

Port Alsworth files with ANCAB

From the Alaska Native Management Report

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The people of Port Alsworth say they feel "like a mouse un-

der a rug" as they watch events unfold in such a way that they are gradually losing their land entitlement they feel is their right under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

Caught in the middle of the Cook Inlet-Bristol Bay boundary dispute, the three-way Cook Inlet Land Swap, and the regulations and land orders of the Bureau of Land Management, this tiny group may become disfranchised, landless Natives despite the clear intent of the Act.

But now the mouse has decided to roar. They have filed a protest with the Alaska Native Claims Appeal Board to gain entitlement for the seven people in their group, which is incorporated as Tanalian, Inc.

Tanalian has done all that is required to become a certified

group entitled to 320 acres per person, or 2,240 acres for the group. But they have gradually been caught in the tide-rips of politics, without the resources to be heard on their own behalf. Their members are registered at-large to Bristol Bay, but their land selections area lies wholly within the Cook Inlet Region. Five Cook Inlet villages have made selections there.

The dilemma for Tanalian is that BLM regulations state that a group cannot be certified out-of-region, and also there is no land available for them to select inasmuch as 12(a) village selections. To further complicate the situation, the area occupied by Port Alsworth is involved in the Cook Inlet Land Swap with the federal and state governments.

Meanwhile, the Port Alsworth people have been left out of all the negotiations which so profoundly affect them. Everyone involved in the matter seems to believe that Tanalian has a right to the small acreage entitlement of a bona fide group, but various complications piled on previous complications seem to always halt the workings of justice for the seven people of Port Alsworth.

Just what it will take to unravel the tangled threads of circumstance that have pushed them into a corner is not known, but it is Bristol Bay's hope that their protests with ANCAB can be a first step in that direction.