

## DOE, Tribes sign a renewal of the Agreement in Principle

FORT HALL--The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and the Department of Energy – Idaho Operations Office recently signed a new Agreement in Principle, thus renewing the formal relationship between the two parties for another five-year period.



Lee Juan Tyler, Vice Chairman of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes (left) and Elizabeth Sellers, manager, DOE Idaho Operations Office (Right)

Photo courtesy of Lori Edmo-Suppah, Sho-Ban News.

The photo shows the official signing of the Agreement by Beth Sellers, Manager Idaho Operations Office, and Lee Juan Tyler, Vice Chairman Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, Fort Hall Business Council. Lee Juan signed on behalf of the Fort Hall Business Council Chairman, Alonzo Coby, who was called away for a family medical emergency.

This agreement is the latest in a series between the tribes and the department, dating back to 1992. The agreement is significant in that it formally establishes a government-to-government relationship and officially recognizes the Federal Government's trust responsibility to federally recognized Indian tribes, and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes' sovereignty. It also acknowledges their ancestral connection to the Idaho National Laboratory, and their 1868 Fort Bridger Treaty, with its retained rights.

Areas of particular importance to the tribes and the department are protection of the environment, safe operations, health, risk minimization and management, cultural resources and tribal economic self sufficiency. The agreement also recognizes the tribes' concern over project activities at the Idaho site and commits the department and its contractors to open communications, discussions, briefings and consultation.

The department has sole responsibility for formal consultations, pursuant to applicable DOE and Executive Orders. The department's contractors, in accordance with DOE Orders, assist the department's efforts in working with affected tribes, specifically the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. The tribes are seen to share similar interests with the department and its contractors in management of the site, in order to protect the aquifer, the environment, conduct operations safely and protect the Site's cultural resources.

The tribes' concept of cultural resources assists the INL in making good, balanced decisions that include science and humanistic interests. The tribes define cultural resources more broadly, from a holistic perspective that includes both archaeological and anthropological areas, as well as plant life, the air and water, animal life and scenic vistas and landscapes.

The current agreement expires on December 4, 2012.

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By Brad Bugger