Babbitt and Deer Expedition

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~ Part III ~

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt.
Photo by Jeff Richardson

Secretary appoints advisory councils

Regional advisory councils (Councils) have been established in Alaska to advise the federal government on subsistence hunting and fishing in the state. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt announced his appointments to these councils during his recent Alaska tour.

Members of the new Councils are Alaskans who have personal knowledge of local conditions. (See list this page.) The 84 members were chosen after extensive recruitment and review of 260 applications. Recommendations for Council members were made to the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture by the Federal Subsistence Board in Alaska, which oversees subsistence management on federal public land.

The Councils will provide a regional forum for gathering information and making recommendations on the subsistence uses of fish and wildlife resources. The Council chairs serve as liaisons to the Federal Subsistence e Board and make recommendations regarding subsistence management in their respective regions.

The establishment of a network of citizens' advisory councils is required by the subsistence provision of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) of 1980. Title VIII of ANILCA provides for "the continuation of the opportunity for subsistence uses by rural residents of Alaska" on federal public land. It further requires that the federal government provide a subsistence priority for rural Alaskan residents.

The State of Alaska provided for a subsistence priority and an advisory system through its laws until the 1989 State Supreme Court McDowell decision resulted in a finding that the State law was unconstitutional. The federal government assumed the responsibility for subsistence management in 1990. Federal agencies now manage subsistence use of fish and wildlife on 188 million acres of Alaska (more than 50% of the state), and the Fish and Wildlife Service is the lead agency for this effort.