

Could Sign Wildwood Air Force Sta. to Natives

A delegation of Alaskans began talks in Washington D.C. on Monday, March 27, to transfer the 4300 acre Wildwood Air Force Station on the Kenai peninsula to Natives as part of the Land Claims Settlement.

Only 100 acres of the land, worth a total of \$18 million, is presently developed and Native leaders indicated that educational programs would occupy a number of the former military facilities.

George Miller of the Kenaitze Indians, Larry Oskolkoff, Cook Inlet Regional District, Inc., and Don Wright, president of the Alaska Federation of Natives, began discussing the possibility of turning the land over to the Natives last fall, when they learned the base would be closed by June 1, 1972.

Kenai city manger, Ed Glot-

felty said that his community wants to work directly with the Native people of the area on the land action.

"They are part of this community and anything we can do to provide land or help for them and their organization within the community, we are going to do."

The Alaska contingent in Washington D.C. includes Glotfelty, Miller, Wright, Kenai borough chairman George Navarre, Vince Oreilly, executive director of the Kenai Peninsula Borough Overall Economic Development Program, and a representative of the State of Alaska from the office of Gov. William A. Egan.

The group will meet with Ernest Smalling and William J. Sheehan of the Office of Economic Adjustment within the Defense Department and with

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officials of the Interior Department and BIA. They plan also to meet with Alaska's congressional delegation.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act gives organized cities a two mile buffer zone in which Native groups are not allowed to select land, if the city chooses.

"But the city of Kenai has indicated that as far as we are concerned the Natives can come into the two mile zone or into the city if they need to for their selections," said Glotfelty. "We're leaving the option open."

Native groups have indicated interest in making the initial main program an educational one with Boarding Home programs which could take up to 200 students this fall and community college courses in the vocational field.

All Air Force activities are to be completely withdrawn from the base by June 1, 1972.

In a meeting last Thursday at Kenai, Native, city and borough officials met with representatives from the offices of Governor Egan and Attorney General John Havelock and came to an initial agreement to secure the land for ongoing educationally oriented programs.

Now they must explore the federal channels through which this might be accomplished.