

Three G's:

Porcupine herd only and commission of eight

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From the TCC Council

The largest international caribou herd left in North America, which migrates between Alaska and Canada, was the topic of testimony in Fort Yukon in June. Gwitcha Gwitchin Ginkye, the Yukon Flats Native nonprofit corporation, submitted their version of the International Porcupine Caribou treaty to U.S. State and Interior Department representatives.

Three G's treaty stated that only the Porcupine caribou herd (above 64 degrees 30' N. latitude) be cited in the management and habitat sections; that the International Caribou Commission be comprised of eight members, four members from each country, with an Inuit and an Indian who use the Porcupine caribou herd for subsistence, a federal representative and a state representative and the Canadians would have their counterpart. Under the commission it is suggested that there be a Migratory Caribou Committee made up of both subsistence users and scientific people, plus an Arctic International Wildlife Range Coordinating Committee.

Jonathan Solomon, president of 3 G's said, "the main thing is to protect habitat of the Porcupine caribou herd and that there be Indian and Eskimo representation with the scientific community on the board."

"Caribou is the most important thing to Arctic Village. If we don't have any caribou, I don't know how we're going to live," testified Trimble Gilbert, a Neetsi Gwitchin Indian. "In the calving ground, we don't want any development. Since the pipeline was built, we haven't seen any caribou until last summer. I was a guide in that area; I see a lot of people from the lower 48 who just want bulls for their horns; they just leave the meat. I'm responsible to see the meat gets taken back; they don't want it. I don't take lower 48 people out anymore because my people depend on the caribou. I want to see the Porcupine caribou protected for future generations."

Tom Parker of the U.S. State Department assured those who testified that 3 G's draft treaty would be taken to the Interior Department back in D.C., but he offered no guarantees that the people would get what they wanted. Interior Department delegates were Terry Wafflestauffer, assistant secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Esther Kaloa, special assistant for Alaska to the Assistant secretary for Indian affairs; and Avrel Thayer, refuge manager for William O. Douglas National Monument.

TCC's Henry Mitchell and Dolly Garza Koonook coordinated the meeting.

Testimonies were also taken in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Kaktovik. In Canada, testimonies are also being taken.

