

What others say...

How much money needed for bear study?

To the editor:

I caught a curious interview on the radio today that made me think and that made me write. The interviewee, a Park Service or Fish and Game sort, was explaining that his agency would be conducting a three-year study of grizzly bears in the Noatak area — our area. Our camp is just off the Noatak River just outside a park or preserve.

These are lean times financially for both the state and the federal government. How much will this three-year study cost? If an agency wants information on the wildlife in an area, why not ask our people? School kids, the next generation of hunters and hunters' wives, could get all sorts of information simply by asking their fathers and *atatas*. The kids would learn and accurate information could be gathered at little cost.

Money saved, taxpayer money, our money, should be used for more needed services. Our schools need any extra money they can get. Our kids will have fewer course choices next year, fewer extracurricular activities and larger classes because our district has had to cut every possible corner and lay off several good teachers. Money is very tight. But, we have money to study bears for three years? Not with my tax money, thank you.

Another curious point in this bear matter is the rule announced recently which allows hunters in this area only one bear in four years. I have trouble keeping our fishing and trapping records straight for the I.R.S. and I'm supposed to remember just when we got our last bear? Strangely enough, my father-in-law and his father hunted bear from our camp area long before agencies bestowed their wisdom here, and there are still plenty of bear. Why do we have rules limiting bear hunting before we have a study on these same bears? When will the agencies realize that we have animals to hunt today because our hunters have always been careful. Do they think we'd kill our last bear, fish or caribou if it were not for their wisdom and rules? Who do they protect — the wildlife from us? Us from the wild animals? The environment from who knows what?

I think our people have proven they can manage our resources without outside self-proclaimed experts. When money is tight we must use it where it can do the most good. No more expensive studies which would merely enlarge bear trivia knowledge. Perhaps the park and wildlife experts can be retrained to some useful work somewhere else.

Sincerely,
Sally McClellan
Kotzebue