"Settlement is an example of the collaborative approaches announced in Interior's Water 2025 initiative," Secretary Norton says

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(WASHINGTON) - Interior Secretary Gale A. Norton announced today that all of the requirements of the Shivwits Band of the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah Water Rights Settlement Act, Public Law 106-263, have been completed, allowing the settlement to become fully effective. As required by the Settlement Act, the Secretary's statement of findings will be published in the Federal Register.

"Congress approved this important water rights settlement for the Shivwits Band of Paiute Indians and the citizens of Southwestern Utah in 2000, but the Settlement Act still required certain actions by the parties and full appropriations by Congress before the end of this year to validate and enforce the settlement," Secretary Norton said. "I am pleased to report that all of the requirements under the Settlement Act have been met.

"I congratulate the Shivwits Band, the Washington County Water Conservancy District, the city of St. George, and the state of Utah for coming together to resolve these often contentious issues through a creative, negotiated settlement for the benefit of all the parties, rather than relying upon costly litigation, which often takes decades and results in few winners and many losers. I also want to thank the Utah congressional delegation for their continued support of the legislation and the funding required to complete this settlement and also thank the federal settlement team for helping to shepherd the successful resolution of these issues."

According to Glenn Rogers, band chairman, Shivwits Band of the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, "This settlement will help us become self-sufficient and will open the door for economic development so that we can look forward to the future."

The Settlement Act confirms a water right of 4,000 acre-feet per year for the Shivwits Band of Paiute Indians, whose reservation lies in the Virgin River Basin just north of St. George, Utah. Most of the water to satisfy the Band's right will come from two separate projects developed as part of the settlement. One, the St. George Water Reuse Project, will treat and recycle discharges from the St. George Water Reclamation Facility. The other, the Santa Clara Project, will use a pressurized pipeline to replace certain irrigation water deliveries via area canals, thereby conserving water currently lost through seepage and evaporation. These projects will not only benefit the Shivwits Band but will also benefit the city of St. George and other water users in the area.

To become fully effective, the Settlement Act required the Secretary to find that: congress had fully appropriated the $24 million authorized for the settlement; parties had revised, as necessary, the underlying settlement agreements to conform to the settlement legislation; the state engineer of Utah had taken all actions necessary to implement the agreements; and the state's district court had entered

a final decree in the Virgin River adjudication confirming the water rights of the Shivwits Band. Publication of the Federal Register notice will certify the Secretary's findings as required by the Settlement Act.

This settlement also represents an example of the collaborative approaches to address water supply problems in the West sought under Secretary Norton's recently announced Water 2025 Initiative.

"In this water-short area of the country, the Shivwits Band, local water users, the city and the state came together to develop innovative solutions to address their respective water needs while also working to protect the habitats of species of concern in the basin, such as the Virgin River spinedace," Secretary Norton said. "The projects developed as part of the settlement provide water supply flexibility through improved water conservation and efficiencies in the area and by also providing an opportunity for market-based transfers of water as well. These projects, combined with the cost-sharing arrangements for all parties under the settlement, represent the type of collaborative approach which I hope Water 2025 will foster in resolving other water supply challenges in the West."

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