



Trust Matters

Tribal Task Force Recommends New Look to DOI Trust Organization

The Tribal Leader Task Force on Trust Asset Management provided a report to the Secretary of the Interior on June 4, 2002 that includes its recommendations on Interior's future organization of the trust asset management functions.

The Task Force has been holding monthly meetings at locations across the country to review proposals relating to the organization of the Department's trust responsibility. The meetings also have provided a forum for discussions on general trust issues.

After being invited to the

March 2002 meeting by the co-directors of the Task Force, Special Trustee Tom Slonaker has attended every Task Force meeting and has praised the Task Force for its thoughtful consideration of these important issues.

The Task Force considered numerous options to reorganize the structure of the Department's trust responsibilities. These ranged from the Secretary's November 2001 proposal to transfer all DOI trust functions to a new Bureau of Indian Trust Asset Management (BITAM), to the creation of a new Deputy Secretary or As-

sistant Secretary of Trust position within Interior.

All of the proposals selected by the Task Force would establish a new, senior-level position in charge of the trust responsibility. In addition, the proposals establish a more clear chain of command for trust issues to improve accountability. Special Trustee Slonaker stated that these proposals "are an important step for effective trust reform" and that "the key to success will be the leadership at the top of the organization, in addition to the project management throughout the reform effort."

EDS Issues Reports on Trust Reform

Within the past few months, Electronic Data Systems (EDS), an independent consulting company hired to review the Department's implementation of a number of trust reform projects, completed two reports on the status of trust reform.

In its first report published November 12, 2002, EDS reviewed the

progress of the BIA data cleanup effort and the Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (TAAMS). Among other findings, EDS noted that the goals of the data cleanup and TAAMS projects are vague, and tools to measure and monitor their success are lacking. EDS recommended that DOI appoint a single, accountable official to be

responsible for the management of trust reform projects and that a business model for the future management of these projects be developed. The Secretary of the Interior and the Special Trustee have concurred with these recommendations.

On January 24, 2002, EDS provided a second report to the Department (*continued on back*)

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Special points of interest:

- *The Special Trustee now holds regular OST All-Hands meetings in Albuquerque.*
- *The OTFM-BIA Procedures Handbook has been completed.*
- *The EDS Reports and the Ninth Quarterly Report to the Court are available on the DOI web site at www.doi.gov*

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Trust Business Processes Under Review

The Department, in conjunction with the Tribal Task Force, is working to identify and document existing trust business processes. The effort, called "As-Is Business Process Modeling," is a review, or mapping, of core trust business processes as they exist today.

This project is being performed by a team of DOI employees, Tribal task Force representatives and EDS contracted facilitators. The team is traveling throughout Indian Country interviewing the people who perform the day-to-day business of Indian trust asset management.

The information gathered through interviews and extensive workshop discussion sessions will be documented in a detailed process modeling format and will result in the "As-Is Trust Business Models." These models will serve as the necessary foundation for determining which processes work well and which ones need to be reformed or reengineered to increase efficiency, accountability and to allow for a high level of service to the Indian beneficiaries. The future identification of consistent trust business processes, or operational standards, will be dependent upon the recommendations of the same DOI and Tribal personnel whose expertise was essential to the documentation of the As-Is Trust Business Models.

This project will allow for a more consistent delivery of trust services to beneficiaries, and will encourage the development of the comprehensive resources required, including systems, staffing and training, necessary to support the trust management personnel responsible for the delivery of the highest level of service to beneficiaries.

Note from the Special Trustee

Trust reform is now at a critical juncture. Efforts are underway at DOI to determine the future structure of the organization that will be responsible for carrying out the trust responsibilities, while many current activities are proceeding under tight deadlines and with limited staff resources. These circumstances may mean that some of us face daily challenges in accomplishing our duties. Let's keep in mind, however, that our work has a direct impact on the lives of trust beneficiaries. We must continue to put forward our best efforts.

I would like to particularly recognize the employees at the Office of Trust Records, who are frequently operating under tight deadlines for document production requests, and commend them on the job they are doing at work.

★
★ **Interagency Procedures** ★
★ **Handbook Finished** ★
★
★ The OTFM-BIA Interagency Procedures Handbook has been completed. ★
★ The handbook is the result of extensive efforts of OST and BIA personnel ★
★ to map the policies and procedures relating to the administration of trust ★
★ accounts. Training on the handbook ★
★ will begin in the near future. ★
★

OST Welcomes Appraisal Function and Staff

On June 16, 2002, the transfer of the appraisal function from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians was completed. The transfer was authorized by Secretarial Order Number 3240, which was signed on March 12, 2002.

This realignment will separate the land valuation and appraisal functions from the other leasing and realty activities currently performed by the BIA. Separating these activities



From left: Robert Grijalva, Senior Review Appraiser and Gabriel Sneezy, Chief Appraiser.

will alleviate the existence of any apparent or perceived conflict of in-

terest between the leasing and valuation functions, and will ensure the independence, objectivity, accountability and oversight of the Indian valuation and appraisal responsibilities. This realignment will allow for better service to the trust beneficiaries.

Current BIA appraisal staff are now a part of the new Office of Appraisal Services (OAS) within the OST organization. OST welcomes our new colleagues.

All Hands Meetings Held in Albuquerque

In recent months, Special Trustee Tom Slonaker has been holding OST all-employee meetings in Albuquerque, N.M. One such meeting was held in April and two in May 2002.

The meetings serve as an opportunity for an exchange of dialogue between the Special Trustee and OST employees in the field. Specifically, Mr. Slonaker enjoys the opportunity to inform OST personnel

in Albuquerque of recent events and trust reform activities occurring in the Washington, D.C. headquarters office. However, just as importantly, the meetings also provide a forum for employees to seek answers to questions they have regarding the status of trust reform overall, and specific activities of the Washington office.

Mr. Slonaker characterized these meetings as "an important way for

me to stay in touch with members of the OTFM, OTR and OTRM staff, to answer their questions and to hear, first hand, any concerns they might have about trust reform."

As often as scheduling considerations permit, Mr. Slonaker intends to hold all-employee meetings to coincide with his frequent trips to Albuquerque OST offices.

OTFM Debuts New Trade Show Booth

OST has a new and improved trade show booth. Created in time to debut at the November 2001, NCAI meeting in Washington state, the booth includes general information about the mission and functions of the Office of Trust Funds Management, as well as photographs of OTFM employees and trust beneficiaries. The new booth is the result of the efforts of Helen Riggs and Faye Ward of the OTFM Albuquerque office to improve the visual presence of OST at public functions.



Left to Right: Rae Padilla (OTFM—NM), Deputy Secretary Steven Griles, Madonna Renville (OTFM—WA), and Cheryl Keiffer (OTFM—WA).

Following Shutdown, Oil and Gas Payments Back Online

On March 20, 2002, the Minerals Management Service (MMS) received approval from the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to bring its computer systems back on-line and to resume operations of its accounting systems. The mechanics associated with the system resumption resulted in the first transmission of oil and gas royalty information for distribution on March 25, 2002.

These royalties related to data that was in the queue for distribution immediately prior to the shutdown.

During the time that the computer systems were shut down, estimated royalty payments totaling \$3.5 million were made to Indian account holders on February 22, 2002 and March 22, 2002 to mitigate any adverse financial impact of the shutdown to beneficiaries. Following

the resumption of the MMS accounting systems, efforts have been underway to reconcile, or balance, the estimated payments distributed previously with the correct royalty data that new has been supplied. MMS will continue to work to reduce the backlog of production information accumulated during the internet shutdown to expedite future royalty payments to beneficiaries.

Office of Trust Records Update

Records Assessments currently are conducted by employees from the Office of Trust Records to review the volume, physical condition, and location of all records at a particular office or location. These assessments are essential to understanding how to improve record storage conditions, the number of records in need of appropriate disposition and the characteristics of equipment or systems needed to better protect active records.

To date, records assessments at 95 BIA regional and agency locations have been completed. Assessments also have been started at BIA Central Offices (East and West), and Office of Trust Funds Management locations.

Records Schedules are the key to any successful records management program. Schedules include a description of each records series and detailed instructions for records disposition. They must be comprehensive and include all records, regardless of format. The Archivist of the United States must approve all records schedules before they can be implemented.

In March, the BIA/OST Records Schedule Working Group met in Albuquerque, NM and accepted a proposal presented by the BIA Technical Program Expert to review and restructure the schedules functionally. Work continues on the development of BIA land-related (textual and electronic) and OTFM (textual) records schedules. OTR also worked with OTFM Field Managers to identify and define records and to develop filing plans for records that are created and received at OTFM Agency locations.

Program Evaluations of records management programs have been conducted at 95 BIA locations. These evaluations are conducted pursuant to National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) regulations that require all Federal Agencies to conduct cyclic evaluations of their records management programs. The evaluations conducted to date are the first cycle of evaluations—OTR has designed a foundation upon which Cycle II (Records Program Improvement) will be based. Using NARA guidance and information used for the first evaluations at BIA field locations, OTR established standards that local records management programs will be evaluated against in the future.

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EDS Reports (continued from front)

on the effectiveness of the Department's Trust reform efforts to date. The report makes recommendations to fulfill the Department's fiduciary duty more effectively and to coordinate the management of these programs. A review of those recommendations is underway.

Training Contractor Receives Distinguished Award

Upper Mohawk Inc. (UMI) founder and CEO Ken Barnes was honored recently as one of the "Fifty Influential Minorities in Business." OST has contracted with Upper Mohawk to provide general trust training to Departmental and Tribal trust employees.

The distinguished award was presented by the Minority Business & Professionals Network, Inc. at its Fourth Annual Awards Gala on May 23, 2002 in Washington, D.C. The theme of the



Ms. Pat Lawson Muse, NBC4 News Anchor (left) and Ms. Robin W. Berry, President and CEO SaiTex Engineering (right) present the award to Upper Mohawk Inc., founder and CEO, Mr. Ken Barnes.

2002 awards was "Celebrating Excellence Through Courage," and Upper Mohawk was honored in the company of other awardees who represented the federal government, corporate sectors and academia.

The Department of the Interior was one of the organizations that nominated Upper Mohawk for this outstanding achievement, and OST offers its congratulations to UMI on this award.