Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Washington, D.C.— On Tuesday, September 27, 2011, the Associate Deputy Secretary Meghan Conklin at the United States Department of the Interior (DOI) and Principal Deputy Special Trustee Ray Joseph will attend the fourth 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: Meghan Conklin, Associate Deputy Secretary, DOI Ray Joseph, Principal Deputy Special Trustee, Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians Tribal Leaders from the Southwest Region and other regions

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

WHEN: Tuesday, September 27, 2011 Registration will begin at 7:00AM MDT Consultation will begin at 8:30AM MDT – 4:00 PM

WHERE: National Indian Programs Training Center 1011 Indian School Road, NW Suite 254 Albuquerque, NM 87104 (505) 563-3805

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