



**Dorothy Thomas - Frost,  
from Old Crow, Yukon,  
Territory, Canada &  
Lenny Kohm**

**“Last Great Wilderness Project”  
January/February 1997**

**Tour Schedule**  
(subject to change)

- January 28**  
1:45 pm - 3:30 pm Santa Clara University  
Santa Clara, CA
- 7:00 pm**  
Mac's American Grill  
Los Altos, CA
- January 29**  
7:30 pm Resource Center for Non-Violence  
Santa Cruz, CA
- January 30**  
7:30 - 10:30 pm Saratoga Library  
Saratoga, CA
- February 4**  
Noon- 12:30 pm University of California  
Berkeley, CA
- February 5**  
11:45 - 1:30 pm Commonwealth Club of California  
San Francisco, CA
- February 6**  
Noon - 1:30 pm Los Gatos Lodge  
Los Gatos, CA
- 7:30 pm**  
Bay Area Action Cafe  
Palo Alto, CA

*For further information please contact:*

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**Protecting the Porcupine  
Caribou Herd  
and its Habitat**  
Canada's Position on Development  
in the "1002 Lands" of the  
Arctic National Wildlife Refuge



*"Since the Sonoma Coalition was established (to protect the Porcupine Caribou Herd from oil and gas development in ANWR) Lenny has become a true brother to us within our nation. Lenny has shown us the dedication to assist us in preserving what is left of our way of life. He has spent many days, which extended into months, living amongst my people, living off the land and learning our traditional way of life, learning to understand our ways, eating our food, and sharing our caribou skins, for this we love him dearly.*

*On behalf of the Gwich'in, I fully support Lenny Kohm and his helpers. Their assistance in educating you and many others across this land for the survival of our nation and its whole way of life.*

*That our voices can be heard through our brother, may the Great Spirit be with you all."*

*Written from a letter by the Honourable Norma Kassi, Member of the Yukon Legislative Assembly for Old Crow.*

**THE PORCUPINE CARIBOU HERD**

The porcupine caribou herd, which numbers about 160,000, ranges across the northern Yukon, a small portion of the Northwest Territories and north-eastern Alaska. Every Spring the herd migrates to its principal calving grounds the Arctic coastal plain, the "1002 lands" of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.

The herd is a vital food source for northern Aboriginal communities in both countries and is an essential element in their economic, social and cultural stability.

In 1987 Canada and the United States signed the Agreement on the Conservation of the Porcupine Herd, under which they agreed to conserve the herd and its habitat and to consult promptly if the herd or its habitat were damaged or its migration route disrupted.

## TECTING THE HERD

*With the creation of the Northern Yukon (now Ivvavik) National Park in 1984, Canada permanently protected as wilderness a large portion of the herd's habitat, including all of the areas in which it occasionally calves in Canada.*

Much of the herd's range on the U.S. side of the border has also been protected since 1980 when the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge was doubled in size. The herd's principal calving grounds, however, lie within the area of the Alaskan coastal plain ("the 1002 lands") that is under pressure for oil and gas exploitation.

The Canadian Government is concerned that development in these sensitive calving grounds could cause irreparable harm to the herd and the communities that depend on it for their livelihood. Canada is not opposed to development in the North but strongly believes that it must be sensitive to the environment.

## CANADA'S CONSERVATION MEASURES

Canada has never allowed drilling on its portion of the Porcupine caribou calving grounds.

## Wilderness Protection

Despite significant pressure to develop the Arctic coastal plain, Canada has given the area wilderness protection, including it in Ivvavik National Park, where oil and gas development is strictly prohibited.

Canada has also refrained from developing certain areas beyond the coastal plain calving grounds that may contain oil and gas. For example, the Old Crow Basin has never been tested either by

drilling or seismic means. About 30 per cent of the basin is included in Vuntut National Park (bordering Ivvavik National Park), where all oil and gas drilling is prohibited.

Since 1978, exploration and development north of the Porcupine and Bell Rivers have been prohibited by the Territorial Lands Act.

## ABORIGINAL LAND CLAIM AGREEMENTS

Development in the rest of the herd's habitat is subject to Aboriginal land claim agreements and would be severely restricted.

The area around Old Crow not included in Vuntut National Park lies within a special wildlife area established under the Vuntut Gwitch'in First Nation Final Agreement. Development could only occur after consultation with Aboriginal communities and even then it could not violate the Agreement's primary management principle -- protection and conservation of the region's fish, wildlife and environmental habitat, in particular, migratory birds and the Caribou Caribou.

The area east of Ivvavik National Park is included in another Aboriginal land claim agreement signed in 1984, under which all oil and gas activity is prohibited.

## CANADA'S DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY Oil and Gas Exploration

While Canada undertook minor drilling in limited areas of the herd's range beginning in the late 1950's, the drilling activity was never significant enough to constitute an exploration program.

In the early 1970's, three exploratory wells were drilled in the Yukon's Arctic coastal plain outside the calving grounds, the last in 1972. All have since been abandoned.

Between 1957 and 1985, 75 exploratory wells were drilled within the herd's less sensitive fall and winter range, far away from the calving grounds. No oil or gas was ever produced and all the wells have been abandoned. Most of the drilling occurred in the early 1970's before the creation of Ivvavik and Vuntut National Parks and the conservation regime established under the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, an Aboriginal land claim settlement.

## The Dempster Highway

Construction on the Dempster Highway in the northern Yukon and the Northwest Territories began in 1959. Built along an existing winter road, it crosses a caribou migration route but is nowhere near the herd's calving grounds. The herd can easily cross the highway which is in mountainous terrain and sparsely traveled. Hunting along the highway corridor is restricted to protect the herd.



Dorothy Thomas - Frost

Dorothy Thomas - Frost, a member of the Gwich'in Nation is a community leader committed to protection of the environment in the town she lives in, Old Crow, located in the Yukon Territory, and the Canadian north.

The Gwich'in Nation rely on the Porcupine Caribou Herd for their daily lives and survival. The Herd provides for almost everything in their life, including the continuation of their society and their culture, now thousands of years old. Ms. Thomas - Frost is an active volunteer serving community organizations dedicated to improving the way of life of her people. She has served as a deputy to the Council to the Chiefs and been a Member of the Board for the Health Commission, the Chief Zzeh Girtlin School Board and the community library.

Lenny Kohn



Lenny Kohn, a nationally known photojournalist, will introduce "The Last Great Wilderness Show", a multi-media slide presentation which offers a close-up look at the fragile and beautiful Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. A list of public program dates and locations is on the other side of this panel.

The program also will feature the controversy over oil development vs. wilderness protection of the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.