

# Kipnuk wants ANCSA land put into trust

by Tundra Times staff

The Kipnuk Traditional Council is renewing efforts to put land formerly owned by the local village corporation into federal trust status.

In a January 2 letter to Ada Deer, assistant secretary of the Interior for Indian affairs, Traditional Chief Luke Amik, Sr. and Traditional Council President asked for help in accomplishing the transfer.

"We would like to request that the BIA put this land into trust, so that we can have jurisdiction as a tribal government over it," they wrote.

In November, 1988, shareholders of

Kugkaktlik, Ltd., the village corporation for Kipnuk created by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, voted to transfer approximately 115,000 acres—its entire ANCSA entitlement—to the traditional council. In their letter, the leaders noted that "all shareholders supported the

federal regulations preclude the government from taking Native land back into trust. A decision by the Interior Solicitor on a NARF petition to reverse that prohibition has been pending for some time.

"We have reason to be optimistic that will be approved," Aschenbrenner said. "We were led to believe (the decision) was imminent."

The letter from the Kipnuk Traditional Council cited the antagonism of the State of Alaska to tribes as part of its rationale

for seeking to place its land in trust.

"Our only wish is to be protected from outside influences on our way of life, which is already taking its toll on our people through television, and their (western) education," the letter stated.

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transfer through proxy votes, and was verified by an independent election official."

According to Lawrence Aschenbrenner, attorney for the Native American Rights Fund in Anchorage, current