

Handbook Aims To Help Villages

A village land use planning handbook produced by the Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission is undergoing improvements following a field test of the manual in the village of Nikolai in June.

The handbook aims to help villages redistribute village corporation lands under provisions of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, sometimes called 14(c) reconveyances.

In two days of intensive work villagers, including village corporation officers and city council members, identified lands they wanted for public use — streets, boat ramps, etc., designated lots for residents, businesses and non-profit groups.

Commission planner Janet McCabe and Larry Kimball, a planner with the Alaska Department of Community and Regional affairs, coordinated the handbook project and served as advisers in the Nikolai sessions.

Representatives of the Federal Bureau of Land Management, the Alaska Division of Aviation, Doyon, Ltd., and the Alaska Native Foundation also participated in the field test.

Tony Alexie, president of the village's Native corporation, served as the planning officer for the village.

Nikolai is a second class city under Alaska law with a population of 112. It is located on the south fork of the Upper Kuskokwim River.

Provisions of the Claims Settlement Act require village corporations to redistribute villages lands to residents, businesses and non-profit groups, such as churches.

Titled "Reconveying Land — A Handbook for Village Corporations," the handbook provides a step-by-step planning guide for villages which have yet to be surveyed by the BLM.

About 100 villages must be surveyed in preparation to land redistribution and could make use of the handbook.