

build, maintain, and disseminate framework data.

Outcomes of these projects will include the establishment of operational framework sites that will provide testbeds on policies and practices for the framework process. The projects also will serve as examples of framework implementation and as starting points for future framework research and development.

Applications may be submitted by State and local government agencies, educational institutions, private firms, private foundations, and Federally acknowledged or state-recognized Native American tribes or groups. Each project must be collaborative and involve two or more organizations. The FGDC encourages the collaboration of Federal agencies in these projects, however, Federal agencies may not lead a FDPP project nor submit proposals. The USGS intends to award approximately 7 cooperative agreements with funds totaling \$460,000 during fiscal year 1997. Funds requested for a specific project shall not exceed \$65,000. Participants are expected to cost-share no less than 100% of the amount of funding received from the Federal government. Authority for this program is contained in the Organic Act of March 3, 1879, 43 U.S.C. 31 and Executive Order 12906.

DATES: The program announcement is expected to be available on or about March 7, 1997. Applications must be received on or before May 16, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Copies of Program Announcement No. 1434-HQ-97-PA-00023 may be obtained by writing to Tammy Fanning, U.S. Geological Survey, Office of Acquisition and Federal Assistance, Mail Stop 205B, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, Virginia 20192. Requests may also be made by facsimile to (703) 648-7901. Confirmation by telephone at (703) 648-7372 is recommended.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tammy Fanning, U.S. Geological Survey, Office of Acquisition and Federal Assistance, Mail Stop 205B, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, Virginia 20192; voice telephone number (703) 648-7363; facsimile telephone number (703) 648-7901.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Applications of digital geospatial data vary greatly, but users have a recurring need for a few common themes of data. The framework concept outlined in the report "Development of a National Digital Geospatial Data Framework" (April, 1995) proposes a means by which the geospatial data community can work together to produce and

maintain commonly needed data for national, regional, state, and local analyses. The report and additional information about the framework are available from the FGDC Secretariat. The materials can be retrieved from the Committee's World Wide Web page at <http://www.fgdc.gov>, or by contacting the committee by mail at the U.S. Geological Survey, 590 National Center, Reston, Virginia 20192; by Internet at gdc@usgs.gov; by facsimile at (703) 648-5755; or by voice telephone at (703) 648-5514.

Within the geospatial data community, multi-agency, and multi-sector partnership are being established in local and regional areas to collaboratively leverage resources and funding, and coordinate data collection, utilization, and access. The framework builds on these activities by providing a basic information content, and the technical, operational, and business contexts by which a distributed, collaborative data collection and maintenance effort for the nation would operate. The framework information content consists of geodetic control, digital orthoimagery, elevation, transportation, hydrography, governmental units, and cadastral data categories.

While the framework concept is well received by the geospatial data community, questions remain as to its practical implementation, and the modifications in approach that will occur as the community evolves. This program is a means by which the FGDC facilities, and provides resources for the development, and implementation of the NSDI Framework concept.

This program will fund the development of institutions and technology needed for framework operations. Proposals should be from geographic areas where multiple parties have data to share for at least a subset of the framework data content. Project activities may include establishment of the following institutional roles: evaluating, developing and implementing technical standards; coordinating data creation, maintenance, and dissemination for a geographic area; ensuring updates of framework data from local data contributions; developing data quality certification policies; and ensuring data integration among themes, and geographic areas. Technical development and applications may include the following: permanent feature-based identification; the support of multiple resolution data; mechanisms for maintaining the user's data investment when updating their data holding from the framework; processes

for gathering and evaluating user satisfaction to the framework; and the evaluation of methods for implementing metadata (including data quality information), required for the framework data.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (FDAC) Program Number 15.808)

Geological Survey, Research and Data Acquisition.

Dated: February 21, 1997.

Richard E. Witmer,

Acting Chief, National Mapping Division.

[FR Doc. 97-6904 Filed 2-26-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-31-M

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Notice of Receipt of Petition for Federal Acknowledgment of Existence as an Indian Tribe

AGENCY: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

This is published in the exercise of authority delegated by the Secretary of the Interior to the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs by 209 DM 8. Pursuant to 25 CFR 83.9(a), notice is hereby given that the Biloxi, Chitimacha Confederation of Muskogees, Inc., 1112 Daisy Street, Houma, Louisiana 70363 (BCCM), has filed a letter of intent to be considered for acknowledgment by the Secretary of the Interior that the group exists as an Indian tribe. This letter was received by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) on October 24, 1995, and was signed by members of the group's governing body.

This petitioner was part of the United Houma Nation, Inc. (UHN), which received a proposed finding December 22, 1994 (59 245:66118-66119). In response, this portion of the UHN has requested that it be considered separately from the UHN. The BCCM has received an extension until May 13, 1997, to respond to the proposed finding. After receipt of the BCCM response to the proposed finding, the BIA will issue an amended proposed finding, which will be published in the Federal Register.

Under §§ 83.9(a) and 83.10(i) of the Federal regulations, the petitioner may then respond to the amended proposed finding, and interested and informed third parties may submit factual and/or legal arguments in support of or in opposition to the group's petition and the proposed finding. The comment period will end 180 days from the date of publication of the amended proposed finding pertaining to the Biloxi, Chitimacha Confederation of

Muskogees, Inc. in the Federal Register. Any information submitted will be made available on the same basis as other information in the BIA's files. Such submissions must be provided to the petitioner and the BIA simultaneously. The petitioner will have a 60-day period in which to respond to such submissions prior to a final determination regarding the petitioner's status.

Under § 83.10(h), a report summarizing the evidence upon which the UHN proposed finding was based is available upon written request to the BIA. The petition may be examined by appointment in the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Branch of Acknowledgment and Research, MS-4603-MIB, 1849 C Street, NW., Washington, DC 20240. Phone: (202) 208-3592.

Dated: February 11, 1997.

Ada E. Deer,

Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs.

[FR Doc. 97-4838 Filed 2-26-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-02-P

Proposed Finding for Federal Acknowledgment of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe

AGENCY: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of proposed finding.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to 25 CFR 83.10(h), notice is hereby given that the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs (Assistant Secretary) proposes to acknowledge that the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, PO Box 2547, 1417 15th Avenue No. 5, Longview, WA 98632-8594, exists as an Indian tribe within the meaning of Federal law. This notice is based on a determination that the tribe satisfies all of the criteria set forth in 25 CFR 83.7 as modified by 25 CFR 83.8, and, therefore, meets the requirements for a government-to-government relationship with the United States.

DATES: As provided by 25 CFR 83.10(i), any individual or organization wishing to challenge the proposed finding may submit arguments and evidence to support or rebut the evidence relied upon. This material must be submitted within 180 calendar days from the date of publication of this notice. As stated in the regulations, 25 CFR 83.10(i), interested and informed parties who submit arguments and evidence to the Assistant Secretary must also provide copies of their submissions to the petitioner.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the proposed finding and/or request for a copy of the

report of evidence should be addressed to the Office of the Assistant Secretary, 1849 C Street, NW., Washington, DC 20240, Attention: Branch of Acknowledgment and Research, Mailstop 4603—MIB.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Holly Reckord, Chief, Branch of Acknowledgment and Research, (202) 208-3592.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This notice is published in the exercise of authority delegated by the Secretary of the Interior to the Assistant Secretary by 209 DM 8.

The petitioner consists of descendants of the historical Lower Cowlitz Indians and Upper Cowlitz, or Cowlitz Klickitat, Indians of southwestern Washington. Its members are descendants specifically of the Lower Cowlitz Indians who were represented in 1855 at the Chehalis River Treaty negotiations held between several American Indian tribes of southwest Washington and Federal officials, and of the Upper Cowlitz band which was subsequently amalgamated with the Lower Cowlitz band. Although the Lower Cowlitz refused to sign the Chehalis River Treaty, their participation in the negotiations constitutes unambiguous Federal acknowledgment of the tribe's sovereignty. The petitioner thus meets the requirements of § 83.8 as having unambiguous previous Federal acknowledgment and has been considered under the modifications of § 83.7 that are prescribed by § 83.8. The date of the treaty negotiations, March 2, 1855, has been used as the date of latest Federal acknowledgment for purposes of this finding to enable the petitioner to proceed under the provisions of § 83.8. Because the petitioner had already completed documentation of the petition before the present regulations became effective, it was not necessary to determine if there was a later date of unambiguous Federal acknowledgment for purposes of this evaluation under the 1994 regulations.

The Federal acknowledgment regulations confirm that it is historically valid for tribes to have combined and functioned together as a unit. Under the regulations in 25 CFR part 83, tribes which combined because of historical circumstances may be acknowledged in so far as the group resulting from the amalgamation continued to function as a single tribal unit. The petitioner is an example of a group which has evolved from linguistically distinct and politically independent bands which combined. In reaching this determination, the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs took fully into account

the historical circumstances surrounding the petitioner's development and the impact of Federal policy in combining the Salish-speaking Lower Cowlitz, the métis descendants of the Lower Cowlitz, and the Sahaptin-speaking Upper Cowlitz into a single entity for administrative purposes between the 1860's and the 1920's.

Since 1855, the Cowlitz Indians have continued to reside in a traditionally dispersed residential pattern along the Cowlitz River valley. The residential locations of the individual subgroups today remain similar to those described by observers in the mid-19th century and by BIA Special Agent Charles Roblin's 1919 Schedule of Unenrolled Indians in western Washington. The tribal entity as defined by Federal policy was identified in BIA documents from the 1860's through the 1880's, from 1904 through the 1930's, and since 1950. The umbrella tribal organization was also regularly identified as an American Indian entity by newspaper accounts from the period 1912-1939, and 1950 to the present. The component settlements comprising the umbrella tribal organization were described by local residents and local historians from the 1890's through the 1960's. Additionally, throughout this period, county vital records and articles in local newspapers regularly described individuals, families, and component settlements as "of the Cowlitz Tribe." Therefore, we conclude that the petitioner meets criterion 83.7(a) as modified by criterion 83.8(d).

As a result of the historical circumstances surrounding the petitioner's development, the modern Cowlitz Indian Tribe (CIT) is a two-level tribal community in which there is comparatively intense community within defined subgroups and a looser community encompassing the overall membership. It is significant that the modern situation does not represent a post-World War II dispersal of a once tightly-knit and more closely related group, but the continuation of a long-standing historical pattern. The subgroups have interacted in consistent ways and similar patterns at least since the formation of the formal Cowlitz Tribal Organization in 1912.

Genealogical relationships within the subgroups remain comparatively close: Within each subgroup, today's adults ordinarily share a set of grandparents. Within the Cowlitz as a whole, the majority of the adult membership shares at least one set of great-grandparents. Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries large proportions of people known as Cowlitz married non-Indians, and assimilated into the dominant