



**INTERTRIBAL MONITORING ASSOCIATION on Indian Trust Funds**  
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## **Colville Chairman to Lead Tribal Trust Association**

**For Immediate Release**  
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NESPELEM, WA—Michael Finley, Chairman of the Colville Business Council, was elected to head the Intertribal Monitoring Association on Indian Trust Funds (ITMA), an organization representing 65 tribes nationwide, at the ITMA's annual meeting in Las Vegas, NV last week.

Finley was elected Chairman of the ITMA Board. He previously had served as a member of the ITMA Board of Directors.

"I'm honored to be selected Chairman of ITMA, and will continue its work to hold the federal government accountable for its historic mismanagement of tribal trust resources," Finley said today. "The number and extent of failures, by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and other federal agencies, to fulfill their fiduciary duties to tribes is almost overwhelming. But we can't let the huge scope of this problem deter us from demanding that these issues be resolved."

The US government is responsible for tribal and individual tribal members' trust land holdings, their natural resources such as timber, coal and grasslands, and administers funds generated from trust resources. The government has specific and indisputable legal obligations to manage these resources for the benefit of the tribes and individual Indians.

"The Federal government has simply failed to perform its trust duties at the *most basic level*," Finley said. "Mismanagement of these enormously valuable natural resources is well-documented. Payments for land leases and mineral resources are below fair market value, or not made at all. Every Tribe in this country has a story about not being adequately compensated for the use of its land, water, and other natural resources. No other fiduciary would be allowed to get away with this institutionalized mismanagement for so long."

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Finley said that, in addition to the monitoring of trust reform activities of the federal government, in the coming year, ITMA will take the lead on a national effort to gather input from Indian beneficiaries and make recommendations to improve the process for obtaining appraisals of Indian trust lands. ITMA will continue its very successful land consolidation and estate planning project expanding from the Rocky Mountain region to include other regions. ITMA is currently forming a national tribal workgroup who will assist in conducting tribal consultations to develop amendments and refinements to policies and AIPRA. Finley is hopeful that these efforts will result in the Department of the Interior revising its policies to allow for more timely processes involving all aspects of Indian trust lands.

The ITMA, based in Albuquerque, NM, was organized in 1990 to monitor the federal government's management of tribal and individual Indian trust resources and trust funds, and to advocate for meaningful trust reform. The organization has been actively involved developing a process for the resolution of tribal trust mismanagement claims.

Other members of the ITMA board elected this week include Scott Russell, Crow Tribe, Vice-Chairman; William Martin, Tlingit and Haida, Secretary; Sam Penney, Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho, Treasurer.

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