Who Owns/Manages Alaska?

Russian traders arrived in Alaska in the mid-1800s and established small, scattered trading posts and settlements. Alaska Natives (the Eskimo, Indian, and Aleut peoples) continued as the primary landowners during this period of Russian occupation. On October 18, 1907, Russia sold Alaska to the United States government. As a result, the federal government owned the Alaska Territory, approximately 373 million acres—a little over one-fifth the size of the rest of the U.S.

State of Alaska - 89.8 million acres

Private Ownership - 12.1%
46.2 million acres
U.S. Government - 63.8%
237.8 million acres
State of Alaska - 24.1%
89.8 million acres

Under the terms of the Alaska Statehood Act of 1959, the federal government granted the new state 25% ownership of the total acreage. Approximately 103,500,000 acres were to be set aside under three types of grants:

1) Community - 400,000 acres
2) National Forest Community - 400,000 acres
3) General - 102,500,000 acres

Additional territorial grants for schools, university, and mental health trust lands, totaling 1.2 million acres were included with statehood. All grants combined gave the State of Alaska approximately 105 million acres. To date, 56.9 million acres has been granted with the balance expected to be granted by 2008.

ANCIA Native Corporation (Private)
39.3 million acres

On December 18, 1971, C.R. 20-203, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was signed into law. The purpose of ANCIA was to provide the lands to which Alaska Natives have a legal claim. This includes approximately 44 million acres of land and 350,000 miles of water, both on and off the coast. The settlement is worth approximately $960 million, more than 100 years since the United States purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867.

Native lands are private lands, ANCSA mandates the creation of regional and village Native corporations to manage 44 million acres and payment of one billion dollars. Thirteen regional corporations were created for the distribution of ANCIA land and money. Twelve of those shares in selection of 15 million acres, the Shelikof corporation, based in Seattle, received a subsistence settlement of 224 village corporations, of 30 or more residents, shared 26 million acres. The remaining acres, which include historical sites and existing Native owned lands, went into a land pool to provide land to small villages of less than 25 people.

To date, 30.3 million acres have been transferred to ANCSA corporations.

Non-ANCIA Private & Local Government - 5.9 million acres

In private ownership (other than Native lands) comprises less than one percent of the total land in Alaska. Much of the local land for development around Alaska’s communities is, or will be, privately owned. Private land development meets people’s needs by providing places to live, work, shop and recreate. It also provides a tax base for cities and communities to help support public services.

Bureau of Land Management - 82.5 million acres

Alaska is one-fifth the size of the contiguous 48 states.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - 78.8 million acres

The USFWS manages wildlife refuges in Alaska. The two largest are the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge and much-storied Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), both of which are approximately 16 million acres.

National Park Service - 62.4 million acres

There are eight national parks in Alaska, including the five largest in the national park system:

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve - 13,175,901 acres
Gates of the Arctic National Park & Preserve - 8,473,536 acres
Denali National Park & Preserve - 6,075,000 acres
Kluane National Park & Preserve - 4,933,376 acres
Lake Clark National Park & Preserve - 4,350,029 acres

U.S. Forest Service - 22.3 million acres

The USDA manages two National Forests in Alaska. The Tongass NF, 16.8 million acres, and the Chugach NF, 5.5 million acres are the two largest national forests in the U.S. The USDA manages these lands for a wide range of goods and services while conserving and protecting them.

Department of Defense - 1.7 million acres

Dept. of Defense lands in Alaska provide for a unique training environment, most notably at the Northern Warfare Training Center in the Tanana Valley in the Interior.

Highway
Alaska Marine Highway System (state ferry) Route

Town, population more than 2500

Town, population less than 2500

Maps produced by the Alaska Dept of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry