Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
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Washington, D.C.— On Thursday, October 6, 2011, Department of the Interior (DOI) Deputy Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs for Policy and Economic Development Jodi Gillette and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Director Michael Black will attend the sixth regional government-to-government tribal consultation regarding the Trust Land Consolidation component of the Cobell Settlement. Tribal leaders from the BIA Eastern Oklahoma and Southern Plains Regions and Other Regions are scheduled to participate in the consultation session.

BACKGROUND ON COBELL SETTLEMENT:

The $3.4 billion Cobell settlement was approved by Congress on November 30, 2010 (Claims Resolution Act of 2010) and signed by President Obama on December 8, 2010. The Cobell Settlement will address the federal government's responsibility for an historical accounting of individual Indian trust accounts and trust mismanagement claims on behalf of more than 300,000 individual American Indians. A fund of $1.5 billion will be used to compensate class members for their historical accounting, trust administration and asset mismanagement claims.

In addition, to address the continued proliferation of thousands of new trust accounts caused by the "fractionation" of land interests through successive generations, the Settlement establishes a $1.9 billion fund for the voluntary buy-back and consolidation of fractionated land interests. The land consolidation program will provide individual American Indians with an opportunity to obtain cash payments for divided trust land interests and free up the land for the benefit of tribal communities. Up to $60 million of the $1.9 billion will be set aside to provide scholarships for post secondary higher education and vocational training for American Indians and Alaska Natives.

More information and materials can be found at www.doi.gov/cobell.

WHO: Jodi Gillette, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Economic Development, Indian Affairs, DOI Michael Black, Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs, DOI Tribal leaders from the BIA Eastern Oklahoma and Southern Plains Regions and Other Regions

WHAT: Sixth Regional Tribal Consultation on the Cobell Trust Land Consolidation Program.

WHEN: Thursday, October 6, 2011 Registration will begin at 7:00 a.m. (CDT) Consultation will begin at 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 a.m. (CDT)

WHERE: Best Western Saddleback Inn and Conference Center 4300 Southwest Third Oklahoma City, OK 73108

NOTE: All media must present government-issued photo I.D. (such as a driver's license) and valid media credentials.