

Land Selection Time Running Pretty Short

Time is growing short for three Native corporations in Sitka, Juneau, and Kodiak to nominate lands they would like to select under a special provision of the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) called the "Four Cities Provision."

A fourth corporation, Kenai Natives Association, has already made most of its preliminary selections.

A lengthy, three-step process which will lead to the corporations receiving title to 23,040 acres each must be completed by Dec. 18, 1975 under the terms of the ANCSA.

As an initial step, the corporations must nominate for consideration 92,120 acres of land located within 50 miles of each of their respective cities.

After review and public hearings the Secretary of the Interior shall withdraw up to 46,080 acres near each of the cities in question from the lands nominated.

Each corporation representing the Natives residents of the four named cities may select 23,040 acres from those withdrawn by the Secretary.

These four corporations will hold title to the surface estate of the lands, while their regional corporations will receive the title to the subsurface estate.

The four cities provision was drafted by Congress to provide Natives in areas where their traditional village site has become a city of modern, urban character with a predominately white population to share in the benefits of the Settlement Act.

Time Short . . .

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Under the basic provisions of ANCSA villages of modern, urban character cannot receive land.

Bureau of Land Management Director Curtis McVee says that although the villages have until December of this year to make their final selections, they must make preliminary selections early enough to allow the BLM to check the status of those lands and insure that there are no prior claims.

"There must be at least 60 days notice on the lands which have been nominated before the public hearing can be conducted," McVee says. "And after the hearing BLM will allow 30 days for written comments before deciding which acres will be withdrawn for final selection purposes."