peninsula.

The Alaska Native Land Claims Bill might be a vehicle to help repair all the past promises broken by the U.S. Government, but unless some justice is done in the case of Cook Inlet, there will always be a mar against the record, a continuing record of all injustices for history to look at. We all know that the boundaries in the Moose Range have been changed to meet the white man's economic interests. We plead that the Land Use Planning Commission seek to square up the balance sheet, this time with a boundary change based on fundamental human needs by a people closely tied to this land. It is time to make some decisions based on people rather than dollars. The Land Use Planning Commission here has a chance to go on record as a champion of equal rights, of just treatment of all people under the law. Our society cannot long survive if men can continue to build and twist the law successfully to meet their own needs. There is a greater need now than ever before to have a rule of law rather than a rule of men. The Land Use Planning Commission with its Moose Range recommendation has an opportunity to make a stand for what is right under the law.