After a lengthy history of debate and litigation about whether Alaska Native people had aboriginal claims to ancestral lands and resources, the U.S. Congress answered in a very distinctive way. On December 18, 1971, Alaska Native aboriginal claims were ‘settled’ and extinguished by an Act of Congress and signed by President Nixon through the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), the largest land claims settlement in U.S. history.

**What ANCSA Did for Alaska Native People**

Within each region there is a complex landscape of governance, land ownership, roles, and relationships. But most of all it meant that Alaska Natives could settle on traditional homelands. Within each region there is a complex landscape of governance, land ownership, roles, and relationships. But most of all it meant that Alaska Natives could settle on traditional homelands. Within each region there is a complex landscape of governance, land ownership, roles, and relationships. But most of all it meant that Alaska Natives could settle on traditional homelands.

**Fulfilling Land Entitlement**

The BLM’s monumental mandate: Coordinate the transfer of 45.7 million acres of federal land, roughly the size of Washington state, to over 200 corporate entities for private ownership.

**Process at a Glance**

1. **Selection**
   - After Alaska Native Regional Corporations enrolled eligible shareholders it was time to select lands. Alaska Native regional corporations selected lands where any part of the village was located, and Alaska Native regional corporations selected any lands from within their ANCSA regional boundaries. All applications were sent to the BLM to process.

2. **Adjudication**
   - Some selections were straightforward, and the application had all the required documents. While others proved to be more complex especially when there were competing selections and interests, easements and roads to work out, navigable water issues, and any other special legislations to consider.

3. **Approval**
   - Everything checks out or was resolved and the decision to transfer title is made. Notice of the decision is published in the Federal Register and in the newspaper.

4. **Conveyance**
   - All the legal complexities are worked out and all rights, title, and interests to the land is formally transferred from the federal government to the village or regional corporation through an Original Patent. The BLM can also issue an Interim Conveyance (IC) for unsurveyed or inadequately surveyed lands and later issue a Confirmatory Patent once survey is completed.

**2021 Progress**

44 Million Acres+ Conveyed

- 3,000+ Patents issued
- 99% Village Corporation lands have been surveyed
- 61,000 Survey monuments

- 2,000+ Interim Conveyances
- 98% Regional Corporation lands have been surveyed
- 140,000 Survey miles

**References:**

https://ancsaregional.com/

https://www.blm.gov

Learn more at https://www.blm.gov/alaska/land-transfer