Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON – Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk announced today that the Match-e-be-nash-she-wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians of Michigan's reservation proclamation has been signed. Approximately 147 acres, more or less, will serve as the Tribe's initial reservation under the authority of the Indian Reorganization Act of June 18, 1934 (48 Stat. 986; 25 U.S.C. 467). The land is located in Wayland Township, Allegan County, Michigan.

"I am pleased to issue this proclamation and to exercise the authority delegated to me by the Secretary of the Interior to the Match-e-be-nash-she-wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians," Echo Hawk said. "The land is for the exclusive use of Indians on the reservation who are entitled to reside at the reservation by enrollment or tribal membership. These properties will provide opportunities for economic development, self-determination and self-sufficiency."

A proclamation is a formal declaration issued by the Secretary, proclaiming that certain trust lands, acquired for an Indian tribe, are a new reservation or are being added to an existing reservation. The request for a proclamation must originate from the tribe. The parcel was acquired in trust under the authority of the Indian Reorganization Act.

The Gun Lake Tribe filed their initial land acquisition application with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in August of 2001, requesting the Secretary of the Interior to take this land into trust and to proclaim the land to be the Tribe's reservation. The application was processed in accordance with 25 C.F.R. Part 151 and the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act. On May 13, 2006, the Department of the Interior, BIA, published in the Federal Register, a Notice of Final Agency Determination to take the 147 acres of land into trust for the Gun Lake Tribe under 25 C.F.R. Part 151.

On August 10, 2009, Assistant Secretary Echo Hawk signed the proclamation for the Tribe's initial reservation. With this proclamation the trust lands are now legally a formal reservation. The BIA's Midwest Regional Office shall record the Federal Register's notice and Proclamation in the Land Titles and Records Office, after which the Original Proclamation will be sent to the Tribe for their records.

The Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs has responsibility for helping the Secretary of the Interior to fulfill his trust responsibilities to tribal and individual trust beneficiaries and promoting self-determination and self-governance for the nation's 564 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes. The Assistant Secretary oversees the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), which administers one of two federal school systems.