

"I may not agree with a word you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it." — Voltaire

Tundra Times



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Other voices — Working together —the OCS challenge

Many of Alaska's people make their living from the state's valuable coastal resources. Fish, timber, oil and gas are among the most important. Because many people use these resources, conflicts become inevitable. There are conflicts between users and the resources, and between different interest groups.

To handle these increasing demands, many state and federal agencies, and some local governments, have established regulations and other management tools.

The Alaska Coastal Management Program was established to coordinate these management efforts dealing with the protection, use and development of coastal resources.

At present, the state's number one priority for coastal planning is preparing for the impacts of Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas development.

Although the federal government controls the sale and regulation of OCS oil and gas, state agencies must respond cooperatively and develop planning schemes to help our citizens cope with the massive onshore impacts.

Pending federal legislation would give assistance to the state and local governments to do the necessary planning and to build roads, sewers, schools and other facilities that will be needed by the oil industry (Amendments to the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1975).

Looking towards comprehensive coastal planning, the Coastal Management Program has funded several state agencies to complete studies of the fish, wildlife, and other resources in areas to be impacted by OCS leasing.

With Alaska's OCS Supplemental Grant, the Department of Community and Regional Affairs is completing a plan to assist coastal communities in the location of necessary oil and gas facilities.

This includes pass-through funding for planning by communities by themselves. The Departments of Environmental Conservation, Natural Resources, and Fish and Game are completing studies of environmental impacts which will be available to all involved in the planning process.

Of growing concern are the conflicts of resource use, and the laws and regulations we have to avoid or reduce these conflicts. Therefore, the potential impacts of forest management on fish streams in Southeast Alaska, the development of mining in coastal areas, and the need to protect wetlands and tidelands in areas of urban growth are all coastal management concerns.

OCS development is only one of the resource uses that must be considered. But the OCS challenge is a big one, and it is here now. It will have a long-term effect on future patterns of growth, and therefore on demands for our other land and water resource wealth. If we don't have a system for coordinating plans and policies between state and local governments for OCS, it will be more difficult later as new resource demands arise.

(For more information contact Betsey Hastorf, Alaska Coastal Management Program, Office of the Governor, Pouch AD, Juneau, Alaska, 99811, 465-3576).

Letters from Here and There

Antioquia's statement on fire standards questioned

June 22, 1976

Ms. Sue Gamache,
Editor
The Tundra Times
P.O. Box 1287
Fairbanks, Alaska 99707

Dear Ms. Gamache:

I am writing to you in reply to your lead story in the May 26th issue of the Tundra Times, specifically to the comment you attribute to BIA Commissioner Morris Thompson in which he asserts that BIA schools "were built up the fire standards that were in existence . . . when they were built." (Editor's note: The comment concerning BIA schools up to the standards that were in existence at the time is credited to Clarence Antioquia, Juneau Area Director for BIA)

I am afraid that Commissioner Thompson is guilty of spreading the same misleading information that one seems to hear regularly from career Federal employees. This is that the federal government has to meet the same safety standards as any ordinary citizen. In many cases the exact opposite is the case.

There is no requirement in the BIA that says any facility they build or are involved in the construction of, will conform with the nationally accepted standards of either the National Fire Code or the Uniform Building Code. Rarely, if ever, is the maintenance or remodeling effort of the BIA aimed specifically at bringing any facility up to meet the requirements of these codes.

A good example of this is the so-called "BIA/HUD" rural Alaska housing unit which is being built by the hundreds all over rural Alaska. This structure does not meet the minimum requirements of the UBC and is, from a fire safety point of view, a poorly designed and potentially dangerous dwelling unit.

We have already had two of them burn in our community (one with a fatality) and quite a spectacular blaze do they produce. Does this stop BIA or HUD from continuing to produce them? Does this encourage them to use better building materials like sheetrock and windows with larger openings? Not really.

If I may use the Kotzebue BIA school as an example, I think I can tell you why BIA schools burn. First, they were not designed with the idea in mind that if one section catches fire, adequate separation will be provided with the other sections so the whole complex does not burn down.

These are called fire separations and usually are constructed through the use of multiple layers of sheetrock or concrete with special rated fire doors to allow passage between areas.

Second, they were not built with the idea in mind that if the building catches fire, the fire can be somewhat limited. This is also called the "fire loading" of a building and concerns things like what you cover the walls with and what is on the floor, etc.

By using a minimum of combustible materials inside the building, a fire will be kept to its

minimum intensity.

This makes fighting the fire easier (if there is a fire department) or simply keeping it within its compartment (if there is not a fire department). Again, BIA seems to love to use wood veneer plywood on interiors, combustible carpeting and the like as opposed to vinyl asbestos floor tile and sheetrock.

Finally, they were not built with the idea in mind that if a fire starts in the building, early detection of it may allow school or community personnel to extinguish it with portable fire extinguishers while it is still small.

This requires not simply a manual fire alarm system (the little lever on the wall that you pull and a bell rings) but the use of heat, smoke, or particle combustion detectors in addition to the manual pull stations. And it would also be nice if an alarm bell went off in the teachers' living quarters or fire station when there was a fire, rather than hoping that someone will drive by on a snow machine or walk by and hear the bell ringing!

This is not to imply that there is no one in the BIA concerned about the fire safety of its facilities. There are and many of them. But is there one thing for an employee to "want" to make a safe building and quite another for someone in authority to "demand" that the building be safe. So fire safety is relegated to the personal prerogative of the line employee—not made a part of any regulation.

What can be done? I think two things are happening. First, a number of schools are being turned over to the regional boards by the BIA and these schools will be required by the State Fire Marshal to meet the Alaska Fire Safety Code, which I am sure the REAA Boards will do as quickly as they can fund the changes needed for compliance.

Second, the BIA is having to pick up a goodly portion of the tab of the cost of remodeling or renovation on some of the larger schools (i.e. Barrow, Kotzebue, etc.) at the time of or shortly after turnover to the regional districts.

These comments are the results of my having been a bush fire chief for the last five years and chairman of the local advisory school board for three years.

I would urge your readers to listen very critically whenever a federal official speaks of its facilities as meeting "national fire codes." I seriously doubt that any rural Alaskan facility does. But I would love to be proven wrong—over and over again until they all do!

Sincerely,
Charles M. Huss
Chief
Kotzebue Fire Department

Eliza Jones goes to NABEC

Tundra Times
Box 1287
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Dear Editor:

I work at the Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska, for two years now, as a writer of Koyukon Athabaskan. I also teach beginning conferences statewide and also to nationwide meetings. Last year I went to

Calgary, Alberta, to attend a Native American Bilingual Education Conference. It was really an eye-opener for me meeting different Indian people from all over the United States and Canada who are either involved in bilingual education or some kind of Indian education, and to learn something about their culture and beliefs, their music. I saw a pow-wow for the first time in my life. I was impressed among other things at their elaborate dancing customs, and by the many young people who participated who speak their language as a first language and are keeping up their culture. I met a lot of interesting people at that meeting. It was also my first trip outside Alaska. So it was altogether a very interesting trip.

This year I again had the privilege of going to NABEC, this time in Phoenix, Arizona. Katherine Peter and I left on the morning of May 4 and arrived in Phoenix late that night. The next morning we registered for the meeting, and put up our display of materials from ANLC. We walked around looking at other people's displays, meeting and talking to people about their problems. There were also people selling turquoise jewelry, and the Pueblo people from San Juan, New Mexico, were selling pottery and willow baskets.

The meeting was held at Ramada Inn East, which I guess is a luxurious hotel. We got room service if we wanted, and they pick us up at the airport free of charge, all for \$1.00 per night; maybe it was special rates for those attending the conference.

We were there for four days, and it was cloudy all that time. They said that's kind of unusual for there. So the temperature didn't go above 70 degrees, which was in our favor, at least those of us from Alaska. There must have been at least 10 people there from different parts of Alaska.

I was also glad to see friends from last year's conference. One of the interesting things we did at last year's conference was to meet informally with some of the Navajos and compare language. We had so much fun trying to talk to each other. We found that our languages are very similar. The Koyukon word for 'thorns' is hus and in Navajo is means 'cactus.' Our word for dog is leek, and in Navajo is means 'horse.'

They said there were expecting about 600 people for the conference. There must have been about that many people there.

Katherine Peter and I also signed up for a bus tour to visit an Indian school and some other outlying areas, but it was cancelled because we were the only ones who had signed up for the tour.

On the second day they had a lot of workshops. I had a problem trying to make up my mind what workshop to go to. I finally went to a linguistic and orthography workshop headed by Paul Platero, who is a Navajo, an associate director of Native American Materials Center at Albuquerque, New Mexico. He made a very interesting presentation about their program.

They had a pow-wow on Thursday evening. The people from a Pueblo in New Mexico did the buffalo dance and butterfly dance. They sang a lot of songs. And they had an invitational dance which most of us danced in; it was fun. They told jokes and

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