



Redoubt Lake Village Sealaska Corporation Selection

Key Message

As provided by Section 14(h)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), Sealaska Corporation (Sealaska) selected certain lands near Redoubt Lake located approximately twelve miles south of Sitka, Alaska, within the Tongass National Forest. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is currently in the process of adjudicating Sealaska's 14(h)(1) selection. Significant sport and subsistence use occurs at Redoubt Lake for sockeye salmon and the potential conveyance of the lands to Sealaska is controversial with some residents of Sitka. The Forest Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association, the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, and other partners have joined in a cooperative effort to enhance and monitor the sockeye salmon fishery at Redoubt Lake.

Background

Sealaska is the Southeast Alaska regional corporation established pursuant to the ANCSA, which was enacted by Congress in 1971 to finalize Alaska Native land claims. Section 14(h)(1) of ANCSA provides that regional corporations may select existing cemetery sites and historical places, which must meet the criteria established by the BLM regulations at 43 C.F.R. § 2653.5. Based on site investigations performed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the BLM adjudicates the 14(h)(1) selections to determine the eligibility of properties as cemetery sites or historical places. If the BLM determines that the criteria are met, the land may be conveyed to the regional corporation subject to restrictive covenants that prevent the corporation from using the land in a manner that derogates its value as a cemetery site or historical place.

Current Situation

Sealaska selected the Redoubt Lake Village site as a Section 14(h)(1) site in 1975. Following a site investigation, the BIA issued a report in 1981 finding the site met the criteria for a historical place as established by the BLM regulations. The Forest Service reviewed the BIA report and title records and advised the BLM that it did not agree that the site met the criteria established by the BLM regulations because the archaeological evidence suggested the site was a significant Russian-American historical site rather than an Alaska Native historic site. **The Forest Service is currently reviewing the case file, including its earlier advice about the criteria, and to develop recommendations to the BLM for any needed public or administrative access if the site is conveyed.** The BLM is currently adjudicating the 14(h)(1) selection and has requested a survey of the site be completed before it issues a decision regarding the conveyance of the site. **The Sitka Conservation Society is encouraging the Forest Service to pursue a fisheries exception to ensure access to its fish weir (which has been in place since the 1980's) and public access to the fishery. The Sitka Tribe has recently sent a letter in support of the conveyance.**

More Information

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