Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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For Immediate Release: September 27, 2011
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Washington, D.C.— On Thursday, September 29, 2011, the United States Department of the Interior (DOI) Solicitor Hilary Tompkins, Deputy Associate Secretary Meghan Conklin, and Deputy Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs for Policy and Economic Development Jodi Gillette, will attend the fifth regional government-to-government tribal consultation regarding the Trust Land Consolidation component of the Cobell Settlement.

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 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 succeeding 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 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: Hilary Tompkins, Solicitor, DOI Meghan Conklin, Associate Deputy Secretary, DOI Jodi Gillette, Deputy Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs for Policy and Economic Development Tribal Leaders from the Western Region and Other Regions

WHAT: Fifth Regional Tribal Consultation on Cobell Trust Land Consolidation Program

WHEN: Thursday, September 29, 2011 Registration will begin at 7:00AM MST Consultation will begin at 8:30AM – 4:00 PM MST

WHERE: Sheraton Crescent 2620 W. Dunlap Avenue Phoenix, AZ 85021 (505) 563-3805

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