Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Lovett 343-7445
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Interior Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Forrest Gerrard, said today that the Department has initiated action to establish order in the administration and government of the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation in Northern California. Gerard said that long-standing disagreements about the unity of the reservation and the persons entitled to the use and benefit of the reservation had created an "unfortunate situation which is detrimental to both the Hoopa and Yurok Indians and has severely impeded the proper management of government of the reservation."

In 1963, these disagreements led certain Yurok individuals to file suit in the U.S. Court of Claims in Jessie Short, et al v. United States. I 1973 that court held in an interlocutory decree that the so-called "square" and the "Extension" constituted a single reservation in which all "Indians of the Reservation" were to be treated equally. The claims of more than 3500 of approximately 3800 individual plaintiffs in that litigation remain to be determined. The Department's action is addressed to the present an future use of the reservation.

Gerard said that his staff had carefully reviewed the entire history of the reservation, including the past practices and policies of the Department, to provide a base for a course of action acceptable to him and to Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus, which "will result in a just resolution of the long-standing conflict and the fair and proper use of the resources of the reservation." In a November 20 message to the Hoopa and Yurok Indians of the reservation, Gerard said that the Secretary has the obligation to remove all doubt about who is entitles to use and benefit from the reservation and, consequently, he was designating the Hoopa Valley Tribe and the Yurok Tribe as such beneficiaries.

He said that the membership of the Hoopa Tribe is known, but membership standards and criteria for the Yurok Tribe would be established and a roll developed. The standards would be similar to those used during the construction of the Hoopa roll.

Other parts of the action plan outlined by Gerard were:

- Until the organization of the Yuroks is completed and the two tribes agree on a reservation-wide management and coordination body, the Department of the Interior, through the Assistant Secretary's office, would assume complete management of the reservation assets on behalf of both tribes. During this interim management there would be a moratorium on all per capita payments beginning February 1, 1979.
- Work would begin immediately on creating a Yurok voters list and the election of an interim Yurok committee which would be given authority and responsibility to draft a proposed Yurok tribal constitution and to carry out other tribal organizational activities.
- After the Yuroks are organized and the membership roll certified, the Secretary will make available for the use of the Yurok Tribe trust funds which have been set aside since 1974
- The Present 70%/30% split of the reservation trust income will continue until February 1, 1979, when a single reservation account will be established. When the reservation-wide body is formally established, it will determine, under the general trust authority of the Secretary, the use of funds flowing into this account until this reservation-wide body is established, only the amount

necessary for tribe will be made available in amounts approved by the Secretary. No per capita payments will be made from this account until the reservation-wide body is established.

Gerard described these actions as "indispensable first steps toward the realization of self-determination on the Hoopa Valley Reservation."
