Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Bureau of Indian Affairs, (BIA) Law Enforcement Officers have begun an extensive campaign against the supply and use of narcotics, drugs and marijuana on Indian reservations throughout the United States.

Ross Swimmer, Interior's Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs has given top priority to improving law and order on reservations. He feels it is a fundamental key to economic development for the Indian tribes.

"Many Indian reservations. which in past years were relatively free from drug activity, are now experiencing frequent problems" Swimmer said "Illegal drug activities on the reservation tear at the very fiber of the Indian communities, destroying traditional Indian values and creating lawlessness. I intend to commit resources necessary to help rid the reservations of this illegal activity," he added.

He asked that all tribal leaders support this campaign.

The BIA program, part of the Presidents war against drugs, includes the eradication of marijuana illegally cultivated on Federal and Indian lands. The BIA is cooperating in this operation with various Federal, State, local and tribal law enforcement organizations to locate and destroy marijuana fields, Some of which have been found hidden in deep forest areas and under camouflaged shelters.

One such effort is in Northern California where a specially trained interagency task force headed by the BIA is locating and destroying hundreds of high quality marijuana plants each day.

The BIA's Northern California effort will concentrate on marijuana eradication on reservations and Rancherias in the area. Although the state and county programs have conducted eradication operations in past years in the Hoopa Valley, they have not been able to dedicate sufficient resources specifically to reservations. This year's BIA operation will insure that major efforts are devoted to federal and Indian lands in the area.

The United states Government, through the BIA, has trust responsibilities for approximately 53 million acres of reservation land in more than 20 states, most of it west of the Mississippi River.