



# United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Alaska State Office  
222 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, #13  
Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7599  
<http://www.ak.blm.gov>

January 31, 2006

Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities  
Regional Right of Way Chiefs

RE: Acquisition of ROW from Indian Trust Land

All,

I wanted to introduce my new position as the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs Alaska Region *Bureau Indian Lands Surveyor* (BILS). This is a newly created position defined in the Department of Interior's Fiduciary Trust Model (FTM) to better serve the needs of Indians across the country in regards to real property services for Indian Trust Lands. The BILS position is basically created to provide a BLM Cadastral Surveyor to work in the BIA regional offices to be a liaison and survey subject matter expert to advise BIA on realty transactions in regards to surveys, descriptions and record keeping as well as provide for enhanced coordination of Federal Surveys performed by BLM or our designated private surveyors.

One of the common transactions that come up with Indian trust status lands (in Alaska these are most typically Certificated Native Allotments and Restricted Townsite Lots) are applications for acquisitions of Right of Way from Agencies such as yours. This process is defined statutorily by Federal regulations 25 CFR 169. In order to provide for implementation of these regulations the BIA has national handbooks and regional interpretive and policy directive memorandums. As the BILS for Alaska, I hope to assist BIA with providing consistency and order to this process, and to provide an additional point of contact to parties requesting ROW acquisitions. Initial official requests for Right of Way acquisitions are still required to be directed to the appropriate Regional Realty Office or designated Realty Service Provider in those areas where there is an Indian Self-Determination Act service provider for the Realty Services.

In Alaska the BIA Regional Realty Officer is Mervel Harris, who has the delegated authority for Interior to sign and approve all realty transactions for realty transactions, including ROW grants. I am working closely with Mr. Harris in improving BIA's processes and to take advantage of the knowledge and experience that I bring to the BIA's realty business.

The BIA has just gone through a national project to upgrade the ROW Handbook, and I will be going to Albuquerque in the first week of March for the initial distribution of the new handbooks and training sessions on them. Some time after that it may be appropriate for us to meet with your Agency to review any changes as the outcome of the new Handbooks, and to go over things that remain the same. I believe it is in your interest as an acquirer of ROW with the BIA to have a full understanding of the special requirements and procedures for acquiring ROW across Indian

trust lands to provide an efficient and most timely execution of these transactions. There are many things that apply to these ROW transactions that are different than your normal procedures.

I will be doing a short presentation concerning the BILS position and the new Certified Federal Surveyor (CfedS) program at the upcoming Alaska Surveying and Mapping Conference on Friday, February 17<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am. This presentation will be a general overview of these topics, but you may find it informative.

Due to the important issue of trust asset protection, I am going through a higher level security clearance than I presently have in order to get computer access at my duty station at the BIA Regional Office. Additionally, BIA computer systems are not in a status such that they are allowed external access to the Internet for things such as email. In order to fulfill my role as the BILS, I do have a station in the BLM Anchorage State Office, so that I am able to have access to email and the internet daily for a short time. Consequently, it may take me a little longer than usual to respond to email request, and a FAX sometimes is a better way to get important information to me.

My physical duty station is located at the BIA Anchorage Office in the Frontier Building located at:

Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Suite 1100  
3601 "C" Street  
Anchorage, Alaska

Mail should be routed to me at my BLM address shown on the letterhead above. I look forward to your response, and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

/s/

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cc: Mervel Harris, BIA Regional Realty Officer  
John Sroufe, BLM Deputy State Director for Cadastral Survey