Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt today announced the appointment of Robert T. Anderson as Counselor to the Secretary. Anderson will be based in Seattle and advise the Secretary on a wide variety of policy matters, including Native American, environmental and Northwest issues.

"Bob Anderson is an experienced professional with an enormous grasp of the complexity of our trust responsibilities and Alaska Native and American Indian tribes," Babbitt said. "He has demonstrated his ability as a decisive lawyer and manager, and has a solid reputation as a problem-solver and mediator."

Anderson, 40, joined the Interior Department in April 1995 as Associate Solicitor for Indian Affairs. As Associate Solicitor, he was the lead attorney and supervised a team of attorneys advising the Secretary, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and worked with tribes to assert and protect their legal rights. For the past year, he has advised the Secretary on legal and policy matters involving western water rights, Indian tribes, Endangered Species Act and hydropower issues.

Anderson is a member of the Bois Forte Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. Before joining the Interior Department, he worked as an attorney for 12 years with the Native American Rights Fund, a leading national Indian organization representing Indian tribes on issues of federal Indian law. Anderson is one of two attorneys credited with opening NARF's Alaska office, where he helped to develop the organization's substantive role in Alaska Native rights issues. He has served as counsel for Natives in a number of landmark cases involving tribal sovereignty and hunting and fishing rights.

In addition, Anderson also worked with tribes in the Lower 48 on water rights and a variety of other issues.

Anderson earned his B.A. Summa Cum Laude at Bemidji State University, and his J.D. Cum Laude (1983) at the University of Minnesota Law School. He is a member of the bar for the District of Columbia, Minnesota, Colorado, Alaska, and the United States Supreme Court.