

AFN sponsored **Subsistence conference starts Tuesday**

by **Geoff Kennedy**

for the **Tundra Times**

The Alaska Federation of Natives holds a two-day "summit conference" on subsistence this week.

"The conference will provide a forum to hear all views of Native groups throughout the state and to discuss how the interests of Native people can be advanced in the long-term," says AFN President Julie Kitka.

The conference takes place in the Egan Convention Center in Anchorage Tuesday and Wednesday.

Although the Tanana Chiefs Conference and the Association of Village Council Presidents have broken away from the AFN in the past, both

continued on page fourteen

• AFN convenes subsistence meeting

continued from page one

organizations will send representatives to the conference.

Former TCC President Mitch Dementieff will participate in a discussion of Congress and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. And AVCP Vice President Myron Naneng will participate in a discussion on the effects of a federal takeover of fish and game management on federal lands in Alaska.

AVCP planned to meet last week to develop its own subsistence position.

"Hopefully, AFN will listen to our concerns first. We know they already have come up with a position," Naneng said.

In February, AFN supported a con-

stitutional amendment to set a subsistence preference for rural Alaskans. Gov. Steve Cowper and Rep. George Jacko, D-Pedro Bay, have introduced legislation to replace the rural preference law struck down last December by the state Supreme Court.

But Rep. Kay Wallis, D-Fort Yukon, has introduced legislation to provide a preference for Alaska Natives.

The Southeast Native Subsistence Commission also supports that position.

Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, and Rep. Don Young, R-Alaska, support a rural preference.

Stevens says changing the State Constitution to include a rural preference is a much better approach than trying to amend the rural

preference section of ANILCA. Amending ANILCA would invite animal-rights advocates to push for an outright ban on all hunting and fishing, including subsistence, on federal lands in Alaska, Stevens says.

Young agrees, and he says a Native preference constitutional amendment would divide the state and generate an anti-Native backlash.

Young is tentatively scheduled to address the conference, and Stevens is scheduled to send a taped address. Sen. Frank Murkowski, R-Alaska, will not attend because he is expected to be in the Middle East.

AFN also has invited Cowper and Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan.

The AFN tentative agenda focuses on four main issues:

- The effects of federal intervention in managing fish and game on federal lands if the state fails to enact a subsistence law that meets federal requirements.

- The likely political effects of attempting to change the rural preference sections of ANILCA.

- Cowper's rural preference approach.

- Wallis' Native preference approach.

"We intend to provide enough clear information so that people can return to their communities with a clear idea of what's at stake," said Janice Ryan, AFN public information officer. "We'll try to provide them with specific information to deal with (these issues) because it affects them so deeply."