Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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The Department of the Interior is publishing in the Federal Register a notice that 120,681.25 acres of lands formerly under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management will be held in trust by the United States for the Navajo Indians, for use in connection with an irrigation project.

The transfer and trusteeship was authorized by Congress in the Act of June 13, 1962, and amended by the Act of September 25, 1970. A condition of the transfer was that the Navajos pay the appraised value of the land and compensate ranchers holding grazing privileges in the area for improvements installed on Federal land. The tribe has now paid the required $1,255,374.33 to the Federal Government for these lands.

The lands are located in northwest New Mexico near Farmington. The transfer is subject to valid existing rights.

A final environmental statement analyzing the irrigation project was approved by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs on October 12, 1976.