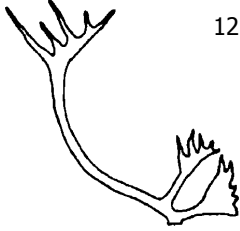


Gwich'in Steering Committee

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Human Rights of Gwich'in primary in Arctic Refuge debate Sacred Place Where Life Begins must be considered

Sarah James, states, "It is the Gwich'in that are threatened by the proposed development in the calving and nursery grounds. We are the ones that have everything to lose." She lives in Arctic Village, Alaska and is a spokesperson for the Gwich'in Steering Committee.

The symbiotic relationship that has existed between the Gwich'in Nation and the Porcupine Caribou Herd since time immemorial is still a reality. The Gwich'in diet is 60-70 percent derived from subsistence. Yet, caribou is not only a food source the caribou is what the culture of the Gwich'in is based upon. Remember the Plains tribes and the buffalo? The birthplace of 40-50,000 caribou calves has been always been considered sacred to Gwich'in. The sacredness of birthplaces is long established among tribes.

The decision makers of the United States must consider the human rights of the Gwich'in and not to wantonly disregard those basic human rights. The arguments put forth by proponents of drilling do not hold up, yet they would develop regardless of the costs to the land, the animals, or the people.

In a report released in March 2004, the Bush Administration's own Energy Information Administration found that oil from the Arctic Refuge would have a negligible effect on world oil production and prices. It is imperative to give conservation, alternative energy, improved fuel efficiency and renewables a chance, and thereby protect the human rights of the Gwich'in and the future generations.