



Chichagof Conservation Council

Box 621

Tenakee Springs Alaska 99841

April 2010

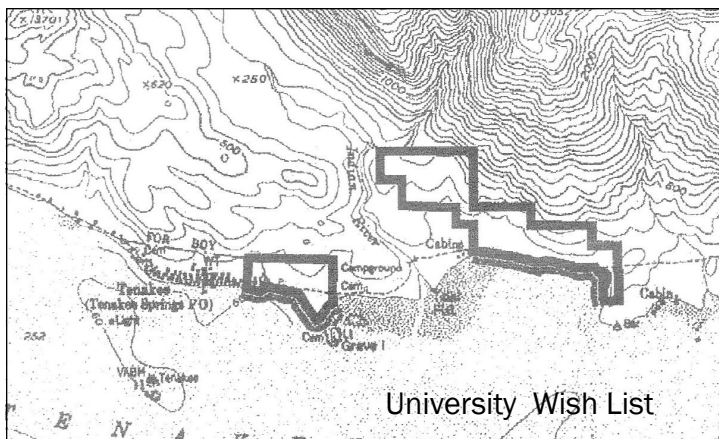
University Land Bill

The University of Alaska is again seeking ownership of state land for revenue production. The 2005 bill ruled unconstitutional was revised and reintroduced at Governor Parnell's request, with the same land selections including three parcels within the city limits of Tenakee Springs. The largest parcel (261 acres) extends from the ranch to near Sunny Point and upland to the city boundary. Two smaller parcels (17 acres each) are located within a larger parcel inland from the harbor.

The Tenakee Springs City Council voiced strong opposition to the proposal with a City Resolution, letters from Mayor Pegues and hearing testimony by Council members Art Bloom, Larry Hura, Joan McBeen and Steve Lewis. Legal research questioned whether the harbor parcels were eligible for transfer in the first place, and the House Committee on Community and Regional affairs (Co-chair Cathy Munoz) passed an amendment removing only the harbor acreage.

When the House Resources Committee scheduled the next hearing, an avalanche of public comment brought Tenakee's concerns to the attention of Co-Chair Mark Neuman, who contacted Molly Kemp at midnight the night before the hearing seeking more information. The next day Representative Neuman introduced an amendment removing ALL Tenakee parcels from the bill. After some tense moments in the hearing, the amendment passed and in Representative Neuman's words there was "a great sigh of relief in Tenakee".

It's not over yet. Anything can happen in the last days of the legislature, but this was a big step in the right direction.



Sealaska Solution By Steve Lewis

Senator Murkowski's Sealaska Lands Bill, S.881, presents a problem to residents of SE Alaska. Few would suggest that Sealaska should not receive the lands due it under the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), but there are many who feel that the current bill will cause serious damage to karstlands and the underlying caves, create permanent rifts among Southeast Alaskans, and provide Sealaska with more than it was due under ANCSA.

Sealaska Corporation was entitled to roughly 354,389 acres within limited "boxes" under ANCSA. They have already received 290,767 acres, or more than 82% of their entitlement. BLM estimates the balance due at between 68,000 and 79,000 acres. ANCSA entitles them to this acreage, and they should have it.

Here's the problem. Sealaska now wants to select 80,000 acres throughout all of SE Alaska. S.881 includes hundreds of miles of taxpayer-funded roads, high-volume old-growth karstlands and many "enterprise sites" that are low-acreage, but high-value properties. It's a bit like they ate all the filling from a pie and want to trade the stale crust for more filling.

Much of northern Prince of Wales and Kosciusko islands, and Tuxekan Island would be privatized under S.881. 53% of S.881 lands are on karst, lands which require special management to protect the caves below as well as the forest above. Thin soils, and erosion that works just as if soil were on a colander, require special management. In many cases, good stewardship requires not harvesting.

The US Forest Service has developed guidelines that help protect karstlands from poor management practices. Karst guidelines are not included in state forestry practices regulations, and would not be enforced on private land. Over 50% of forested karstlands in the Tongass have already been logged. Severe damage is evident on lands harvested before implementation of guidelines to protect karst. Forest regeneration is frequently poor on lands like those S.881 would convey to Sealaska. Siltation is evident within the underground streams that pass through caves and reemerge as local water sources and salmon habitat.

These endangered karstlands are also breadbaskets for the communities of Edna Bay, Naukati, Port Protection, and Point Baker. While Sealaska claims that folks would be allowed to hunt on their lands, in reality these lands would be private and subject to state hunting regulations, (continued page 2)

Legislative Contact Information

The internet "links" provide direct access to legislative public opinion sites

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(*Sealaska continued*) not Federal subsistence regulations. Sealaska would have no ability to allow subsistence harvest. Furthermore, past and current logging practices suggest that there will be virtually no deer until massive clearcuts have had many, many years to regenerate into something other than dense second-growth. This may never occur, since Sealaska's stated goal is to resume logging as soon as second-growth is commercially viable.

Sealaska also wants to select small parcels of land throughout Southeast Alaska as "Enterprise Sites". It is unclear exactly what Sealaska plans, but many would likely be bases for tourist development. In Tenakee Inlet, Crab Bay and the portage between Tenakee Inlet and Port Frederick are listed as enterprise sites in S.881. Such development will be controversial. Crab Bay and the portage are in areas used by Tenakee for hunting access, and recreation, just as many more of these "Enterprise Sites" are in areas heavily used by local communities for subsistence, or by local guides in their business activities. These businesses don't (and shouldn't) have the ability to privatize their favorite spots in the Tongass. Why should Sealaska Corporation?

S.881 is overly generous to Sealaska Corporation. The ANCSA acreage they have already selected was highly productive forestland, now mostly clearcuts. The remaining timber within the original entitlement are more average, but that is to be expected after the best was already chosen and developed.

This is not a problem without a solution. Here is what I suggest.

If Sealaska is to be allowed out of the "box", Congress must ensure that they are getting equivalent value to that provided under the ANCSA legislation. Acres in S.881 are much more valuable than those left within it. This is acceptable only if the number of acres outside the "box" is reduced commensurate with their higher value. Valuation should incorporate timber, roads, as well as less tangible aspects like the biological productivity of the forest and fisheries that would be affected.

S.881 economic development lands contain almost ten times the large-tree forest, and more than thirty times the karsted forest on the land-base proposed for selection now, as that found in the ANCSA "box". I would guess legislation would be more than fair to Sealaska if acreages were reduced by more than 50%, but an unbiased appraisal is needed to assure any legislation is fair to Sealaska and the American public.

Smaller acreages would allow karstlands to be better protected in the final legislation. Even better, Sealaska could choose from areas that are less sensitive, but with valuable timber. High vulnerability areas, known caves, and Geological Special Areas should be removed from the selection pool. Sealaska Corporation would need to think about the cash value of each Enterprise Site because their value would be so

Stream Temperature Monitoring Project

CCC's second year of stream temperature data was recorded and collected last summer. Our conjecture that the intact north facing watersheds of upper Tenakee Inlet maintain cooler temperatures was borne out by the presence of snow on river banks in Long Bay on June 24th, and very cold streams. The water of Sitkoh River (south facing and heavily cut) was much warmer. After last summer's hot spell (which caused salmon die-offs in several locations) it will be very interesting to download last year's data.

Wendy Stern and Craig Mapes provided transportation for the Olmsted/Kemp stream team.

large relative to their acreage.

Reevaluation will take time—in the interim, Sealaska could select more land from within the ANCSA “box”. Such selections don’t require special legislation and could be accomplished rapidly.

Sealaska should receive the value due to it under ANCSA. The current legislation fails to do this. Instead, it privatizes large areas of high value karst forest, places important to local communities, and computes value based only on acres, not real worth of the land. It will privatize and damage caves and old-growth forest on northern Prince of Wales and Kosciusko islands, and threatens Tenakee directly with privatization and potential corporate development of Crab Bay and the Portage further up the Inlet.

I urge CCC members to write or call Senators Murkowski and Begich and let them know how you feel about S.881, the Sealaska Lands Bill. They need to do a better job with this legislation.

Tenakee-Hoonah road connection update

Despite repeated requests, the promised report on the Alaska Department of Transportation’s proposal to connect the Indian River and Game Creek logging roads has not appeared. An inquiry by Senator Mark Begich yielded this statement in late October:

“It is my understanding that the state’s transportation project planning will focus on priority projects, given fiscal realities at both the federal and state government levels. I have been advised that the proposed Tenakee Hoonah Road project is not considered by the Alaska Department of Transportation (DOT) to be a priority project, and absent compelling reasons from both communities to continue with its planning, DOT is working to close down the project.”

CCC will continue to pester DOT for a written decision.

SEACC board of directors election

The Southeast Alaska Conservation Council board of directors recently elected Joan McBeen as president of the board. This appointment is simultaneously a great honor and a tremendous amount of work .

Congratulations Joanie!

NOTICE —Annual Membership Renewal

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Please take a few moments to send in your 2010 membership application/ renewal. Your support and contributions are vitally important.

The Chichagof Conservation Council is a registered 501-C non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of natural resources with emphasis on the Tongass National Forest.

President: John Wisenbaugh
Vice-president: Joan McBeen
Secretary-treasurer-newsletters: Molly Kemp
Board members: Steve Lewis, Sam McBeen.

New Native Corporation Legislation

Legislation co-sponsored by Senators Begich and Murkowski would create five new Native corporations identified as Haines, Ketchikan, Petersburg, Tenakee and Wrangell. Each new corporation would receive one township of federal land (23,040 acres) in the vicinity of its base, plus \$650,000 and other “appropriate compensation”. (For comparison - visualize the city limits of Tenakee, which encompass about 7800 acres including USFS uplands, and stretch from Cannery Point to the west boundary past Swopes.)



**2010 membership issue
Join or renew now!**

Chichagof Conservation Council
Box 621
Tenakee Springs AK 99841

**Chichagof Conservation Council
2010 membership application/renewal**

Name_____

Address_____

City_____State_____Zip_____

Phone_____ E-mail_____

Membership dues \$5 individual, \$10 household. Additional contributions are welcome!

CCC is a registered 501c non-profit organization and all contributions are fully deductible.

Would you like to receive membership information from SEACC? (Southeast Alaska's regional conservation coalition) yes____ no____

Would you like to be on CCC's e-mail list for *infrequent* announcements and alerts?
yes ____ no____