

Koyuk students learn about beluga management

Students and graduates of Koyuk High School participated in meetings, workshops, and research related to use and management of beluga whales last year as part of a Tribal Youth Leadership Project.

The training project, which is funded through September 1996 by the Administration for Native Americans (ANA), is administered by the Native Village of Koyuk IRA Council.

ANA staff members are Project Coordinator Danny Adams, Administrative Assistant Debra Kimoktoak, and Village

Planner-Grantwriter Arlene Charles.

High school students, graduates, and anyone up to 24 years of age may participate in the project. Students Brenda Adams, Olga Adams, and Stephanie Anasogak and graduates Cherilyn Kavairlook, Kimberly Kavairlook, and Charles Swanson traveled to Elim in February 1995 to attend a meeting of the Elim-Shaktoolik-Koyuk Marine Mammal Commission (ESKMMC). Graduates Freida Moon and Freddy Otton have participated in other project activities.

The ESKMMC, which was formed by a

joint resolution of the IRA tribal government of the three villages in 1994, plays a leading role in co-management of beluga whales in the area of the three villages. The National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), is the federal agency responsible for managing beluga stocks.

The youths videotaped the meeting and listened to reports on subjects that included the ESKMMC monitor and the interim principles of co-management of belugas between the ESKMMC and NOAA.

Project participants also attended research workshops in Koyuk conducted with three elders from each of the ESKMMC villages by Henry Huntington of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference. Huntington interviewed the elders April 17-21, 1995, to document on maps and in writing as much information as possible about beluga whales in the area. He gath-

ered information on the local environment, prey and predators, influence on belugas, and changes in patterns over time.

The study also involves two other Alaska villages and three villages in Chukotka, Russia.

Elders who participated in the research were Clara and Alex Sookiayak and Lynn Takak of Shaktoolik; Julius Saccheus, Beatrice Daniels, and Ralph Segock of Elim; and Charlie Henry, Sankey Charles, and Roger Nassuk of Koyuk.

Kawerak, Inc., and the Koyuk IRA provided staff support for the project. Kirby Sookiayak of Kawerak's Tribal Affairs Office helped with logistics, note taking and recording the workshops.

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