Cooperative Initiative Builds on Progress to Advance Tribal Self-Determination and Self-Government

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FAIRBANKS, Alaska – U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell today announced a Secretarial Order encouraging cooperative management opportunities between the Department's land and water managers and federally-recognized tribes. The Secretarial Order sets out a framework to ensure that Native communities have the opportunity to assume meaningful and substantive roles in managing public lands that have special geographical, historical and cultural connections to the tribes.

Secretary Jewell announced the Order at the annual Alaska Federation of Natives Conference in Fairbanks, Alaska. In her remarks, Jewell shared that her Order facilitates collaborative partnerships and the integration of tribal ecological knowledge, practices and concerns into the management of federal lands, waters and natural resources where there is a connection to tribal communities.

"This Secretarial Order reflects the Obama Administration's deep commitment to strengthen respect between the United States government and Native American and Alaska Native leaders and communities while boosting our efforts to increase tribal self-determination and self-governance," said Secretary Jewell. "This kind of collaboration with tribal nations will help ensure that we're appropriately and genuinely integrating indigenous expertise, experience and perspectives into the management of public lands."

Interior land and water management agencies covered by the Secretarial Order include the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and Bureau of Reclamation. The Secretarial Order directs these agencies to identify opportunities and undertake efforts to partner with tribes in the management of their land and water resources. These efforts include identifying key personnel to explore such collaborative management arrangements; developing bureau-specific guidance for collaborative partnerships with tribes; and engaging in consultation with tribal governments at bureau, regional, and unit levels to better understand tribal interests in specific collaborative opportunities.

Interior Deputy Secretary Michael L. Connor, who has been a champion for collaborative management opportunities with indigenous communities during his tenure, noted that the Secretarial Order is guided by Interior's federal trust responsibility to federally-recognized tribes and self-governance principles. Connor helped negotiate the successful Kuskokwim River Pilot Project in Alaska which is a cooperative partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission for the management of fish and wildlife resources in the area.

"This Order ensures a continued connection between Native communities and federal lands where we share complementary interests in conserving and managing fish, wildlife and their habitats, and protecting cultural resources," said Deputy Secretary Connor. "Cooperative management and other

collaborative partnerships with tribes help ensure the protection of public lands and resources, guides appropriate development, and assists in better understanding and addressing the effects of climate change."

As outlined, the Secretarial Order guides Interior's land management agencies to identify opportunities, consult with tribes, and implement cooperative management agreements or other collaborative partnerships as appropriate that relate to:

- Management of fish and wildlife resources;
- Identification, protection, preservation and management of cultural sites;
- Management of plant resources, including collection of plant material;
- Delivery of specific programs and services;
- Management and implementation of agency-related maintenance activities; and
- Managing public information related to tribal, cultural and/or educational materials related to an agency.

The Order does not address 'co-management,' which are situations where there is a specific legal basis that requires co-management of natural resources or that makes co-management otherwise necessary. In some instances, such as management of the salmon harvest in the Pacific Northwest, co-management has been established by law.
