Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall today announced that his Department's Bureau of Indian Affairs, at the request of the Hoopa Valley Indians of California, has approved a $600 per capita distribution to tribal members from the Tribe's emergency reserve fund. Many Hoopa Valley families suffered severe economic setbacks, including loss of homes, in the series of floods which swept the region early this year.

The per capita distribution is in addition to funds provided for reconstruction of homes, rehabilitation of roads and irrigation works, and restoration of other facilities in flood-stricken Indian areas of northern California and the Pacific Northwest.

A total of $2,910,000 in supplemental funds has been appropriated to Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs and is being channeled into flood damage reconstruction and road repairs in the following Indian areas: Hoopa Valley Reservation and other nearby Indian communities in California; the Warm Springs, Umatilla and Yakima Reservations of Oregon; the Nez Perce and Fort Hall Reservations of Idaho; and the Pyramid Lake and Washoe Ranches areas of Nevada.

A substantial part of the emergency appropriations will be used for home construction. Indians whose homes were damaged or lost in the floods will be required to contribute toward rehabilitation or replacement of their homes to the extent of their financial ability.

Since the first helicopter survey was made last New Year's Day, while the waters were still churning through timber stands, home sites, irrigation ditches, and roadways, the Federal Government, through several aid agencies, has been at work in behalf of the stricken Indian communities.

Cooperating with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in administering emergency aid have been the Interior Department's Bureau of Reclamation, and the Public Health Service, the Corps of Engineers, and the Office of Emergency Planning, as well as the Red Cross and local groups, to restore vital facilities and provide shelter and food to stricken families. The long-range reconstruction phase has brought the Federal Housing Administration and the Small Business Administration into the effort.

Interior's Bureau of Reclamation contracted for and supervised emergency work involving the clearing of debris from the river channel, the repair of roads on Indian lands and in the Six Rivers National Forest and the restoration of sewage facilities, all at a cost of about $2.25 million.

The Bureau of Reclamation also is engaged in comprehensive river basin studies of northern California rivers to evolve plans for reservoirs and other works which would protect the Hoopa Valley from floods by putting the waters to work for irrigation, municipal and industrial supply and hydroelectric power production, fish and wildlife enhancement and recreation. These studies are being coordinated with the activities of State and other Federal agencies including the Bureau of Indian Affairs.