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Chris Anderson of Tanana Chiefs Conference speaks at a University of Alaska seminar on subsistence

Jeff Kennedy, moderator

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Series: Potlatch series

Jeff Kennedy said Chris Anderson talked about the present and future of subsistence in rural Alaska.

Chris Anderson said he has worked with Tanana Chiefs Conference about six years. He has traveled through many of the villages and he thinks he has a good feeling about what the feelings are concerning subsistence in the past, present and future. He will be talking about three proposals or soon to be pieces of legislation on both state and national levels. The state administration has put together a proposal to decentralize the state boards of Fish and Game. The d-2 lands issues have moved from one committee to another committee. Representative Nell Sanderson who is chairing the interim committee on subsistence this past year has introduced resolutions. The administration has proposed the Connor Act.

Governor Hammond's proposal is to decentralize or change the system of the fish and game department and the regulatory functions into a regional concept. They would get more input from the villages concerning land management and the rules and regulations they are under. A lot of the people feel that it is a step in the right direction. A lot of people feel that at least something is being done concerning the input of the people from the villages. The concept deals only with advisory boards or councils throughout the state of Alaska. The people in the villages in the Interior feel that they should go one more step and make these councils have the authority to pass laws or rules and regulations. One thing that has come out is the people want to have an easier accessibility to the regulatory power. To have another level of government to work through does not make them happy. They feel like this proposal from the administration is creating another level of government and they feel this type of thing isn't decentralization of the state government. They feel like they have to go through the advisory boards and then they have to go through the state fish and game boards. Boundaries may not be in line with the thinking of the people in the Interior. They are after close accessibility to the power, the people that are making the decisions on land management, subsistence and things of this sort. There are advantages to this type of concept. Input from the rural areas will be maximized. They will have more of a chance to see people that are closer to them, they can communicate with them and their wishes will be known. He thinks the administration's proposal and the interim committee's proposal are pretty much in line. The committee's proposal on subsistence is in line with their way of thinking. They would have some sort of regulatory responsibilities. The committees or councils formulated under this proposal would have regulatory powers. He talked about a newspaper

article criticizing the governor's proposal as well as the interim committee's proposal. He said there might be problems with the latter proposal because fish and game doesn't know any boundaries. He discussed this with some people and they thought it was a good concept, but they wonder about different regions wanting different things. He said there has to be a mechanism to control the whole state. Caribou migration affects different regions. He said there is a problem with migrating fish and game animals. If this proposal is to go through it would have the authority to pass regulations and he foresees problems with game moving from one region to another. For game the people would like a say so, but for fisheries he doesn't think the people want the responsibility at this time.

The proposal that Nell Sanderson's committee drew up may have problems. Someone suggested that these board proposals be activated but there had to be some type of arbitration overseeing everything. People he has heard from agree with this idea.

Anderson said another proposal was to create a division of subsistence within the state Department of Fish and Game. People in the villages are happy about this. They feel a lot of people do not know about subsistence. They also felt it was a good idea that an interim committee on subsistence be an ongoing type of committee because of issues coming up year to year.

Song by Mary Travers

Jeff Kennedy said Chris Anderson comments on recent revision of d-2 legislation proposed by United States House committee chaired by John Seiberling. This committee revision allows for subsistence hunting and fishing on lands selected for wilderness areas. Anderson also comments on the Carlos Frank case when a man was arrested for hunting a moose out of season in order to contribute to a potlatch in Minto.

Anderson said there has been recent d-2 legislation that has some good language in it. Anderson said one thing that he hears from people in the Interior especially the smaller communities is the present system with Fish and Game isn't to their thinking. He talked about the people in Galena seeing many moose that were shot and not used. They believe that the Department of Public Safety should have more money for enforcement or give authority to locals to enforce Fish and Game regulations. This has been a concern for several years. He discussed the Carlos Frank case. This was a religious case where fresh meat had to be used. He thought there was an appeal on the case. Doyon Ltd. has made it public that they support Carlos Frank.

Song by Ted Wesley

Chris Anderson said the future of subsistence in the villages is hard to say at this point. There may be a conflict between the people in the rural areas. There is a village corporation and a regional corporation within the Tanana Chiefs area. They are out to make money like any other business. There are resources that need to be extracted somehow and roads are to be built. The conflict is should they hold on to this subsistence lifestyle and take a hard stand about extracting minerals or develop. He said at this point after talking with people and looking at Doyon Ltd. and what they are trying to do a lot of people are satisfied with what Doyon is doing. The people

are comfortable with what the board of directors are doing about extracting minerals with a close eye on the subsistence lifestyle. The village corporations only have surface rights to the land that they selected also have this attitude. Anderson said he was talking with a powerful individual in Ft. Yukon and he said the subsistence lifestyle is going to be around for a long while. Anderson said one report concluded these people are used to this type of living and moving from moose to beef could be harmful nutritionally speaking. Native foods may be physically what they need. A lot of people on the upper Koyukuk are noticing fewer fish coming up to their area and are interested in rehabilitation of the stocks. Kotzebue has reindeer herding. People in the McGrath area are looking into domesticating moose. This has been successful in Siberia. Anderson said people in the rural areas would like to be heard and would like to work with other people. He talked about the Native versus non-Native thought. The Natives want a healthy communication between the urban and rural. Anderson said he personally thinks game is for use by Alaskans. He said the people don't want the racial factor involved. He talked about factors involved in the definition of subsistence including economic dependence, traditional lifestyles and residency. He said subsistence is a lifestyle and it will be around in the future. There are nutritional needs and the Natives in the rural areas need this type of lifestyle.