

BLM Gets More Money—

To Survey Native Lands

The Bureau of Land Management is requesting \$6,769,000 to accelerate survey work on Native lands in Fiscal Year 1976, an increase of \$1 million over last year's appropriation.

The survey work on lands to be conveyed under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act — necessary before final title can be given — should be complete by 1985, BLM spokesmen told U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens at Senate Appropriations hearings on the BLM FY 1976 budget.

They warned, however, that it could take as long as until 1990.

In the meantime, interim conveyance of the lands to Natives are being issued with all rights accorded by ANCSA, including oil and mineral rights, subject to final survey, they said.

Stevens asked what steps are being taken to give survey contracts to consortiums formed by Native corporations and existing survey organizations.

BLM representative Ed Hastey said they are trying to accomodate such groups in Alaska by setting up a two-level system for contracts so the Natives will not have to undergo unfair competition with large established companies.

"We are aiming for at least two small business minority-type contracts next year that the Native groups will have an opportunity to bid against," Hastey said.

He pointed out that the last contract with competition in Alaska had about 70 applicants. There was very stiff competition for some of the small organizations in Alaska, he said.

BLM director Curt Berkland

said one of the Native consortium groups already has come up to BLM qualifications and could be contracted.

BLM representatives, along with the BIA and Small Business Administration, are trying to set up a meeting with other Native consortium groups in Alaska in May to help them come up to BLM qualifications for such contracts, Hastey said.