



INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL TIMBER NOTES

Fall ~ 2025



Caleb Cain

PETE WAKELAND RETIRES AFTER NEARLY A DECADE OF SERVICE

On September 9, 2025, Pete Wakeland officially retired after more than nine years of dedicated service as the Chief Forester. Throughout his tenure, Pete played a pivotal role in shaping the direction of forestry within the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Among his many accomplishments, he was instrumental in the creation of the BIA's Timber Team—an initiative that has since become a cornerstone of the agency's forestry operations and a model of collaboration and success.

Pete also oversaw the implementation of the Indian Trust Asset Reform Act, helping



Photo of Advanced TAAMS Training Cadre and participants in Fort Vancouver, WA in August 2025.

to modernize and streamline trust resource management. His leadership was marked by a commitment to thoughtful policy development, resulting in numerous updates that have strengthened the BIA's forestry programs and improved service delivery to tribal communities.

Beyond his professional achievements, Pete was known for his approachable leadership style and his genuine willingness to listen. His presence, insight, and steady guidance will be deeply missed by colleagues and partners alike.

As he steps out of federal service, Pete begins a new chapter of service—he was recently elected to his tribal council, where he will serve a three-year term. We

wish him all the best in this new role and thank him for his years of outstanding leadership and dedication.

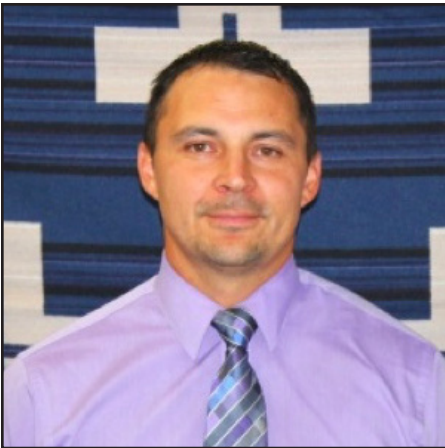
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President's Message

by Cody Desautel



Cody Desautel

As we transition into the fall we have several changes at the federal level that will have implications for tribes. Those include reorganization of fire functions within U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Department of Interior (DOI), rescinding of the 2001 Roadless Rule, and as we understand additional reorganization of the federal government. As I write this it is unclear if we will have a federal budget or continuing resolution approved prior to October 1, 2025, start of fiscal year 2026. On a positive note, ITC has selected its first Executive Director.

USDA and DOI are initiating consultation on reorganization of the U.S. Forest Service, and Department of Interior fire bureaus. Executive Order (EO) 14308 was issued on June 12, 2025, and directed the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture to, among other things, consolidate their wildland fire programs to achieve the most efficient and effective use of wildland fire offices, budgets, and programs. The departments were given 90 days to accomplish this under the EO. In response to this directive Secretarial Order (SO) 3443-Elevating and Unifying DOI's Wildland Fire Management Program, was issued on September 10, 2025. This SO

directs the establishment of a U.S. Wildland Fire Service (USWFS), which will report directly to the Secretary of Interior.

Current DOI wildland fire and aviation bureaus and offices will be consolidated under this U.S. Wildland Fire Service, which will include BIA, BLM, FWS, NPS, OWF and OAS. The SO also directs the plan to be complete and approved by the Secretary prior to the implementation date of January 12, 2026. A USWFS Fire Chief will be recruited or appointed to lead the service. There will also be continued collaboration with U.S. Forest Service on full unification. ITC will stay engaged in this reorganization and share information with our member tribes as it becomes available. We have raised questions about the inclusion of 638 contracted/compacted wildland fire programs, and believe additional discussion is needed to determine how those programs and responsibilities will be incorporated into this new USWFS. I strongly encourage our member tribes to participate in the consultation sessions and share concerns or recommendations you have with ITC.

On June 23, 2025, USDA Secretary Rollins announced the departments intent to rescind the 2001 Roadless Rule. The Roadless Rule currently pertains to almost 45 million acres of national forest and grasslands. On August 29, 2025, a notice was published in the federal register initiating an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and rulemaking concerning the management of inventoried roadless areas. Comments for this notice were due on September 19, 2025. ITC did submit comments and can share those with any member tribes interested in ITC's perspective. The draft

EIS and proposed rule is expected by March 2026, with the final rule, final EIS, and Record of Decision are expected to be released in late 2026. We have heard a variety of perspectives on the 2001 Roadless Rule and want to ensure ITC is representing all the perspectives across Indian country. We will continue to track this process and report to the ITC member tribes as we get more information.

To end my report, I have two pieces of good news. I want to share the selection and start date for ITC's first Executive Director. We were thankful to have numerous professionally qualified candidates apply for the position, and after deliberation among the interview committee Calvin Mukumoto was selected. Cal has a distinguished career working in forest management, and a history with ITC that dates back to the 1980's. He was part of the IFMAT's I and II and has worked for Tribes over the course of his career. Cal's official start date will be October 1, 2025, and we are overly excited to add his skillset and experience to the ITC organization.

After a lengthy process that extended from the past administration into the current administration we finally have a fully executed Agreement with the USDA Forest Service (USFS). The purpose of the agreement is to build tribal capacity that meets the intent of a series of Executive Orders, Secretarial Memo's, and USFS strategies through targeted technical assistance to develop TFPA, Good Neighbor Authority, and stewardship contracts and agreements. Although there were many turns on the road we appreciate the diligent efforts from the Forest Service staff and USDA leadership to finalize

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President's Message

by Cody Desautel

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this agreement. Additional information will be forthcoming as we develop the workshops and information delivery methods to ensure tribes can utilize these authorities

to achieve both tribal and Forest Service management goals.

There are several other issues/opportunities that we are tracking and can share more in future newsletters. I hope many of you can join us

for the in-person December board meeting. You will receive the details soon.



BIA Division of Forestry

by Caleb Cain

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PLANNING AND PRIORITIES

Budget / Funding for Forestry Projects: The deadline for the Regions to submit FY 2025 accomplishments and FY 2026 funding proposals to Central Office for Forest Development, Forest Management Inventory and Planning, Woodlands Management, and Timber Harvest Initiative projects is November 7, 2025. We appreciate your timely submissions to your Regional Forestry staff! Accomplishments data is critical for BIA Forestry Budget formulation and justification. If you have questions about how to report your annual accomplishments or funding requests, please contact your Regional Forester.

Forest Health: Unfortunately, the Forest Health Program (FHP) did not receive funding for its forest health proposals for FY25 from the Forest Service. Work continued on projects that had already been funded through current interagency agreements, but no new funding was provided.

The importance of these funds to the programs involved is recognized, and Central Office staff kept the proposals on the shelf for consideration. Each proposal was fully funded in 2025 with other BIA lines of accounting.

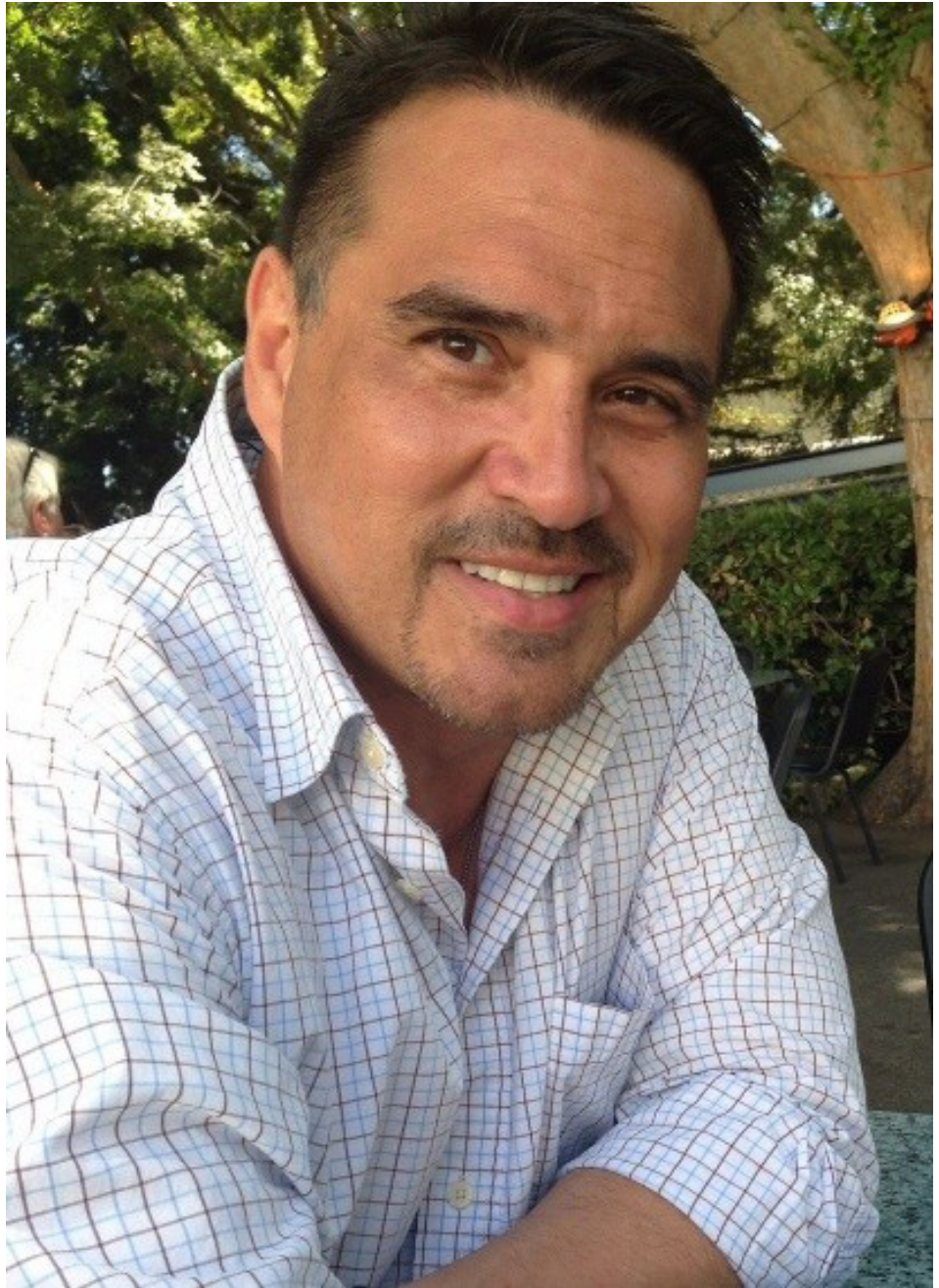


Photo of Pete Wakeland retired BIA Chief Forester.

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Looking ahead it is assumed that there will not be forest health funds in the Forest Service 2026 budget. Proposals will still be accepted for consideration of DOF funding and are due by close of business on November 7, 2025.

TAAMS Training Updates: Below is the planned and approved TAAMS Forestry Training schedule through April 2026. The plan is subject to change. All classes should be posted to DOI Talent at least 60 days prior to the event.

Timber Team: The Timber Team has experienced a marked increase in demand for geospatial analysis expertise, driven by numerous Tribes seeking to revise their forest management plans to reflect more accurate Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) figures. In response, the team has continued to expand its formal training programs and demonstrate its capabilities through the development of interactive dashboards, timber sale and cruise maps, and updated forest cover type mapping.

This surge in activity aligns with Executive Order 14225, which calls for the immediate expansion of American timber production across Indian Country. In direct response, the Timber Team has significantly increased its productivity and service delivery. The Timber Team Accomplishments Dashboard, updated monthly, provides a transparent view of ongoing and completed projects and is accessible at Timber Team Projects.

Throughout the summer months, the Timber Team provided extensive support to Tribes across Alaska, Montana, Utah, and Washington. These efforts resulted in the preparation of approximately 13.1

TAAMS Class	Location	Dates	CGI/In-House
Forestry Pre-Sale	MS Teams	Jan 21, 2026	In-House
Introductory Forestry	Ft. Vancouver	Feb 3-5, 2026	CGI
Forestry Pre-Sale	MS Teams	Feb 18, 2026	In-House
Introductory Forestry	TBD	Mar 10-12, 2026	CGI
Forestry Pre-Sale	MS Teams	Mar 18, 2026	In-House
Advanced Forestry	Ft. Vancouver	Apr 7-9, 2026	In-House
Forestry Pre-Sale	MS Teams	Apr 21, 2026	In-House
Forestry Pre-Sale	MS Teams	Apr 29, 2026	In-House

million board feet (MMBF) of commercial timber across 1,399 acres. Timber sale preparation activities included internal marking, unit layout, silvicultural prescription development and review, and timber cruising.

Among the Timber Team's additional summer initiatives was the participation in whitebark pine surveys on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. Whitebark pine, a keystone species recently listed under the Endangered Species Act, plays a critical ecological role in high-elevation forest ecosystems. The surveys focused on identifying individual trees exhibiting resistance to white pine blister rust, a major threat to the species. These findings will support the Tribe's future efforts in cone collection and propagation, contributing to long-term restoration and conservation strategies.

This report summarizes the Timber Team's concerted efforts over the past few months and outlines future commitments that underscore their ongoing dedication to enhancing timber production in collaboration with tribal partners.

Timber Team's tentative schedule and openings for the remaining calendar year:

Date/Tribe/Region

- September 8–19, 2025: Crow Reservation Sale Prep in MT, RMR
- October 12–24, 2025: Bemidji Storm Salvage in MN, MWR
- November 3–21, 2025: Adopt a Forester Campaign in All Regions
- December 1–12, 2025: Quinault Reservation Stand Exams in WA, NWR
- January 11–24, 2026: OPEN DATES
- February 2–March 27, 2026: Several trips reserved for Eastern Band of Cherokee sale prep in NC & Karuk Tribe CFI install in CA
- April 6–17, 2026: Ute Mountain Ute CFI in CO, SWR
- April 26–May 9, 2026: OPEN DATES
- May 26–June 12, 2026: ITC Symposium and project assistance for the Menominee Reservation in WI (ER)
- June 21–27, 2026: OPEN DATES
- July 12–25, 2026: OPEN DATES
- August 3–14, 2026: OPEN

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DATES

- August 24–September 4, 2026: OPEN DATES
- September 14–25, 2026: OPEN DATES

We are seeking proposals starting in January of 2026 and beyond and any federal/tribal staff that would like to work with the Timber Team on any upcoming assignment.

To find the project request form and more information about the Timber Team please go to <https://www.bia.gov/service/timber-team>.

Portable Milling Infrastructure:

Portable Milling Infrastructure projects are designed to support tribes in achieving a portion of their Allowable Annual Cut (AAC), provide fuelwood for tribal members, and produce value-added wood products for tribal use and/or sale. These projects are funded through

Timber Harvest Initiative monies.

The proposal submission period closed at COB on September 19, 2025. We are now in the process of reviewing submitted proposals.

Please note that this year's process includes a new ranking criteria packet, which places a strong emphasis on reporting and geospatial information. Accurate and timely reporting is critical to highlight the positive outcomes of these projects. Geospatial data will also support the development of web-based dashboards and other public-facing tools to showcase project impacts.

BRANCH OF FOREST INVENTORY AND PLANNING (FIP)

Tablet Update: Contract cruisers on the Ute Mountain CFI wrapped up fieldwork in July using FIP's tablet data collection software, "CFI Collector." Seventy-three 1/5th acre timber fixed-area plots were measured. FIP Forest Analysts Chris LaCroix and Casey Sigg, along with Southwest Regional FMI&P Forester Joseph Rule met the contractors in April to kick off the CFI. Training on the tablet was provided to get the contractors started and their response to its ease of use was enthusiastic. One of the contract crews had extensive experience completing complex FIA plots in the Pacific Northwest and found CFI Collector to be one of the best data collection software systems they have ever used. The remainder of the contractor's fieldwork was completed without issue after the kickoff. This project is the third successful deployment of FIP's modernized tablet data collection software.

New Digital Tool for Collecting

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Photo of a Timber Team forester measuring the diameter on a whitebark pine on the Wind River Reservation of Wyoming.

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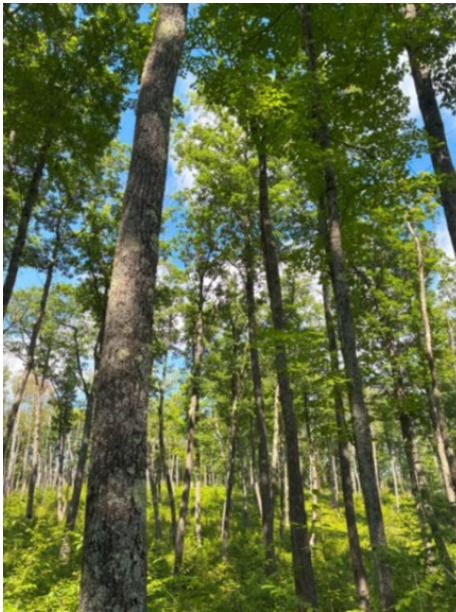
L: Photo discussing evapotranspiration at the Marcell Experimental Forest.

R: Photo of the Oak shelterwood field visit at the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest

Stand Exam Data for FVS: FIP has completed development of a data collection tool and user guide enabling foresters to collect Stand Exam data digitally for easy import directly into Forest Vegetation Simulator (FVS). The tool is built using ESRI's Survey123 software, which is supported on Windows, Android, and iOS devices, so you can leave the paper tally sheets at home.

After a few customizations to account for geographic area, tree species, and the local FVS variant, foresters can get straight to the fun stuff: collecting stand exam data in the field. The survey form is designed to streamline data export into an FVS-ready excel spreadsheet. Once loaded into FVS, foresters can then project growth and assess current timber volume based on their stand exam data.

While Survey123 is free, it operates on the ESRI platform, requiring an ArcGIS Online or BIA Portal account for data collection and management. The data collec-



tion tool and accompanying user guide, "A Guide for Using ArcGIS Survey123 to Readily Upload Data into the Forest Vegetation Simulator," is slated for release to all Regions at the end of August. Tribes interested in accessing the tool can request it through Jesse Wooten or Casey Sigg at FIP.

Advancing AI Innovation in Forestry Compliance and Data Management: Building on our previous updates, the BIA Division of Forestry is leveraging AI-driven automation to significantly improve compliance, data management, and operational efficiency. Through the development of AI-powered solutions, FIP is at the forefront of modernizing forestry practices with innovative technology.

Recent advancements include the setup of dedicated AI development environments and ongoing collaboration with BIA IT representatives to ensure proper implementation and coordination of AI Builder credits. The next steps involve thorough testing and ver-

ification with a good sample of documents before moving to the production phase. Once testing is complete, the final approval and the Risk Management Framework (RMF) and Authorization to Operate (ATO) process will be initiated through the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO).

In collaboration with the Departmental Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) Program Manager at the DOI, we have ensured that data privacy is maintained throughout the process. Access to the FIA AI analysis tool and outputs will be restricted to staff members at FIP, who may share the outputs with authorized project staff.

A significant milestone has been achieved with the completion of the National Indian Forest Library project. This Power BI integration enables regional foresters to easily find documents for their programs by applying filters such as tribe, year, and document type. Foresters can open the documents they need directly within the Power BI report, enhancing data visualization and accessibility.

These advancements mark a significant leap forward in our goal to integrate innovative technology into forestry management. By harnessing the power of AI and data visualization, we are not only enhancing operational efficiency but also paving the way for more informed decision-making and sustainable resource management. Stay tuned for more updates as we continue to push the boundaries of what's possible in forestry compliance and data management!

National Advanced Silviculture Program (NASP): NASP 19: All five enrolled BIA and Tribal stu-

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dents that attended NASP 19 successfully completed the Ecological Systems Module 1 at the University of Minnesota from July–August 2025. The same five students are scheduled to attend the Inventory and Decision Support Module 2 at Oregon State University this September 2025.

NASP 20: All Regional Foresters were recently notified and asked to circulate the new application requirements beginning for NASP Class 20 within their respective regions.

From NASP Class 20 and beyond, all application packages must adhere to the new requirements in order to qualify for selection as a nominee. The process requires the completion of an ‘Accountability Plan’ which is the terminology now being used for the application package. The ‘Accountability Plan’ consists of a resume describing how the candidate has completed seven foundational silvicultural work tasks prior to applying, a letter of intent from the candidate, and letters of support from the candidate’s supervisor and line officer.

The seven foundational silvicultural work tasks in which each candidate needs experience are vegetation inventory, presale, sale admin, reforestation, stand improvement, planning: existing conditions, and vegetation data analysis.

Regional Foresters were asked to please begin identifying potential nominees, as the formal Call for Nominations memorandum for NASP Class 20 will be released the first week of October. It will include a November 7th deadline for submitting application packages to the Regional Office for review. If you have any questions, please

contact Steve Singleton at stephen.singleton@bia.gov.

A FORESTER GOES BACK TO SCHOOL BY CASEY SIGG

Foresters work in a complex world. To practice sustainable forest management today, a professional forester must have strong knowledge in soils, hydrology, plant physiology, economics, ecology, and statistics. The list could go on, and having this knowledge is not enough. Foresters also need excellent communication skills to effectively apply this knowledge in a society with competing demands and ideas on how our nation’s forests should be managed. The National Advanced Silviculture Program (NASP) has been helping foresters achieve this balance since 2007. NASP is a graduate-level training in the forestry discipline of silviculture taught by various universities and hosted by the US Forest Service. Silviculture can be defined as the art and science of influencing forest growth to meet society’s objectives on a sustainable basis. It is applied at the ‘stand’ level, where forests are subdivided into similar characteristics such as species of trees and topography. Sound silvicultural practices are mandated on trust lands under the National Indian Forest Resources Management Act of 1990.

As part of the 18th Class of NASP, I traveled to the town of Cloquet in Minnesota’s Northwoods for the first module of the program titled “Ecological Systems,” taught by the University of Minnesota. The cohort was 40+ students, mostly from the US Forest Service. The BIA has five slots in each NASP class. Interested candidates submit an application package to their Re-

gional Forester and they nominate candidates based on their prior experience and program needs. A panel of experienced foresters led by the BIA’s Division of Forestry Central Office then makes the final selections. This class included foresters from Menominee Tribal Enterprises, Hualapai Tribe, Spokane Tribal Forestry, BIA Timber Team, and BIA Branch of Forest Inventory and Planning (FIP). My aim in committing to NASP was gaining new knowledge to better solve forest management problems faced in my current role at FIP and collaborate with peers from across the nation. Also, whether you are planning a tree planting project or finding novel ways to regenerate birch on your forest, silviculture is plain fascinating. For two weeks, we had intensive instruction on the core ecological principles that determine forest growth, and it felt like a refresher of key takeaways from my college forest ecology course. Overviews were given on topics like tree physiology, genetics, and water storage budgets for forested watersheds.

We were tasked with applying learned concepts in the face of current management challenges. Responses to extended droughts and the wildfire crisis were frequently discussed as a class. Learning took place in the field too. Graphs and lectures can only take one so far in their learning, so I was highly intrigued when a Research Forester presenting on drought tolerance and photosynthesis rates brought us outside to see stomatal measurements being performed in real-time on a bur oak seedling. Using a ‘LI-COR’ machine, we could see how stomata (microscopic pores on leaves that make photosynthesis possible) open and close based

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BIA Division of Forestry

by Caleb Cain

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on changing temperature and light conditions. It turns out trees can close or open their stomata instantaneously, even with the shadow from a pass of the hand! The Research Forester remarked, “trees are weird,” as he pointed this out, saying he has seen trees of the same species have markedly different reactions to changing conditions in his lab. Trees still have much to reveal to us. NASP is filled with little moments like this.

Another highlight was visiting the forest on the Fond du Lac Reservation. Foresters with the tribe are practicing innovative management for building resiliency in forest wetlands with threats such as invasive insects. Ash from prescribed

burning is being used to increase the health of wild rice in some lakes.

NASP also comes with plenty of homework. We split into groups and were assigned a forestry research publication to evaluate critically. It is difficult getting back into a college work mindset for most people, but group presentations for this assignment served to better connect with our fellow students. As foresters, we are often asked by others outside the profession to manage forests based on public opinion. These ideas may or may not be grounded in data on how forests actually function. Long nights of studying reinforced our ability to evaluate such claims against known ecological principles.

Over my 10-year career in forestry, numerous coworkers, bosses, and mentors have attended NASP, and all largely said the same thing. Their favorite part was the relationships. Sharing ideas and challenges with peers from across the country was a joy, and I look forward to the next modules. Beginning the program at the University of Minnesota’s Cloquet Forestry Center felt like a return to the roots of why I wanted to be a forester. NASP started in 1909, I am one of many foresters now to have shared laughs around the campfire, traded fieldwork adventures in the halls, and watched sunsets over the towering red pine at this historic forestry campus.



BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin



Aaron Baldwin

BIA AND BIE PARTNER TO EMPOWER THE NEXT GENERATION OF WILDLAND FIREFIGHTERS

The Bureau of Indian Affairs Division of Wildland Fire Management

is proud to partner with the Bureau of Indian Education in the new Native Youth Firefighter Training Program. This is a groundbreaking initiative designed to introduce high school students to the fundamentals of wildland firefighting while attending a Bureau of Indian Education-funded school.

This collaborative effort began with strategic discussions between the DWFM training staff and the Bureau of Indian Education Chief Academic Officer and team in late summer. The program officially launched this fall, offering students a structured curriculum that includes:

- S-130: Firefighter Training
- S-190: Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior
- L-180: Human Factors in the

Wildland Fire Service

- IS-100.C: Introduction to the Incident Command System
- IS-700.B: An Introduction to the National Incident Management System

Through this initiative, Bureau of Indian Education schools provide daily oversight and support to students, guiding them through the coursework and ensuring successful completion. Meanwhile, the Division’s training staff facilitate virtual sessions and discussions, offering expert insight and mentorship.

The program leverages modern technology, including web-based applications and the Wildland Fire Learning Portal, to deliver high-quality training in a flexible,

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BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin

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accessible format. The portal offers an array of courses specifically for wildland fire professionals ranging from basic introduction to advanced training courses.

Last year, DWFM and cooperators taught the distance learning and blended instructional model at three Bureau of Indian Education schools. With hopes of expanding and providing more career options to native youth, the program aims to introduce them to fire careers and an advantage in completing basic fire school courses and field activities ahead of annual hiring for the upcoming fire season.

“This opportunity opens doors for Native youth to pursue seasonal — and potentially permanent — employment with Tribal, BIA, and other wildland fire agencies,” said Blake Abbott, BIA DWFM Fire Planner. “The success of our youth is the success of our communities. We are committed to growing this program and celebrating the achievements of our students.”

The Native Youth Firefighter Training Program represents a powerful investment in the future of Indian Country through building skills, confidence, and career pathways for the next generation of fire professionals.

ADVANCING FUELS MANAGEMENT THROUGH TLS COLLABORATION WITH THE CONFEDERATED SALISH KOOTENAI TRIBES

In late June 2025, the Bureau of Indian Affairs joined the Confed-



Photo of a BIA wildland firefighter applying fire while conducting a prescribed burn in Arizona.

erated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, the U.S. Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station and Southern Research Station, and the New Mexico Consortium in Pablo, Montana for a Terrestrial Laser Scanning (TLS) training and fuels data collection. The visit supported CSKT’s ongoing work to expand technical capacity in fire and fuels management, advancing their priorities in stewardship, and fire risk reduction.

Throughout the week-long training, participants conducted TLS scans and implemented Tier 1 and Tier 2 data collection at two field sites on CSKT lands: Frog/Schley and Grey Wolf. The work followed established TLS collection protocols used in previous collaborative efforts, including San Carlos Apache Tribal lands in Arizona. CSKT staff were also introduced to Cruise Assist tablets, which streamline tree measurements by digitally capturing DBH and GPS location data within the sampled plots. The classroom and field instruction were led by teams from the U.S. Forest Service and the

New Mexico Consortium, who provided guidance on TLS operation, Cruise Assist workflows, and in-field troubleshooting.

Participants also engaged in discussions on the role of TLS and fire modeling in advancing stewardship goals. While environmental compliance processes can be complex, TLS-derived, and physics-based modeling (e.g., QUIC-Fire) that support treatment planning and communication. These tools can help leadership weigh treatment needs, assess potential trade-offs, and support assurance in proposed actions.

As part of these discussions, participants reviewed the CSKT Blueprint for RX Fire Project, which outlines fuels treatment strategies across CSKT and Reserved Treaty Rights Lands, to support long-term planning and risk reduction. The project emphasized the importance of addressing the components of the Fire Behavior Triangle (Fuels, Weather, Topography), with a focus on fuels as the most actionable variable we can influence. By

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BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin

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Photo of training participants conducting field-based TLS setup and fuels data collection exercises during the CSKT session.



using modeling and monitoring to assess how risk shifts across the landscape, the Blueprint helps prioritize treatments that protect cultural values, infrastructure, and natural resources while aligning with community-driven goals. A related session highlighted how TLS supports fuel characterization, complements traditional fuel models (e.g., Scott & Burgan 2005), and provides 3D structural detail to support advanced modeling.

The data collected remains under the control of Tribes, ensuring it is managed according to their priorities.

Throughout these discussions, CSKT staff expressed enthusiasm to continue TLS data collection and explore its applications in support of tribal stewardship goals. The collective drive among the Tribe and agency partners reflects a shared commitment to innovation through co-production while work-

ing together to integrate emerging technologies in manners that align with tribal values. This partnership is helping lay the foundation for future projects built on mutual learning and trust.

This emphasizes on long-term partnership highlights the value of hands-on engagement, shared knowledge, and respect for community priorities. The training reinforced CSKT's leadership in guiding fire and fuels management on their lands, while expanding opportunities to incorporate advanced tools into local strategies.

The BIA remains committed to supporting these tribal-led initiatives and working alongside CSKT and other Nations to grow this collaborative model across Indian Country.



Photo of the CSKT TLS training participants gathering for a group photo in the field.

Education Committee

by Shawn de France



Shawn de France

2026 TRUMAN D. PICARD SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE

The Education Committee met virtually and reviewed the 2026 Truman Picard Scholarship. The award amounts remain the same for college and graduate students studying Forestry or Fire is \$4,000, college and graduate students studying Natural Resources is \$3,000, and graduating senior high school students studying Natural Resources, Forestry or Fire is \$2,000. The deadline is March 20, 2026, and the announcement can

be found at www.itcnet.org/about_us/scholarships.html.

The 2026 Picard applications will be submitted via an online form. This process should make it much easier for students to submit all of their required documents. Enrolled members and enrolled descendants from a federally recognized tribe are eligible to apply for the Truman Picard Scholarship. We believe that this will provide more opportunities for our students and increase the number of applicants significantly.

Each student that receives a Picard scholarship will receive a complementary membership to The Society of American Foresters. Thank you to SAF for supporting our scholars. The ITC also has cooperative financial aid agreements with the University of Washington, Oregon State University, Salish Kootenai College, and Yale University. Recipients of the Picard Scholarship are eligible to receive additional scholarships including tuition waivers, if attending one of these colleges. For more info visit the ITC website or contact the col-

leges directly.

The Education Committee discussed several topics at our meeting. America Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association, a Native American tourism agency, has funding to support recreational activities. The ITC will set up a smaller zoom call with tribes that are interested in discussing it further.

Project Learning Tree a Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) created a pilot project with Yakama Nation to develop a career guidebook that tribes can use for recruitment purposes. We are looking for volunteers to join a committee to move forward with the ITC-SFI Indigenous Voices Guide. We hope to report on the progress during the 2026 Symposium. ITC will be teaming up with Ecotrust to show the stories of how people got to their careers by creating a suite of supporting social media and short video content.



Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo



Jim Durglo

I recently had an opportunity to attend the Intertribal Coalitions Webinar sponsored by the First Nations Development Institute presented by Hillary Hoffmann. This webinar was the second installment of the 2025 Co-Management and Co-Stewardship Webinar Series. This webinar explored how Tribes with shared interests in co-stewardship and co-management opportunities can work together as Intertribal Coalitions to collectively explore and enter into co-stewardship and co-manage-

ment agreements.

Hillary served as Co-Director of the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition from 2022-2025. She led the team that drafted, negotiated, and secured over 300 individual recommendations of the Bears Ears Commission to their federal agency collaborative planning partners at the Bureau of Land Management and USDA Forest Service during the development of the first collaborative Resource Management

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Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo

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Plan for a national monument in U.S. history. Hillary is now teaching Federal Indian Law and Natural Resources Law, serving as a Visiting Professor at Vermont Law and Graduate School and an Adjunct Professor at Boston College Law School. Hillary provided some interesting information about tribal sovereignty that I feel compelled to share. She noted that tribal sovereignty can be exercised and would argue that it can be leveraged in coalition work, and that there are three recognized bases of tribal sovereignty under federal law. The federal government recognizes tribal sovereignty that stems from any of the three sources—whether inherent, delegated, or negotiated.

Inherent Sovereignty—refers to self-governing powers. Felix Cohen, author of the Handbook of Federal Indian Law, summarizes inherent sovereignty well in his quote: “Perhaps the most basic principle of all Indian law supported by a host of decisions....is the principle that those powers which are lawfully vested in an Indian tribe are not, in general, delegated powers granted by express acts of Congress, but rather inherent powers of a limited sovereignty which has never been extinguished. What is not expressly limited [by Congress] remains within the domain of tribal sovereignty.” Examples of inherent sovereignty are apparent in tribal maintenance of their legal systems, governance structures, and defining membership.

Delegated Sovereignty—refers to powers and authorities given by congressional action. Although Indian tribes retain some of their inherent powers of self-governance, tribes are subject to the supreme (plenary) powers of the United



Photo of CSKT Division of Fire, Type 21A Crew on assignment at the Cameron Peak Fire, Colorado, 2020.

States.

Negotiated Sovereignty—refers to rights and authorities outlined in Treaties.

The webinar emphasized the importance of understanding and exercising the sovereignty that remains protected under federal law.

In a blog titled Cultural Burning as a path to Indigenous Led Forest Stewardship, posted on the Intertribal Timber Council website (itcnet.org) in May of this year, Bill Tripp, Director of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy, Karuk Tribe, and ITC Fire Subcommittee Chair ties cultural burning to sovereignty. He states and I totally agree that at its core, cultural burning is an act of sovereignty and self-determination. When we light fire on the land, we are exercising our inherent rights to manage our territories according to our laws, values, and relationships. Fire is a teacher, a relative, and a force for healing.

Bill also notes that to realize this vision, we must invest in tribal-led fire programs, expand training and mentorship networks, and build governance models that empower Indigenous decision-making. We must confront liability issues, expand legal protections, and fund tribal priorities as defined by tribes — not as defined by external agencies. When applied with care and intention, fire can renew landscapes, revitalize ecosystems, and restore our relationships with one another. The flame we carry is not only physical—it holds cultural, spiritual, and political meaning.

As we light good fire on the land once again, we do so with the understanding that sovereignty and sustainability are intertwined. Through cultural burning, we reclaim our role as caretakers and affirm that the health of our forests depends on the health of our communities — and vice versa.

In February of this year, a coalition

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Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo

(Continued from page 12)

of 23 Tribal organizations and intertribal councils representing the majority of sovereign American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal Nations sent a letter to the President, members of Congress, and the Interior Secretary to uphold federal treaty and trust obligations.

At the core of the letter is a reaffirmation that “Tribal Nations are not

racial groups but sovereign political entities with a unique legal and political relationship with the United States.” This relationship is rooted in inherent sovereignty, recognized by the U.S. Constitution, and upheld by treaties, federal laws, and court decisions. Thus, the signatories stress that federal funding for Tribal programs is not a discretionary budget item but rather should be understood and acknowledged as a legally mandated obligation

owed to Tribal Nations.

While tribal sovereignty is limited today by the United States under treaties, acts of Congress, Executive Orders, federal administrative agreements, and court decisions, what remains is exceedingly important to understand and exercise.



National Native Conservation Network Coordinator

by Kathy Ferge



Kathy Ferge

Now in my fifth month with ITC, I am starting to get an idea of what this position truly entails! Tribes with forestry programs seem to fall into two camps, they either have excellent relationships with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), or they don't work with NRCS at all.

For those of you working with NRCS I would love to hear your stories about how you have grown your relationship with NRCS. We are especially looking for tribes interested in being part of our case

studies that we can share through a variety of social media venues. Hopefully providing information that is helpful to all tribal forestry programs.

If you are not working with NRCS, I would like to know why. The survey that was shared during the ITC Symposium indicated tribes can be hampered by the expectation of providing a cost share on practices, need better coordination between BIA and NRCS, and lack of staffing or contractors to implement projects. I would like to know more so we can start addressing these challenges.

Finally, I feel pretty good about my accomplishments to date. The big projects include an ITC hosted webinar featuring work of the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa along with NRCS and Farm Service Agency (FSA) partners. Presenting at the Indigenous Agroforestry Network Gathering. Planning for an in-person meeting in California with NRCS and the Forest Business Alliance. Planning a Pre-Symposium ITC Workshop in 2026 with a variety of opportunities for tribes to build or enhance relationships with NRCS and FSA.

I will also be researching funding opportunities to address the need for cost shares and locations for future in-person meetings regarding NRCS-related training.

I am here to work for you. So please share your needs by giving me a call at (541) 571-3815 or sending me an email at kathy.ferge@icloud.com. Let's explore NRCS opportunities together!



Awards Committee

by Robin Harkins



Robin Harkins

NOMINATE A DESERVING INDIVIDUAL FOR THE EARLE R. WILCOX AWARDS

Have you thought about recognizing your peers or employees for outstanding work and contributions to Indian Forestry at the regional or national level? As fall approaches it is time to start thinking about recognizing those who have made significant contributions to Indian forestry and natural resources through their work in our industry.

Nominations will open for the Earle R. Wilcox Memorials Awards in January 2026 with completed

applications due by 5 PM Pacific Time, Friday, March 13, 2026. A checklist will be included with the nomination information to be sure all required items are gathered and included with the submission. If you have thought about nominating a peer in the past, please give it some more thought and begin to gather the information needed for the application. Award recipients will be featured at the 49th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium banquet on June 11, 2026, in Keshena, WI.

Earle R Wilcox Memorial Awards honor individuals who have made significant contributions in the field of Indian forestry and natural resources. The awards are given in honor of Mr. Earle R. Wilcox, who will always be remembered for his significant achievements on behalf of Indian people and their forests. Mr. Wilcox's career spanned some 33 years with the Bureau of Indian Affairs across the country, being interrupted by World War II and the Korean War and culminating with his position as Chief of the BIA Forestry Program with his retirement in 1973. After his retirement, Mr. Wilcox continued to

serve Indian forestry and contributed greatly to the development of the Intertribal Timber Council and what it stands for, giving with a spirit that exemplifies a man who believed in the greatest good for Indian people and our forests. His integrity and tenacious spirit inspired those who were privileged to have known him.

Anyone can submit a nomination for the award. Details on how to nominate and the application requirements for the Earle R. Wilcox Award will be mailed to Tribes in mid-January 2026. They can also be found on the ITC website later this fall at www.itcnet.org/about_us/awards.html or can be obtained by calling the ITC office at 503-282-4296. Nominations will be considered for both the regional and national award based on level of contribution and effort. If you have questions or need guidance on completing a nomination, please contact ITC Awards Committee Chairperson, Robin Harkins at rob-inharkins@coquilletribe.org or the ITC office.



Legislative Update

by Matt Hill



Matt Hill

INTERIOR, AG ANNOUNCE “WILDLAND FIRE SERVICE” PLAN

On September 15, 2025, the Interior and Agriculture Departments announced the U.S. Wildland Fire Service to modernize wildfire management nationwide. The functional action is a secretarial order from DOI “directing the Department to elevate the wildland fire program to the status it deserves by unifying it within the U.S. Wildland Fire

Service (USWFS).” “Unification” is defined as the strategic alignment of resources, including but not limited to, the following:

- physical resources like aviation and vehicles;
- pay, benefits, retirement, training, and human resource systems;
- consistent application of fire-fighting strategies, which differs from tactics that are situational;

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Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

(Continued from page 14)

- technology for early fire detection; and
- modernization of communication and life safety tools to ensure cross-team coordination when jointly fighting wildland fires.

By October 31, 2025, the Department's primary wildland fire and aviation Bureaus and Offices—BIA, BLM, FWS, NPS, OWF, and OAS—will finalize a plan, under the direction of the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary, and in consultation with senior Departmental leadership and key stakeholders, for consolidating line authority and management of the entirety of the wildland fire program identified under the wildland fire management appropriations and extended to other DOI lands as appropriate.

Once approved by the Secretary, implementation of this plan will commence on January 12, 2026. In developing the plan, DOI will “consider outside input when formulating the best and most effective strategy for unification, including from State, Tribal, and local partners with relevant wildfire experience.”

DOI will “await” unification with the Forest Service, but identifies a lengthy list of new cooperative activities and processes, including:

- Utilize a unified wildfire risk mapping tool to plan mitigation activities and demonstrate wildfire risk reduction accomplishments across Federal, Tribal, State, local, and private lands; propose a timeline for implementation within 30 days.
- Establish a 5-year emergency stabilization and rehabilitation framework including recommend-

ed consistent appropriations language and shared authorities within 270 days.

- Work with USFS and the Environmental Protection Agency to eliminate regulatory barriers for prescribed fire and the use of fire retardant, including revising the exceptional events rule, and permitting requirements within 270 days.

- Ensure coordination between the Department's Solicitor's Office and USDA's General Counsel regarding post-fire litigation activities, as appropriate, to effectuate the goals identified in the EO.

ITARA REAUTHORIZATION

House Republicans are gearing up to introduce legislation to reauthorize and improve the Indian Trust Asset Reform Act (“ITARA”). This legislation would make the ITARA initial 10-year demonstration project permanent while addressing obstacles that have prevented ITARA from being fully implemented.

The legislation stems from the Subcommittee's oversight hearing on ITARA on February 25, 2025, where ITC President Cody Desautel testified. First enacted in 2016, ITARA was an effort by Congress to reaffirm the trust responsibility of the federal government to Tribal Nations. Witnesses at the hearing testified that they had faced various challenges with ITARA implementation, especially when attempting to enter an Indian Trust Asset Management Project (ITAMP). ITAMPs were a key factor in ITARA, as they were intended to provide Tribal Nation with more control over how their trust assets were managed.

The ITC provided input on the legislative text and looks forward to enactment of the bill.

ROADLESS AREA MANAGEMENT

The ITC has provided formal comments in response to the U.S. Forest Service's proposal to rescind the 2001 Roadless Rule (promulgated by the Clinton Administration), which limits management in approximately 44.7 million acres of National Forest System lands.

The Roadless Rule's provisions supersede the plan components for inventoried roadless areas applied through individual land management plans. The proposed rescission of the Roadless Rule would not authorize any specific ground-disturbing activities or projects, nor does it propose any increase in the overall amount of timber harvested or roads constructed.

According to the Federal Register notice, “Tribal governments and Alaska Native Corporations will have an opportunity to be engaged during rulemaking and EIS development through various coordination and consultation events.”

ITC comments requested:

- More information about the prevalence of tribally-focused designations (e.g., areas of tribal importance) found within roadless areas;
- Identification of how the rescission could impact traditional cultural districts and properties under the National Historic Preservation Act;
- More information about how the rescission could impact decisions made pursuant to the Cultural and Heritage Cooperation Authori-

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ty Act;

- An inventory of roadless areas adjacent to tribal lands;
- Consideration of a new mechanism to allow tribal co-management of roadless areas.

APPROPRIATIONS STATUS

We are in the final stretch of Fiscal Year 2025, ending on September 30. Both the House and Senate Committees of jurisdiction have passed their own versions of the Interior appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2026, although neither chamber has passed the committee-reported bill.

Both bills *generally* increase overall spending on BIA programs. The House bill would increase BIA Forestry spending from the current level of \$63 million to \$66 million, while the Senate bill holds forestry spending level.

At the time of publication, House Republicans have unveiled a short-term Continuing Resolution to keep the federal government funded until November 21, 2025. House Democrats are objecting, pledging to propose their own CR that ties in an extension of enhanced Affordable Care Act insurance subsidies.

If a CR agreement is not reached, the federal government will shut down on October 1.

STATUS OF MAJOR FOREST MANAGEMENT LEGISLATION

Fix Our Forests Act (“FOFA”): Sponsored by Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-AR) passed the House in

January and is still being negotiated in the Senate. The bill aims to encourage active forest management and community resiliency to wildfires by expediting environmental analyses, reducing lawsuits, and increasing the pace and scale of forest restoration projects. The ITC generally supports the intent of the legislation. In March, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians testified in favor of the bill at a hearing before the Senate Agriculture Committee.

In August, ITC sent a letter to the Senate Agriculture and House Natural Resources Committees supporting several tribal amendments to the bill, including:

- reduction of wildfire risk to timber held in trust;
- empowering Tribes to designate firesheds on their own lands, and on adjacent lands where Tribes are carrying out Tribal Forest Protection Act projects;
- extending NEPA CE’s to tribal forest lands.

FORESTS Act: On May 20, 2025, the ITC and several tribes testified before the House Natural Resources Committee’s Federal Land Subcommittee’s hearing on the FORESTS Act (Rep. Hurd [R-CO]), focused on expanding tribal participation in cross-boundary forest management. The bill would authorize the Forest Service and BLM to treat forest areas as “Indian forest land” for purposes of working with tribes and utilizing federal laws and regulations that tribes use for management of tribal trust forests.

In August, the ITC provided Chairman Westerman’s staff with proposed changes to the draft FORESTS Act. We expect the bill to be intro-

duced in the coming weeks, which must happen before the committee can formally “report” it out.

Tribal Self-Determination and Co-Management in Forestry Act: Sponsored by Rep. Huffman (D-CA), the bill directs the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Forest Service to incorporate Tribal co-management into decision-making processes—affirming Tribal sovereignty and fulfilling the U.S. federal government’s longstanding trust and treaty obligations. Specifically, the bill extends statutory authority to the U.S. Forest Service to enter into co-management agreements with Tribes for activities including forest planning, ecological restoration, recreation, and research.

A hearing was held on the bill, with supportive testimony provided by the Karuk Tribe. The ITC and member tribes have been providing comments and proposed edits to Huffman’s staff.

“One Big, Beautiful Bill” Act (“OBBBA”): The controversial Republican budget reconciliation bill was passed by Congress and signed into law in July. OBBBA permanently extends the 2017 Trump tax cuts, eliminates taxes on tips and overtime, etc. while reducing spending on federal entitlement programs such as SNAP.

Of note, OBBBA also contains public land and timber provisions.

For each of fiscal years 2026 through 2034, the Forest Service is directed to sell not less than 250,000,000 board-feet greater than the quantity of board-feet sold in the previous fiscal year. However, this is subject to the maximum allowable sale quantity of timber or the projected timber sale quantity

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Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

(Continued from page 16)

under the applicable forest plan in effect on the date of enactment of OBBBA. There's a similar provision for the BLM.

It also authorizes 20-year timber contract language (similar to "sustained yield units"). Rural counties are particularly concerned about this provision because timber revenues are entirely directed back to the Treasury, by-passing statutory revenue sharing requirements such as the 25% Act.

With respect to NEPA, it also allows a "project sponsor" to pay the Federal government 125% of expected costs for a "project," complete the analysis under specific timelines, and be protected from administrative and judicial review.

Barred Owl Management: Bipartisan legislation has been introduced by Rep. Nehls (R-TX) that would use the Congressional Review Act to invalidate the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's barred owl management strategy in the Pacific Northwest. The Hoopa Tribe has been involved in the removal strategy and opposes the legislation. The strategy has shown success in reversing the decline of the northern spotted owl, as well as addressing the negative impacts of the barred owl on other species of tribal interest, such as pilated woodpeckers.

U.S. FOREST SERVICE UPDATES

USDA Reorganization: On August 1, the USDA announced opened a 30-day public comment period for stakeholders to provide feedback on the Department's reorganization plan, as outlined in the Secretary's memorandum issued on July 24, 2025.

The reorganization proposal will consolidate operations and relocate approximately 2,600 Washington-based positions to five regional hubs: Raleigh, NC; Kansas City, MO; Indianapolis, IN; Fort Collins, CO; and Salt Lake City, UT.

On August 26, the ITC submitted comments on the proposal, including the following recommendations:

- Engage in robust Nation-to-Nation consultation with Tribal Nations before finalizing or implementing the reorganization plan. Public comment alone is not a substitute for Tribal consultation;
- Protect and strengthen forest- and regional-level relationships by ensuring continued presence, technical capacity, and staff who understand Tribal sovereignty and forest management priorities. This should include specifically designated officials at each National Forest to serve as Tribal Partnership coordinators;
- Commit to service continuity so that critical programs, including co-stewardship, wildfire suppression, and forest restoration, are not delayed or disrupted.

NW Forest Plan: The Forest Service states that it is still processing comments on the DEIS for the NW Forest Plan Amendment. In March, the ITC (and many member tribes) submitted comments on the DEIS and requested full revision of the Plan.

At this point, a revised amendment is more likely and may include a revision of the scope of the amendment to consider issues raised by ITC.

AS-IA NOMINEE

Still pending is the nomination of

Billy Kirkland to serve as DOI Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs recently voted to favorably report Mr. Kirkland's nomination from the committee, but no floor vote on his nomination has been scheduled.

While Kirkland's nomination continues to linger, Janel Broderick is now acting as Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. She was previously the principal deputy AS-IA and the chief of staff to the AS-IA.

Bryan Mercier continues to serve as BIA Director, which is not a political appointment and—like the Chief of the Forest Service—oversees a large federal agency without Senate confirmation.



Operations Committee

by Jason Robison



Jason Robison

Happy fall everyone. The ITC Operations Committee gathered virtually on September 9, 2025, to discuss key initiatives shaping tribal forestry, wildfire management, and national policy. As always, it was a very full agenda. The meeting covered ongoing collaborations, federal updates, and upcoming opportunities for tribal engagement. Below are highlights from the discussion.

TRIBAL LISTENING SESSION WITH THE FOREST SERVICE

A listening session is scheduled for September 25, 2025, where the Forest Service will provide updates on wildfire risk reduction efforts. Tribal representatives are encouraged to attend and share perspectives on pressing issues. The session will also address leadership direction on timber production under EO 14225, the USDA reorganization, and updates to the Explore Act. ITC will designate a board representative to host the session, with ITC President Cody Desautel and Vice president Phil Rigdon providing support. Sample questions are available in the ITC Board Book to help guide discussion. Board treasurer, Tim Miller, will also be in attendance for the

call to ask questions and drive the discussion.

NAFO POLICY UPDATES

James Wilson, Director of policy for the National Alliance of Forest Landowners (NAFO) briefed the committee on policy opportunities surrounding the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS). The current statutory definitions exclude much of the small-diameter wood that contributes to wildfire risk, an issue impacting both forest health and rural economies. Advocates are pushing for updates that would open new renewable fuel markets for woody biomass. The technology to convert woody biomass into transportation fuels now exists, and bipartisan interest in expanding the RFS is growing. ITC has supported this effort in the Fix our Forest Act (FOFA). ITC will coordinate on related advocacy, develop a white paper on EU regulations, and explore NAFO-USFS agreements to expand tribal co-stewardship opportunities.

MARKETS MATTER ADVISORY GROUP

Brian Brashaw from the USFS highlighted the growing challenge of residual forest materials such as small-diameter logs and biomass. To address this, a national initiative will launch with surveys, listening sessions, and a 2026 national summit in Madison, Wisconsin. The initiative seeks to align stakeholders, accelerate market development, and shape supportive policy options. ITC is invited to consider roles in the steering committee and advisory group, ensuring tribal forestry is represented in solutions.

USDA REORGANIZATION

Reed Robinson, Director of the Office of Tribal Relations, updated members on the USDA reorganization plan, which proposes consolidating into five hubs while eliminating regional offices. This restructuring has already reduced Tribal Relations staffing in Washington, D.C., by 75%, raising concerns about capacity for meaningful consultation. Public comments on the plan are due September 30, 2025. ITC members are encouraged to provide feedback to help ensure tribal voices remain central in USDA decision-making. ITC has provided comment on the re-org.

MARKETING & BRANDING

Steve Rigdon with Sustainable Northwest reported that surveys and focus groups on tribal forestry branding are nearly complete. Next steps include developing a formal definition of 'tribal forestry' and 'wood products,' with ITC members providing feedback. Preparations are underway for the Ponderosa Pine Summit in Flagstaff this November, which will highlight the cultural and economic importance of ponderosa pine. The effort also includes showcasing nine tribal forestry projects through media campaigns and supporting the U.S. Green Building Council in refining standards.

IFMAT IV

The self-governance survey results will be focus of the next self-governance workgroup meeting. A self-governance workshop will be held at the next symposium in Menominee. A primary need identified is additional training, particularly around the Indian Trust Asset Reform ACT (ITARA), where use

(Continued on page 19)

Operations Committee

by Jason Robison

(Continued from page 18)

and understanding remain limited.

On July 22, 2025, ITC met with the ABA to plan a Continuing Legal Education (CLE) program on tribal forestry, the first of its kind. Tentatively scheduled for January, the CLE will highlight tribal forestry, land management, and resource management. Participants include Laura Alvidrez, Carolyn Gilbert, Christina Reichert, Jason Robison, and Phil Rigdon. The group also discussed pairing the CLE with a podcast to expand outreach. Themes include co-stewardship, the government-to-government relationship, and disparities in funding under Joint Secretarial Order 3403. Next steps include securing speakers, finalizing application requirements, and ensuring diversity in panelists.

The legislative and policy work group continues to advance work on the Fix our Forest Act (FOFA), Indian Trust Asset Reform Act (ITARA), Huffman's Co-Management bill, and the Forest Act, with letters and draft legislative text already submitted on FOFA, ITARA, and the Co-Management bill.

LEGISLATIVE & POLICY UPDATES

Matt Hill reported on USDA's proposal to rescind the 2001 Roadless Rule, which currently restricts road building and logging across 58.5 million acres. Supporters of rescission argue that the rule hampers forest management and rural economies, while opponents stress the need for protecting cultural and ecological values. ITC is coordinating comments to emphasize tribal consultation, cultural recognition, and management resources. Comments are due by September

19, 2025.

FIRE SUBCOMMITTEE

Fire Subcommittee Chairman Bill Tripp highlighted federal fire program challenges, including stalled consolidation efforts, limited funding, and the medical standards process that creates barriers for tribal administrators. The Intertribal Buffalo Council shared efforts to expand prescribed fire as part of buffalo management, partnering with TNC to restore ecosystems. It was also noted that funding for the Tribal Firefighter pay rollout has been secured, though tribes must update policies and procedures for implementation.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

With staff turnover at Salish Kootenai College affecting workforce capacity, ITC is considering forming a task group to guide the Workforce Development Strategic Plan moving forward. The tribalforest.org site needs updates, and stronger coordination with BIA is required. Additionally, ITC is exploring a potential \$1 million funding agreement with BIA to support a second timber team, expanding technical services to tribes nationwide. More to come at the December board meeting.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ONBOARDING

ITC welcomed the announcement that Cal Mukumoto will begin as Executive Director on October 1, 2025. ITC President Cody Desautel and the board officers will assist with onboarding, including orientation on ITC's structure, projects, and priorities. A staffing package with 60-day, 90-day, 6-month, and 1-year goals is being finalized to

support Cal's transition and ensure ITC's momentum continues. This is a monumental step for ITC.

LOOKING AHEAD

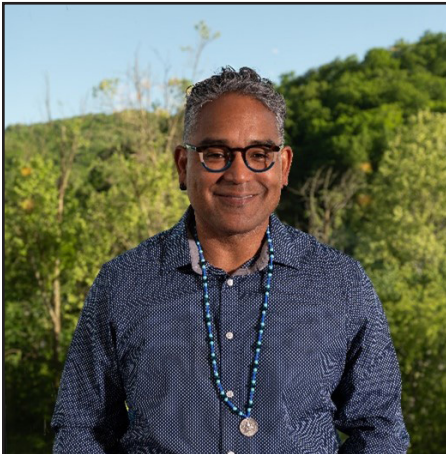
The Committee continues advancing priorities in IFMAT IV Implementation, co-stewardship, workforce development, wildfire resilience, and national policy engagement. Members are encouraged to participate in upcoming meetings, consultations, listening sessions, and subcommittee efforts to strengthen the tribal voice in forestry and natural resource management. Please reach out to Laura Alvidrez if you'd like to participate in these types of discussions.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone in -person at our next meeting in December.



Symposium Committee

by Howard Teasley, Jr.



Howard Teasley, Jr.

2026 SYMPOSIUM SAVE THE DATE

Please save the date of June 8–11, 2026, and join us in Keshena, WI! The Symposium Committee is planning a great program for next year's Symposium with our host the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin. They were our gracious



Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin staff at the 2025 Annual Awards Banquet in Missoula, MT.

hosts in 2013, and this new event will be as thrilling and entertaining thirteen years later. There will be plenty of activities which includes field tours and learning sessions to fit everyone's interests. We will have a full update in the winter newsletter. Lastly, a quick fact...

The Menominee Nation is the only tribal reservation that can be recognized from space.



49th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium

Forestry in a Changing Environment

SAVE THE DATE | JUNE 8 – 11, 2026 | KESHENA, WI

*Hosted by Intertribal Timber Council &
Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin*

FROM ROOTS TO CANOPY: THE *ITC* VOICE



<https://medium.com/@intertribaltimbercouncil>



Member Tribes we want to hear from you!

ITC is looking to feature the amazing work being done across Indian Country in Forestry, Fire, and Natural Resources for our blog.

It's an easy process, with a short interview, and then the story is written for you.

Interested Tribes should contact the ITC office at (503) 282-4296.



Truman D. Picard Scholarship Announcement For Native American/Alaskan Natural Resource Students

Submit Online



Deadline: Friday, March 20, 2026, 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time.

Award: Number of awards varies per year. Award provided in summer 2026 to support students for fall 2026.

\$4,000: College students, graduate students, and graduating college seniors applying/accepted for graduate school studying Forestry or Fire.

\$3,000: College students, graduate students, and graduating college seniors applying/accepted for graduate school studying Natural Resources.

\$2,000: Graduating senior high school students studying Natural Resources, Forestry or Fire.

Status: Full-time college students enrolled in 12 or more credits; graduate students enrolled in 6 or more credits.

The **Truman D. Picard Scholarship Program** is dedicated to supporting Native American students pursuing higher education in Natural Resources. Preference will be given to students whose degree or area of study directly involves management of Forest Resources or Fire. The \$4,000 award is contingent upon college and graduate students being accepted in a school for a Forestry or Fire degree.

FINANCIAL AID AGREEMENTS

The ITC has cooperative financial aid agreements with the University of Washington, Oregon State University, Salish Kootenai College, and Yale University. Recipients of the ITC Picard Scholarship are eligible to receive additional scholarships including tuition waivers, if attending one of these colleges. For more info visit the ITC website at www.itcnet.org/about_us/scholarships.html or contact the colleges directly.

TRUMAN D. PICARD (1946-1986)

The ITC established a scholarship program in honor of Truman D. Picard who served on the ITC Board from 1982-1985. He attended the Forest Engineering Institute at Oregon State University while working for the BIA Colville Presales program and became one of the first from the agency to complete the program. In 1977, Truman transferred to Colville Tribal Forestry as a Supervisory Forest Technician in charge of woods operations and later promoted to Assistant Supervisor of Forestry Operations. Because of his drive to complete his education, Truman returned to Oregon State University earning a B.S. Degree in Forest Management. Post college, he was appointed Colville Forestry Director. Truman's work for the Tribe will always be remembered by his individual efforts to bridge BIA Forestry and Colville Tribal Forestry in a joint effort to improve the level of Forest Management on the reservation – truly a lasting legacy.



Truman D. Picard Scholarship Announcement For Native American/Alaskan Natural Resource Students

Submit Online



APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ **Complete the form online at <https://app.ezfiledrop.com/546117/picard-2026> and upload all required documents.** No account is required. The form will not save your progress; therefore, you must have all required documents prior to starting the application. The Scholarship Selection Committee will review and rank applicants who completely address each section.
 - Your name, email, permanent mailing address, and phone number
 - Award category, school you are currently enrolled in or applied/accepted to, major category, declared major, expected graduation date, and school you will attend in fall 2026

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- ☐ **Essay discussing the following three (3) questions**, be as specific as possible:
 - 1) Academic interest in Forestry, Wildland Fire Management, and/or Natural Resources
 - 2) Commitment to education, community, and your culture
 - 3) Financial need
- ☐ **Resume**
- ☐ **Three (3) letters of reference on letterhead, signed, and dated.** If no letterhead is available through the reference's organization, they should create their own. Digital and electronic signature accepted. The letter must be dated within the last six months. Open any sealed documents, if applicable. Reference letters are not accepted directly from referrals.
- ☐ **Evidence of validated enrollment or descendant enrollment in a federally recognized Tribe or Alaska Native Corp.,** as established by the U.S. Government. Proof of parent enrollment or birth certificate is NOT accepted; applicant must submit a copy of the applicant's enrollment.
 - Accepted documents include a copy of applicant's enrollment card or descendant card, front and back;
 - Or completed BIA Form 4432 Verification of Indian Preference for Employment <https://bit.ly/BIAForm4432>.
- ☐ **Transcripts and GPA:** ALL students must include unofficial or official transcripts.
 - **High school students** must provide a **college acceptance letter** and **class schedule** to verify before a check is released.
 - **College students** must provide proof of their **declared major and current class schedule**.
- ☐ **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):** ALL students must complete the FAFSA and the Submission Summary. If it has not been completed, include last year's report. **View your FAFSA Submission Summary** by logging in to your StudentAid.gov account Dashboard at <https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/sign-in/landing>, select your processed FAFSA submission from the "My Activity" section, and click "View FAFSA Submission Summary" or contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-433-3243 and request a mailed copy (10–14 days).
- ☐ **Submission Deadline:** Applications must be submitted **before** the close of business (5:00 p.m. Pacific Time) **March 20, 2026**. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.
- ☐ **Questions:** Contact the ITC office by email intertribaltimbercouncil@gmail.com or by phone (503) 282-4296.



INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL

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