

Minto Petitions Secretary of Interior for Moratorium

The village of Minto has officially petitioned the Secretary of Interior to place a moratorium on all land transactions in the Minto area until congress has established title with the people of Minto and made just compensation for lands disposed of.

The petition was filed with Robert Krumm, local BLM director in Fairbanks, by Barry Jackson, attorney for the village. Minto is located about 30 air miles west of Fairbanks in the Minto Flats, or about 100 miles downriver via the Tanana River.

The petition asks the moratorium of land transactions, excepting native allotments, and asks the Secretary of Interior to present the petition

to Congress as Minto's legal representative.

The village petition further requested that the secretary

make available applications for transfer of title from the United States are report on

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progress of the secretary's office in regard to the petition to the Congress.

Jackson, in a letter directed to Robert C. Krumm, BLM manager here, said it was his understanding that the filing of this petition will effectively halt third party entries and prevent existing entries from ripening into title.

The Minto claim occupies mainly the Minto Flats area and portions of the Chatanika Tolavana, and other valleys feeding the flats. The area is easily identified both geographically and ecologically.

The area represents the present day traditional hunting, fishing, and trapping grounds of the Minto people. The area is extremely rich in fur, moose ducks, geese, which provide both income and food for the villagers.

The village of Minto numbers approximately 160 persons and sits on the east bank of the muddy Tanana River about 30 miles downstream from Nenana. The village has a BIA school, two churches, and is connected to the outside by air and river in summer, and air and dog-team during the long winters.

The efforts of the village to secure some title to its lands goes back to the 1930's, but the most recent effort dates back to about 1962 when the State of Alaska sought to file on the lands as state selections. The village objected and blocked the selection.

It is reported the state sought the land due to their high recreational potential and the possibilities of oil in the area.

During recent years many sportsmen have begun hunting the flats area by airplane and many cabins have been built in the area.