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Dave Johnson talks about the recent decision made by the Game Board concerning the Western Arctic Herd; Grace Cross and Morgan Solomon Field representatives for human rights are interviewed by Jeff Kennedy

Jeff Kennedy, interviewer

Series: Potlatch series

Dave Johnson talked about the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. He said one of the most important decisions made at a recent Game Board meeting in Fairbanks was the allocation of permits to a number of northwestern Alaskan villages. This would allow 3,000 caribou to be taken in the western arctic. Some Alaskans have lobbied hard for a total closure to hunting while others want no restrictions. The Board had to at least partially appeal to both sets of interest and still help the caribou to recover. Board chairman Dr. Samuel Harbow said a zero take would have been the best choice. The board found it necessary to consider the subsistence needs of the people in the area. Harbow said some of the people in the villages are dependent on the herd for their protein source. Their overwhelming need for protein would have caused a complete closure to in effect less than a complete closure. The emergency need clause would have come into play and a necessary emergency harvest would come into play. For the regulation to be affective there must be a minimal acceptance of it. The Board structured the harvest so it would have a minimal impact on the herd. Dr. Harbow said their first concern was the level of harvest. The Native leaders helped to make the apportionment of the permits based on a number of factors. The Board considered a number of regulations, but did allow caribou to be bartered in that area. The Board also discussed wolf control in that area. The Department of Fish and Game is preparing to control wolves in the western Arctic because the caribou herd numbers have dropped to a level of concern. The wolves will be taken by air according to Robert Rausch. Although the number of wolves is not known but the techniques used in the past have been accurate. Their estimate of the wolf population is 1300. The actual survey will be after there is snow on the ground to be more accurate. The action by the Board has reduced the number of caribou taken by humans. Rausch said their calculations show that if there is a zero take by humans the pressure by wolf predation would continue to reduce the herd. The wolves are taking more than the annual increment increase. Johnson said there weren't easy solutions to the problem but most board members think there was a workable compromise.

Song by Joan Baez

Morgan Solomon talked about how he became involved with the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights. He was interviewed while he was in Barrow by Neil Thomas. Grace Cross applied for the job and she got it. Jeff Kennedy asked about the cases they are investigating. Cross said she is mostly involved with cases involving discrimination. Usually in housing cases a person may read about an available place and then get turned down by the manager when they show up to look at the place. They may be told that someone else is going to rent the place. In those cases people will call them and tell them about the

discrimination. There are times they try sending over a non-Native to apply for a place. A lot of times they contact the manager or owner and talk with them. Kennedy asked about discrimination in hiring on the pipeline. Cross said she has had complaints and a lot of them are women. Most men don't want a women around in some of the traditionally men crafts. Most of the jobs are union related and Alaska Natives aren't in unions. Cross said there are a lot of things they check when there is a discrimination claim. In a non-union case they look to see how many whites they hire that are non-union. There are also whites who are not hired and complain they aren't hired because they are not a minority. They investigate these reverse discrimination cases. They are more difficult. There are cases when a white male isn't hired because he is white. Cross said they are subtle about not hiring Natives. They find a reason to fire Natives in some cases. It may be because of seniority and not discriminatory.

Song by Doc Watson

Morgan Solomon will be opening an office in Barrow. He said he thinks housing will be a problem up there. He talked about the HUD program and the expense of some of the houses. There are Native people that can't afford the price of some of the houses and trying to solve some of the problems in the federal programs.

Song by the Weavers

Morgan Solomon talked about his experiences with discrimination in his background. He said he was born in Wainwright and raised in Fairbanks. He has seen discrimination. He thinks you don't see a lot of discrimination now in the larger cities. He said the Natives were born here and raised here and eventually discrimination will not persist. Kennedy commented that some people are not happy about what the Natives are receiving through the Land Claims Settlement Act. Solomon said the people that say these things have not been here very long and don't know anything about the Native culture.

Music from the village of Gambell

Grace Cross said most of the discrimination she has experienced has been very discreet. She talked about looking for an apartment and being turned down. She said some people don't want Alaskan Natives in their area. Some newcomers are told false stereotypes. Solomon talked about not speaking English when he first moved to Fairbanks. Cross said she is a talkative person but she also listens before she talks. She said she was taught to listen.