



## The ANCSA Top 10 List

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### THE TOP 10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE ALASKA NATIVE CLAIMS SETTLEMENT ACT (ANCSA)

1. **The Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) was an act to settle long standing Alaska Native land claims.** In each of the major federal laws beginning with the Treaty of Cession through the Alaska Statehood Act, existing Native land claims and rights were recognized in writing and specifically reserved for Congress to eventually resolve. ANCSA resolved those Alaska Native land claims.
2. **It took a perfect “land storm” to make ANCSA possible in 1971.** After the Alaska Statehood Act was signed in 1959, the state began to select 105 million acres of land. Native land claims were also beginning to be filed with the U.S. Department of Interior as their homelands were encroached upon by outsiders. By the late 1960s Humble Oil, while searching on newly selected Alaska state land, discovered the Prudhoe Bay oil field. Amid this storm, Secretary of Interior Stewart Udall placed a “land freeze” on land selections until Alaska Native land claims could be resolved.
3. **ANCSA increased private land ownership in Alaska.** Just over 12% of Alaska’s 365 million acres are privately owned by Alaska Native Corporations (ANCs). Through the Act, ANCs received title to over 44 million acres of Alaska.
4. **ANCSA did not transfer federal responsibility for the social and health needs of Alaska Native people,** it was a settlement of legitimate land claims only. That said all ANCSA regional corporations and some village corporations have robust non-profit organizations providing services to their region. ANCs contribute millions annually to their non-profit operations including health and social service delivery organizations. The life expectancy of an Alaska Native has improved 32% since the passage of ANCSA from 53 years in 1971 to 70 in 2015.
5. **ANCSA was both a cash and land settlement.** In addition to title to land, ANCSA corporations received \$962.5 million to be paid over the course of 11 years. These funds were compensation for land that could not be selected by ANCs because it had already been transferred from federal ownership, sold or was designated for other land uses like military installations.





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- ANCSA created 13 regional corporations and 200+ village corporations.** Twelve of the regional corporations are located in Alaska, the 13<sup>th</sup> was created later to address claims of Alaska Native people who were not living in Alaska at the time of ANCSA passage. The 13<sup>th</sup> Regional Corporation did not receive any land distribution but did receive a cash distribution from the ANCSA proceeds. Unfortunately the 13<sup>th</sup> regional corporation is currently in bankruptcy proceedings. Several of the 200 village corporations have either merged with their regional corporation or other village corporations.
- Not all Alaska Natives are ANC shareholders.** Originally, those individuals who were at least one quarter Alaska Native, as determined by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and who were alive on December 18, 1971 received 100 shares to either the regional corporation in the region they were from, or to the regional corporation where they were living. These same individuals were also eligible to receive 100 shares in a village corporation within that region or they could choose to be "at large." Today, many Alaska Native corporations have added new shareholders by opening enrollment offering new classes of stock to new generations of shareholders. Currently there are about 138,000 regional corporation shareholders.
- ANCSA Corporations offer very real benefits to Alaska Native people.** In their 2017 report it was estimated that "on average over the last five years, ANCSA Regional Corporations paid out 110.9% of net income to shareholders and descendants in the form of direct dividends, scholarships and contributions to Native non-profit corporations, which deliver the bulk of social services in their regions," an unheard of amount by Western corporate standards (ARA). A U.S. Government Accountability Office report found that the companies provide shareholders and descendants employment opportunities, dividends, scholarships, cultural preservation, land management, economic development and advocacy for Alaska Native people and communities.
- Stock cannot be traded or sold.** Ownership in an ANCSA corporation cannot be bought or sold. When ANCSA was passed in 1971 shares were intentionally restricted to Alaska Native people. ANCSA, as drafted in 1971, removed those restrictions in 1991; however, prior to that '91 deadline, ANCSA stockholders voted to continue the prohibition on trading ANCSA corporation shares. Restrictions continue to this day.
- The land is part of who we are.** Most ANCSA shareholders see gaining fee simple title to 44 million acres of Alaska as the most important accomplishment of ANCSA. ANCSA corporations do not carry the value of the land on their company's balance sheets as an asset unless that land is developed.

