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Path Cleared For Memorial To Flight 93

By SEAN D. HAMILL

Work will begin this fall on a memorial to those killed aboard United Airlines Flight 93 on Sept. 11, 2001, now that agreements have been reached to buy the last key pieces of land in Pennsylvania, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar said Monday.

The federal government will pay about \$9.5 million to the owners of nine parcels near Shanksville, in rural southwestern Pennsylvania, totaling 1,395 acres, including the site where the plane crashed and one right-of-way, Mr. Salazar said.

"Thanks to the collaborative efforts of the landowners, the Families of Flight 93 and the employees of the National Park Service, we have reached this important milestone," he said.

Flight 93 was traveling from Newark to San Francisco when it was diverted by hijackers, who crashed the plane as passengers tried to wrest control of the cockpit. All 33 passengers and seven crew members died.

The announcement ends years of bargaining with landowners.

Negotiations intensified at the end of last year when, with some parcels still in limbo, the Families of Flight 93, a nonprofit group that has been helping with the purchases, asked the Bush administration to get something done before it left office.

This summer, with time running short to get the first \$58 million phase of the memorial completed in time for the 10th anniversary of the crash, the Interior Department set a deadline for the remaining landowners and threatened to take the land through condemnation.

That prompted Senator Arlen Specter to intercede and bring in Mr. Salazar to talk to the landowners himself, which got negotiations moving.

"It really took all the elements to align these stars," said Patrick White, a lawyer and member of the Families of Flight 93, who helped with negotiations.

Larry Hoover, whose family owned two parcels, totaling five acres, would not say how much his family would receive for the land that held his summer home and a year-round home for his son.

"It was an honorable figure for both sides," he said. "Did we get everything we wanted? Probably not. But it was fair."