Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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The tribal plan for the use and distribution of judgment funds awarded to the Seneca Nation of Indians by the Indian Claims Commission has been published Ii in the Federal Register, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Morris Thompson announced today.

A total of almost $5.5 million was awarded jointly to the Seneca Nation and the Tonawanda Band of Senecas to provide, fair compensation for land sold in the period between 1797 and 1842. Each tribe will receive a proportionate share based on tribal membership. Both are New York tribes.

Before use or distribution of the judgment funds could be made, it was necessary to obtain Congressional approval of a plan for the use or distribution of the funds as required by the Act of October 19, 1973, 87 Stat. 466.

The Seneca plan which became effective on September 26, 1974 calls for a per capita distribution of 80 percent of the funds to tribal members. The remaining 20 percent is to be used for the development of an Old Age Benefit Trust Fund which would begin payments to female tribal members at age 62 and to males at age 65.

The per capita distribution which sometimes involves lengthy determinations of the eligibility of persons seeking to qualify for receipt of per capita payments, will be made as soon as possible.