

# AFN fights challenge to ANILCA

The Alaska Federation of Natives has announced its plan to intervene in a case challenging federal subsistence law.

The case is *McDowell versus United States*, filed in Federal District Court in Fairbanks June 22, and it challenges the authority of the U.S. Congress to assume management of fish and wildlife resources on public lands in Alaska.

It also questions the constitutionality of the authority of Congress to provide a priority for subsistence uses by rural residents, claiming that it unlawfully discriminates among classes of citizens.

"This lawsuit is not at all unexpected," said Julie Kitka, president of AFN. "The plaintiffs in *McDowell* have warned us all along that they intended to challenge the federal act in court. As a result, we've been prepared to protect our interests and our rights as Native people.

"This issue is critically important not only to Alaska Natives but to all rural residents who rely on subsistence harvests to feed their families.

"While to some people it may only be an obscure discussion of who gets a priority in times of shortage, to us subsistence represents the very basis of our culture. From this perspective, we are obligated to involve ourselves in this lawsuit."