

Hearings on D-2 Lands—

Chiefs: Needed Throughout State

Due to the increasing concern of all citizens, the Board of Directors of Tanana Chiefs Conference are strongly recommending that all the federal agencies that are studying the proposing classifications on D-2 lands hold local hearings throughout the state. The board took this formal action at their Tok meeting recently.

"We have five major federal agencies that are now in the process of making decisions and proposals as how to utilize the lands that are now in a D-2 classification" stated John Sackett, president of the Tanana Chiefs Conference.

In contacting the agencies concerned, Sackett wrote that the "board feels strongly that

you should hold local hearings. We urge this because the local residents are the ones that are going to be greatly affected by whatever you recommend, and in some respects their entire livelihood and way of life can and will be drastically changed.

"In order to know how your proposal is going to affect local Alaskan residents, you must gain their opinions.

"Additionally, even before you draw up a proposal you should start at the grassroots level and find out what we in Alaska want, not only what a federal agency or what the nation needs."

Sackett said that within the Tanana Chiefs Conference area

(Continued on page 6)

Hearings on D-2 Lands..

(Continued from page 1)

each of the federal agencies mentioned has plans to reclassify the land, and the rural village people are lost as to what this means to their ways of life in the near future.

"Our residents are extremely concerned that a park or a federal forest or a wildlife reserve may be placed near them. They are also concerned as to what a river classified as wild and scenic will do their hunting and future economic development within a wild and scenic classification," he stated.

"These federal agencies must explain in detail the exact affect their branch of government's operation will have on the people and the land, and they must go into each area and hold public hearing to learn if the local people affected want the jurisdiction of any of these federal agencies."

The agencies referred to are the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service on Wildlife Reserves, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, and National Parks Service.

The agencies are presently drawing up proposals on 80 million acres of land as how the land will be classified, and they

have until next Dec. 18 by which to make their recommendations to the Secretary of Interior.

"Dependant upon which agency makes a proposal on use of the D-2 lands they can restrict and in many cases totally terminate all human activity and development.

Subsistence hunting and fishing, game regulations, and future economic development can and will be changed and the local Alaska residents have a right to know how these federal agencies are planning to restrict their lives," stated Sackett.

"While we are not necessarily against any of the proposals that may be made, all of us as Alaskans do have a right to know in advance what the affects will be and have the opportunity to make our opinions known," he stated.

Sackett further called upon the Land Use Planning Commission to monitor and make sure that the federal agencies will gain the opinions of all people affected in the different geographical areas.

Sackett asked that hearings be held in the Kuskokwim, Yukon, Tanana, Upper Tanana, and Fairbanks area within the Tanana Chiefs region.