

# Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission

dba / Copper River-Ahtna Intertribal Resource Conservation District (CRITR)

Resource Conservation District // PO Box 613 // Glennallen, Alaska 99588  
(907) 822-8154 // [info@ahtnatribal.org](mailto:info@ahtnatribal.org)

## Traditional Resource Stewardship

November 29, 2016

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission and U.S. Department of the Interior Sign First Cooperative Management Agreement Under New Secretarial Order**

*Agreement provides for a greater tribal role in managing subsistence wildlife resources*



*U.S. Department of the Interior Deputy Secretary Michael L. Connor (left) and Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission Chairman Christopher Gene signing the Cooperative Agreement at the Bureau of Indian Affairs Provider's Conference in Anchorage, Alaska on November 29, 2016. Photo Courtesy of AITRC*

Glennallen, Alaska – U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) Deputy Secretary Michael Connor signed a historical agreement today to create a cooperative management demonstration project with the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission (AITRC). The agreement formalizes the subsistence wildlife management partnership between the DOI and the AITRC regarding the allocation and harvest of moose and caribou on federal lands in the Ahtna region. The AITRC was established by the Ahtna ANCSA regional and village corporations and the eight federally recognized tribes in the region it serves.

The signing of the agreement comes on the heels of the announcement U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Jewell made at the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) Conference last month. She announced the release of [Secretarial Order No. 3342](#) requiring the Interior Department's agencies to, where possible, include tribes in the management of federal lands and resources. The Interior Department's agencies include the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of

Ocean Energy Management and Bureau of Reclamation.

The Ahtna Cooperative Management Demonstration Project is the first cooperative agreement established nationwide under the DOI Secretarial Order No. 3342. It recognizes that tribes have special geographical, historical, and cultural connections to Federal lands and waters, and that tribes have traditional ecological knowledge and practices regarding resource management that have been handed down through generations. It was established for the benefit of healthy ecosystems, wildlife populations, the Ahtna traditional way of life and all those that wish to enjoy the federal lands that lie within Ahtna's traditional territory.

"As Alaska's population has grown, the Ahtna people have borne the brunt of increasing hunting pressure on their traditional lands because these areas are fairly accessible to much of the Railbelt region, home to 70 percent of Alaska's population," said Deputy Secretary Michael L. Connor. "This agreement is an effort to help preserve their traditional way of life, put food on the table, and improve wildlife habitat and populations for everyone."



For more information regarding this release, please contact:  
Shannon Blue, Ahtna, Inc., Corp. Communications Director  
[news@ahtna.net](mailto:news@ahtna.net) | (907) 230-7058

# Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission

dba / Copper River-Ahtna Intertribal Resource Conservation District (CRITR)

Resource Conservation District // PO Box 613 // Glennallen, Alaska 99588  
(907) 822-8154 // [info@ahtnatribal.org](mailto:info@ahtnatribal.org)

## Traditional Resource Stewardship

Rural Alaskans of the area who are not tribal members will continue to hunt under the federal subsistence program as before and will not be affected by the agreement. "The practical impact on other Alaska hunters would be minimal since the amount of moose, caribou and other wildlife resources necessary to meet Ahtna's needs is only a small percentage of the total take of wildlife within Ahtna's traditional territory," said Ahtna, Inc.'s Chairman, Nick Jackson. Moreover, AITRC intends to increase the current moose population through enhancement of habitat on Ahtna lands.

The DOI and AITRC will work cooperatively on wildlife management on the public lands within Ahtna's traditional territory and on Ahtna lands that are in-holdings or adjacent to these public lands. Federal lands in the Ahtna region include portions of Denali National Park and Preserve, Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge, and Bureau of Land Management lands around the Richardson and Denali Highways. Plan priorities include conservation and sustainable subsistence harvest of wildlife populations, habitat conservation and enhancement, harvest and population monitoring, trespass control and enforcement, and access for subsistence hunting.

"The DOI and AITRC share mutual concern for conservation of healthy wildlife populations and their habitats, as well as ensuring sustainable and sufficient harvests for customary and traditional subsistence uses. The ability of our people to pass down traditional knowledge and customary practices from generation to generation has allowed us to thrive for thousands of years. We are very thankful for the work of Secretary Jewell and Deputy Secretary Connor and their staff to make sure our traditional ecological knowledge and customary and traditional management practices are heard and represented," said Christopher Gene, Chairman, AITRC.

"We see this as a solid first step to bring increased wildlife decision making back to Alaskans. Our need to be involved in decisions impacting our traditional food sources is so much more than meets the eye. Under this contemporary approach to wildlife management, Ahtna people are at the table providing traditional knowledge and practical 'on the ground' experience," said Michelle Anderson, President, Ahtna, Inc. "We believe that the most sustainable and integrated wildlife management is co-management, in which decision making includes Alaska Natives, and both the State of Alaska and the Federal Government, and their respective lands."

### About AITRC

The Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission (AITRC) was formed in 2011 to conserve, manage, and develop fish, wildlife and plant resources of the Ahtna region according to culturally relevant values. Traditional resource stewardship is AITRC's mission and their board is made up of Tribal representatives that have spent their lives on the land. AITRC was established by the eight federally recognized tribes in the region it serves and the Ahtna ANCSA regional and village corporations. Membership is made up of the federally recognized tribes of Native Village of Cantwell, Mentasta Traditional Council, Cheesh-Na Tribe, the Native Village of Gakona, Gulkana Village, the Native Village of Tazlina, the Native Village of Kluti-Kaah, and the Native Village of Chitina. As the land holders, the two Alaska Native Corporations, Ahtna, Incorporated and the Chitina Native Corporation, are also members. AITRC is successfully building wildlife management capacity through collaboration and cooperative management programs with state and federal agencies.

###



For more information regarding this release, please contact:  
Shannon Blue, Ahtna, Inc., Corp. Communications Director  
[news@ahtna.net](mailto:news@ahtna.net) | (907) 230-7058