

Agreement with Arctic Slope

Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus and representatives of the Arctic Slope Regional Native Corporation have signed an agreement designed to speed land transfers to the Native corporation, allow oil and gas exploration, and reduce land ownership conflicts within the Gates of the Arctic National Monument.

"This is a special case where the interests of environmental protection and development can be balanced for the interests of all concerned," Secretary Andrus said.

The major conflict centered on the Karupa Lakes and Killik River area near the northern boundary of the new Gates of the Arctic National Monument. That area is considered by many to be one of the important scenic attractions of the central arctic and the northern Brooks Range foothills.

But at the same time, the area is believed to have significant oil and gas resources which may have national importance.

The agreement pledges the Interior Department and the Native corporation to work toward legislation that will formally guarantee the agreement. If legislation is not passed, the Department will move administratively within the limits of other laws including the National Environmental Policy Act to implement these agreements as quickly as possible, Secretary Andrus said.