

Congress and federal lands . . .

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would gain Congressional approval almost as is, Young concluded, "I'm going to do my best to convince the state that multiple use is the way to go. Alaskans have got to wake up, we've got a bear by the tail."

Alaska Governor Jay Hammond, a Republican who has long been identified with conservationists, appointed a task force to draft a state position on d-2 lands. The plan was unveiled late in October, 1975 and calls for 40 million acres to be set aside in permanent federal reserves and another 62 million acres to be designated as "cooperative management areas" to be managed by a joint federal-state Alaska Land Commission. Boundaries for eight management areas would be drawn generally along the lines of the state's major watersheds.

Under the Hammond plan, land use advisory boards for each management area, along with private landowners and Congress would provide each management area, along with private landowners and Congress would provide input to the commission which would form the basis of the land classification process. An important feature of this plan is that the federal and state side of the commission would have veto power over the other.

Hammond emphasized that private land ownership would not be affected by the plan.

Hammond, whose razor-thin margin of victory over his opponent in the last election is hardly indicative of a mandate for his way of thinking, has mounted an intensive program of public education to

familiarize Alaska's 386,000 residents with the plan, and is scheduling hearings to gather their views.

In a carefully worded message to the people of Alaska, Hammond said the charge of the Alaska Land Commission "would be to enhance all uses at the expense of no single use." Urging flexibility and maximum cooperation between the state and federal government, not always an easy task, Hammond summed up the purpose of the plan by saying, "What it all comes down to is that Alaskans finally would have a proper voice in the management of federal lands within Alaska." He emphasized that the state would not take its plan to Congress until hearings had been held and analyzed.

A staff writer for the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, Fred Pratt, in a recent analysis of Hammond's proposal said, "State officials believe Young's tactic has been to ask for the smallest possible withdrawals in an effort to counter higher Interior and conservationist proposals in congressional bargaining sessions. The state is taking another tack in seeking less national dedication than Young but kicking in some state land to build a cooperative management system and get more say for the balance of the federal land."

In a plan put forth about the same time as Hammond's, the Land Use Planning Commission suggested adding 39 million acres to existing systems and setting aside 46 million acres as the Alaska National Land Reserve in several separate units. The reserve would be managed

by existing agencies, but classified by a federal-state body.

Burton Silcock, federal co-chairman of the Planning Commission, pointed out that the commission is not directly involved in drafting d-2 legislation:

"The Commission's position has been that they should not at this time sponsor legislation, but should be a body evaluating all legislation submitted concerning d-2 lands and make a final recommendation to Congress as the legislation moves through the legislative process."

Silcock also pointed out that the recent Commission proposal does not supercede the original Commission recommendations to Secretary Morton. He said the tentative plan simply broadens the Commission's approach to land management in Alaska.

It has been suggested that a "logical alternative" to multi-agency land management in Alaska would be to do away with present agencies, in Alaska, and replace them with an Alaska land authority which would have jurisdiction over all federal, non-military lands in the state and have power to classify lands in the future. This idea has been put forth by Dave Hickok, director of the Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center. Hickok said there has been discussion of this idea among the staff of the Senate Interior Committee and that Senator Jackson is "highly interested in a new approach to federal land management in Alaska."

Alaska's rapidly emerging power block, nearly 80,000 Eskimos, Indians and Aleuts, has

not been mute on the issue of d-2 lands.

The Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, representing the Eskimos of the oil rich North Slope, and one of 12 regional Native corporations formed to manage the land and money derived from the land claims settlement, introduced a bill, via Senator Jackson, to establish a Nunamut National Park in the Central Brooks Range.

The Arctic Slope bill would provide for two wilderness areas to be managed in accordance with national wilderness policy, and a vast Wildlands area where fishing, but not sport hunting, would be allowed. The unique feature of the bill is that lands selected by the Arctic Slope Region and the village corporation of Anaktuvik Pass under the land claims act would actually be part of the park, for the purposes of boundary designation, classification of areas and management of park policy.

Subsistence hunting would be allowed in the Wildlands. Otherwise, the generally restrictive policies of the National Park System regarding land use and development would be followed.

Alaska's only Native conservation organization, Nunam Kitlutsisti (Yupik Eskimo for "Protectors of the Land") has worked out a d-2 proposal in cooperation with the Calista Regional Corporation, based in Bethel. The plan would set up a wildlife refuge covering the entire region, which essentially comprises the lower reaches of the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers. Their proposal would provide strong protection for subsistence resources and specifically ban transportation corridors.

In a telephone interview from his office in Kotzebue, John Schaeffer, president of the NANA Regional Corporation, reported that his corporation has been developing a d-2 proposal but declined to elaborate. "It's just a little early," he said, "Our policy has always been not to make any decisions or cross any bridges until we have to." Schaeffer, who is also a member of the Land Use Planning Commission, did say that NANA favored some of the general management concepts advanced by the commission.

Underlying the proliferation of ideas and suggestions lie a vast variety of factors which will have enormous influence on the consideration of these issues. First among these factors is just how Congress will approach the issue. Will they approach d-2 lands as a whole? Region by region? Will the different bills be considered one by one?

According to Hickok, a veteran Congress-watcher, "There is no indication at this point how the Congress is going to approach the d-2 issue. There is a great difference of opinion on whether to handle the legislation as a whole or piecemeal." He explained he is dubious whether the "whole approach" would work. "Pragmatically a piece of the whole, a major one, would probably work."

Alaska Senator Ted Stevens told this writer he favors a region by region approach, but said for the time being at least, indications are that Congress favors a whole approach.

Another factor that has people guessing is where the new Interior Secretary, Thomas Kleppe, stands on the d-2 issue. Senator Stevens and Representative Young reported in November, 1975 that the Interior Department is

considering alternative proposals for public interest lands. Remarks made by Kleppe on his first visit to Alaska in December led some people to think that there may be changes in the original Morton proposal that would decrease the acreage committed to reserves or in some other way favor greater resource development.

The deadline for consideration of the d-2 issue is December 18, 1978. Assistant to Don Young, Jack Ferguson, pointed out that time is a very significant factor. "As long as you give them time there will be consideration." At the same time, Ferguson said it would be better to wait until after the 1976 elections to consider the issue, a fairly universal opinion.

Senator Stevens has suggested that d-2 legislation may be a factor in those elections, particularly since two of the major protagonists in the drama are avowed presidential candidates. "The possibility of preserving such large areas is of major interest to the environmentalists and they may attempt to make an issue of the d-2 lands," Stevens said. "At the same time, however, environmentalists may seek to have the matter resolved before the 1976 elections for strategic reasons."

Tightly tied to the inexorable march of time toward the 1978 deadline is the close relationship of the d-2 proposals to other resource issues.

The terrific pressure to develop new energy sources may create a situation where the d-2 legislation will be considered along with broader resource policy questions. Hickok is certain that conservation or energy-related measures will be part of the d-2 package. Stevens acknowledges that other issues will affect the disposition of federal lands in Alaska, but said "it is unlikely to be tied specifically to any other measure."

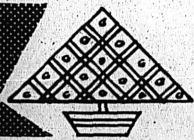
Ironically, according to John Melcher, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Public Lands, consideration of the d-2 issue has been slowed because Congress has been preoccupied with bills on federal coal leasing, strip mining, wilderness proposals, and the Public Land Policy and Management Act.

Another factor, apparently not yet considered in the early stages of the game, is whether some of the proposals, specifically those which would establish new types of management systems or new administrative units, meet the legal, legislative requirements of the land claims act. While the act does not preclude the establishment of new systems, proponents of other plans could argue that since no specific allowance is made for the new systems, such action would be beyond the scope of Congressional authority.

A lot can happen in the next three years. The forces of politics and economics, the forces of history and the expectations of the future, the voices of the great and small, collide, mold, separate, fade and swell again as time squeezes and pushes and pulls, never stopping. The hands that want to shape Alaska's land are already reaching, grasping; they have already begun to leave their mark, even the gentle hands, who by virtue of their number and diversity of interest, have insured that Alaska never will be the same again.

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