

# ***Elders gather in Tanana for Denakkanaaga meet***

***Tundra Times staff***

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Tanana hosted the 14th Annual Denakkanaaga Elders Conference June 5 - 9. The gathering brought warm sun and plenty of people.

Monday saw the Traditional Boat Welcome as many of the delegates arrived by river boat, and a Welcome Potlatch was given to kick off the event. Elders worked closely and involved the youth of the region, showing them the ways of the Athabaskan.

First Chief Trimble Gilbert officiated the meeting, with speakers including Morris Thompson, Doyon Limited's chief executive officer, Tanana

Chiefs Conference's President Will Mayo, Fairbanks Native Association Director John Regitano, and others.

Fourteen resolutions were passed during the elders conference stating:

- that Denakkanaaga supports and encourages Native communities in their efforts to implement programs and policies that encourage land and community cleanliness;
- that Denakkanaaga supports and encourages regular cultural meetings and events in the villages; and supports and encourages the establishment of spirit camps in each village;

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# Denakkanaaga: Elders gather in Tanana



Traditional dancing in the school gymnasium.

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- that Denakkanaaga coordinate an effort to produce recommended guidelines and policies for dealing with solicitations for cultural stories;

- that Denakkanaaga supports and advocates for the establishment of a high school boarding

school in Galena;

- that Denakkanaaga supports curriculum development that includes elder participation in the schools that incorporate Elders and that such programs include financial compensation for time spent by Elders in these school programs;

- that Denakkanaaga supports the continuation of funding for Elder nutrition programs and supports the establishment of such programs in villages where they currently do not exist;

- that Denakkanaaga expresses the Elder's admiration and appre-

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Miranda Hildebrand Wright, originally from Nulato and residing in Fairbanks, uses a "River of Life" model to elicit the problems and solutions of people. She discusses the many issues and challenges that youths face with youth delegates.

# for annual conference . . .

*All photos by  
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Tanana residents cooked moose, bear, and beaver stews for nightly potlatches



Denakkanaaga Executive Director, Don Lee, working with youth delegates from Nenana.

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riation of Village Public Safety Officers (VPSOs) and supports the presence of VPSOs at the annual Denakkanaaga Convention;

- that Denakkanaaga supports the establishment of youth centers in the villages;

- that Denakkanaaga supports the villages in their efforts to establish Elder houses and places for Elders to gather;

- that Denakkanaaga Elders respectfully request support for this welfare reform provision by Alaska Senators Frank Murkowski and Ted Stevens;

- that Denakkanaaga supports the maintenance of options for

Indian gaming in Alaska and respectfully requests that the Governor and Legislature of Alaska to join this support;

- that a checkpoint be established at Tanana and other key point locations, with all out of area hunters required to pass through the checkpoint to prevent the wanton waste of game;

- that Denakkanaaga Elders shall endeavor to begin a draft document detailing Athabascan laws, customs and values; and that the first draft of the document should be available for review by the Elders of the region within two years from the date of this resolution and that it is required to be

refined further over a period of several years; and

- that the Elders of Denakkanaaga support this very important project (University of Alaska/Fairbanks Oral History Department) to preserve our history and language, and support making it public for our people and others in the future.

Along with discussions on the resolutions, youth softball games and Elder Native games were played, dances were held with the Old-Time Athabascan Fiddlers and traditional dances were performed, and small group workshops were given.