Approval is first under Interior's Indian Trust Asset Management Demonstration Project

Media Contact: NewsMedia@bia.gov
For Immediate Release: October 20, 2020
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WASHINGTON – Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Tara *Katuk* Sweeney approved the Coquille Indian Tribe's Indian Trust Asset Management Plan (ITAMP) and tribal forestry regulations in a virtual signing ceremony held with Coquille Chief Don Ivy on October 16, 2020. The approval is the Department's first Indian Trust Asset Management Demonstration Project.

On February 22, 2019, Coquille, whose reservation is located on the coast of Oregon, became the first federally recognized tribe to be approved to participate in the demonstration project. On June 9, 2020, it also became the first to submit an ITAMP.

"The Indian Trust Asset Management Demonstration Project, another important way for tribes to exert sovereignty over their trust lands, had been unused until now. Thanks to its willingness to be a trailblazer in utilizing this project, the Coquille Indian Tribe now can take control of its trust forest land and resources, and manage them in a way that meets their needs," **said Assistant Secretary Sweeney**.

"This is a great day for the Coquille Tribe and for tribal self-determination in general," **said Coquille Chairperson Brenda Meade**. "We're grateful for the opportunity to prove that we can meet our members' needs while managing a diverse, sustainable forest. We're going to show people a better way to do things."

The demonstration project was established under the Indian Trust Asset Reform (ITAR) Act of 2016. Title II of the act authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to establish and carry out an Indian Trust Asset Management Demonstration Project. Under the project, tribes engaged in forest land management and/or surface leasing activities on trust lands may apply to participate in it. If selected, a tribe must submit an ITAMP for the management of its trust assets.

A proposed tribal ITAMP must have provisions that:

- Identify the trust assets that will be subject to the proposed plan;
- Establish trust asset management objectives and priorities for Indian trust assets that are located within the reservation, or otherwise subject to the jurisdiction, of the tribe;
- Allocate trust asset management funding available for the Indian trust assets subject to the proposed plan in order to meet the trust asset management objectives and priorities;
- If the tribe has contracted or compacted functions or activities under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450 et seq.) relating to the management of trust assets, identify the functions or activities that are being, or will be, performed by it under contracts, compacts, or other agreements under that Act, which may include any of the surface

leasing or forest land management activities authorized by the proposed plan;
- Establish procedures for nonbinding mediation or resolution of any dispute between the tribe and the United States relating to the proposed plan;
- Include a process for the tribe and the federal agencies affected by the plan to conduct evaluations to ensure that trust assets are being managed in accordance with the proposed plan; and
- Identify any federal regulations that will be superseded by the proposed plan.

The BIA's Division of Forestry and Wildland Fire Management (DFWFM), which, with the Department's Solicitor's Office, reviewed Coquille's plan, also provided technical assistance to the tribe during the ITAMP's development.

With its ITAMP approved, the Coquille Indian Tribe now has the authority to conduct forest land management activities on forest lands held in trust by DOI for it without further approval from the Secretary.

"We are very excited that the Coquille Indian Tribe chose to participate in this demonstration project and allow the BIA and the Interior Department to support their efforts to develop their Indian Trust Asset Management Plan. As with HEARTH leasing regulations and Tribal Energy Resource Agreements, an ITAMP is another tool the Department has that promotes tribal sovereignty and self-determination," **Sweeney said.**

The Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs advises the Secretary of the Interior on Indian Affairs policy issues, communicates policy to and oversees the programs of the BIA and the BIE, provides leadership in consultations with tribes, and serves as the DOI official for intra- and inter-departmental coordination and liaison within the Executive Branch on Indian matters.

The Division of Forestry and Wildland Fire Management (DFWFM) in the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Office of Trust Services (OTS) oversees the National Indian Forestry and Wildland Fire Management Program, which is a cooperative effort of the Interior Department, the OTS Deputy Bureau Director, the Division of Forestry and Wildland Fire Management, the Intertribal Timber Council, and reservation-based tribal governments. The Division is responsible for providing coordination, management, planning, oversight, and monitoring for all activities, including the National Wildland Fire Program, related to the development and protection of trust forest resources.

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