

State files suit over cabin use

Gov. Steve Cowper recently announced that the state has filed suit against the U.S. Department of the Interior over federal regulations which would restrict the use of cabins in Alaska for subsistence and other traditional purposes.

The suit, filed in U.S. District Court in Juneau, asks the court to prevent the regulations from becoming effective and to order the National Park Service to rewrite them following public hearings.

"Over the past year and a half, the state has tried every way possible to get the Park Service to give us a fair hearing, but we've been turned down each time," Cowper said. "What we're seeking with this suit is some flexibility for Alaskans whose traditional use of cabins is threatened by these rules."

At issue are regulations proposed by the Park Service to implement provisions of the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. The regulations guide the federal administration of cabins, temporary facilities and other structures in Alaska's national parks and preserves.

The state has protested the regulations as too restrictive ever since they became effective last fall. The state's concerns focus on:

- Subsistence.** The regulations are unduly restrictive in that they require subsistence users to provide excessive justification for such use, according to Cowper.

- General Use.** The regulations deny most cabin users the right of "adequate and feasible access" as provid-

ed in the law, he said.

- Fishing rights.** The regulations give superintendents the right to restrict or revoke valid commercial fishing rights, a provision which has no basis in federal law, according to the state.

- Official use.** The regulations say permits issued for use by government officials must comply with federal environmental laws, placing what the state calls an undue burden on the use of cabins for resource inventory, research or other scientific purposes.