

Den Nena Henash - Our Land Speaks

Ut Kah neek - Informing and Reporting

Yupiit Kaniautciat - The Way Eskimos Talk

Unangan Tunukun - The Aleuts Speak

Inupiat Paitot - People's Heritage

Housing needs must be heard

To the editor:

Thirteen out of 15 Alaska Native housing authorities were in attendance at the Annual Conference of National American Indian Housing Council, held in Tampa, Fla.

June 11-14 were busy days with workshops, listening to Washington, D.C., types such as department heads of Indian Health Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs.

On June 14 a major resolution was adopted and passed by the membership of National American Indian Housing Council which is to request from Congress 3,000 housing units for Alaska Native and Indian housing programs. Among other issues were a reduction in payments to housing to 15 percent of income and establishment of an Indian Commission on Housing to study the concerns and issues of Alaska Native and Indian housing.

Specifically for Alaska Native communities there is a need for 6,400 housing units. Last year fewer than 200 units came to Alaska for our communities. At this rate it would take 40 years to meet our housing needs.

At the conference there were several workshops, including Tenant Services, Substance Abuse, Federal Budget Process, Training for Board of Commissioners, Maintenance Management, Conflict Resolution and Housing Our

Elders.

Our Alaska Native housing needs must be heard. Our housing programs provide jobs to your local community, provide a career for several housing staff people within your community and provide your community with homes.

If you feel that there is a need for homes in your community, write to Sens. Ted Stevens and Frank Murkowski, R-Alaska, and to Congressman Don Young, R-Alaska.

You can even telephone their Anchorage or Fairbanks offices and express your concerns and needs for housing. When you telephone or write, put in a request for a field hearing so you can personally express to them and officially enter into the record your views and concerns in the area of housing.

The field hearing, will, of course, be in Alaska. You have a right to express your concerns to our Alaska Congressional Delegation.

Sincerely,
Terrance Booth Sr.
Metlakatla

Editor's Note: Terrance Booth, executive director of the Metlakatla Housing Authority, was appointed to be on the Legislative Committee for Alaska with the National American Indian Housing Council.

Stieglitz responds to Newsweek

To the editor of *Newsweek*:

I recently read the article on walrus hunting in Alaska, entitled "Off With Their Heads" (Environment — June 5) and have major concerns regarding the message it sends to the general public.

Unfortunately this article focused on events which are the exception and not the rule. The situation, as presented

by the article, inflicts an injustice upon those Native Alaskans exercising their right to legitimately take walrus as provided for by the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

The picture painted by the article is distorted, inflammatory and is counterproductive to cooperative management programs on which the

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• Walrus hunt

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Native community have embarked upon in Alaska.

After years of developing a relationship founded in trust and a mutual desire to safeguard the welfare of the walrus population, it is unfortunate when a single article places that relationship, and consequently sound resource management of the walrus herds, in jeopardy.

The facts of the case are that the Eskimo Walrus Commission, the State of Alaska and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have been successfully cooperating with Native hunters to ensure hunting conforms to the requirements of the act.

The commission, as evidenced through their statements and actions, has supported the service's marking and tagging program, a program designed to collect accurate harvest information and to account for possible illegal traffic of ivory.

Also, the commission is an active participant in the service's walrus management planning team. The goal of the planning team is to develop a management plan which will guide future endeavors and safeguard the walrus population.

Each year the service monitors the hunt through observers placed in villages where most of the walrus hunting occurs. These observers report that, in general, Native hunters are concerned about the population status of walrus and are sensitive to how the world views their hunt.

As a result of altering hunting activities, the Native community has *voluntarily* decreased overall annual take. Harvest rates have declined between 25 and 70 percent during the past three seasons.

We are not suggesting that violations do not occur. No system is perfect, and we are aware that individuals both Native and non-Native continue to break the law.

Most Alaskan Eskimos harvest walrus each year in full compliance with the law, providing food for their families, basic tools for their needs and ivory and byproducts for carving beautiful traditional handicrafts.

Our responsibility is to continue to enforce all laws pertaining to the take of walrus, and the commission has encouraged us to take actions to reduce illegal harvest. The service will continue to aggressively pursue law enforcement activities designed to achieve this end.

The most effective way to ensure the continued existence of both a healthy walrus population and a way of life that has persisted for hundreds of generations is through a strong cooperative management program.

Reporting with a focus on the positive aspects of current events would do much to foster this cooperation and help us to achieve the goal of all Alaskans: sound management of the nation's resources.

Sincerely,
Walter O. Stieglitz
Regional Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Anchorage