

Help Natives Protect, Preserve Their Cultural Heritage

Many aspects of the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) have been widely publicized.

Nearly everyone knows, for instance, that this law, the largest settlement ever made with North American Indians, provided for the return of over 40 million acres and the award of \$962.5 million to the Eskimos, Aleuts and Indians of the 12 Native regional corporations.

There are other aspects of the Settlement Act, less well-known, however, which will provide benefits to the Native corporations beyond the more tangible monetary and land provisions.

In addition, they should also prove beneficial to non-Native Alaskans. To help the Natives preserve and protect their cul-

tural heritage resources, Section 14(h)(1) of ANCSA allows the regional corporations to select additional land, not available under other sections of the act, as historic sites and cemeteries.

These historic sites will be chosen by the regional corporations mainly for their importance to Native culture, but their identification, selection, and protection by Native groups will increase the historic and cultural resources of Alaska and the nation in general.

A number of federal agencies are involved in the selection of 14(h) sites. Although final certification and issue of patents will be handled by the Bureau of Land Management,

it is the Bureau of Indian Affairs' responsibility to certify the existence and significance of all sites selected.

And the National Park Service, as the Department of the Interior's advisor on matters of history and archeology, will have an important role as the BIA's technical consultant concerning 14(h)(1) selections.

To implement its role in the selections, the National Park Service has established a 14(h) task force at the University of Alaska, in Fairbanks. Under the direction of National Park Service personnel Zorro Bradley, Melody Grauman and Bill Schneider, 10 professional anthropologists, archeologists and historians are under contract

with the University of Alaska to aid the Native corporations in the evaluation and selection of historic sites.

In addition, and in keeping with the National Park Service's philosophy of historic preservation, these 14(h) researchers will advise the Native corporations on historic matters and in future planning, such as the eventual utilization of the historic and anthropological materials gathered, either in the writing of Native histories, the establishment of village or regional museums and cultural centers, or other forms of cultural interpretation and presentation.

Native corporations wishing to nominate sites—either 14(h) selections or historic sites al-

ready within village and regional selections—to the National Register of Historic Places will be aided by the Park Service personnel in preparing National Register forms.

Each of these professionals will be working closely with one of the regional corporations which have requested Park Service assistance.

They will help the corporations compile inventories of historic sites, establish bibliographies of site references in historical and anthropological literature, and aid in writing the statements of significance required for each site application.

Placement on the National Register will further protect historic sites in that federal

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agencies planning an undertaking in an area including such sites must take into consideration the effect of such an undertaking on the historic integrity of the site, look for alternatives, and weigh the public's best interest before proceeding with the undertaking. National Register sites can also qualify for matching funds for historic preservation.

Members of the 14(h) group working with specific corporations are: Jo Ann Gal, NANA Regional Corp.; Elizabeth Andrews, Doyon Ltd; Kathy Forrer, Bering Straits Native Corp.; Susan Hansen, Calista Corp.; Mary Kroul, Cook Inlet Region Inc.; Holly Reckord, Ahtna Inc.; Harvey Shields, Bristol Bay Native Corp.; Kevin Hekrdle, Chugach Natives Inc.; Linda Yarborough, Koniag Inc.; and Gary Stein, The Aleut Corp.