



EXCHANGE SIGNED — Guy Martin (left), Asst. Secretary for Land and Water Resources, Dept. of Interior; Joseph G. Wilson, President and Chairman of Goldbelt, Inc., the Juneau-based Native urban corporation; and Rupert Cutler, Asst. Secretary for Conservation, Research, and Education; seal deal exchanging Southeast lands. See story, Page Three.

Southeast Corp. exchanges land

A land exchange agreement was formally signed April 11, 1979, whereby Goldbelt, Inc., the Juneau-based Native corporation, exchanged its Admiralty Island land selection for lands in the Port Houghton, Hobart Bay, and Berners Bay area, according to Goldbelt President and Chairman of the Board, Joseph G. Wilson.

"It has been a long and arduous task," Wilson said, "involving many people both in private and public organizations, as well as various agencies of the state and federal government."

The signers of the exchange agreement were Sealaska Corporation Chairman Byron Mallott; Rupert Cutler, representing the Secretary of Agriculture; Guy Martin, representing the Secretary of the Interior; and Joseph G. Wilson, president and chairman of Goldbelt, Inc.

Lands totaling 19,618 acres on Admiralty Island were exchanged for land of equivalent value in the Hobart Bay, Port Houghton, and Berners Bay area, which total 27,774 acres. Lands not involved in the Admiralty Island dispute located in Berners Bay and West Douglas Island, totaling 3,422 acres, will be conveyed by September of this year. Goldbelt will finally receive a total of 31,000 acres as a result of the land exchange and normal selections under the native claims act. Sealaska corporation retains the rights to the subsurface estate.

"The land exchange agreement was pursued when it became evident that the validity of the withdrawal of lands by the Secretary of Interior on be-

half of Goldbelt would be challenged, and that substantial public sentiment existed for maintaining lands on Admiralty Island in wilderness status," Wilson commented. Admiralty Island, located west of Juneau, has been a controversial issue regarding its development versus its status as a wilderness area.

Wilson stated further that "the corporation is moving to prepare land use plans, timber inventory, and the corporate development plan over the next several months. It is hoped that these private lands will contribute to the social and economic development of Juneau and southeastern Alaska."