

Challenge to transfer

Washington — A federal judge has ordered a court chal-

lenge to the transfer of land in the Admiralty Island National Monument in Alaska to two Indian corporations shifted to the U.S. District Court in Anchorage.

The Sierra Club, an environmental group, last year asked U.S. District Judge Norma H. Johnson to set aside the conveyance by Interior Secretary James Watt of 23,000 acres to the Shee Atika and Sealaska corporations under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

The Sierra Club said Watt failed to attach all the conditions to the transfer that Congress required, such as a guarantee of public access to other adjacent federal lands and a restriction on timber cutting.

The Justice Department argued that the two corporations had to be defendants in such a suit, and since they were not, it had to be dismissed. The judge did not decide that question but accepted an alternative proposal from the government, to transfer the case to Anchorage.