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National
Park



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D=2

What is D2? D2 is federal land

"D2" is the symbol that has come to stand for the Alaska lands legislation and for those federal lands which will become either new units or additions to the national park, national forest and national wildlife refuge systems. In addition, *certain wild and scenic rivers would be added to the systems under D2 proposals, to be managed by whichever federal agency controls the area in which the rivers lie.*

The D2 situation actually goes back to the oil pipeline and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) when land ownership and use was in question. When the construction of the oil pipeline was approved, and when the Alaska Native interests received their settlement of cash and land, there was a third element still to be satisfied: the national conservation interests.

In the Native claims act, one section addressed conservation interests in Alaska's federal lands by authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to withdraw up to 80 million acres for study for possible inclusion in the national preservation systems. This was section 17(d)(2) of that act, now called simply D2.

Before statehood in 1959, more than 99 per cent of Alaska's 375 million acres was owned by the federal government and managed as public lands by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

At statehood, Congress promised 103.3 million acres of that federal land to the new state of Alaska. Twelve years later Congress promised Alaska's Natives 44 million acres of federal land under ANCSA. These state lands and private (Native) lands, when they are finally conveyed, will leave more than 220 million acres still in federal ownership. Of this, it appears about half will become national parks, national forests, national wildlife refuges and wild and scenic rivers when D2 legislation is finally signed into law by the President. The other half will remain BLM public lands although these lands, too, will fall under BLM's wilderness review program unless Congress specifically exempts Alaska from that process.

WILDERNESS

Wilderness areas are also proposed in the various D2 bills. The word wilderness in this legislation means the legal definition as set forth in the Wilderness Act of 1964: pristine, with no intrusion of motorized technology, in which man is only a visitor. The legislation would lay wilderness or wilderness study status over many or all (depending on which piece of legislation) of the federally owned Alaskan parks, refuges and forests.

NATIONAL MONUMENTS

When the Alaska lands legislation died in Congress last October, President Carter, who strongly supported HR39, invoked the Antiquities Act, a law that allows the President to reserve land as national monuments to protect historic landmarks, structures and other objects of historic or scientific interest situated on federal land.

When President Carter signed the proclamations, 56 million acres instantly became 17 National Monuments, 13 of which are managed by the National Park Service, two by the Fish and Wildlife Service and two by the Forest Service. An act of Congress, such as D2 legislation, is the only way to change the Monuments to some other preservation system such as Parks, Refuges, and Forests.

THIS YEAR'S LEGISLATION

Several different D2 bills are under consideration in Congress. All contain wilderness provisions but some propose more wilderness acreage than others. All contain new federal parks, forest or forest additions, refuges and wild and scenic rivers. Action on the floor of the House is expected in early May. Senate action is expected in late summer or early autumn.

Brought to you by:
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