

properties, disgusted by the high costs of the system and its abuses at the hands of some who are instrumental in its administration, and despondent because they do not see that any effort is being made to prepare them ultimately to assume control over their own affairs.

The Task Force also found that a share of the responsibility for the present state of affairs in Palm Springs rests upon the shoulders of this Department. When questions and complaints concerning the administration of these guardianships and conservatorships were first raised several years ago, we placed too great a confidence in the probity and ability of the state judiciary to exercise proper control and supervision over court-appointed fiduciaries and attorneys. As you know, I took steps to rectify this error a year ago.

At the outset of this investigation, I directed that certain intermediate actions, described in Exhibit 6 to the Task Force Report, be taken immediately. As a result of the findings and conclusions of the Task Force, I am supplementing my earlier instructions by the following:

1. All income from trust properties now being paid to the Bureau of Indian Affairs will, for the time being, continue to be paid directly to the Bureau to be administered through special accounts for the use and benefit of the particular Indians concerned; subject however, to modification permitting the restoration of the flow of funds to those individual conservators and guardians whom the Bureau finds to be trustworthy and competent.
 2. I have directed the appropriate officers of the Department to immediately explore ways of assisting members of the Agua Caliente Band to make arrangements with institutional trustees when feasible for the management of their non-trust property as substitutes for court appointed fiduciaries.
 3. The Bureau of Indian Affairs will immediately assume sole and complete responsibility for the management of all trust properties. This means that all leases, sales and other dispositions of interests in trust lands are to be accomplished by Bureau of Indian Affairs personnel in consultation with the Indian owners and such business advisers and attorneys as may be retained, but with minimum involvement of guardians, conservators and their attorneys.
 4. Departmental auditors will selectively audit further estates in accordance with Departmental instructions.
 5. The Solicitor's Office will provide a full-time attorney in Palm Springs to render necessary legal services.
 6. The Department of Justice will be requested to pursue the legal actions heretofore undertaken and to institute any further actions deemed necessary to obtain accountings and recovery of funds rightfully belonging to Indian estates.
 7. As above stated, copies of the Task Force report are to be presented to the proper California authorities for appropriate action.
- Although some individual guardians and conservators have performed in a completely honorable and competent fashion, the Task Force has recommended that the entire Agua Caliente Indian guardianship-conservatorship system be abolished. The evidence amply supports this recommendation. A comprehensive study of this recommendation and what may be required to implement it is underway.

Sincerely yours,

Enclosure.

STEWART L. UDALL,
Secretary of the Interior.