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Special Assistant to the Secretary Faith Roessel Resigns

Faith Roessel, a special assistant to Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt has announced her resignation. Roessel is a native of Round Rock, Arizona, and is an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation.

Roessel served as a special assistant to Interior Secretary Babbitt, and had responsibility for issues that included military base closures involving Indian tribes, environmental justice, tourism, and tribes. Roessel also staffed the White House Domestic Policy Council's Working Group on American Indians and Alaska Natives, which Secretary Babbitt chairs. As special assistant to Secretary Babbitt for the Working Group, Roessel served as a liaison to the agency cochairs of the five subgroups to help develop their work plans on interagency collaboration in: protecting the environment and natural resources that affect Indian people and lands; promoting reinvention opportunities to better serve Indian tribes; improving consultation between federal agencies and tribes; strengthening educational opportunities for Indian youths and adults; and recognizing and preserving Indian religious freedom. The Working Group, created at the urging of Secretary Babbitt, is a focal point in coordinating and carrying out President Clinton's policies toward tribal governments. President Clinton signed two executive orders originating from the Working Group.

"Faith has assisted me greatly in her counsel on Indian issues and helped create an interagency Working Group that is productive and result-oriented," said Secretary Bruce Babbitt. "She has taken on some tough issues for the department and I will miss someone of her caliber and dedication."

For the immediate future, Roessel plans to spend time with her family. She is married and has two young children. Prior to her current position, Roessel was the Interior Department's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. She joined the Clinton Administration in 1994 and has served as a political appointee of President Clinton in both capacities as Special Assistant and Deputy Assistant Secretary.

In Washington, D.C., Roessel has served as the director of the Navajo Nation Washington Office, senior staff attorney for the Native American Rights Fund, and legislative assistant for U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM). Prior to coming to Washington, Roessel was an associate in a Phoenix law firm.

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