

ARCTIC CORRIDOR PROPOSED

BLM Prepares Plan To Stop Speculators; Public Hearings Set

The Bureau of Land Management has announced a proposal to classify 2,436,000 acres of land in a corridor leading from Livengood through Bettles and Anaktuvuk Pass to Umiat and the Sagavanirktok River.

The classification will segregate the land from all forms of settlement which leads to title transfer or patent while the State Department of Highways selects a right-of-way for a proposed road to the Arctic.

The proposal is subject to amendment, and a series of informal meetings will be held with interested groups during April. A formal public hearing will be held May 10 in Fairbanks.

The BLM said the classification was being made to prevent land speculation while the Highway Department was selecting a right of way.

As soon as the exact location is known, the classification will be modified to allow and encourage settlement and development along the right-of-way.

Claims now on record will not be affected by the proposed classification.

Bettles and Anaktuvuk Pass both lie within the corridor, and the classification could preclude expanding the villages until the final route is established.

However, the BLM adds that

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Corridor . . .

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it can be amended, and they will meet with the Natives to avoid any problems with the two villages.

The Bureau says that it will contact the Native Associations involved, and will hold the meetings where the associations suggest to get the opinions of the Natives affected.

One point is whether the Native land claims will include highway rights-of-way. If so, the conflict will be sent to the BLM state office or higher, for a decision.

The meetings will also seek opinions on what effect the proposal will have on the livelihood of the Natives - whether the changes will benefit or harm them.

A detailed map of the corridor is available for public inspection in the Fairbanks Land Office, 516 Second Avenue.

A formal public hearing will be held at 10 a.m. on May 10 in the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce building. Written comments may be sent to Robert C. Krumm, District Manager, Fairbanks District and Land Office, P.O. Box 1150, Fairbanks, Alaska, 99701.