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Nominations for members of a special committee to advise the Secretary of the Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs on administration of Indian trust responsibilities are now being accepted, the Bureau of Indian Affairs announced today.

The Advisory Committee on Trust Responsibilities will render advice with respect to water rights, real property rights of every kind and nature, and personal property rights wherein the United States has a trust responsibility to an Indian tribe, band, or community.

The Committee will act as a conduit of information and cooperation from federally-recognized Indian people to the Secretary, and will establish liaison between various Indian groups.

About 51 million acres of land and approximately $450 million are now held in trust by the United States for Indian tribes and individuals. These assets must be protected and prudently developed to enhance their value.

The establishment of the new committee, with its charter and functions, was announced in the Federal Register March 11.

Nominations for the 16-member group are now being accepted by the Secretary. The committee will include at least one person from each of the BIA's 12 administrative Areas and is expected to provide a balanced representation of Indian interests with respect to the performance of the trust responsibility of the Department. The members appointed by the Secretary will select their own chairman and determine the internal organizational structure of the Committee.