



Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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BARONA RESERVATION, Calif., Nov. 17 U.S. Newswire -- Interior Secretary Gale Norton today surveyed fire damage suffered by the Barona Band of Mission Indians at the Barona Reservation. Approximately 6,300 acres of tribal land was burned as the Cedar fire spread across the community on Oct. 25, 2003. The fire consumed 39 homes, two schools and reservation's electrical and telephone infrastructure. Secretary Norton said the Bureau of Indian Affairs has provided \$723,000 in emergency assistance for dislocated tribal members in Southern California affected by October fires.

The BIA has approved 564 applications for emergency assistance - of which at least 32 have been approved for Barona tribal, members. The assistance is distributed at \$1,000 per tribal family and is provided to pay for shelter, food and clothing while a family is dislocated. "While no one can replace the memories and heartache that these fires have caused, the Bureau of Indian Affairs has responded by providing emergency assistance to tribal members throughout Southern California," Secretary Norton said. BIA's Southern California Agency has been a lead group in conducting weekly informational meetings with tribal leaders and members affected by the fire all across Indian Country.

The Agency has also arranged individual meetings between FEMA and tribal leaders regarding housing assistance, "The people of the Barona reservation are beginning to recover," Secretary Norton said. New replacement home construction is in the planning stage. On November 10, tribal members were given five floor plans to choose from for their replacement home. The tribe will build the homes and members will buy these homes and pay a mortgage to the tribe. "The electrical service is back at the Barona Reservation and the healing is underway. It will take time and it will take perseverance. I thank the tribal leaders and members, BIA employees and countless others across Southern California Indian Country for working so selflessly and heroically to restore the community's, rebuild the infrastructure and foundations and renew spirits," Secretary Norton concluded.

Thirteen federally recognized tribes were affected by the recent fires in Southern California tribes. The following list is the tribes and a brief description of the losses:

- Barona Band of Mission Indians - All 6,296 acres of reservation land burned. 35-40 homes and a daycare center lost.
- San Pasqual Band of Diegueno Indians - 2 deaths and all 1,380 acres of reservation land burned. All of the approximately 70 homes on the reservation were burned.
- Rincon Band of Mission Indians - Over 20 homes lost and three-quarters of the 4,269 acre reservation were scorched.
- San Manuel Band of Mission Indians - All 700 acres burned with 2 homes destroyed.
- Capitan Grande Band of Diegueno Mission Indians - All 15,753 acres of reservation land burned.
- Viejas Band of Mission Indians - 1,609 acres burned.

- Inaja-Cosmit Reservation - All 852 acres burned.
- Santa Ysabel Band of Mission Indians - 150 of 15,527 acres burned.
- La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians - More than 2,000 acres of the 8,541, acre reservation burned.
- Sycuan Band of Mission Indians - 30 acres burned.
- Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians (formerly the Cuyapaipe Band of Mission Indians) was evacuated and five acres burned.
- The Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians (1,802 total reservation acres) was evacuated, but there was no damage to the reservation.
- La Posta Reservation, San Diego County. The reservation was evacuated, but there was no damage to the reservation.

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