

## Cobell Settlement Land Buy-Back Program Speaker Bio

### John McClanahan, Program Manager, Department of the Interior Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations

From the perspective of the DOI, the key to the buy-back program is to try to resolve the fractionation issue and restore land holdings, if possible, to a situation where the land is owned in a more effective land-use pattern. Through this they hope to reverse some of the negative effects of the allotment policy. The buy-back program is required by the Cobell settlement to be completed within a ten-year period and will go through four major steps: outreach, land research, land valuation, and land purchase. The preliminary draft of the plan for the buy-back process has been published and aims to purchase lands on the 40 most highly fractionated reservations first. In order to fulfill the outreach portion of the plan, the Interior is relying heavily on the assistance of the tribes. Listen to McClanahan's presentation to learn about the challenges, goals, and processes of the buy-back that will result in the transfer of fractionated allotted lands into tribal ownership.



John McClanahan has spent more than a decade at the Department of the Interior, focused on Indian trust reform and the resolution of historical claims, most significantly *Cobell v. Salazar*, which commenced in 1996 and resulted in a \$3.4 billion settlement in 2009. He currently serves as the program manager for the Department's Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations, which was created to implement the land consolidation component of the Cobell Settlement. The Program is responsible for managing a \$1.9 billion fund to purchase fractionated interests in trust or restricted land at 150 reservations across the country. McClanahan previously served in the Department's Office of the Solicitor and the Office of Historical Trust Accounting, where he helped resolve tribal trust fund accounting and management cases brought in various federal courts, playing a key leadership role on settlement initiatives totaling over \$1 billion. McClanahan practiced real estate law in Colorado before coming to the Department. He received a LLM from New York University and a JD and BS from the University of Wyoming.