

# No need for road

I am curious to know why the State of Alaska would want to spend so much money on a road to the Kanthisna River. There is no need for it. Hardly anyone lives there and the few that do oppose a road. They moved there to get away from roads.

The Stampede Road by Healy already goes there and it is rarely used. Old mail trails and survey line are open and used by people that live in the area and by trappers and Natives that subsist off of the land. This is the way it has been since before recorded history. The last thing that anyone wants to see is a new four wheel drive Ford pulling up along their trail and shooting everything in sight and then leaving it there to rot with the rest of their trash.

I do not think that our state treasury will withstand all the projects that expansionists keep dreaming up. There is already talk of starting a state income tax again. We could can the road and go another year tax free.

We are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars. That is to say \$500,000.00 for a feasibility

study alone. Many millions of yards of gravel and hundreds of tons of steel would have to be put in a road bed in the form of fill, culverts and bridges. The freight alone would be a tremendous expense. There is very little high ground in the route. The Rex area in contrast offers lots of high ground.

It pretty much looks like the only ones that could benefit from this expressway is the big money developer that has his foot in the door and the people affiliated with him. He isn't a believer in union work anyway. It is matter of public record that our representative of District J has always submitted to an absolute minimum of union participation in all of 20 years of projects that he has had anything to do with.

The fact that he personally owns land that would have to be used as a base camp probably looks sweet to him, too. It is rumored that this is his master stroke to show the traditional Natives of the area that he is the head cheese and that they might as well sign over what ever else he wants.

Would it be a terrible tragedy to preserve wild lands only 60 miles away from our second largest metropolitan area? Couldn't it serve as recreation for state residents and tourists as well? It is doing just that now as it has done for as long as anyone can remember. Countless sportsmen and Natives can attest to that.

I find it hard to believe that there aren't any conservationists around to support this. There is also the tourism industry. Our state depends heavily on tourism. I challenge you to find a tourist that comes to Alaska not to see any accessible wildlands. Thousands of tourists have pictures of their Alaskan adventure in this area hanging on their living room walls and in photo albums.

In the light of even half of these facts, a private developer would abandon the project. Our oil revenues are on the decline. so, why do we want to spend alot of money that is left on something that we do not really want????

Frank A Minano Jr.  
Nenana, AK

# Non-drinking trend

To the Editor:

As 1991 looms on the horizon, with the as-yet indistinct but potentially disruptive impacts on all Alaskans, it is reasonable to note a trend among many Native Alaskans that flies in the face of long-held stereotypes held by many non-Natives. This trend makes the task of preparing for the upcoming battle over corporate and land ownership between the Native corporations and potential outside owners that much more hopeful.

A good number of Native people--aware of their historical reputation for self-destruction--are choosing not to drink or use drugs. They are making this decision not only in order to feel better, but in some instances, as a political act of defiance.

As a Native friend of mine puts it, "Sobriety is a revolutionary act for Alaskan Natives." The

truly subversive feature of being sober is that he thinks clearly, understands the issues confronting him and his people, and is able to act with credibility in ways that were never available to him during his heavy drinking days.

Most of us have never considered sobriety to be anything other than a personal liberating act. The thought has not occurred to most of us that if large numbers of heretofore, more or less frequently inebriated people choose not to drink, there may be social, economic and political consequences which we had not anticipated.

An example of this trend can be seen in the recently enacted policies of the Alaska Federation of Natives and the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), both of which have in recent years adopted policies of no drinking during their annual meetings.

AVCP even contacts local villages when any of their representatives to the annual conferences break the rules and become inebriated.

Having overcome the devastations of decades of epidemic disease, it would appear that many Native people are beginning to deal effectively with the problems of a minority of their number who drink too much. Further, many of those who in the past have been alcohol abusers are choosing on their own, or with the help of friends, to give it up.

Let us applaud the courage, defiance and good sense of those who have quit drinking or who will not drink when important business is being transacted. We should all follow this good example.

Sincerely,  
Joyce Schwettman  
Anchorage, AK  
278-4458