

THE LAND

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OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF OFFICE BEGINS STUDY OF RESOURCES

The Outer Continental Shelf office, a new division of the Bureau of Land Management which opened here last month, will be seeking a great deal of cooperation from government and private agencies in the months to come, says Edward J. Hoffmann, OCS manager.

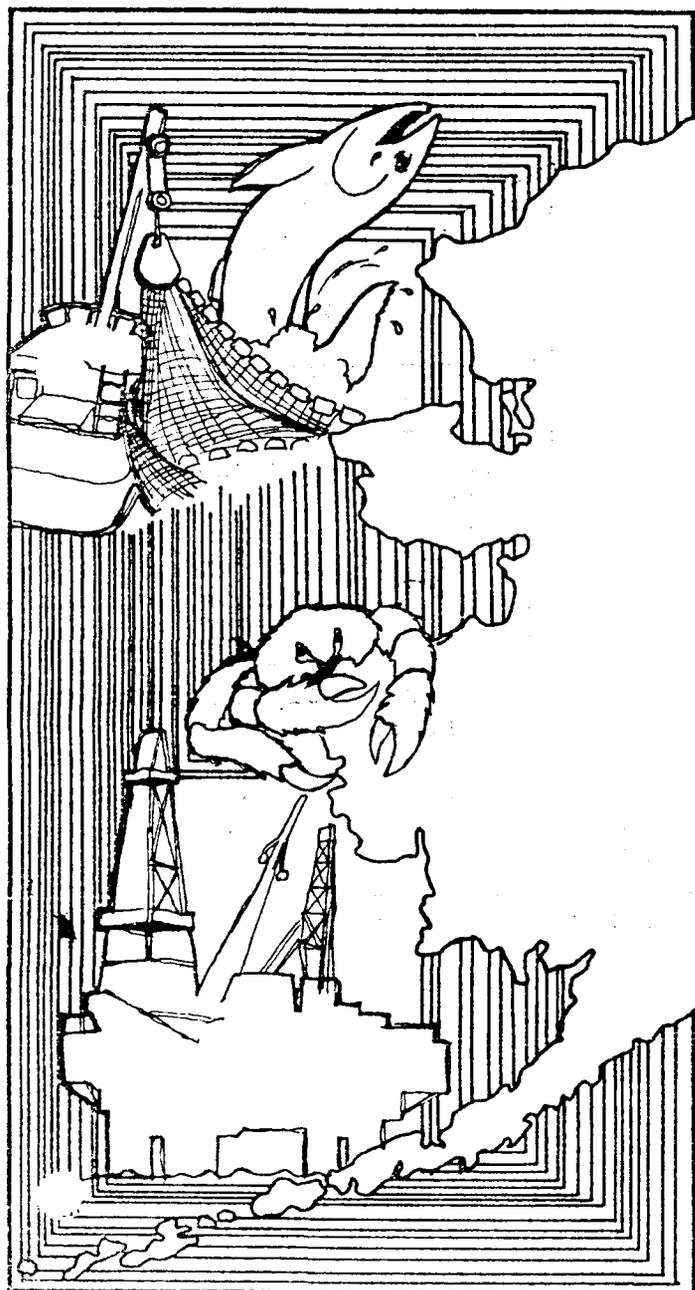
Hoffmann, who arrived in Anchorage Sept. 24 for the Council on Environmental Quality hearings on offshore oil and gas development in the Gulf of Alaska, says his office will be analyzing the potential impact of such development for the BLM associate director of energy and minerals in Washington, D. C. and the Secretary of the Interior.

Under the Outer Continental Shelf Act, Secretary Morton has the authority to lease portions of the shelf for mineral production.

The former Associate State Director of the Arizona BLM office, Hoffmann will be putting together an interdisciplinary team of scientists which will study research data on the continental shelf surrounding Alaska.

Multi-skilled team

That team, composed of an oceanographer, a marine biologist, a wildlife biologist, cartographer, economist, and an outdoor recreation planner, will initially review



EKLUTNA FILES FIRST LAND SELECTION APPLICATION

The people of Eklutna, a Native village northeast of Anchorage, have filed the first application for village selections under the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA).

In their initial application the villagers seek title to three townships, two core village areas and one adjacent township.

"This first selection will set in motion the wheels of the BLM's processing machinery," says Clark Noble, Anchorage land office manager. "It will be the precedent setting case and one that allows us to discover the practical problems involved in processing the hundreds of selections to come."

Expect Problems

Practically speaking there will be problems, says Neil Bassett, land claims director, and those problems are going to delay conveyance until they are resolved.

"In developing this program of conveyance we have become aware of a number of significant problems," Bassett says. "Some of these will require coordinated decisions at the Departmental and Bureau levels. Others will require time consuming checking and correspondence here in Alaska."

"Among the things we must 'wrestle' with are navigability, Section 17(b) easements, third party interests created by the State prior to ANCSA, and the handling of less-than-fee interests such as rights of way and leases."

Legal Query Posed

The question of the State's prior claim to lands has been submitted to the Regional Solicitor and awaits a decision by him.

To facilitate selection, the BLM recently sent letters to each of the 12 regional corporations describing how selections should be made

The letter pointed out that the quickest way to "begin the process, to obtain the maps and regional approval of village incorporation, and to set the stage for additional applications is for each eligible village to submit its core township applications on Form 2630-2."

Villages and corporations were reminded that accurate descriptions of land being selected are of the utmost importance in order that the land office personnel understand exactly which parcel of land the village is claiming. Each application should describe land according to the legal description as shown on the public land records. Lands which are not available for selection for any reason (patented land, valid existing rights, withdrawals) are to be identified by case type and serial number

Staff To Increase

Both the Anchorage and Fairbanks land offices are gearing up to meet the demands of selection by hiring additional personnel and by institution of a computer system of cataloguing selections.

In addition, a librarian, Jack Gibson, has arrived to take over the Alaska Resources Library, the source of many land-use planning tools. Use of the library has steadily increased as people become aware of the materials there.

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