

Local priority for jobs and visitor services

The Alaska Lands Act gives rural residents a better-than-average chance for a job in a national park, refuge, forest monument or wilderness, trail or river. The Act also gives preference to local residents and Native corporations for visitor services.

LOCAL HIRE

All of the Federal land managers are required to ignore many of the usual hiring rules in order to provide job opportunities to a person who "...by reason of having lived or worked in or near a conservation system unit, has special knowledge or expertise concerning the natural or cultural resources of such unit...."

This means they do not have to require the usual education or work experience as a condition of employment. Veteran's preference and personnel ceilings also will not apply. All this gives rural Alaskans a leg up on getting some of the new jobs.

Don't expect to see these new hiring rules go into effect immediately. The Federal agencies are still developing the local hire program. The Alaska Federation of Natives and others are working to make sure that each agency establishes a program which provides a real opportunity for local hire.

Some local rural residents have already been hired, though. For example, two Eskimo women, one from Kotzebue and one from Shungnak, have worked for the Park Service this

summer in northwest Alaska.

PREFERENCE ON VISITOR SERVICES

Visitor services, such as providing food, rooms, transportation, tours and guide services, are regulated by the Federal land manager of each park, refuge, river or forest monument unit. This does not include hunting and sport fishing guiding activities which are regulated by the State of Alaska.

The Alaska Lands Act requires Federal land managers to give preference for visitor services or concessions to the Native corporation most directly affected by the establishment of the new unit and to other local residents of the area.

Many of the new parks and refuges will require administrative sites and visitor facilities. The Act requires the Federal land manager to "attempt to locate such sites and facilities on Native lands in the vicinity of the unit...." This requirement gives a regional or village corporation the opportunity, if they want it, to lease land and construct buildings for use by the Federal agencies as offices and visitors centers.

If you are interested in employment or in operating a concession close to your home, you should contact the Federal agency which manages the nearby conservation unit. The addresses and phone number of those agencies are listed on page 3.