

Midwest couple gives land 'back' to Iowa Indians

Reprinted from Indian News

Published by the Bureau of Indian Affairs

Eddie Dorweiler, 77, and his wife, Margaret, 74, have no children. Their relatives are "well fixed," according to Dorweiler, so in a discussion about what to do with their land, Margaret Dorweiler said to her husband, "Let's give it back to the Indians."

The couple is doing just that. They are giving all 700 acres of their land, worth about \$700,000 to the Indians — the Sac and Fox Indian tribe of Tama, Iowa.

"I find it unbelievable and amazing. I have no words to describe our gratitude," said Donald Wanatee Sr., executive director of the Sac and Fox.

According to a story in the *Des Moines Register*, Dorweiler said he thought about giving the land to the state, but decided against that. He also rejected any thought of giving it to a church, a college or some other non-profit or charitable organization.

"I know the Indians will do better," Dorweiler said.

The land is about 400 acres of cropland and about 300 acres of river-bottom land and several lakes and ponds, formed when Dorweiler operated a sand and gravel business on the property. An avid animal lover, he says the property has an abundance of wild geese, deer and other wild animals he has cared for throughout his life.

He recently spotted a herd of 74 grazing deer. The land is about 120 miles northwest of the Mesquakie Indian settlement near Tama. An attorney for the Dorweilers said they have been granted a life estate by the Indian tribe as requested.

According to Earl Barlow, BIA's Minneapolis area director, the paperwork is in the process to deed the land to the Sac and Fox. Then the process will begin to transfer it from fee status to be held in trust for the tribe. Barlow also said that the tribe will assume a small mortgage that is still held on the land.