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## Tribal court to hear claim

by K.C. Mehaffey | [Aug. 20, 2013, 10:19 a.m.](#) | [Comment](#)

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NESPELEM — A Colville Tribal court will hear a civil complaint Wednesday claiming the Colville Business Council should have considered a petition from tribal members seeking full distribution of a \$193 million settlement with the U.S. government.

Yvonne L. Swan, a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, said she filed the complaint in May on behalf of herself, other members of the Colville Members for Justice, and 2,700 tribal members who signed a petition asking the council to distribute the entire amount to members.

The money is part of a \$1 billion settlement from the U.S. government with 41 American Indian tribes whose trust lands were mismanaged by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Last year's council adopted a plan in October to spend half of the settlement to fund senior centers, health clinics, resource restoration, language development and other programs.

The council distributed the other half to members in two separate payments, giving about \$10,000 to each of roughly 9,500 members.

Swan will ask a judge to prevent the council from spending or planning to spend the remaining funds until the issue over whether the council should consider full distribution is settled.

She said she also hopes the court will order the council to direct all tribal programs to return any funds provided through the settlement.

And, she said, she wants a full accounting of any funds spent so far, and detailed information on the council's plans for remaining money.

"We have a right by (tribal) constitution to have that," she said. "We've been fighting for 15 or 16 months to try to get that information. They did not keep their promise to let us decide how to spend the remaining 50 percent, so that's when the petition for the rest of the money began," she added.

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