

Millions of acres of land selected

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article was written by a Native student at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. Such articles, some on land situations, some on other pertinent matters pertaining to Native situations, will be published in the Tundra Times as they become available.)

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By MARIE ADAMS

Since the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, millions of acres of land have been selected and studied. Approximately 45 million acres have been committed to private Native ownership, 103.5 million acres will be free for the State of Alaska to complete its entitlement, and about 80 million acres was withdrawn by the Secretary of Interior for study as possible addition or creation of national systems.

Land withdrawn for study as possible inclusions or creations of National Parks, Forest, Wildlife Refuges, and Wild and Scenic Rivers have the attention of the state, federal and Native people.

In the Settlement Act under Section 17 (d) (2), the Secretary of Interior was directed to withdraw up to 80 million acres of land for study, provided that the withdrawals did not affect the authority of the State and Regional Corporations to withdraw and patent land within the areas withdrawn.

Several bills are in Congress which are proposals for creation or addition of national systems from lands studied, the D-2 lands. The Secretary of Interior has proposed 83.47 million acres for national systems. Alaska Governor Hammond introduced a bill proposing 36.617 million acres for national systems and 61.946 million acres for Alaska Resource Lands.

Alaska Representative Don Young has proposed 42.74 million acres for national systems and an additional 24.39 million acres for Scenic Reserves. Arizona Representative Morris K. Udall proposed 94.20 million acres for national systems and 11.90 million acres for Ecological Reserves.

The Conservationist Bill has proposed a total of 106.1 million acres for National Parks, Forests, Refuges, and Wild and Scenic Rivers.

The Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission has recommended 39.14 million acres for national systems and 58.94 million acres for Alaska Resource Lands.

Whatever proposal receives the acceptance of Congress, it will have an effect on land use by state, federal, Native, and interested individuals and parties. The Congress has until 1978 for Congressional action on the bills.

Some of the proposed D-2 lands for national systems have been selected from lands historically used by Alaskan Natives for subsistence. The Native people along the Brooks Range must face either transportation corridors or the development of national systems. National Parks, Refuges, Forest, and Wild and Scenic Rivers are strongly supported by Natives from Anaktuvuk Pass, Nome, Kotzebue, Bethel, Barrow and other villages affected.

One of the reasons that the Arctic Natives support the national system is because of the effects the other option could have on their lifestyle with emphasis on subsistence use of land. They feel that the development of transportation corridors could increase noise levels, disruptive to caribou migration patterns.

With increased transportation routes, harvest of fish and game species by outsiders could easily increase, depleting resources used by the Natives. With the acceptance of national systems by Congress, the Native people will have a greater opportunity to continue their lifestyle as it is now.

National systems will provide protection for natural resources within the system's boundaries. Game species and plant resources will be protected. Subsistence use of renewable resources will be permitted. However, existing communities of subsistence users cannot be relocated or created, such that, they effect subsistence use within the national systems.

Sports hunting will be allowed within some of the national systems such as the parks with regulations in accordance to the State of Alaska. One example of regulations for sports hunters is that of "fair chase" which prohibits the use of "mechanical devices" to find, pursue, or retrieve game species.

Since subsistence hunting and fishing will be permitted, the use of the snow machine by subsistence users will be allowed. The snow machine has replaced the use of the dog sled during subsistence activities.

The Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission has recommended that if any conflict occurs with sports, commercial, and subsistence use of resources "preference should be given to the taking for subsistence needs."