

Letters to the Tundra Times

Future of Culture

Copper Center Village Council
Box 154
Copper Center, Alaska
99573
AHTNA TRIBE
February 08, 1980

Tundra Times
Editor
639 "I" Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Editor:

I am writing this letter to you because of our future in our culture, tradition and language. First, I am the village chief of Copper Center, one of the biggest villages in the AHTNA region. I have known for the last ten years our generation and the younger generation is losing our culture, tradition and language. The reason I think is because we are not trying to keep it. I know that is wrong. We have to ask the older generation. Once the older generation is no longer with us in this world, the culture will be lost FOREVER.

It is our responsibility to stop this from happening. We must seek this knowledge from our elders so in return we can pass it on to our children. I know a long time ago during the Potlatch there was no drinking. The people really respected the Potlatch. But now I see alot of drinking going on at the Potlatch. I really think to myself the people should respect the Potlatch. I really hope and pray that our generation will start tinkling about our future years.

Sincerely,
Carl N. Pete, President

Correcting the record

State of Alaska
Department of Fish and Game
Jay S. Hammond, Governor
1300 College Road
Fairbanks, Ak 99701
January 30, 1980

Editor
Tundra Times
639 I Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Sir:

There has been a recent series of articles in the "Anchorage Times" which reflect poorly on subsistence-oriented, rural Alaskans. Please consider the attach-

ed copy of a letter to the "Times" for inclusion in your paper. It is my attempt to correct the record on behalf of subsistence hunters and myself.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
John J. Burns
Marine Mammals Biologist
Division of Game

Enclosure

Walrus stories

State of Alaska
Department of Fish and Game
1300 College Road
Fairbanks, AK 99701
January 18, 1980

Mr. Guy Martin
Eskimo Walrus Commission
Kawerak, Inc.
Box 948
Nome, Alaska 99762

Dear Guy:

Today I was informed about a newspaper article in an Anchorage paper concerning walruses. I have not yet seen the article in question although I have been told about quotations attributed directly to me and also Tom Lonner. In both cases, the quotations were in error and taken out of context. It was apparently stated that I said there was no subsistence dependency on walruses in Alaska.

Reporting by the media has frequently been in error, particularly when high profile or emotional issues are involved. I am sure that you have already been exposed to such errors as, for instance, in reporting about business ventures of the Regional Corporation or about statements you supposedly have made.

At this point, about all that Tom and I can do is to assure you and others close to the scene that, in fact, we did not make the statements attributed to us. I suspect you have already reached that conclusion yourself, based on personal knowledge of our past efforts on behalf of subsistence hunting and subsistence hunters.

To the extent possible, I shall try and correct the record on behalf of the many subsistence hunters in villages all along the coast. If you have suggestions as to how this can be best accomplished, please let me know.

Sincerely,
John J. Burns

Marine Mammals Coordinator
Division of Game

cc: Tundra Times

Subsistence Harvest

State of Alaska
Department of Fish and Game
Jay S. Hammond, Governor
P.O. Box 862
Nome, Ak 99762
January 28, 1980

Mr. Guy Martin
Eskimo Walrus Commission
Kawerak, Inc.
P.O. Box 948
Nome, Alaska 99762

Dear Guy:

I read with great distress the recent Times article on the hunting of walrus.

I wish to inform you that I was misquoted and my opinions misrepresented.

I did tell Mr. Blessington that there were great commercial pressures to harvest and sell walrus ivory. However, I also told him that the Walrus Commission was the most hopeful sign that walrus issues could be handled internally. He did not choose to report this. He also did not choose to report my hope that Native Subsistence Harvest would not be hurt by any future legislation or regulation.

I regret any concern Mr. Blessington's misreporting may have caused you.

Sincerely,
Tom Lonner
Subsistence Section

cc: Tundra Times

Caribou treaty

State of Alaska
Board of Fisheries/
Board of Game
Juneau, Alaska 99811
January 31, 1980

Hon. Cecil D. Andrus
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Andrus:

The Alaska Board of Game is the primary regulatory agency for the development of all game resources of the State of Alaska. We feel that it is important to make an official expression of our view regarding the "Draft Convention for the Conservation of Migratory Caribou and their Habitat" currently under review (See LETTERS, Page Three)

Letters to the Tundra Times

(Continued from Page Two)

by the federal government of the United States and the federal government of Canada.

The Board of Game is adamantly opposed to adoption of the Convention in its present form. The Board has expressed the reasons for this opposition in discussions with representatives of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service over the years, especially at a joint meeting in Anchorage in July, 1979. Briefly summarized, those reasons are:

1. The current status of the Porcupine Caribou herd is excellent. Under State management, the herd as a whole has thrived. Cooperation with Canadian Territorial biologists has historically

been excellent. There is no present need to disrupt this harmonious relationship and substitute a cosmetically appealing, but substantively lacking, management regime involving additional bureaucracy.

2. The regularity provisions of the Convention elicit grave concern for the continued Subsistence, recreational, and aesthetic uses of caribou in Alaska.

3. The Convention is unforgivably imprecise as to which herds of caribou it purports to cover.

4. No mechanism for setting an acceptable standard for habitat is established by the Convention.

5. Allocation of national quotas envisaged by the Convention appears to strongly disadvantage the United States.

6. The composition and role of the Commission and Advisory Committees are unclear.

If the Carter Administration is immutably committed to establishing an international agreement pertaining to the Porcupine Caribou Herd, then the Board of Game strongly suggests that the iteration provided by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game be used in place of the current Draft Convention. The Alaska version of the Con-

vention does not suffer from the unacceptable defects noted above.

The Alaska Board of Game and the entire State of Alaska are strongly supportive of the desire to protect and preserve the delicate habitat in which the Porcupine Herd lives. Prophylactic measures may in the future prove to be necessary as industrial development in the Arctic becomes more widespread. At the present time, however, there is no need to preempt the actual management of caribou by the State of Alaska by means of a convention, treaty, or executive agreement. The consensus among the professional biological commun-

ity is that the Porcupine Caribou Herd is in fine shape. It is a natural resource providing sustenance, recreation, and aesthetic pleasure to people on both sides of the border as presently managed. Let me repeat: the Alaska Board of Game sees no existing need for the Draft Convention as currently written.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,
Greg Cook for
Dr. Samuel J. Harbo, Jr.
Chairman
Alaska Board of Game

cc: Tundra Times