



INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL TIMBER NOTES

Summer ~ 2025



Robin Harkins

2025 NATIONAL FORESTER OF THE YEAR AWARDED TO STEVE ANDRINGA

A National Forester of the Year Award was given to Steve Andringa. His forestry journey began in Morton, Washington, where he inherited the values of hard work, integrity, and stewardship from his father — a forester himself who quietly instilled these traits not with words, but with action.

Our award winner's own forestry story began humbly. He worked on a Christmas tree farm at age 12 and later in the mills and forests of the Pacific Northwest. By the time he was setting chokers in the blowdown of Mount St. Helens, it was clear: this work wasn't just a job — it was a calling.



Photo of Steve Andringa receiving his 2025 Earle R. Wilcox Axe Award.

Steve went on to dedicate more than 30 years to Indian Country. Most notably by building and leading the Yakama Nation Forestry Program as well as providing technical support for the tribe in establishing Yakama Forest Products.

As the Tribal Forest program developed under his leadership, he assisted in building the capacity for the tribe to 638 contract the tribal fuels and fire management sections. Our winner also led restoration efforts to mitigate massive insect outbreaks and wildfires.

Under Steve's leadership, more than 40,000 acres of ancestral fee lands were restored to Yakama ownership. And over 100,000 acres were treated through the Forest Development Program.

He was also instrumental in getting Yakama lands certified to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative — a milestone in sustainable tribal forest management.

But it's also important for us to understand that Steve's impact extends beyond sustainable

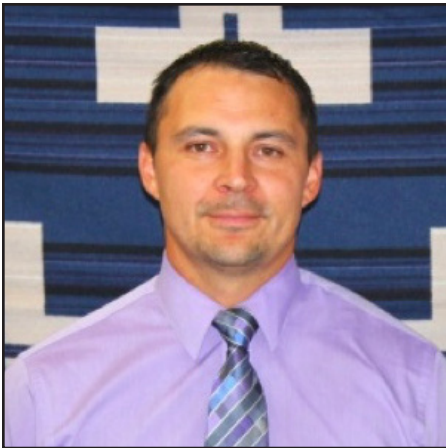
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President's Message

by Cody Desautel



Cody Desautel

It was amazing to see everyone at the Symposium in Missoula in early June. While we were a little short on our federal partners, we had good attendance from the other participants that typically join us. I want to thank the staff and leadership from the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribe for welcoming us into their homelands and showing us the clever work they are doing in western Montana. I also want to thank the ITC and symposium committee staff. These events require an immense amount of

work, and somehow they seem to pull them together year after year with their small group.

Although registration numbers were great, there were concerns that we didn't have enough General Member delegates registered for the 2025 Symposium to meet quorum and hold the Annual Business Meeting in person. We made the tough decision to move the ITC Board Elections voting and Annual Business Meeting to an online format and rescheduled for after the symposium. Member Tribes will meet online on July 22, 2025, to reveal the 2025 Board Elections results and select the 2028 and 2029 Symposium Host Tribes. There are five Tribes up for election including – Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Quinault Indian Nation, and Tanana Chiefs Conference.

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, we are off to an eventful start to this year and administration. That

has not changed much over the last few months. We have a number of items to report on that include proposed legislation that provides tribes new authorities on adjacent federal land, appropriations, staffing reductions in the federal government, and other bills that can impact our member tribes and Indian country.

We will start with the good news. Congress continues to support tribal forest management through legislation that provides additional authorities for tribal management on adjacent federal lands. On May 20, 2025, I testified alongside several other witnesses from Indian Country on the draft Fostering Opportunities to Restore Ecosystems Through Sound Tribal Stewardship (FORESTS) Act, Sponsored by Rep. Hurd from Colorado. We've spent the last year working with House Committee on Natural Resources, and Chairman Westerman on text for this draft bill. The bill would allow tribes several management opportunities on federal land, which would include managing federal land in Indian forest land. This would allow Tribes to use federal authorities, such as the National Indian Forest Resource Management Act, to manage federal lands. There are a number of other provisions and pilot projects that will be covered in Matt Hill's report. We will continue to support this bill and provide updates as it moves through Congress.

In addition to the FORESTS Act, Representative Huffman introduced another Tribal co-management bill titled Tribal Self-Determination and Co-Management in Forestry Act. Bill Tripp from Karuk Tribe was given the opportunity to testify on this bill in



Photo of the 2024-2025 ITC Board of Directors from L to R: Phil Rigdon, Cody Desautel, Timothy P. Miller, Robin Harkins, Clinton Northway, Howard Teasley, Jr., James "Bing" Matt, and Jason Robison.

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President's Message

by Cody Desautel

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early June. This bill builds on the co-stewardship agreements under the last provide traction and provides further definition to what tribal involvement in planning and decision making on federal lands should look like.

Now the unwelcome news. We have seen the President's proposed "skinny" budget, and the subsequent House version titled the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which passed on May 22, 2025,. Both versions had significant reductions to federal spending, including a proposed 617 million dollar cut to BIA's 2.9 trillion-dollar budget from FY 2025. The Senate continues to work on their version of the 2026 appropriations bill, and ITC will continue to lobby for Indian country stressing the importance of funding to support forest and fire management. We will provide updates in future newsletters as we have more information. In addition to the budget cuts there are significant reductions in the federal workforce. Based on early information we think the BIA may have lost more than 20% of its workforce to the Deferred Resignation Program (DRP). As we noted in our appropriations testimony in February of this year, the BIA has al-

ready seen significant reductions in staffing with the 2020 BIA update noting almost 7,000, which did include BIE. The ITC will continue to track this closely, but based on our current estimates the BIA workforce may be below 3,000 employees with complete consultation on the Reduction In Force (RIF) and reorganization plans for the department. That number could be reduced further depending on how many positions are identified for the RIF.

Other important items we are tracking are the Executive Order (EO) to increase timber production, and another to combine the U.S. Forest Service fire staff with Department of Interior fire staff to create one fire service. There have been subsequent Secretarial Orders (SO) from USDA to provide the Department guidance on how to achieve the intent of EO 14225. ITC is drafting letters to the department to ensure tribal impacts are considered, and consultation is provided to capture tribal input. We don't have much information about the process or plan for moving all fire suppression agencies under the Department of Interior to form the unified fire service but will provide updates as we receive them.

ITC also continues to work with

BIA on implementation of the new firefighter pay tables and Incident Response Premium Pay, which were authorized in the March continuing resolution that funded the federal government for the remainder of FY 2025. Through support of the Office of Wildland Fire, and the BIA we have confidence both will be available to tribes. The contract mechanisms or reimbursement processes will need additional work though. We will also provide updates on this as we get more information.

In closing I want to thank the ITC board and our member tribes for their continued support for Tribal forestry and fire. I don't remember a point in my career where there have been so many important agenda items on our respective plates. We did hold interviews for the ITC Executive Director position on June 13, 2025, and hope to have a candidate approved by the board in July. With the growing workload for ITC the addition of this position is critical. As we continue to navigate these unique times feel free to reach out to me or the ITC staff with any questions, concerns, or input you have.



Awards Committee

by Robin Harkins

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forestry. He was a guiding force on the ITC Awards Committee for many years and served as the Chair of the ITC Education Committee.

Under his leadership, the Picard Scholarship raffle flourished — helping raise over a million dollars

for future tribal foresters. His steady presence and mentorship helped shape ITC initiatives including the *Trust in Crisis* wildfire report, the *Anchor Forest Project*, and *Workforce Development* initiatives.

Steve is known across Indian Country as a generous mentor, a policy leader, and a quiet

force who led with humility and principle. As one nominator put it, our winner didn't just influence forestry — he influenced foresters. He inspired a generation of young tribal professionals to lead with purpose and heart.

We honor not just a career, but

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Awards Committee

by Robin Harkins

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a legacy. A legacy that began in the woods of Washington rippled through the halls of tribal leadership, national forums, and

the lives of all who were lucky enough to work with him.

Like Mr. Earl Wilcox, the leadership, devotion, and accomplishments of this years' National Achievement Award

winner will leave a lasting impact on Indian forestry and natural resources across the nation. Congratulations Steve!



National Native Conservation Network Coordinator

by Kathy Ferge



Kathy Ferge

INTRODUCING NNCN COORDINATOR KATHY FERGE

Greetings from eastern Oregon! I'm Kathy Ferge and I'm so excited to be working with Intertribal Timber Council (ITC), as part of the National Native Conservation Network (NNCN). The NNCN is a consortium of tribal entities that are working under an umbrella agreement with the Intertribal Agriculture Council. In addition to ITC, members include Indian Nations Conservation Alliance, United

Southern and Eastern Tribes, Tribal Buffalo Council, Columbia River Intertribal Fisheries Commission. These groups are tasked with helping their tribal constituents either connect with or enhance their current connections with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Services Agency. For ITC this includes:

Building Relationships through Outreach & Communication:

- Use a variety of tools or develop tools, to share pertinent USDA & NRCS information with tribes: programmatic due dates, disaster funding, success stories, upcoming workshops and events, etc.

Utilizing Partnerships & Technical Assistance that can Help Put Relationships to Work:

- Ensure conservation partnerships are in place that assist tribal foresters as they plan for management and protection of their natural resources.
- Outreach to date NRCS, IAC, Bureau of Indian Affairs, seeking other organizations providing services to tribes with forestry programs.
- Special attention will be given to developing strategic partnerships that will allow ITC to expand services in areas where it may be lacking.

Developing Workshops & Training that get Conservation on the Ground:

- Identify opportunities for NRCS led workshops and training to assist tribal partners better understand how to connect with NRCS programming, with special interest on contracting for tribal forestry programs and tribal individuals.

I'm all about building relationships, and to me, part of that is helping you understand who I am and why I've been selected to lead the NNCN for ITC. I'm relatively recently retired from Oregon USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) where I served for 13 years as state Tribal Liaison and Outreach Coordinator.

As tribal liaison I expanded tribal engagement in Oregon to include all nine Oregon-based tribes, connecting NRCS leadership and field staff with tribes, introducing tribal partners to NRCS programs and technical resources and partnering with organizations such as IAC to assist with some of the challenges we faced. Probably most important to my work with ITC, I helped both tribes and national and regional tribal organizations better understand the NRCS planning process and facilitated their input to help get

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National Native Conservation Network Coordinator

by Kathy Ferge

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conservation on the ground. Not every project goes smoothly, no matter who the partners are, so I also worked to help identify project barriers and developed and with help from various tribal partners implemented strategies to enhance service and ensure the projects met tribal needs.

Nation-wide, NRCS has a talented group of regional, state and district conservationists, who support a strong cadre of tribal liaisons and tribal conservationists who work directly with tribes. I see my role as both augmenting that work where needed, providing added

support and staying focused on the needs of tribes and tribal foresters. Prior to coming to NRCS, I also worked on a variety of projects in conjunction with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, which is located near my home. I've lived in eastern Oregon for most of my life, for the last 38 years on a small cattle operation on the Umatilla River near Echo. I also understand engaging with NRCS and FSA from a personal perspective and will note it can be challenging for nontraditional producers to find programming that works for them. As a retiree, much of my spare time is spent chasing seven

grandchildren ranging from age from 4 to 15, at their various events and love when they come over and play on the farm. I'm also introducing them to the tribal world, through visits to some of the stellar tribal museums in our region.

To set up an appointment send me an email at kathy.ferge@icloud.com to discuss the needs of your tribe. I can also be reached by phone at (541) 571-3815.



BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin



Aaron Baldwin

THE BIA PINE RIDGE AGENCY WILDLAND FIRE PROGRAM HELPS EXPAND TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT

The Bureau of Indian Affairs

(BIA) Pine Ridge Agency has led efforts to engage the Oglala Sioux Tribe in South Dakota through hazardous fuels reduction projects. The hazardous fuels reduction projects on the reservation not only prevent wildfires but have helped elders stay warm in the cold months and provide community members with essential items for traditional ceremonies.

In 2015, the Agency launched hazardous fuels thinning projects on the Reservations through the use of the Reserved Treaty Rights Lands program. The intent of the RTRL program is to provide tribes with opportunities to operate tribally determined projects on ancestral lands, regardless of ownership, to enhance the health and resilience of tribal natural resources as it pertains to wildland fire risk reduction.

Thinning, a method used to treat hazardous fuels, involves

skilled wildland firefighters who mechanically remove overgrown vegetation, both living and dead. This overgrowth poses a significant wildfire risk due to its flammability.

After completing a thinning project, firefighters often burn the remaining piles of slash and wood under close supervision. Tamara Randall, the BIA Pine Ridge Agency fire management officer, recognized that these projects could benefit the community beyond wildfire mitigation. She noted that too much wood was being burned that could be utilized by the Tribe.

Randall and Wildland Firefighter Justin Bauer, the agency's hazardous fuels reduction module lead, began collaborating with the Oglala Sioux Tribe. Bauer contacted tribal leadership within natural resources, emergency management and land

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BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin

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management who collectively brainstormed with Bauer on how to best make use of the slash and wood from the thinning projects.

As a result of these efforts, the Agency completed six thinning projects that fostered Oglala Sioux tribal engagement and supported elder needs and traditional ceremonies by providing wood to its tribal members

Now, after a thinning project, the Oglala Sioux Tribal Emergency Management department collects the wood that would otherwise be burned. This wood is distributed as emergency firewood for tribal elders, who are the top priority. Remaining wood is then made available to community members for traditional ceremonies, such as sweats and sun dances.

Oglala Sioux Tribal members hold sweats and sun dances, traditional ceremonies, during the summer that require one or more continuous campfire all



Photo of wood processed from thinning projects for Oglala Sioux Tribal members to use as emergency heating during winter freeze events.

day or just at night. These types of ceremonies can last up to six consecutive days with constant wood burning for heating rocks or preparing food.

As of March 2025, 18 cords of

wood have been provided for the elderly, and 10 cords of wood have been provided for community members for traditional ceremonies.

Bauer's hazardous fuels reduction module has completed 10 thinning projects totaling 160 acres with three thinning projects remaining.

"It's a grounding source," said Randall regarding tribal engagement. "I think sometimes we get caught up in the day to day [of working in wildland fire management]. We miss those grounding aspects of our culture. It's a reminder that it's still there."

"It's grounding for us to know that not only are we doing our job, but we're giving back to the community. It gives us a bigger purpose."

WILDLAND FIRE THERAPY SERVICE

I am pleased to announce the launch of a first-of-its-kind



Photo of the BIA Pine Ridge Agency hazardous fuels reduction module completes a thinning project on the Oglala Sioux Reservation.

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BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin

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Wildland Fire Therapy Service, now available to federal wildland fire personnel. This dedicated service connects you with a nationwide network of licensed mental health professionals who understand the unique challenges faced by emergency responders. The therapy service is available to help with issues such as acute stress reactions, anxiety, grief, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, or substance use related to traumatic events or cumulative stress from your work in wildland fire.

Tribal firefighters who have participated in a Tribal Fire Program that operates in coordination with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and have supported federal wildland fire operations are eligible to use this service. The service is available for up to six months after your support of federal wildland fire operations ends. It can be used for treatment related to your work in wildland fire.

Offered through the Federal Wildland Firefighter Health and Wellbeing Program, the therapy service provides an initial assessment and up to 16 free therapy sessions per year. It enhances existing bureau and Departmental mental health resources. It represents a crucial step forward in ensuring a more comprehensive, responsive approach to your overall wellbeing.

Taking care of yourself is not a luxury—it's essential. Just as you dedicate yourself to protecting our public lands and communities, we are committed to supporting your health and resilience. Seeking support is a sign of strength, and this service is here to make that support easier than ever to access.

If you have not supported federal wildland fire operation or the six-month eligibility period has passed, you can contact the Behavioral Health Officer (BHO) serving your region or the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Mental Health Program Manager for help identifying available mental health

services at mentalhealth@bia.gov. To learn more about the Therapy Service, visit the Wildland Fire Therapy Service website or email the BHOs at bho@ios.doi.gov. Please use the subject line "Wildland Fire Therapy Service" and list your region to help your message reach the right person more quickly.

I also encourage you to attend one of the informational drop-in sessions that will take place throughout July. It's a great chance to ask questions and learn more. Watch for a flyer with the dates or check <https://health.nifc.gov> for more information that will be posted soon.

Please spread the word about this valuable resource to your colleagues and staff that may not have email access. The flyer can be displayed where appropriate to help this information reach more employees. Thank you for your dedication, your service, and your strength.



BIA Forestry

by Caleb Cain



Caleb Cain

PLANNING AND PRIORITIES

Communication: Current BIA Forestry contacts are as follows:

- Central Office – Acting Chief Forester, Caleb Cain, Caleb.Cain@bia.gov or IA_Forestry@bia.gov
- Alaska – Regional Forester, Fabian Keirn, Fabian.Keirn@bia.gov
- Eastern – Regional Forester, John Cook, Lewis.Cook@bia.gov
- Eastern Oklahoma, Regional

Forester, Hollie Neighbors, Hollie.Neighbors@bia.gov

- Great Plains and Rocky Mountain – Acting Regional Forester, Albert Cayson, Albert.Cayson@bia.gov
- Midwest – Regional Forester, Matt Anderson, Matthew.Anderson@bia.gov
- Navajo – Regional Forester, Tony Luxon, Antoine.Luxon@bia.gov
- Northwest – Regional Forester, Dale Sebastian, Dale.Sebastian@

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bia.gov

- Pacific – Regional Forester, Darin Jarnaghan, Sr., Darin.Jarnaghan@bia.gov
- Southern Plains – Regional Forester, Vacant
- Southwest – Acting Regional Forester, Taurus Diaz, Taurus.Diaz@bia.gov
- Western – Regional Forester, Melvin Hunter Jr., Melvinjr.Hunter@bia.gov

Budget / Funding for Forestry Projects:

Now is the time to develop proposals at the agency level for FY 2026. We know there is a lot of work that needs to be accomplished out there. If you have questions about any of your projects or how to develop them, please contact your Regional Forester.

Executive Order 14308:

President Trump Signed Executive Order to Enhance Wildfire Prevention and Response on June 12, 2025. Executive Order is aimed to strengthen wildfire prevention and response, addressing the devastating impact of wildfires like the January 2025 Los Angeles fires. The order aims to streamline federal wildfire capabilities, promote technology-driven strategies, and improve state and local preparedness. Key actions include consolidating federal wildland fire programs, leveraging AI and innovative mapping, and revising rules that hinder prevention efforts. The order also directs agencies to declassify historical satellite data to enhance wildfire prediction and response, emphasizing common sense land management to protect communities and reduce fire risks.

Monthly Forestry Call: On

June 16, 2025, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Division of Forestry held a general discussion TEAMS meeting that was open to all BIA and Tribal Forestry staff. This meeting marked the first of what will become a monthly session. Each month will feature a different discussion topic based on the needs and requests of participants. The topics will focus on forestry operations and may include areas such as timber sales, TAAMS, forest development, forest inventory, and the timber team, among others. The inaugural topic covered the new TAAMS Forestry reports released in TAAMS version 9.5 on June 2nd. The next call is scheduled for July 21, 2025. Future topics are still open to suggestions, and input is encouraged on what should be covered next.

Office of Trust Services

Quarterly Newsletter: The Office of Trust Services (OTS) Newsletter is a quarterly publication that highlights key developments and activities within forestry and various trust services programs. Each edition features concise narratives that provide insights into ongoing projects, initiatives, and achievements in these areas. If you would like to contribute an article to the newsletter and showcase your work or the efforts of your team, please reach out to Orvie Danzuka at Orvie.Danzuka@bia.gov. Your contributions are valuable in promoting awareness and sharing best practices across the community.

Additionally, you can access the archive of past editions of the BIA Trust Quarterly newsletter through the following link: www.bia.gov/service/trust-newsletter. This archive serves as a resource

for anyone interested in exploring previous topics and updates related to trust services and forestry initiatives.

Forest Health: Unfortunately, the Forest Health Program (FHP) did not receive funding for its Department of the Interior (DOI) forest health projects for FY25. Work may continue on projects that are already funded through current interagency agreements, but no new funding will be provided.

The importance of these funds to the programs involved is recognized, and the situation is regrettable. Should budget realities change in future fiscal years, the FHP will revisit these proposals. The review panel was impressed with this year's proposals, and there is unanimous agreement that the work is extremely valuable and crucial for the nation's forest health. Division of Forestry staff will make efforts to identify additional funding sources to support these proposals.

It is assumed that there will be forest health funds in the 2026 budget, and proposals are encouraged to be submitted by close of business on October 3, 2025. For any questions or further information regarding forest health or the status of these projects, individuals are encouraged to reach out to Orvie Danzuka. Inquiries are welcome, and the FHP appreciates the interest in supporting forest health efforts.

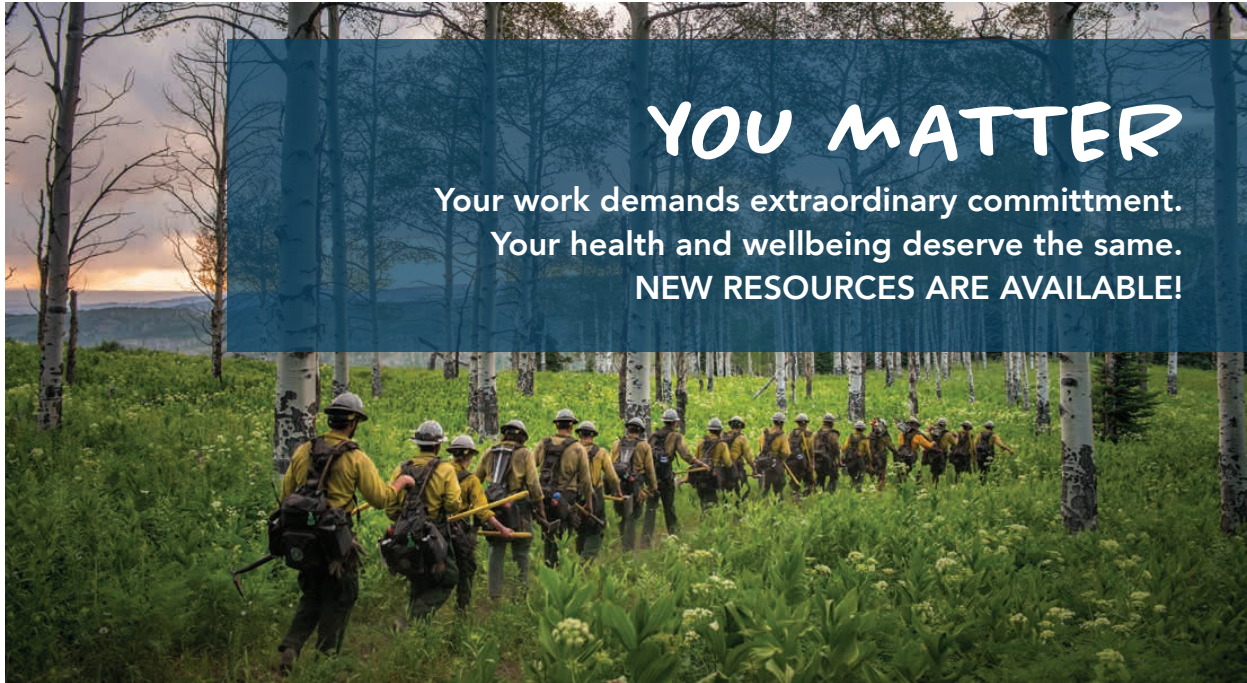
TAAMS Training Updates:

These course sessions are available in DOI Talent. TAAMS Forestry training schedule for the remainder of the fiscal year is as follows:

- TAAMS Forestry Presales: July 9, 2025, Microsoft TEAMS

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FEDERAL WILDLAND FIREFIGHTER
HEALTH AND WELLBEING
PROGRAM



Wildland Fire Therapy Service

Offering year-round mental health support:

- Up to 16 free, confidential sessions per year
- Licensed providers in every state
- Expertise in working with first responders
- In-person and virtual appointments

The service is available to:

- Primary and secondary federal wildland firefighters and dispatchers in full-time, permanent, temporary, collateral duty, and administratively determined (AD) positions
- Those who served in federal roles directly supporting operational wildland fire activities in the past six months

**FIND CARE
TODAY:**

Call:
1-800-424-4051



Plan to spend **15 minutes** when you call for the first time.



This service is offered through an external provider, Magellan Federal, and its network of mental health care providers.

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(online)

- Introductory TAAMS Forestry: July 22-24, 2025, Midwest Region, Great Lakes Agency, Ashland WI
- Advanced TAAMS Forestry: August 5-7, 2025, Northwest Region Office, Portland, OR
- Advanced TAAMS Forestry: August 12-14, 2025, Midwest Region, Great Lakes Agency, Ashland WI

Timber Team: Since the lifting of travel restrictions in late spring 2025, the Timber Team has engaged in extensive travel to support various timber sale preparation projects in response to Executive Order 14225, which aims to facilitate the immediate expansion of American timber production.

Throughout April, May, and June, the Timber Team dedicated significant resources to assist three different reservations and an Alaska Allottee, preparing nearly 740 acres for commercial timber harvests. Their initial visit was to the Nisqually Reservation, where they collaborated with Puget Sound Agency Foresters on boundary marking and internal leave tree marking for a Douglas-fir commercial thinning project.

Following this, the Timber Team was divided into two smaller groups. One group assisted the Crow Reservation with preparations for the Sioux Pass Timber Sale, while the other traveled to Angoon, Alaska, on Admiralty Island to support a sanitation and salvage operation for an Alaskan allottee. During this project, the team identified culturally sensitive areas to be excluded from the project, located

survey monuments, marked boundaries, assisted in road design, and conducted a timber cruise across the property.

In late May and early June, the Timber Team traveled to aid the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes at the Flathead Reservation, focusing on internal marking in the Frog-Schley Management Area. After a week of timber marking, the team participated in the Intertribal Timber Council Symposium.

Looking ahead, the Timber Team is scheduled to travel to the Uintah and Ouray Reservation in late June to assist with timber cruising for the Jefferson Park Timber Sale, as well as layout and inventory collection for the South Slope Joint Fuels Reduction project. This collaborative initiative, involving the tribe and the U.S. Forest Service, will include interagency prescribed burns planned for late 2025. Subsequently, the team will be divided to support timber sale preparation projects for the Metlakatla Tribe of Annette Island Reserve and conduct a whitebark pine inventory project at the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming.

This report summarizes the Timber Team's concerted efforts over the past 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:

- June 16 – 27, 2025: Uintah and Ouray Reservation Sale Prep, UT, Western Region
- July 14 – 25, 2025: Metlakatla Indian Community Sale Prep, AK, Northwest Region
- July 14 – 25, 2025: Wind



Photo of a Timber Team Supervisor taking a breather on a 73-inch diameter Sitka spruce at the project site south of Angoon, AK

River Reservation White Bark Pine Surveys, WY, Rocky Mountains Region

- August 11 – 22, 2025: Yakama Reservation Sale Prep, WA, Northwest Region
- September 8 - September 19, 2025 – Navajo Nation CFI, NM/AZ, Southwestern Region
- October 6 – 31, 2025: Timber Team Availability
- November 3 – November 14, 2025: Timber Team Availability
- December 1 – December 12, 2025: Quinault Reservation Stand Exams, WA, Northwest Region

We are seeking proposals starting in October 2025 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

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Timber Team please go to www.bia.gov/service/timber-team.

Portable Milling Infrastructure

Projects: Portable Milling Infrastructure projects are designed to assist tribes in achieving a portion of their annual allowable cut through funding provided by the Timber Harvest Initiative. Here are key points regarding these projects:

- Purpose: To support tribes in managing their timber resources effectively and sustainably.
- Funding: Financial support for these projects is limited and subject to availability.
- Notifications: When funding becomes available, tribes and regions will be informed accordingly.

For tribes considering participation in these projects, it is important to stay updated on funding opportunities and guidelines.

BRANCH OF FOREST INVENTORY AND PLANNING (FIP)

Inventory Projects: Currently, FIP staff is reviewing two draft documents related to the Forest Inventory Analysis (FIA) and is actively processing and analyzing five additional documents to advance them to the FIA stage. In addition, two projects are in the cleaning stage, and eight are in the initiation stage. Several projects are currently with the regions in the data entry and FIA stages.

FIP continues to provide ongoing support for data collection and has implemented tablet software for three separate Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) projects, including ongoing measurements at Hualapai and Ute Mountain. This tablet software enhances the

workflow for data collection by eliminating the need for paper tally sheets and subsequent data entry. As a result, it reduces the time required to clean and review collected inventory data, creating a more streamlined process between CFI data collection and analysis.

FIP Application Suite Status:

After successfully completing the translation of the legacy program from FORTRAN to C-Sharp, FIP has transitioned from using test data sets and has begun evaluating the new program using CFI data. The FIP staff are verifying the program to ensure a large, complex project will produce the expected outputs before finalizing the beta version and releasing the full version of the Inventory Suite program.

A123: The Foresters at FIP have completed site visits to all three selected regions (Pacific, Northwest, and Midwest) for the FY 2025 FMI&P A-123. FMI&P program reviews were conducted at the three locations with the intention to note observations and recommendations for improvement relevant to mapping for inventory, forest inventory, forest inventory analysis, forest management planning, and performance management internal controls. Program review memos were provided to each Regional Director describing all internal control observations and recommendations for improvement that were noted by the review teams.

The Foresters at FIP are working on compiling and summarizing all regional certification memos and supporting documentation for upward reporting. Foresters are assisting the Division Chief with the preparation of certification memos to the Deputy Bureau

Director that each Regional Internal Control Review assessment is following OTS program internal controls and that program deficiencies are being corrected by regional actions. The Foresters are also working on the Division of Internal Evaluation and Assessment Data Call #3 which is due by June 30, 2025. This data call includes completing the Control Matrices and Test Plans for all BIA Regional Programs summarizing the results as they relate to the Integrated Risk Register's list of identified programmatic risks.

Advancing AI Innovation in Forestry Compliance and Data Management:

The BIA is embracing AI-driven automation to enhance compliance, data management, and operational efficiency. By developing AI-powered solutions, FIP is reinforcing the role of technology in modern forestry practices.

As part of this transformation, staff are developing and accessing an AI-powered compliance tool designed to streamline FIA reviews. This tool utilizes the Microsoft Power Platform, incorporating custom large language model prompts, Power Automate flows, and Power Apps to improve policy evaluations, extract key data metrics, and generate structured document references for enhanced accuracy and transparency. Staff are also working on AI modeling for scanned field data sheets, which automate data entry to free up staff and improve workflow efficiency.

Advancements in AI integration are modernizing forestry data visualization through the incorporation of Power BI with multiple datasets. This integration

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enables teams to effectively track CFI progress, analyze data from InfoDat, monitor program documents from the National Indian Forest Library, and enhance decision-making using real-time insights, moving away from reliance on legacy systems.

Once these AI-driven tools are fully approved, evaluated, and verified, they will assist foresters in streamlining compliance evaluations, automating data handling, and improving accessibility, thereby reinforcing the role of technology in sustainable resource management.

NASP Update: The first module of the 2025 National Advanced Silviculture Program Class 19 kicks off July 13, 2025, at the University of Minnesota's forestry campus in Cloquet, MN. Three Tribal Foresters and two BIA Foresters from across the US have been selected. The second module will begin September 8, 2025, and is hosted by Oregon State University.

53 IAM 9 Handbook: The revision of the 53 IAM Chapter 9 Silviculture Handbook has successfully reached a significant milestone through the collaborative efforts of the Forest Inventory Program (FIP) and several Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Regional Forestry staff. The revised handbook was accepted by the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action and has been signed and published as of June 17, 2025. The updated handbook is accessible at www.bia.gov/policy-forms/handbooks. The new version of the handbook serves as a crucial resource for implementing silvicultural practices aimed at managing



Photo of FIP Forester improving table workflows in the field during the Ute Mountain CFI.

forest stands on lands held in trust or restricted status under BIA's jurisdiction. It has been condensed for clarity and reflects the latest advancements in silvicultural research. The handbook outlines essential procedures, protocols, and best practices for developing, implementing, documenting, and evaluating forest management activities in alignment with the goals and objectives set forth in the Forest Management Plan as detailed in 53 IAM Chapter 9.

Furthermore, the new handbook addresses vital components such as training opportunities, personnel requirements, and pathways for silviculturist certification based on BIA Regional standards. Notably, it incorporates the NPM-TRUS-45 A2: Certified Silviculturist Position Task Book Requirement for BIA Foresters, ensuring that forestry professionals meet the necessary qualifications and

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competencies. This revision

marks a significant step forward
in enhancing forest management

practices under BIA stewardship.



Education Committee
by Shawn de France



Shawn de France

2025 TRUMAN D. PICARD SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Greetings ITC family, I hope you are reading this in good health and enjoying your summer. We received 26 complete applications submissions for the 2025 Truman D. Picard Scholarship Program. It was a difficult task to rank the applications as they were all remarkable. I would like to thank the members of the Education Committee for their time and for selecting the scholarship winners. This year, ITC awarded 23 scholarships totaling \$66,000 to students representing 18 different tribes. Since 1988, ITC has awarded 608 scholarships totaling \$1,294,000! During the past ten years there have been 117 forestry majors awarded scholarships. On behalf of the ITC Board and



Photo of the 2025 Truman D. Picard Scholarship Winners from L to R: Emma James, Corinne Alton, Thomas Trahan, Alexia Pierre, Glenn Jones, James Douthwaite, Alfredo Labro, Riston Bullock, and Jonel Yazzie

Education Committee we offer our sincere congratulations to each of the recipients! We look forward to seeing you all complete your education and hope your career paths will bring you back to the ITC family.

GRADUATE - \$4,000

- Shinya Burck
- James Douthwaite
- Chaylum Hogue
- Glenn Jones
- Jonel Yazzie

UNDERGRADUATE - \$4,000

- Corrine Alton
- Riston Bullock
- Quincy Hayden
- Kee Hernandez
- Emma James
- Tynya Kee

- Alfred Labro
- Alexia Pierre
- Thomas Trahan
- Mariah Williams

HIGH SCHOOL - \$2,000

- Madison Chee
- Cash Clardy
- Bridger Smith

For 2025 the committee has opted to increase the award by an additional \$500 for college and graduate students majoring in Forestry & Fire bringing the total to \$4,000, and for students studying Natural Resources to \$3,000. The high school award remained at \$2,000. Each student that received a scholarship will also receive a complementary 1-year membership to The Society

(Continued on page 14)

Education Committee

by Shawn de France

(Continued from page 13)

of American Foresters. Thank you to SAF for supporting our scholars.

Funding for the scholarship each year is generated in part through the raffle held at the Annual Timber Symposium. This year,

hosted by ITC and Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes had some incredible raffle items donated. We are so humbled by the craftsmanship and generosity of our donors as well as those who support the scholarship by purchasing tickets. Thank you so much for your support of the

Truman D. Picard Scholarship. I am excited to report that the combined total for the raffle generated \$10,766 to support the scholarship.



Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo



Jim Durglo

This article covers key topics from my participation in the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG).

Wildfire Executive Order:

On June 12, 2025, President Trump signed an Executive Order (EO) titled “Empowering Commonsense Wildfire Prevention and Response” related to wildfire. The signed EO differs from the draft that was circulated widely earlier this year, however it does, among several things, contain direction to consolidate, within 90 days, the wildland fire programs of the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture “to the maximum degree practicable and consistent with applicable law.”

Federal Fire Consolidation may affect both WFLC and NWCG in

ways that are not yet determined. Fire leadership in both the Department of the Interior, Office of Wildland Fire and the Bureau of Indian Affairs are currently planning for tribal communication sessions to share information as it becomes available. We should be hearing more later this summer.

WFLC Non-Federal

Partnership: Non-federal partners of WFLC continue to coordinate on several issues. In recent conference calls, a few of the members discussed- priority setting under the new leadership. Mike Zupko, Executive Director, reported on convening WFLC members representing local communities to discuss joint strategies and challenges following recent urban fires in Los Angeles, Hawaii, and Colorado. Although “these types of fires” are not new, the approach and knowledge around the challenges is ever-increasing and the need to address and provide leadership on this topic is important more directly.

The Non-federal partners recently delivered a Letter of Unified Support to the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior conveying their support for the federal wildland fire agencies and the wildland fire management system for the 2025 Fire Year.

The letter also expresses their gratitude to the federal fire leadership as well as their non-federal commitment to sharing stewardship across the wildfire response and resilience system.

NWCG Systematic and Workforce Review:

NWCG was developed in 1976, with two member agencies. Today, the organization has grown to include 13 member agencies (with two more that have initiated requests for membership), 38 full-time staff, 17 primary committees, 90+ subgroups, 130+ incident positions, 120+ publications, and 110+ courses – encompassing more than 1,200 persons working in a collateral-duty capacity to implement the NWCG mission. To keep pace with these changes and increasing system complexities, change is needed while still ensuring the foundation of interagency wildland fire interoperability continues.

Jose (Aitor) Bidaburu, NWCG Executive Board Chair writes- The NWCG Executive Board (EB) is currently redesigning the structure of its committees and workflows to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in accomplishing NWCG’s mission. This comprehensive restructuring will involve the EB, committees,

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Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo

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and the NWCG organizational framework. This redesign process will include many of those currently doing the work, and the EB invites anyone with feedback to filter that up through their primary committee's Chair or Vice Chair.

The purpose of this restructuring is to enable NWCG to keep pace with the evolving demands and system complexities, while adhering to environmental and legislative changes. This initiative aims to restore functional design within the system, allowing us to enhance interagency coordination and maximize efficiencies without simply expecting "more with less." The EB and agency leadership are committed to advancing this proposal. Over the next month, a draft restructuring proposal will be presented during group sessions to gather feedback, with adjustments made based on comments and input received. Chairs and Vice

Chairs of each primary committee will have the opportunity to attend a scheduled session during which they can review the proposal and provide feedback. The EB aims to complete the restructuring by the NWCG Annual Meeting in February 2026. It is expected that the Federal Fire Consolidation effort will change the makeup of the NWCG EB and committee representation.

Wildland Firefighter

Supplemental Pay: In a press release dated March 15, 2025, The Department of the Interior announced permanent pay increases for federal and tribal wildland firefighters across the United States. The permanent pay increases were included in the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (H.R. 1968), which Congress passed on March 14 and President Trump signed into law.

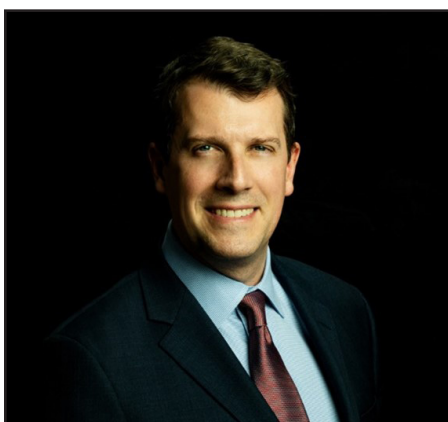
The legislation establishes new special salary pay tables for federal wildland firefighters at

all levels, including temporary and seasonal employees. It also makes permanent Bureau of Indian Affairs funding for Tribal Nations to offer pay supplements to tribal wildland firefighters. This permanent increase replaces temporary pay supplements that firefighters have received over the last four years. In addition, the law creates wildland fire Incident Response Premium Pay, allowing all federal employees to earn extra pay for extended deployments to qualifying incidents. Allocations of funding to contracted tribal fire programs are expected to follow previous procedures. The incorporation of the new pay tables by tribal programs is yet to be determined. Again, folks are saying that this legislative action is an important thing for our firefighters, but it will be complicated to implement.



Legislative Update

by Matt Hill



Matt Hill

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 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.

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

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Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

(Continued from page 15)

regulations that tribes use for management of tribal trust forests.

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.

“One Big, Beautiful Bill” Act: (“OBBBA”): The Republican budget reconciliation bill is slowly making its way through the legislative process. The bill uses the budget process to change federal laws to meet the assumptions in the previously enacted budget resolution. It requires only a simple majority to pass each chamber of Congress. OBBBA passed the House of Representatives on May 22, 2025, by a 215–214 vote. The major provisions are OBBBA would permanently extend the 2017 Trump tax cuts, eliminates taxes on tips and overtime, etc. while reducing spending on federal entitlement programs such as SNAP.

The House and Senate versions of the bill also contain public land and timber provisions. The House-passed bill requires the

Forest Service and BLM to harvest 25% more timber than levels achieved in Fiscal Year 2024. It also authorizes 20-year timber contract language (similar to “sustained yield units). For NEPA the House bill 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.

The Senate version of the bill contains a controversial federal land sale provision, requiring the BLM and Forest Service to sell between 0.5-0.75% of their land bases for housing purposes. The provision would require consultation with local and tribal government and would exclude certain areas such as wilderness areas.

Similar to the House bill, the Senate version requires the Forest Service to sell an annual quantity of timber that is 250 million board feet greater than what was sold in the previous fiscal year through fiscal year 2034 on forest reserves created from the public domain.

It also directs BLM to sell an annual quantity of timber that is 20 million board feet greater than what was sold in the previous fiscal year through fiscal year 2034 and to enter into at least 5 long-term contracts with private or public persons or entities for the disposal of vegetative materials on public lands. Revenue from these specific contracts would go to the general fund of the Treasury, which would seem to bypass existing revenue sharing

agreements under federal law.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION APPOINTMENTS STATUS

As with any new Administration, it is a lengthy process to seek Senate confirmation of the more than 800 political nominations overseeing federal agencies. At the Department of the Interior, the Senate has confirmed the nominations of Secretary Doug Burgum and Deputy Secretary Kate MacGregor.

Still pending is the nomination of Billy Kirkland to serve as Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs recently scheduled a June 25 nomination hearing, but almost immediately postponed the hearing.

While Kirkland’s nomination continues to linger. Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Scott Davis is “acting” as Assistant Secretary, aided by Ken Bellmard as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Economic Development.

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.

TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDER ON TIMBER PRODUCTION

On March 1, 2025, President Trump signed an Executive Order titled “Immediate Expansion of American Timber Production” aimed at increasing domestic timber production and reducing reliance on imported lumber. The order seeks to streamline federal policies to enhance forest management, lower construction, and energy costs, create jobs, and bolster economic and national

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Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

(Continued from page 16)

security. Key directives include:

Boosting Production: It mandates the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to issue updated guidance within 60 days to facilitate increased timber production, reduce delivery times, and decrease supply uncertainty, while cutting regulatory red tape to boost timber sales from public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS).

Streamlining Approvals: Within 60 days, the Secretaries of the Interior and Commerce must develop a strategy to speed up forestry project approvals under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), including exploring emergency exemptions to bypass lengthy reviews. The Interior Secretary is also tasked with proposing legislative changes if needed to further streamline ESA consultations.

Setting Targets: Within 90 days, the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture must submit a plan to the President setting annual timber sale targets (in millions of board feet) for the next four years from BLM and USFS lands.

A companion Executive Order on the same day initiated a Section 232 investigation under the Trade Expansion Act to assess if timber and lumber imports threaten national security, potentially leading to tariffs or quotas.

On March 21, 2025, the ITC sent a letter to DOI with specific recommendations to align the order's goals—increasing timber production and streamlining federal processes—with tribal interests and forest management on trust lands. Key points include:

Recommendations for DOI

Actions: The ITC suggests maintaining the DOI-USDA Secretarial Order No. 3403 for tribal co-stewardship, using Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) on tribal lands to retain timber revenue, providing legal guidance on the EXPLORE Act, and coordinating with USDA and the Army Corps of Engineers on tribal forest management and wood export infrastructure.

Legislative Proposals: The ITC proposes amending the Good Neighbor Act for tribal parity with states, making the Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA) 638 pilot permanent and expanding it across USDA, codifying tribal co-management with federal agencies, passing the "Fix Our Forests Act," and authorizing land transfers and tribal management under trust forest laws.

Annual Allowable Cut (AAC): The ITC urges BIA trust forests in the EO's 90-day plan for timber sale targets, requesting the BIA Director maximize AAC on tribal lands using tools like "timber strike teams," consistent with tribal values.

Categorical Exclusions: The ITC supports new categorical exclusions for timber thinning and salvage to expedite stewardship and fuels reduction, benefiting tribal collaboration with agencies like BLM and USFS.

TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDER ON WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT

On June 12, 2025, President Donald Trump signed an Executive Order titled "Empowering Commonsense Wildfire Prevention and Response" to overhaul federal wildfire management. The order aims to enhance efficiency and reduce bureaucratic obstacles in

wildfire management by:

- Consolidating Federal Programs: Directs the Departments of Interior and Agriculture (U.S. Forest Service) to merge their wildland fire programs, offices, and resources within 90 days, potentially creating a new agency under the Interior Department to centralize firefighting efforts.
- Streamlining Operations: Emphasizes cutting bureaucratic red tape to improve coordination across agencies, modernize response strategies, and enhance tools for wildfire prevention.
- Promoting Proactive Measures: Encourages risk-informed approaches, prescriptive burns, fire retardant use, and advanced technology for prevention, referencing Executive Order 14239 (March 18, 2025) for efficiency.
- Supporting Local Response: Strengthens federal partnerships to improve local wildfire preparedness and response while promoting responsible land management.
- Resource Allocation: Directs the Defense Secretary to prioritize selling excess aircraft and parts to support wildfire mitigation efforts. The ITC will be working with DOI and USDA to ensure proper prioritization of tribal resource protection and full tribal consultation during the process ahead.



Operations Committee

by Jason Robison



Jason Robison

Greetings, friends and colleagues. Summer has arrived in full force, and I find myself reflecting on the incredible momentum we've built together in Tribal fire and forestry. I recently returned from the 48th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium, hosted by the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes at the University of Montana. Nestled among the jagged peaks of the Northern Rockies, the setting was as powerful as the content. The theme, "Managing Tribal and Multi-Agency Interests & Empowering Tomorrow's Stewards," provided the perfect backdrop to showcase our collective progress and to spark bold conversations about where we go next.

During the Symposium, I took the opportunity to hike up the iconic "M" trail overlooking Missoula. The journey was steep, but as I climbed higher, the view became more expansive and breathtaking. That hike reminded me a lot of our work in Tribal forestry and fire management. With every step upward, our perspective broadens, our understanding deepens, and our determination strengthens. We've come a long way, but

there is still much more to see and more ground to cover. The higher we climb, the clearer the path becomes, and the greater the responsibility to lead with vision and integrity. This mirrors the evolution of Tribal co-management and land stewardship across Indian Country. We're not just participating in forest and fire management; we're defining what effective, sustainable, and culturally centered management looks like for future generations. This is such an exciting journey to be a part of.

IFMAT IV: The Operations Committee has been actively working to implement the IFMAT IV recommendations, and this past year marked a transition from strategic discussion to operational action. We developed and deployed a communications toolkit that includes briefing packets, infographics, and a compelling StoryMap, allowing Tribes to tell their forestry stories with clarity and impact. This effort has helped elevate our message to congressional offices, agency leaders, and national advocacy organizations.

Formal resolutions of support from the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians have added significant weight to our advocacy efforts. These resolutions reinforce that the priorities within IFMAT IV are not just operational, they are broadly supported, movement-level goals. ITC President Cody Desautel also had the opportunity to testify before Congress and engage directly with leadership at the Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture, aligning our goals with national funding, programmatic, and policy

objectives.

Looking ahead, we are working to expand self-governance tools that ensure Tribal authority is embedded in every aspect of forestry and fire planning. We're asking all ITC member tribes to participate in a survey so we can better understand the needs.

Legislative and Policy Support:

Alongside our implementation work, the Operations Committee has also expanded its engagement in tracking and influencing key federal legislation that directly affects Tribal forestry and fire programs. Our policy and legislative tracking efforts now include a wide range of important bills and regulatory initiatives. These include the National Old Growth Amendment and its implications for long-term forest management planning, as well as the anticipated revisions to the Northwest Forest Plan. Both have major potential impacts on co-management, habitat restoration, and the recognition of Tribal ecological knowledge.

We are also closely monitoring the Fix Our Forests Act, which includes provisions for cross-boundary collaboration and funding tools that could benefit Tribal and multi-agency efforts, the FORESTS Act, which advances authorities for landscape-scale treatments and cross-boundary wildfire risk reduction, and a new Tribal forestry bill recently introduced by Representative Jared Huffman that seeks to increase Tribal access to forest management funding and streamline co-stewardship agreements. The Farm Bill, a massive legislative vehicle with major conservation, forestry, and nutrition components, remains

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Operations Committee

by Jason Robison

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a top focus for ensuring Tribal access to technical and financial resources. In addition, we are tracking the EXPLORE Act, which proposes investments in outdoor recreation infrastructure and programs. This bill presents new opportunities for Tribes to lead in landscape restoration and cultural tourism initiatives.

Our goal in this area is twofold: to ensure that Tribal voices are heard in the development of these laws, and to prepare our member Tribes with the information, analysis, and policy guidance they need to respond, adapt, and lead. We are currently coordinating with legislative partners and coalitions to provide comments, propose amendments, and push for language that uplifts Tribal co-management and self-governance in natural resource policy. See Matt Hill's Legislative updates for more information on this exciting work.

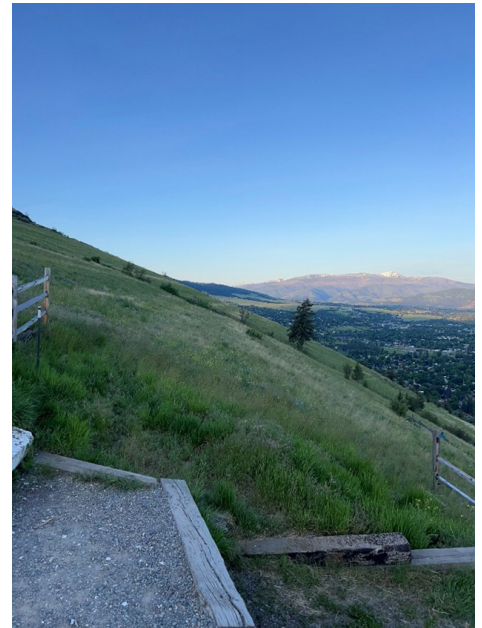
Regulatory Reform: Our 25 CFR 163 Working Group has been working on proposed changes that address the real barriers faced by Tribes from reporting metrics, sale procedures to permit processes and log delivery terms. We are coordinating across BIA, USDA, and DOI to streamline processes and improve consistency in the application of authorities like the Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA), Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (638), and NEPA compliance through IRMPs. These reforms are essential for creating space where Tribal priorities are respected and implemented not constrained by outdated or conflicting federal rules.

Fire Management: Our work



Photos of Jason Robison hiking Mount Sentinel's "M" Trail in Missoula, MT.

in fire management continues to grow stronger through the leadership of the Fire Subcommittee. This group has been focused on strengthening support for cultural fire practices and Indigenous-led prescribed burning, acknowledging that traditional knowledge is not only relevant but essential to wildfire resilience. We've continued to advocate for firefighter pay parity and staffing exemptions that allow Tribes to build and sustain professional fire programs that meet national response standards. Health and wellness have emerged as key areas of concern for our fire crews, and we are beginning to explore long-term strategies to support firefighter retention and mental health. On the operations side, ITC has engaged in discussions about fire modeling platforms and emerging tools that better assess wildfire risk and provide Tribes with data-driven planning options. Whether through national policy change or boots-on-the-ground solutions, we are helping to redefine how wildfire is approached across Indian Country.



Workforce Development:

Investing in the next generation of Tribal forestry professionals remains a top priority for the Operations Committee. Our Workforce Strategic Plan is now fully underway, with over \$1.3 million in allocated funding and more than \$300,000 already deployed to early-stage initiatives. These include Tribal internships, youth engagement programs, and mentorship pathways for new professionals entering the field.

We've also made progress on the development of a centralized job board for Tribal forestry and wildland fire careers. This platform will serve as a critical hub for connecting talent with opportunity, and we are working with Tribal colleges and federal partners to ensure long-term sustainability. Additionally, pilot programs are being launched to introduce high school students to fire training, forestry science, and natural resource management through immersive forest camps and summer experiences.

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Operations Committee

by Jason Robison

(Continued from page 19)

Additionally, ITC is building a list of interested early career professionals who want to participate in future policy engagement and advocacy opportunities. This effort aims to foster early exposure to national forestry policy, help students build leadership capacity, and strengthen the pipeline of Tribal professionals ready to engage in high-level decision-making spaces. for Tribal forestry and wildland fire careers.

Marketing, Branding, and Strategic Partnerships: Through our collaboration with Sustainable Northwest, we've taken important steps toward enhancing the visibility and market identity of Tribal forestry. Sustainable Northwest has conducted a series of regional focus groups to gather feedback from Tribal leaders and forest product stakeholders, and the insights we gathered are guiding the development of a national branding strategy. This strategy is aimed at positioning Tribal forestry as a leader in sustainable, ethically produced forest goods and services.

We've also expanded our collaboration with the National Alliance of Forest Owners (NAFO), which has helped us

push shared legislative goals at the national level. This strategic alliance reflects the growing influence of Tribal leadership in national forestry policy.

Research: The Research Subcommittee continues to make strong advances in promoting Indigenous data sovereignty and supporting Tribal-led research. They are actively working to support new publication platforms that prioritize Tribal authorship and control of cultural knowledge. This includes exploring the development of a Tribal research journal and protocols for publication of culturally sensitive research.

Additionally, Tribes are playing a more prominent role in scientific modeling, climate adaptation studies, and ecological restoration projects. The subcommittee is contributing to national conversations on carbon markets, forest history documentation, and ecosystem recovery. The work being done in eDNA sampling, cultural burning documentation, and historical forest knowledge is demonstrating that Tribal science is both innovative and deeply rooted in cultural continuity.

Your Voice Matters: I want to extend sincere gratitude to

everyone who has participated in Operations Committee meetings, work groups, and subcommittees over the past year. Your insight, energy, and leadership are what drive this movement forward.

We are always looking for new participants. If you have a passion for advancing Tribal self-governance, forestry, fire management, or workforce development, welcome your involvement. Current opportunities include active participation in:

- IFMAT IV Implementation Workgroups
 - o Self-Governance
 - o 25 CFR 163 Regulatory Reform Workgroups
- Fire Subcommittee
- Research Subcommittee

If you're interested in participating in these groups, please reach out to Laura Alvidrez so we can add you to our email list. I hope everyone has a safe and productive summer. Our next Operations Committee meeting will be held virtually in September.



Symposium Committee

by Howard Teasley, Jr.

2025 ITC SYMPOSIUM CONCLUDES

We celebrated the 48th year of the National Indian Timber Symposium hosted by the Intertribal Timber Council and the Confederated Salish &

Kootenai Tribes at the University of Montana in Missoula, MT, held June 2-5, 2025. The theme for this year's symposium was *"Managing Tribal and Multi-Agency Interest & Empowering Tomorrow's Stewards."*

Registration numbers were up, even without the Pre-symposium workshops on the first day

(redactions), we were able to make it work. Our symposium committee was in a frantic state in January and February of this year. Five versions of the agenda were finalized and redacted before the symposium. I want to thank our hosts the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes for an unbelievable time in their ceded

(Continued on page 21)

Symposium Committee

by Howard Teasley, Jr.

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Howard Teasley, Jr.

territory of Missoula. We had an amazing number of attendees, which would have been increased

if all our federal partners were able to attend. The Host Tribe welcome was one to remember when their young people were showing, sharing and giving us a historic overview of their learned emersion process of their traditional ways.

Monday, June 2: The Symposium officially began with Registration for all attendees at the University of Montana (UMT). Followed by the Host Icebreaker at the UMT Washington-Grizzly Stadium. Attendees enjoyed hors d'oeuvres and mingled with attendees. We hope to have Pre-Symposium Workshops again next year.

Tuesday, June 3: Started with

Opening Ceremonies, Invocation, Posting of the Colors, and Welcomes by our hosts and ITC President, and the Keynote was given by Bryan Mercier BIA Director setting the tone for the day. After the morning break, we had a panel on Co-Management in Forestry. After the ITC Luncheon was the second panel Lumber and Log Market Indication & Influences. The Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes ended the session with a Host Presentation on their history, tribal resource management, protecting cultural resources, forest management, environmental protection, and tribal relations.



Photo of the Symposium Host Welcome Dinner at Fort Missoula Regional Park.

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Symposium Committee

by Howard Teasley, Jr.

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We finished the day with the Host Tribe Welcome at the Fort Missoula Regional Park including a welcome dinner and local dancers.

Wednesday, June 4: Our day started outdoors. Stop 1 began with a tour of the CSKT Bison Range. Stop 2 included lunch at the River Honoring Site on the Flathead River in Moiese Valley. Stop 3 included a visit to the CSKT Forestry North Greenhouse. Our day concluded with the General Membership Meeting at the UMT. During the meeting we discussed the National Native Conservation Network, IFMAT-IV Implementation Update, Administration Transition and Strategy, ITC Staffing and Contracts, Searching for Symposium Host Tribes for 2028 and 2029, ITC Committee Signup, and Members Forum.

Thursday, June 5: The day's activities started with the ITC

President's Report, then updates from the U.S. DOI - Office of Wildland Fire, BIA Division of Forestry and Fire, Legislative, and USFS Office of Tribal Relations. Immediately following the updates our three workshops started concurrently. Workshop 1: Indigenous Workforce Partnership Success Stories was led by Joshua Rosenau. Workshop 2: Buring for a Resource Benefit was moderated by Germain White. Workshop 3: Federal Funding and Partnership Opportunities was led by Kathryn McDonald.

Total Attendees: There was an awe-inspiring response to register for the symposium this year with 353 attendees, 59 participating Tribes, ANSCA Corporations, and Tribal organizations, 60 federal agencies and other organizations, 60 speakers, 19 college students, and 16 exhibitors – American Forests, DJ&A / Woodland Solutions Group, FSC Indigenous Foundation, Global Ocean Health / Partnerships for Tribal Carbon

Solutions, Intermountain West Joint Venture, Montana Urban and Community Forestry Association, National Indian Carbon Coalition, Northern Rockies Fire Science Network, Northwest Management, Inc., Silvix Labs, SciVista, Inc., SKC TREES, Sustainable Northwest, The Forest School at the Yale School of the Environment, and Vibrant Planet.

2025 Symposium: The 49th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium will be hosted by Menominee Indian Tribe, June 8-11, 2026, in Keshena, WI. The 50th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium will be hosted by San Carlos Apache Tribe, April 5-8, 2027, in San Carlos, AZ. If you would like more information about hosting a Symposium please email laura@itcnet.org. Take Care and God Bless. Qe'ciyew'yew.



Photo of Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes Host Tribe Presentation.

General Members Are Invited To :



Intertribal Timber Council Annual Business MEETING

Join us online to reveal the 2025 ITC
Board Elections results and to select
2028 & 2029 Symposium Host Tribes



Tuesday, July 22, 2025



12 pm AK / 1 pm PDT / 2 pm MDT /
3 pm CDT / 4 pm EDT



Zoom - see meeting invite for link



Questions

Call the ITC Office at (503) 282-4296



INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL

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First Class
