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Title: *The Yukon River Intertribal Watershed Council: A Case Study in Indigenous Governance in Alaska*

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As the world's attention turns towards the Arctic, Alaska has growing relevance in global political economics. Its rich resource reserves and strategic location brings opportunities and challenges. Among these challenges are questions about the ability of existing governance structures to ensure that Alaska's communities survive and thrive in a changing environment. These questions have particularly relevance to the two hundred indigenous communities that have seen their sovereignty steadily erode since Alaska became a state in 1959.

This paper examines the relationship between property rights, governance and "well-being." In particular, it focuses on the work of the Yukon River Intertribal Watershed Council to assert increased governance over traditional resources that are increasingly threatened by a variety of external impacts and changes. Over the past half-century, Alaskan indigenous tribes have lost significant governance authority over traditional lands. This loss of sovereign jurisdiction has dramatically impacted their ability of communities to ensure the well-being of their members. The YRITWC's governance project is an effort to regain local control and promote community well-being.

This case study assesses the causes and consequences of efforts to increase local governance. It examines how and why Alaskan tribes seek to assert greater governance authority, and the challenges to these efforts. The paper frames these efforts within the constructs of property rights, governance and human development. Such understanding facilitates deeper understanding of the impacts of conflicts between differing cultures and differing property regimes. Likewise, this understanding is vital to assessing the range of options available to indigenous tribes in Alaska seeking to increase their own authorities and capacity to promote community "well-being" in a time of tremendous change.

The term "well-being" is derived from literature on human development and its application to the Arctic.