

Bilingual Natives To Be Hired

ANCHORAGE — While the U.S. Fish and Wildlife contends it cannot hire two bilingual Alaska Natives provided for by Congress last June, it is now considering hiring part-time bilingual Natives to assist in the Native involvement program.

The agency was provided with \$80,000 to recruit and hire two bilingual Natives for the Bethel-Yukon Delta and Kotzebue-Kobuk areas. There are presently no Native employees on a professional or semi-professional level within that federal agency in Alaska.

Gordon Watson, Alaska Area director for the Fish and Wildlife Service indicated that imposed employment ceilings have forced the agency to cut back on employees and use present employees to do the jobs

(Continued on Page 6)

Bilingual . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

previously intended for bilingual Natives. Bob Stevens, public information officer for the agency, is "shepherding" the program.

"We have been sending people out to do the job, I've spent some time in villages myself talking to the people, and we'll get the job done," Stevens said. "We've already told a lot of people that if they are bilingual and interested, they should fill out an application and we'll consider them for part-time positions."

Stipulations for a total of four bilingual Native positions were included in Fish and Wildlife's 10-year plan as developed by Richard J. Hensel, a wildlife biologist. Hensel worked two years in the Yukon Delta region before transferring to another division of the department.

"The reason for my leaving was, by and large, prompted by the inability of the government to lend full administrative support to Native involvement functions and my own impotency as a Program Coordinator in respect to insuring the government did exactly this," Hensel stated in a Jan. 17 letter to David Friday of Bethel. "I will be reassigned to the Division of Wildlife Research..."

Stevens says the agency is considering two possible ways for

either a cooperative effort with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, or contracting to Native corporations for the work that needs to be done. Other persons within the agency expressed concern to the Tundra Times that such approaches are only efforts to keep from directly involving Native people in the major decisions which will affect them in the future.

Native positions are also provided for in the 10-year plan for Anchorage and Fairbanks, but while the first two positions designated to be filled by last fall are still unoccupied, prospects of meaningful Native employment are diminishing throughout the agency.