

Summary: Investigation of a Bureau of Indian Affairs Deputy Superintendent for Violation of Tribal Land Policies and Procedures and Conflicts of Interest

Report Date: January 19, 2016

OIG investigated allegations that the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Deputy Superintendent of the Cherokee Agency misused her official position to purchase property rights for lands held in Indian trust for personal gain, thereby creating a conflict of interest.

We did not substantiate the allegation that the deputy superintendent misused her position, but we determined that she violated BIA policy by acquiring and selling trust land property rights for personal gain while a BIA employee.

Despite a requirement to do so, the deputy superintendent neither submitted a “Conflict of Interest Waiver for Trust Real Estate Transactions” form nor obtained prior approval for numerous land transactions that she conducted for personal gain during her BIA employment from 2010 through 2015. Her failure to obtain advance approval for these transactions violated BIA tribal land policies and created a conflict of interest.

We also found that other employees of both the Cherokee and Choctaw Agencies did not know about BIA’s conflict-of-interest policies related to trust real estate transactions or the required form and approval necessary to conduct transactions of lands held in Indian trust.

We referred our findings to BIA for information only and did not require a response.

This is a summary of an investigative report that was issued internally to the U.S. Department of the Interior. This summary was posted to the web on May 11, 2016.

