Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — On Thursday, Jan. 31., 2013, the Department of the Interior will hold the first of three tribal consultation sessions on its Initial Implementation Plan outlining how Interior will carry out the land consolidation component of the historic Cobell Settlement. The first meeting will take place in Prior Lake, Minn., with the remaining sessions to be held Feb. 6 in Rapid City, S.D., and Feb. 14 in Seattle, Wash.

"The Land Buy-Back Program is a historic opportunity to address the fractionation problem and restore lands to Indian tribes, but it will not succeed without the active support of tribal leaders," said Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Kevin K. Washburn. "The Department is keenly interested in receiving guidance from tribal leaders on the draft Plan."

The Settlement provided a $1.9 billion fund to purchase fractional interests in American Indian trust lands from willing sellers, thereby enabling federally recognized tribal governments to use the consolidated parcels for the benefit of their communities. The Plan reflects comments received from tribal consultation sessions the Department held in the summer and fall of 2011 and on a draft Plan released in January 2012. On Dec. 18, the Department announced the launch of the Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations, which will purchase the fractional interests, as well as a Secretarial Order outlining the program's organizational structure.

For more information about the Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations, the Cobell land consolidation component, the Initial Implementation Plan, and the Department's 2011 and 2013 tribal consultation sessions, visit www.doi.gov/buybackprogram.

WHO	Michele Singer, Deputy Special Trustee, Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians, DOI John McClanahan, Program Manager, Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations, DOI Anthony N. Walters, Counselor to the Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, DOI Darryl LaCounte, Senior Advisor to the Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs, DOI
WHAT	First tribal consultation session on the Department's Initial Implementation Plan for the Cobell Settlement land consolidation component.
WHEN	Thursday, January 31, 2013 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (local time)
WHERE	Mystic Lake Casino and Hotel, 2400 Mystic Lake Blvd., Prior Lake, Minn. 55372; Phone: 952-445-9000.

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