



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL TRUSTEE FOR AMERICAN INDIANS

Washington, D.C. 20240

August 7, 2008

Dear Tribal Leader,

I joined more than 150 tribal representatives at a meeting sponsored by the Intertribal Monitoring Association (ITMA) from April 23-25 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The meeting included sessions on fractionation issues. ITMA is holding discussions to generate multiple solutions to this challenge. In May, ITMA met with the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians and in June with the Council of Large Land Base Tribes. Additional sessions are being planned in the Northwest and Great Plains Regions and in Oklahoma. I encourage members of tribes and tribal organizations to participate in these discussions. In the fall, ITMA will arrange a meeting to review options and make recommendations on this matter of significant importance to Indian Country. Please contact ITMA for meeting dates and locations and email your comments and suggestions to itma@itmatrustfunds.org or call the ITMA office at 505-247-1447.

Another topic that goes hand-in-hand with fractionation is locating Individual Indian Money (IIM) account holders who do not have current address information on file with OST. We refer to these account holders as "Whereabouts Unknown" (WAU). I know you meet with IIM account holders quite often; you may wish them to review the WAU list and consider gift deeding as an option. Fiduciary Trust Officers are also available to meet and assist IIM account holders on gift deeds and updating their addresses.

OST's personnel have been actively reaching out to American Indians in urban centers to locate WAUs and answer questions regarding their trust assets. California and Illinois have significant urban Indian populations. Our workforce conducted outreach events in the Los Angeles and San Francisco metro areas over the spring and summer and have been in contact with the American Indian Center of Chicago. Outreach efforts like these provide opportunities for beneficiaries to meet their Fiduciary Trust Officers and ask questions about their trust accounts. Also, OST invites representatives from other bureaus to co-staff at these events. In this way, beneficiaries can get immediate answers to questions about other issues that typically come up, such as probate, land ownership, lease terms, and tribal enrollment. To learn about planned outreach events in your area, contact the Regional Trust Administrator (RTA) for your region (please see enclosure to this letter).

In addition to outreach efforts, OST is working with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in other arenas, including social services. BIA and OST recently formed a joint social services working group. The primary goals of this working group are to strengthen communication between the two organizations and address specific issues that will improve the efficiency of their joint management of supervised IIM accounts. Implementation of training for BIA social workers and OST FTOs was the prime objective of a meeting in May between representatives from the two organizations. The working group launched the first formal training, with nationwide exposure, in July 2008.

This summer may also bring resolution to the 12-year long *Cobell et al., vs Kempthorne, Secretary of the Interior, et al.*, class-action lawsuit. Judge Robertson, at the conclusion of the Cobell trial on June 24, said he would likely render his decision in August.

Also in August is the next meeting of the nine-member Advisory Board, which provides the Special Trustee advice on matters within the jurisdiction of the Special Trustee. The meeting will take place August 14 at the Oneida Nation of New York Turning Stone Resort & Casino, following the tribal budget advisory committee meeting.

I look forward to talking with you at many of the events coming up in Indian Country. Until then, I welcome your calls at 202-208-4886.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ross O. Swimmer".

Ross O. Swimmer
Special Trustee for American Indians

Enclosure

OST Regional Trust Administrators

OST Field Region 1 – Southern Plains & Southwest
Melvin Burch (505) 816-1465

OST Field Region 2 – Navajo & Western
Robert Craff (505) 816-1462

OST Field Region 3 – Great Plains & Eastern
Jim James (505) 816-1073

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