



U.S. Army Garrison, Alaska (USAG-AK) Quarterly Update for Alaska Native Tribes March 2005, Issue 3



This is a quarterly update on U.S. Army Garrison, Alaska activities and issues that might be of interest to federally recognized tribes in Alaska.

USAG-AK VISIT TO THE NATIVE VILLAGE OF TAZLINA

On October 5-6, 2004, USAG-AK staff to include Jeff Andrews, Russ Sackett and Amanda Shearer, visited with leaders, members and staff of the Native Village of Tazlina. A number of topics were discussed during the trip, to include the preparation of the Historic Properties Component of the Army Alternate Procedures and upcoming tribal consultations regarding revisions of USAG-AK's Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan (INRMP). Other items included a general discussion on government-to-government relationships and ideas for enhancing consultation.



Lunch at Native Village of Tazlina on October 6, 2004.

Before leaving the village, we had the special opportunity of visiting Tazlina's traditional language school for elementary aged children. We were impressed by both the enthusiasm of the students and teaching techniques we observed. We would like to extend our thanks to the Native Village of Tazlina for hosting lunch during the second day of our visit, and for sharing your thoughts and ideas with us.

USAG-AK VISITS THE VILLAGES OF DOT LAKE, TANACROSS, NORTHWAY, AND TETLIN

USAG-AK staff, to include Amanda Shearer, Kevin Gardner and Carrie Barta traveled to visit several Upper Tanana Tribes on the week of November 15-19, 2004. We met with folks at Dot Lake Village, Native Village of Tanacross, Northway Village and Native Village of Tetlin. Unfortunately, bad weather caused the cancellation of our charter flight to Healy Lake Village.

The purpose of the visits was to discuss the Battle Area Complex and Combined Arms Collective Training Facility (BAX/CACTF) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that had been mailed out in early November. We wanted to provide information and answer any questions that might facilitate tribes in preparing their comments for the tribal comment meeting held on December 17, 2004.

We would like to extend our appreciation to each of the villages that we visited. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to meet with us and for sharing your thoughts and questions.



On the road to Native Village of Tetlin on November 19, 2004.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ✓ OCTOBER 5-6: USAG-AK visited Native Village of Tazlina (see article on page 1)
- ✓ OCTOBER 12-14: "Implementing Government-to-Government Relations in Alaska" training for DoD employees
- ✓ OCTOBER 19: DoD Liaisons presentation at the Alaska Tribal Environmental Conference
- ✓ NOVEMBER 15-19: USAG-AK visited Dot Lake, Tanacross, Northway and Tetlin to discuss BAX/CACTF (see article on page 1)
- ✓ DECEMBER 7: Tribal Military Leader's Meeting was held in conjunction with Alaska Inter-Tribal Council (AITC)
- ✓ DECEMBER 17: USAG-AK met with Upper Tanana Tribes to gather their comments on the DEIS for the Battle Area Complex and Combined Arms Collective Training Facility (BAX/CACTF) (see article on this page)
- ✓ JANUARY 20: USAG-AK met with Upper Cook Inlet Tribes to present information on the Army's application for a National Pollutants Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from EPA (see article on back page)
- ✓ FEBRUARY 22: USAG-AK personnel were invited guest speakers at the Native Village of Eagle's subsistence potlatch.
- ✓ FEBRUARY 23: USAG-AK conducted a meeting regarding the Historic Properties Component of USAG-AK Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan at the Native Village of Eagle.

UPCOMING

- APRIL 4-5: USAG-AK will conduct a review meeting for Historic Properties Component of USAG-AK Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan in Fairbanks. Folks that are unable to attend may teleconference into the meeting.

UPDATE ON BAX/CACTF EIS

The public comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the construction and operation of at Battle Area Complex (BAX) and Combined Arms Collective Training Area (CACTF) concluded on January 10, 2005. Over 60 comments were received from Alaska Native tribes, agencies and members of the public. Comments received from Tanacross, Northway and Tanana Chiefs Conference, Inc. focused primarily on the need for further research on and subsequent protection of grave sites, historic communities and hunting grounds. Tribes also commented on the Army's past, present and future waste disposal and clean-up methods and requested that local residents be considered for employment during construction and operation of the BAX and CACTF. Other issues of concern voiced by members of the public and agencies related to range location, wildland fire management, human health and safety, noise and use of surrounding airspace.

U.S. Army Garrison, Alaska is currently reviewing all comments received on the Draft EIS and taking them into consideration during the preparation of a Final EIS and a Record of Decision (ROD). The anticipated publication date for the Final EIS is expected to be in late Fall of 2005 or early Spring of 2006. The publication of the Record of Decision will outline the decision made and identify all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the selected alternative. A monitoring and enforcement program will also be developed for any mitigation associated with the construction and operation of a BAX and CACTF. Tribes will receive a copy of the Final EIS and Record of Decision and USAG-AK will host a meeting to discuss the decision with tribes at that time.

UPDATE ON ARMY ALTERNATE PROCEDURES

The next draft of the Historic Properties Component of USAG-AK's Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan is available for review. Copies are being mailed to participating Tribes and can also be downloaded from the internet at www.usarak.army.mil/conservation. Please submit review comments by March 21, 2005.

A review meeting for Tribes and interested parties will be scheduled for March 28-29, 2005 in Fairbanks. The two-day meeting will include tribes and interested parties from the surrounding areas of both Fort Wainwright and Fort Richardson.

Those not able to attend the meeting in Fairbanks will have the option to participate via teleconference. This is the last review meeting prior to the publication of the final document. There will be a meeting for those tribes interested in signing the Historic Properties Component. For further information, please contact Mr. Russell Sackett, Cultural Resource Manager, at phone (907) 384-3041, fax (907) 384-3047 or e-mail Russell.Sackett@richardson.army.mil.



COL Donna Boltz chats with Ed Thomas, President of the Tlingit-Haida Central Council at the Tribal Military Leaders Meeting in Anchorage on December 7, 2004.



BG Hirai and LTG Chandler chat with a Tribal leader at the Tribal Military Leaders Meeting in Anchorage on December 7, 2004.

USAG-AK'S ANNUAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORTS

USAG-AK's Annual Archaeological Report for 2003 is now available online at www.usarak.army.mil/conservation/CR_home.htm. This report provides information on archaeological surveys conducted in 2003. It is anticipated that the Annual Archaeological Report for 2004 will be made available late May 2005. For more information, or to receive printed hard copies, please contact Mr. Russell Sackett, Cultural Resource Manager, at phone (907) 384-3041, fax (907) 384-3047 or e-mail Russell.Sackett@richardson.army.mil.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Ms. Amanda Shearer at phone (907) 384-3263, fax (907) 384-0283 (email: Amanda.Shearer@richardson.army.mil). Ms. Shearer is the U.S. Army Garrison, Alaska Native Liaison and is available to answer questions or provide any other information, which might be helpful to you.

TRIBAL COMMENT MEETING ON ARMY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT



On December 17, 2004, USAG-AK hosted a meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska to gather comments from the Upper Tanana Tribes on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed Battle Area Complex and Combined Arms Collective Training Facility (BAX/CACTF). Representatives from Dot Lake Village, Native Village of Eagle, Healy Lake Village, Northway Village and Native Village of Tanacross were in attendance. Army personnel in attendance, to include U.S. Army Garrison, Alaska Commander Colonel Donna Boltz.

Several questions regarding the project posed during the meeting were answered by Army staff. Additional non-project related concerns were also voiced and recorded. USAG-AK received two sets of written comments from tribal members before the December 17th meeting, and one set of comments afterwards. Project related concerns found in the comments will be addressed in the preparation of the final environmental impact statement. (Please also see article on page 2.) Special thanks goes to those that reviewed and/or read the lengthy environmental impact statement in preparation for the meeting, we truly appreciate the amount of time and effort this takes!

INFORMATIONAL MEETING FOR UPPER COOK INLET TRIBES

On January 20, 2005, USAG-AK hosted an informational meeting in Anchorage, Alaska for Upper Cook Inlet Tribes. The topic of the meeting was the U.S. Army Alaska's application for a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the potential discharge of pollutants related to military munitions into the Knik Arm of the Upper Cook Inlet. Representatives from Chickaloon Village, Native Village of Eklutna, Knik Village and Native Village of Tyonek were in attendance. Army personnel in attendance included U.S. Army Garrison, Alaska Commander Colonel Donna Boltz.

Since this was a purely information meeting, tribes were not asked to make any decisions. After the presentation by Dr. Mark Prieksat, tribes asked questions regarding the Eagle River Flats and the application permit. Several attendees stayed after the presentation for one-on-one discussions with USAG-AK staff. Thanks goes to those that were able to attend, we truly appreciate your participation!

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