

Chugach amends selection

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In the face of an ever-shortening deadline, Chugach Native Inc. has submitted yet another land selection proposal which drops any quest for timber lands in Washington and Oregon, reduces inner Prince William Sound land and dismisses the federal offer of 800,000 acres of subsurface oil and gas rights.

CNI submitted its compromise proposal last week at the monthly meeting of the Chugach Region Study Group which was established to work out the CNI claim to 379,000 acres of land CNI is entitled to because of the Alaska Native Claim Settlement Act.

The CNI claim has to be submitted to Congress by late November by President Ronald Reagan. The group next meets Sept. 15 and the group also has to publicize its recommenda-

tions before writing the final proposal and submitting it to Reagan.

The latest CNI compromise incorporates portions of a proposal for land settlement presented to the study group in late August by representatives of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service.

The forest service at that time recommended that CNI take, as part of its settlement, 800,000 acres of oil and gas subsurface exploration rights but CNI dismissed that offer because it felt the chance of oil or gas being found in those lands was "too speculative and intangible."

The proposal also reduced CNI's objective of acquiring land in the inner Prince William Sound area - the traditional land of the Chugach people - because of the concern of other study members. CNI's

(Continued on Page Ten)

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(Continued from Page One)

willingness to reduce its request was called "significant" in a paper submitted to the study group by CNI.

CNI also has reduced the amount of timber lands selected in Southeast Alaska from 112,000 to 40,000 acres because of objections voiced by study members about the larger amount of acreage.

CNI has identified a preference for the Yakutat and Big Salt Lake areas but also has submitted an alternative proposal of the Hobart Bay-Port Houghton and Big Salt Lake if the Yakutat can not be granted.

Those areas total 45,000 acres.

In the new compromise proposal, CNI has designated 30,000 acres of Western coal lands as land the region would like to select. According to the report submitted with the proposal, the coal lands, which are outside of Alaska, were selected because of committee suggestion that non-Alaska lands be selected.

Propse said that several of the selections were made because of suggestion of the study group. Some 10,000 acres of land in Yakutat, was selected

because it would ease administration of the land for the government.

A selection was made at Icy Bay but only for subsurface oil and gas rights "and we recognize the Park Service's interest in managing the surface land," said Propse. He said a similar situation is found for the 66,405 acres at Katalla.

In making its compromise proposal, CNI has included two alternatives of about 67,000 acres each.

Alternative A includes Green Island, 7,242 acre; Latouche Island, 13,367 acres; Knight Island, 13,564 acres of subsurface rights; Icy Bay addition 12,868 acres of subsurface rights; and Katalla, 66,405 acres of subsurface rights.

Alternative B includes Stockdale Harbor, 1,195 acres; Port Chalmers, 960 acres; Zaikof Bay, 4,075 acres; Esther Passage, 7,785 acres; Miners Lake, 10,525 acres; Martin River, 26,580 acres; Point Pakenham, 10,164 acres; and Exit Glacier, 6,480 acres.