

Chugach Region Inc. submits land claims requests

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Tundra Times Editor

Chugach Region Inc. has designated 16 panels of land in the Prince William Sound area as land it is considering to select as part of land due the corporation under the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

All parcels are undeveloped and included in the Chugach National Forest.

The land selection, made under the 14HA section of the ANCSA, was for 33,167 acres of land due the corporation. The land selection is the smaller of two land claim selections the Corporation is involved in and is the less controversial of the two.

The corporation last week submitted selection nominations totalling 70,000 acres of land in the Prince William Sound area of

the Chugach National Forest. Although the corporation is entitled to only 33,000 acres under the ANCSA, Carl Propes, Chugach Region Inc. Director of lands and natural resources, said the larger selections were made as a "safety value."

Propes said the selections are negotiable and he said no priority ranking has been included with the selection.

The land selections include 16 tracts of land in the area. They are:

Patton Bay, Montegue Island, 19,354 acres;

Whalen Bay, 2,709 acres;

St. Matthews Bay, 1,585 acres;

LaTouche Island, 13,367 acres;

McKinley Lake east of Cordova, 14,607 acres;

A 97.5 acre tract of land ad-

jacent to the Cordova Airport;

A strip of land from mile 27 to mile 41 on the North side of Copper River Highway totalling 1,405 acres;

Gibbon Anchorage, on Giren Island, 1,607 acres;

Hook Point on Henchenbrook, 1,105 acres;

Macleod Harbor on Montegue Island, 2,927 acres;

Stockdale Harbor on Montegue Island, 1,195 acres;

Bettles Island, 240 acres;

Louis Bay on Knight Island, 685 acres;

Northeast arm of Mommy Bay on Knight Island, 287 acres;

Iron Mountain on Knight Island, 13,563 acres.

The corporation's choices were limited to unreserved land in the National Forest, according to Propes. Edgar Blatchford, Chugach chairman of the board,

said the corporation was further limited in that it had to choose land that the Chugach people had traditionally lived upon. That meant the land had to be accessible to the sea, economically feasible, and of traditional use.

Propes said each section of land was chosen with different criteria in mind. Some was chosen for its "economic potential, some selection for hard rock mineral deposits, for real estate or development potential, or for commercial recreation potential or timber potential, a good harbor etcetera."

The land selections will be forwarded to the Chugach Regional Study group which is considering the Chugach land claims.

That group will hold this land selection recommendation for

consideration until land selections under the Chugach Region 12C land selections are made.

That section of the ANCSA calls for Chugach to receive 339,000 acres of land and has more potential for problems because the Chugach Regional Study group already has asked Chugach Region Inc. to look outside the Prince William Sound area.

Chugach Region Study group will meet June 23 to consider the 14HA land claims and the 12C claims.

According to Propes, the 14HA land claims settlement will go through if Chugach Region Inc., and the study group are able to reach an accord on what lands Chugach Region wants on 12C. However, if no

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Proposed Chugach land selections made

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accord -- either monetary or land -- is reached by the study group and the corporation over 12C, the corporation will be able to claim whatever 33,000 acres it wants under 14HA claims.

The corporation also has the option of a monetary settlement but in the past leaders have said they are inclined to a land settlement because of the age-old ties to the land.

Proper was cautious about potential opposition to the claim. "I won't say there won't be op-

position. We will ruffle some feathers with some of the (14HA) selections because everybody has a favorite spot."

"It's going to be a painful settlement. Hopefully it will be equally painful to all." He said he has distributed copies of the corporation's selections to members of the Chugach Study group but has received no comment yet.

Blatchford was equally cautious. "I've always said that no matter where the Chugach people go, that someone will want them to go elsewhere. But that's why we go through the public hearing system."

He said that shareholders of

the Chugach Region Inc. won't have a chance to review the land selections exclusively before the recommendations are made because the land claims proposals have to be submitted to President Ronald Reagan before Dec. 1. There will be several public hearings however and shareholders will be able to review the selections and voice their opinions then.

The Chugach Region Study group will meet in the Bureau of Indian Affairs conference room in Anchorage at 9 a.m., June 23 to study the land nominations.

The public is invited.