

# Alaska Inter-Tribal Council convenes third convention

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The two major statewide organizations representing Alaska Native interests have now closed ranks, calling for restoration of aboriginal hunting and fishing rights. Meeting November 26 and 27 in Anchorage, the Alaska Inter-Tribal Council voted unanimously to pass a resolution calling for repeal of Section 4 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. That section of the 1971 land settlement extinguished aboriginal land titles and hunting and fishing rights. This action follows a similar, and also unanimous,

resolution passed by the Alaska Federation of Natives at its annual meeting in October. However, the AFN resolution only addressed Sec. 4(b), dealing with hunting and fishing rights.

In another development at the AITC convention, a major showdown between Alaska Native tribes and the non-profit Native associations that have for many years contracted to administer government programs for Natives may be shaping up. Herbie Edwin of Tanana told announced that the National Congress of American Indians will hold a constitutional convention in March to determine

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# AITC meeting . . .

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if tribes, or the non-profit associations, will represent Alaska Natives in NCAI.

Delegates to the annual meeting of the Alaska Inter-Tribal Council sweated out more than half of their two-day annual meeting waiting for a quorum to be established. At final count, 79 tribes were registered, two more than the 51 percent needed to conduct business.

While they waited, time was put to good use discussing a number of important issues. The first day, several hours were devoted to the prospect of tribes assisting the Alaska Native Health Board in management of the Alaska Native Medical Center. On Monday, concerns were raised about a recent agreement between the Alaska Federation of Natives, Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. and the federal government to correct lax enforcement of a Native hire requirement for trans-Alaska pipeline jobs.

With a quorum finally established, the convention passed a number of important resolutions, including measures that call for:

- AITC to pressure the State of Alaska to recognize the existence of Indian Country in Alaska, over which tribes would be able to exercise planning, zoning, taxation and other powers over both members and non-members;

- the Governor and the Alaska Legislature to formally recognize

Alaska Native tribes;

- tougher laws against drug sales and bootlegging alcohol in Alaska.

Resolutions were also passed to defend the gains made under the Indian Child Welfare Act, strengthen tribal courts, and end bias against Natives in the state judicial system. Invoking the United Nations Declaration on the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples, delegates also adopted a Code of Offenses in a bid to end human rights violations and genocidal policies in issues like subsistence, environmental justice and economic violence.

Also, delegates once again asserted AITC's status as the only organization sanctioned to represent Alaska Native tribes, except tribes themselves. A separate resolution called on AITC and the Alaska Federation of Natives to establish "procedure(s) for communication on tribally-related issues that AFN advocates for, before providing opinions to agencies and the federal government."

According to Tanana's Herbie Edwin, a location for the NCAI constitutional convention has not yet been announced. However, he said Alaskan tribes would be notified as soon as possible.

"Alaska tribes, I urge you to be at this convention," said Edwin. "The main issue is NCAI is going to say the non-profits or the tribes are representing you."