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**(Regional)- Gov't Rolls Out \$1.9B Indian Land Buyback Program**



By: Jeremy Anderson Posted at: 12/18/2012 03:44 PM

HELENA, Mont. (AP) - U.S. government officials are rolling out a Native American land buyback program as part of a \$3.4 billion settlement over mismanaged royalties.

The 10-year, \$1.9 billion program is meant to purchase individual allotments from willing Indians and turn over the consolidated parcels to tribes.

Program manager John McClanahan said Tuesday it could be up to a year before the first land sales are completed.

The program is the largest portion of the settlement finalized last month. It aims to reduce Indian Country's high number of individual tracts with multiple owners.

Land fractionation was caused by the 1887 Dawes Act, which split tribal lands into individual allotments often inherited by multiple heirs with each passing generation.

In some places, more than 1,000 individual owners own portions of a single tract.