

Villages Form Alaska Tribal Association

By JEFF RICHARDSON

ANCHORAGE — What would you do if you had nearly 3.8 million acres of land coming to you, but no money to buy the maps to show where you want to select that land?

This is the plight of several Native groups who collectively represent 7,372 Native people, and are entitled to 3,789,892 acres of land under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. These groups got together last week and formed the Alaska Tribal Association to look after their common interest — money.

The association is composed of a rather oddly matched group of Native people. On the one hand are those villages who chose to keep land on reservations established before the land claims act instead of receiving regular land and monetary benefits.

On the other hand are Natives enrolled to the cities of Sitka, Juneau, Kenai, and Kodiak. The Native corporations for these cities are entitled to 23,040 acres of land, but no monetary benefits under the act.

Representatives from Elim, Savoonga, Gambell, Venetie, Arctic Village, Tetlin, and Klukwan, and the four cities, were brought to Anchorage by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to discuss the land claims act as it relates to their special problems. Representatives from the Bureau of Land Management were also present.

Out of this meeting came the Alaska Tribal Association. According to Mary Shields, execu-

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Association . . .

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tive secretary of the Kenai Native Association, the purpose of the organization will be to seek funds for its members for land selection and general planning purposes. The ATA will seek recognition under provisions of the Indian Reorganization Act.

George Miller, of Kenai, was elected President of the ATA. Also elected were Garrett Aukon of Elim, 1st Vice President; Joe Wilson of Juneau, 2nd Vice-President; Bill Berestoff of Kodiak, Secretary; and William Brady of Sitka, Treasurer.

Monthly meetings are planned for the ATA. The next meeting will be December 18, at the BIA office in Anchorage.