

Legal Work by ALSC for Calista Shareholders

Calista Corporation has granted Alaska Legal Services Corporation the sum of \$32,000 Frank Flavin, Executive Director announced recently.

The grant award has been made to support that program's work in legal representation of shareholders of Calista Corporation who are seeking Native allotments from the federal government.

Russell Gallagher, Council for Calista, indicated there are over 2,000 applications for 160 acre Native Allotments in the Calista Region.

The Bureau of Land Management, the federal agency charged with adjudicating these claims, has indicated that they will be rejecting a large portion of these claims.

The law which grants these claims to Alaska Natives says that in order to get the land a Native person must have used and occupied it for a 5-year period prior to the passage of Alaska Native Settlement Claims Act, December 18, 1971.

It is going to be difficult to prove this in many cases arising in the Calista Region as Native lifestyle on the tundra makes the use of land without leaving any marks the rule rather than the exception.

Lewis Schapper, Supervising Attorney in Bethel, Alaska Legal Services Corporation Office, says that the bulk of these funds will be used to allow Alaska Legal Services Corporation to match the facilities the federal government can use in obtaining evidence either in the form of physical evidence of use of affidavits by local people.

This should allow the Natives to present thorough evidence to the Bureau of Land Management and to the appeal board, the Interior Board of Land Appeals that they have in fact used the land.

Frank Flavin stated that pursuing Native Allotments appeals through the courts is the first priority of his program.

Alaska Legal Services Corporation will consider any rejection or cut back of allotted acreage and intends to fight each and every case.