

# ALUC represents an opportunity for landowners

Alaska has been the target of two historic land laws: the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). These two laws will forever change land ownership patterns in Alaska. Perhaps an equally important fact is that these laws will change how millions of acres of public land are managed and thus made available for private and public use. In particular, federal land management decisions made in the implementation of ANILCA will have longlasting impacts on state and Native land and resource development.

For the most part, ANCSA focused on identifying and transferring land to Native ownership. Certain requirements, such as 14(c) reconveyances, passed land ownership to other than the Native community, but those conveyances represent comparatively few acres within the overall settlement. The federal role in ANCSA is primarily one of overseeing a process of title transfer.

On the other hand, ANILCA placed millions of acres of federal land into more intensive federal management. Large tracts of federal land that were managed under a general purpose concept prior to ANILCA are now reclassified into Conservation System Units (CSU's) such as National Parks and Wildlife Refuges. The CSU's created or added to national parks and preserves, wildlife refuges, wild and scenic rivers, national forests, conservation and recreational areas. The federal role in ANILCA is primarily one of land management.

Federal agencies assigned to manage these newly classified areas under ANILCA include the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management.

These four land managing agencies carry out their responsibilities by developing and using a number of standard land management tools. These tools include the development of policy, regulations, land exchanges, general management plans, cooperative management agreements and land bank agreements, to name a few. When federal agencies develop and use these tools they are, in effect, making decisions and establishing policy that will influence and impact other land interests throughout Alaska.

For example, a federal decision related to

access may limit someone who has an inholding in a National Park from fully using his property. It may disallow or severely limit subsistence practices where a valid right to such activities exists.

Or it may curtail a resource development activity which in turn impacts the state economy.

Given the vast amount of federal influence in land management responsibilities assigned by ANILCA, it was only appropriate that the

drafters of the Act create the Alaska Land Use Council (ALUC). Federal land management decisions made in ANILCA's implementation will have long-lasting impacts on state and Native land and resource development. There was a recognized need to establish a formal structure that would

not dictate policy, but rather offer an opportunity to the state and Native community, as major landowners, to take part in federal land management activities.

The council is charged with fostering cooperation and coordination between federal, state and Native landowners in the management of private and public land. It has the added responsibility of performing oversight functions upon the federal implementation of ANILCA.

The Council is co-chaired by the governor of Alaska and a federal appointment made by the president.

In addition to the two co-chairman, the council has four commissioners representing state agencies, six regional directors of federal agencies and two members representing ANCSA Native corporations. All members are individuals delegated the responsibility of providing input to, and implementing policy at, all levels of land and resource management in Alaska. The authority and resources available to council members is unprecedented anywhere else in the state. There is no other forum that offers the state of Alaska and the Native community the opportunity to not only influence federal land and resource management decisions, but to cooperatively set the agenda of issues to be addressed.

The impact of federal land management decisions is oftentimes extended beyond immediate, short-range concerns to long-range



by Larry Kimball  
Land Manager  
Alaska Federation  
of Natives

ALUC on page thirteen

## ALUC from page five

issues that directly influence future economic development opportunities. As such, there is a need for all interested parties to have input into federal land management decisions and not just at the general level of public meetings.

The opportunity is there in the council. There need only be a genuine effort by all parties to make it work.

