PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

I want to thank everyone who participated in this year’s ITC Symposium at Seminole in Florida. In addition to our productive workshops and tours, ITC continued its tradition of providing scholarships and honoring those in our tribal forestry community. ITC awarded the 2019 Forester of the Year award to former ITC President, Phil Rigdon. Phil’s work brought ITC to where we are now and opened the door to the many new opportunities tribes have to improve the health of federal lands.

As such, much of our focus at the Symposium was on implementation of new federal authorities. Jim Durglo, ITC Wildland Fire Technical Specialist, continues to keep his sleeves rolled up and take on a lead role in working with our partners to utilize new and existing tools that support active land management. Durglo also continues to track the findings and recommendations developed in the two fire studies completed because of the devastating fires of 2015, and has completed a report that highlights successful cross-boundary work being done by tribes on adjacent federal lands. Cody Desautel from the Colville Tribes has done an outstanding job of assuming the busy task as the ITC Operations Committee Chair.

In this past year, the ITC completed its TFPA Analysis grant with the Forest Service and every symposium attendee has received a copy of the report “Cross Boundary Collaboration Between Tribes and the United States Forest Service.”

ITC’s work has never been more important. We are halfway through the Administration’s term, and there is a new Democratic majority in the House of Representatives. As always, ITC maintains agility in communicating our priorities and values to all of our nation’s leaders, as they continue to grapple with the larger issues of wildfire and forest health.

In recent years, ITC has made a particular focus on relationships in Washington, D.C., ensuring that tribes have a seat at the table in these critical discussions. On the funding front, we are likely to see a minor increase in funding for BIA forestry, which continues an upward trajectory that we have worked hard to achieve.

The makeup of the Interior Department continues to materialize and change in the Trump Administration. There has been a change in Interior Secretary with David Bernhardt, and Senate-confirmed Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs (Tara Sweeney) and a new Deputy Assistant Secretary (Mark Cruz). Just recently, Darryl LaCounte was appointed BIA Director, having served as acting Director for a year or so. ITC will continue our outreach efforts and ensure that the Administration fully understands the trust responsibility for Indian forests and the widespread benefits
(Continued from cover)

that come to Indian country from well-managed forests.

In spite of all the personnel changes and government shutdowns impacting the Bureau this year we appreciate the work done by a dedicated forestry staff and efforts to initiate new projects such as funding over one million dollars towards portable milling infrastructure projects. They could only fund about 20% of the proposed projects, so we hope to fill some of that need through collaborations with the Forest Service Forest Products Lab efforts.

BIA Forestry has a workforce development planning team, led by Matt Anderson and the BIA Wildland Firefighters have been addressing their workforce needs internally, but our greatest challenge as a group to serve Indian forestry is to create a coordinated outreach program to recruit tribal and non-tribal people into the workforce.

Legislatively, years of ITC’s work paid off last year. The 2018 Farm Bill included new authorities that give tribes and federal land manager’s new tools to improve forest health across boundaries. The Farm Bill authorizes tribes to use Good Neighbor Authority in developing and implementing forest health treatments on federal lands, the same as states are able to do. ITC will continue to work on the legislative language that would give tribes authorization to retain timber receipts that were inadvertently left out of the bill. It also authorized a pilot project for the use of 638 contracting authority for Tribal Forest Protection Act projects. This introduces the 638 concept to the Forest Service and we are actively working with that agency to activate the pilot program and to make it a success. Just like with TFPA, we want to assist with ensuring that every interested tribe understands the authority and has every opportunity to take advantage of it should they choose to. The ITC working with our Forest Service partners will host at least two workshops across the country, much like TFPA, that will provide information and encourage partnerships among tribes and National Forests leadership to plan and implement successful treatments.

Apart from the Farm Bill, Congress also enacted the “Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act.” This creates an Indian biomass demonstration program for both the lower 48 and Alaska. The program directs both the Departments of Agriculture and Interior to develop four Indian biomass projects a year to promote biomass energy production (including biofuel, heat, and electricity generation) on Indian forest land and in nearby communities.

ITC is also happy to report that the forest-related authorities of the Indian Trust Asset Management Reform Act are being implemented. That law was enacted in June 2016, authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to establish and carry out, an Indian Trust Management Demonstration project for tribal forestry and surface leasing programs. In other words, tribes can develop tribal regulations for forest management and opt out of BIA approval of subsequent forest management decisions. Our long-trusted colleague, George Smith, has done a fantastic job in leading the charge towards ITARA implementation.

With George’s guidance, ITC worked with the Department on getting this program off the ground. The demonstration program is now formally established and at least two tribes are actively participating in it.

Back on Capitol Hill, ITC continues to advocate for fair levels of funding for Indian forest management. We also play a critical role in the ongoing conversation about wildfire. Last year Congress enacted a fire borrowing “fix” that should end the practice of robbing non-fire programs to pay for excessive suppression costs. However, Congress declined to enact any comprehensive reform of forest management authorities. We do not believe that Congress will take another bite at the apple for a while. This means that we have to make the best use of existing authorities and get as much work done as possible.

The member tribes have gone the extra mile to help protect our nation’s forests. In July of 2018, 7,000 out of the 30,000 wildland firefighters where tribal members, so that is a testament to why tribes are being recognized as stewards of the land.

Overall, I am proud of the work ITC and its member tribes have done on federal forest policy changes and on the ground support. It is a testament to the positive reputation of the organization with both political parties, as well as that of our membership and the nation.

Thank you all for your ongoing support of the ITC and its mission.
2019 ITC SYMPOSIUM CONCLUDES

We celebrated ITC’s 43rd year of the National Indian Timber Symposium hosted by the Intertribal Timber Council (ITC) and the Seminole Tribe of Florida, held June 10-14, at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, Hollywood, FL. The theme for this year’s symposium was “500 Years of Change.”

Our weather in central Florida was hot, stormy, and humid like Beijing, China in August. It was my first time in Florida and it was a memorable one, and did not make it outside much, except for the tour on Wednesday. Once the Hard Rock renovations are completed, the casino and resort will be outstanding.

I would like to send personal and heartfelt condolences from Nimii-puu country to the Osceola Family in their time of need. May the Lord almighty and Creator of all, Bless you! Qe’ciwyewyew

MONDAY, JUNE 4
We offered five pre-symposium workshops. The first workshop “Swamp Buggy Tour” had 20 individuals attend. The second workshop “Traditional Seminole Crafting” was cancelled. The third workshop “Wildland Fire Update” had 36 in attendance. Our fourth workshop “Everglades Tree Island Tour” with 20 in attendance. The final workshop was “Lidar, Drones, Inventory, Production, & Investment for Working Forests” had 17 in attendance. All of the income generated from the pre-symposium workshops is dedicated to funding the Truman D. Picard Scholarships. Thank you for your attendance. If individuals have ideas for future pre-symposium workshops, please contact us. The Seminole Icebreaker was held after the events of the day, at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino.

TUESDAY, JUNE 5
Started with Opening Ceremonies, Invocation, Posting of the Colors, and Welcomes by our hosts, ITC President and the Keynote was given by Cecil Frost. After the morning break the Host Tribe Presentation was given, then followed by our first panel “Hydrology Changes Over Time,” and second panel was on the “Changes in Fire Management Through the Years” and the final panel was on “Workforce Development: The Emerging Needs and Opportunities for Tribal Forestry and Our Federal Partners.” We finished the day with the Host Tribe Welcome Dinner at the Fort Lauderdale Grand Hotel with an outstanding meal.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6
The Big Cypress Reservation Tour was quite interesting and memorable. Hot and humid it was! During the wonderful lunch at the rodeo grounds in Miccosukee, we were entertained with traditional “Gater wrestling”. Nona Tuchawena gave it her all and subdued the eight-foot alligator after eating lunch too. As you can see, we had an enjoyable time. We also spent time at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, the Cattle ranch, and saw Seminole Wildland Fire up close.

THURSDAY, JUNE 7
The day’s activities started with the ITC President’s Report, then updates from the Office of Wildland Fire, BIA, Legislative, and a

(Continued on page 4)
Symposium Committee
by Howard Teasley Jr.

(Continued from page 3)

USDA Forest Service Tribal Relations. Immediately following the updates, the three Workshop got underway simultaneously: Workshop 1: Contract & Consultations, Workshop 2: Funding Opportunities for Tribes, and Workshop 3: Indigenous Use of Fire.

After the workshops concluded, the Annual Business Meeting of Member Tribes was held. We re-elected to the Board of Directors Tanana Chiefs Conference, Alaska and lost the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Oregon. Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Quinault Indian Nation, and the Spokane Tribe retained their seats on the board. In addition, a location for the future symposium of 2023 has been decided in Western Montana, Big Sky Country, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes.

General Membership is offered to tribes for $250 annually and Associate Membership is offered to individuals and other organizations for $25 annually. Membership applications can be found on our website http://www.itcnet.org/about_us/. If you would like to be on ITC symposium mailing list and receive the agenda, please contact the ITC Office by phone at (503) 282-4296, or email at itc1@teleport.com.

Finally, the National Indian Timber Symposium Awards Banquet. These Seminole Guitars started a riot, each banquet table only having one, which went to farthest traveler at the table, explained by council member Joe Frank. I heard people were googling their addresses to see how far. It was a nice time.

There were 233 attendees, 103 pre-symposium participants, and 12 exhibitors: ASIA - Division of Energy and Mineral Development, Esri, Finite Carbon, Gyro-Trac Corporation, National Indian Carbon Coalition, Nelson Paint Company, SKC TREES, Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Truax Company, University of Florida - Southern Fire Exchange, University of Georgia - Langdale Center for Forest Business, and USDA APHIS.

Thank you to everyone that participated. The 2019 Final Proceedings will be mailed to the 2019 Symposium participants during the fall.

A special thank you to the Seminole Tribe of Florida! It was a wonderful experience.

Next year, the Tanana Chief Conference, Fairbanks, AK will be hosting the symposium during June 1-4, 2020.

Take Care and God Bless. Qe’ci-yew’yew

Recognize that guy! Comedian Gabriel “Fluffy” Iglesias.

Big Cypress Tribal Tour: Nona Tuchawena (Hopi Tribal Member) Superintendent, Fort Apache Agency
PLANNING AND PRIORITIES

(1) Central Office Staff
Pete Wakeland’s detail as the Acting Associate Deputy Bureau Director, Natural Resources has been extended for a second 120-day term. Matt Anderson will continue serve as Acting Chief Forester for another 120 days. Caleb Cain has likewise extended his service to Central Office Forestry; and will be serving for an additional 120 days. We thank Ed Morgan, Alaska Regional Forester, for his service at Central Office this spring and wish him the best as he returns home for the short and very busy Alaska field season. Any BIA employee interested in gaining experience from the national perspective is welcome to take a turn through Central Office on a temporary assignment ranging from 2 weeks to 120 days. Please contact Matt Anderson for further information.

(2) Office of Trust Services Relocates to Albuquerque
Many of the staff members from BIA Office of Trust Services (OTS) have relocated or are in the process of relocating to the Albuquerque, New Mexico area. OTS opened its Central Office West location on April 15. The new offices are on the third floor of the same building that houses BIA’s Southwest Regional Office and the Southern Pueblos Agency. The address is 1001 Indian School Road NW, Albuquerque, NM 87104. Note that OTS West houses some OTS staff but not all. The office of the Deputy BIA Director for Trust Services remains housed in the Main Interior Building in Washington D.C.

(3) Regional Forester’s Meetings
A Regional Foresters’ meeting was held April 16-18 at the Branch of Forest Resource Planning offices in Lakewood, Colorado, with nearly 30 people in attendance. Discussion included, updates from Central Office staff on budget, staffing, and development and revision of guidance documents; from BOFRP staff on inventory projects, training, and ongoing development of the Forest Information Reporting Statistics & Tracking (FIRST) database system; from the Branch of Fire Management staff on pre-season planning and implementation of new national initiatives including Secretarial Order 3372 on active management to reduce wildfire risk on Interior lands; and updates from the Regions. The next Regional Foresters’ meeting is currently being planned for December 10-12 in Albuquerque. Anyone interested in assisting with logistical planning should contact Acting Southwest Regional Forester John Cervantes, and anyone interested in helping to develop the agenda or in speaking to the audience should contact Forester Kurt Mettler of the Northwest Region.

(4) Secretarial Order 3372
The Division has accomplished the tasks identified in this secretarial order that were due within the first 120 days since it was issued. In addition to these tasks, the order identifies other reporting requirements to be completed annually. Division staff are working with the DOI Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) to prepare for meeting those requirements due at the end of this fiscal year.

(5) Indian Trust Assets Reform Act (ITARA), 2018 Farm Bill, and S-245 Indian Tribal Energy Act
Two tribes have been approved to participate in the ITARA demonstration project and are currently developing the Indian Trust Asset Management Plans required under ITARA. Technical assistance is available to tribes who are approved for or considering participation in the demonstration project. Information on ITARA can be found at https://www.bia.gov/as-ia/raca/regulations-development-andor-under-review/itara-demonstration-project. For more information, contact Matt Anderson, Acting Chief Forester.

(6) Tribes are also encouraged to make use of new authorities granted to them under the 2018 Farm Bill and the Indian Energy Act. The Farm Bill extends Good Neighbor Authority to tribes, allowing them to manage National Forest System land under cooperative agreements with the Forest Service. The Forest Service has also been granted authority to enter into self-determination contracts with tribes directly under P.L. 93-638. The Indian Energy Act mandates the Forest Service and BLM to assist tribes in generation of energy by providing reliable sources of biomass fuel for tribal energy generating facilities.

(7) Manuals and Handbooks
Good progress is being made towards completing a combined timber sales and permits handbook to supplement the Harvest of Forest Products Manual (53 IAM Chapter 3) that was issued in October of last year. The Timber Sale Operations Group hopes to complete the handbook by the end of the calendar year. They anticipate revising and releasing the majority of the remaining illustrations from the former hand-

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books as forms available online including an updated version of the Power of Attorney for Allotment Timber Sale form and a new Allotment Forestry and Fire Management Project Consent form. All of the timber sale contract and permit forms and standard provisions were revised in 2017 and made available as online forms at bia.gov.

The Timber Sale Operations group has also drafted a National Forest Management Deductions Policy Memorandum, a National Direct Pay Policy Memorandum, and a draft Direct Pay Memorandum of Agreement template. These documents are currently being reviewed by the Office of the Solicitor.

The Forest Inventory Handbook team is also meeting and making progress on the draft and remain optimistic work can be completed by the end of the year.

BRANCH OF FOREST RESOURCES PLANNING (BOFRP)

CFI Application
- Work continues on incorporating the BIA specific volume equations used for CFI that are not in the USFS National Volume Estimator Library. The Forest Service has entered these equations and BOFRP is in the process of testing the results. A working processing program is still undergoing verification of calculated results to ensure program reliability. In addition, BIA CFI-to-FVS data translation is available to facilitate processing using FVS. BOFRP has been working on updating the field-data collector program for use on a Windows-based tablet. The tablet data collector will have the desktop version of BOFRP Apps and will include more thorough error checking, reporting errors at time of data entry. This will be available within the next year. BOFRP’s priority is to ensure the CFI database and the BOFRP Application are operational for CFI database development, processing and analysis.

FIRST
- BOFRP has worked to correct several issues the regions were experiencing during last reporting season. FEDs have been entered into Regional Distributions and are ready for Agency Distributions. Robin Lovato is near completion with the F.I.R.S.T training materials and is available to provide onsite training: please submit your request for August through October. Online training in FIRST is being considered as well. In the future, BOFRP will work with the Regions to verify and update data in FIRST.

National Forest Library
- The scanning of the forestry documents in the BOFRP library is in progress. We are currently scanning the Western Region documents; the goal is to complete scanning the entire library within a year. Documents in the archive file room are tentatively scheduled to begin being scanned in 2021.

Project Status
- CFIs are nearly completed (BOFRP is processing data and running it through the analysis program): Fort Apache, Southern Ute, Zia, Umatilla, Santa Clara Pueblo Woodland, Blackfeet and Colville.
- CFIs competed (data books or analysis program provided to Agency, Tribe or Contractor for use in FIA report): Warm Springs, Northern Cheyenne, Yakama, Nez Perce, Makah, Ute Moun-
tain, Mississippi Choctaw and Fort Belknap.
- CFI in the data cleaning: Jicarilla Timber/Woodland, Santa Clara Pueblo Timber.
- Upcoming CFIs: Penobscot, Flathead, Coeur d’Alene, Tulalip, 29 Palms, Yurok, Isleta, San Carlos, Swinomish Skokomish, Ramah.
- Stocking studies in progress: Santa Clara, Acoma, Jicarilla, Southern Ute, and Zuni.

BOFRP Objectives
- Our goal is to better serve the Tribes. We are committed to improving the data collection process, and simplifying post-inventory by merging analysis into a single unit to streamline CFI processing at all stages.

BRANCH OF WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

2019 Wildfire Year to Date and Wildfire Potential Outlook
So far this year, Indian Country is below normal for both the number of wildfires and the number of acres burned year to date. By this time in an average year, Indian Country has typically experienced about 1,470 wildfires that have burned about 85,000 acres. This year, due to deep snow packs and record-setting moisture in many areas, we have experienced 1,309 fires that have burned 30,560 acres.

Indian Country is not alone in their numbers. As of June 13, 2019, 16,719, fires have burned 375,239

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acres. Considering the number of fires, as well as acres burned, this is the slowest season year-to-date since 1985.

Looking ahead, according to Predictive Services, a cooler than average spring will persist, slowing snowpack melting, which could delay fire season in at least the higher, timbered terrain across the mountains of California, the Great Basin and the Central Rocky Mountains. However, along the Canadian Border, winter snowpack accrual was below average and spring melting rates are near average.

This could translate to an early loss of the snowpack across Washington State, Northern Idaho, and portions of Northwestern Montana. Should warm and dry conditions develop, these areas could experience periods of above normal fire activity.

In the middle and lower elevations, abundant winter and early spring moisture should translate to a heavy and continuous crop of fine grass and brush, which will become increasingly receptive to fire activity across the West from south to north in June and July. Areas of emphasis will be across California, Oregon, and the Great Basin where precipitation has been greater than 150 percent of average over the past 60 days. Once vegetation dry and cure, they will become especially sensitive to wind events that accompany the passage of dry cold fronts during the summer months.

“We have a robust grass crop in place across California and the Great Basin, into the Pacific Northwest, and even in parts of the Northern Rockies,” said Bryan Henry, predictive services manager at NIFC. “The grasses will dry and cure by the end of June and we’ll see an increase in fire activity across California and the Great Basin.”

2019 Administratively Determined (AD) Pay Plan Released – Here is what Agencies Need to Know

The 2019 Administratively Determined (AD) Pay Plan became effective May 15, 2019, and is valid until the Department issues the 2020 DOI AD Pay Plan for Emergency Workers.

As in previous years, ADs will not be paid for classroom time. However, they will receive pay for the field portion of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group 100 and 200 series courses. To receive payment, they must record their time on the OF-288 as “field training.”


One Stop Shopping for BIA Fire Jobs

In the spring of 2019, BIA Fire Management began updating its Fire Jobs web page to make it easier to find and navigate. It also includes BIA’s first fire recruitment video for interested job seekers.

You can now easily find BIA Fire Management job information, a link to all BIA Fire Management job listings, frequently asked questions, links to required job application forms, and tips and tricks to help applicants apply through USA Jobs by visiting www.bia.gov/firejobs.

Don’t forget to check out the five-minute video about BIA’s Aviation program!
Technical Specialist
by Don Motanic

FORESTRY EXTENSIONS PROVIDE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES
The Intertribal Timber Council is working with Ecotrust, Affiliated Tribes of NW Indians, and United Southern and East Tribes on a workforce development project that includes a survey concerning items that include current training options.

The survey has provided responses from more than 20 Tribes around the nation and one theme seems to have emerged. That theme is the successful training practices including collaboration between the tribe and the State University Forestry Extensions.

Tribes have not only used the extension services but have developed advisory councils for the land grant universities around the country. Stephen Fountain, Ph.D., Clinical Assistant Professor, Coordinator of Native American Programs, Washington State University at Vancouver said that he found seven Native American advisory council in the country that are providing input into land grant schools in various capacities that include natural resource research and creating a welcoming atmosphere for Native American Students.

Some of the land grant universities have a specific Native American Advisory Council for the School of Forestry like Northern Arizona University where Leon Ben, Jr., Chief, BIA, Branch of Wildland Fire Management has been a member for several years working with James Allen, Executive Director.

During the 2019 Symposium Tribal Tour, Alex Johns, Director of Natural Resources, Seminole Tribe

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Industry’s Department to initiate a logger safety program that will help recruit and train employees’ needed in the forest products industry.

To help facilitate the information from the various land grant university training, the ITC website has included links to the extension offices from most of the land grant universities serving the ITC member Tribes. It should only take “two clicks” before you can find the extension office by clicking on the training tab at the top of the ITC homepage and then click onto the list of extension offices.

The ITC training webpage also list most of the Ag Forestry leadership programs for each state. Many of the leadership programs follow the Kellogg Foundation model with a two-year program, while several state programs, such as Idaho and Oregon have modified their program into just a year.

As the ITC works with Ecotrust to finish the survey and complete the report by the end of 2019, the website will provide more information to assist with training and workforce development.

FORESTRY FUN PHONE APP – PLANTNET

PlantNet is a smartphone application that allows you to identify trees and plants by snapping a photo of leaves, flowers, fruit, cones or bark. This app can be used to help adults and youth to connect family fun and education about the plant world. This app can be used by the Indian forest and fire community to help recruit young future workforce at local career fairs, youth camps and school demonstrations.

The PlanNet website (plantnet.org) adds the following information: “PlantNet allows you to identify and better understand all kinds of plants living in nature: flowering plants, trees, grasses, conifers, ferns, vines, wild salads or cacti. PlantNet can also identify a large number of cultivated plants (in parks and gardens) but this is not its primary purpose. We especially need PlantNet users to inventory the wild plants, those that you can observe in nature of course but also those that grow on the sidewalks of our cities or in the middle of your vegetable garden! The more visual information you give to PlantNet about the plant you are observing, the more accurate the identification will be. Many plants that look similar from a far and it is sometimes small details that distinguish two species of the same genus. Flowers, fruits and leaves are the most characteristic organs of a species and they should be photographed first. Any other detail can be useful, such as thorns, buds or hair on the stem. A photograph of the whole plant (or the tree if it is one!) is also very useful information, but it is often not sufficient to allow a reliable identification.

At present PlantNet makes it possible to recognize about 20,000 species. We are still a long way from the 360,000 species living on earth, but PlantNet is getting richer every day thanks to the contributions of the most experienced users. Do not be afraid to contribute yourself! Your observation will be reviewed by the community and may one day join the photo gallery illustrating the species in the application.”

A PlantNet demonstration will be part of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society’s National Conference Workshop, during the week of October 10-12, 2019 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
FY20 BUDGET FOR INDIAN FORESTRY

Earlier this year the Trump Administration proposed its budget for Fiscal Year 2020. Ultimately, Congress holds the purse strings and Congress never fully enacts a President’s budget, even when in the same party’s control. Congressional hearings have begun digging into these numbers deeper, and Congress is preparing its own appropriations bills for FY2020.

Under the Trump budget, DOI would see an overall 14% decrease, with significant cuts coming from BIA programs. However, BIA Forestry was largely spared of any significant cut.

Here are some highlights of the Administration’s budget justification:

Bureau of Indian Affairs (total): $1.99 billion ($1.26 billion reduction [which includes the removal of BIE from the BIA budget])

- Tribal Government (self-gov compacts, etc): $326 million ($8 million increase)
- Human Services (ICWA, etc): $142 million ($18 million decrease)
- Trust Services/Natural Resources: $184 million ($20 million decrease)
- Forestry: $54.759 million (the smallest decrease within Natural Resources).

- Trust Services/Real Estate: $122 million ($7.8 million decrease)
- Public Safety/Justice: $409 million ($3.6 million increase)
- Contract Support Costs: $285 million ($8.3 million decrease)

Indian Health Service: The Trump budget proposes a $140 million increase over 2019, including specific increases for Hospitals/Clincs and Purchased/Referred Care. However, the budget makes several cuts within the IHS budget, including elimination of the Health Education program and cuts to the Community Health Representatives.

In March, ITC President Vernon Stearns testified in front of the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee is support of increased funding for BIA forest management and ongoing encouragement by Congress for federal agencies to quickly implement the new forest management authorities involving tribes.

In May, the House Appropriations Committee approved its version of the FY20 bill. It provides $55.5 million for BIA Forestry – a higher number than the Trump budget, but slightly lower than the FY19 appropriated level ($55.91 million).

The Senate Appropriations Committee has not yet approved its version of the bill.

DOI RE-ORGANIZATION

Questions remain about the direction and nature of the Department’s potential reorganization. At a recent FY2020 budget hearing, a department official told Congress that the goal of having 12 unified, watershed-based regions within DOI did not include the bureaus that engage with Indian Country because they did not wish to participate in the effort. But Committee Chairwoman Betty McCollum (D-MN) argued that Indian Country chose not participate because they were only consulted after the regions were drawn.

Meanwhile, at least 40 BIA positions have been relocated from the Washington, D.C. office to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Other agencies are being courted to move out West. A Colorado Senator is practically begging DOI to move the BLM to Colorado.

The DOI’s reorganization website states that several bureau headquarters “are examining the viability” of being moved entirely out of Washington, D.C. The website also states that DOI is evaluating which cities will be candidates for these potential new bureau headquarters regarding BLM, FWS, USGS and BOR. BIA is not included in that list.

At a hearing of the Democrat-controlled House Natural Resources Committee, a department official again stated that BIA would not be a part of the reorganization due to tribal opposition. The Bureau of Indian Education and the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians won’t be included either as Interior moves other agencies, bureaus and offices to a new “unified” system of regions throughout the country.

“We conducted extensive tribal consultation, both formal and informal,” Scott Cameron, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budget at Interior, testified. He pointed to a series of listening sessions and consultations about the initiative.

FIRST TRIBES ACCEPTED INTO ITARA DEMO PROGRAM

The Coquille Indian Tribe and the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians have been officially accept-
ed into the demo program for the Indian Trust Asset Reform Act (ITARA). The program, which officially opened October 1, 2018, is available to Tribes engaged in forestland management and/or surface leasing activities on trust lands.

If selected to participate, such as Coquille and Cow Creek, Tribes may submit an Indian Trust Asset Management Plan (ITAMP) for the management of Tribal trust assets. An approved ITAMP may allow Tribes to develop Tribal forestry and surface leasing regulations, and assume certain approval authorities currently held by the Secretary of the Department of the Interior. This is similar to HEARTH Act authority.

Draft language for ITAMP’s has been provided by the BIA and is available on the BIA website.

FOREST SERVICE PROPOSES NEW CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS

In early June, the U.S. Forest Service released proposed changes to modernize how the agency complies with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). According to the agency, revising the rules will improve forest conditions and make it simpler for people to use and enjoy their national forests and grasslands at lower cost to the taxpayer. The revised rules will make it easier to maintain and repair the infrastructure people need to use and enjoy their public lands—the roads, trails, campgrounds, and other facilities, it said.

The updates would create a new suite of “categorical exclusions,” a classification under the NEPA excluding certain routine activities from more extensive, time-consuming analysis under an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

The proposed categorical exclusions would be for restoration projects, roads and trails management, recreation and facility management, as well as special use authorizations that issue permits for outfitters and guides, community organizations, civic groups and others who seek to recreate on our national forests and grasslands. The new categorical exclusions are based on intensive analysis of hundreds of environmental assessments and related data and when fully implemented will reduce process delays for routine activities by months or years.

The proposed update is open for public comment for 60 days after publication in the Federal Register. Public comments are reviewed and considered when developing the final rule. Tribes should consider utilization of these regulatory changes as potential tools to be used in tribal projects with the Forest Service under Good Neighbor Authority, Tribal Forest Protection Act and Indian biomass demonstration projects.

Operations Committee
by Cody Desautel

I would like to start by thanking everyone that attended the 43rd Annual ITC Symposium, and the Seminole Tribe for their hospitality. This report will include updates from the April board meeting, and symposium.

FARM BILL
An ITC contingent met with Forest Service staff in Portland on April 19, 2019, to discuss the 2018 Farm Bill provisions. This discussion included both P.L. 93-638 contract authority on TFPA projects, and Good Neighbor authority. Conversations were very productive. As a result of that meeting a Challenge Cost Share Agreement has been drafted in which ITC would conduct outreach to Tribes and Forest Service staff. This outreach will likely be conducted through workshops and webinars. As the agreement and deliverables are finalized we will share member tribes.

INDIAN ENERGY BILL
During the April 19 meeting with Forest Service staff we also discussed the Biomass demonstration projects. The end of fiscal year 2019 is quickly approaching, and we are working to identify potential projects. The demonstration allows for up to four projects in the lower 48 states, and one project in Alaska annually. Please reach out to your local Forest Supervisor or District Ranger if you have interest in a project. You can also contact ITC if you want additional information to inform your decision.

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The Intertribal Timber Council (ITC) initiated two studies regarding wildland fire impacts on Indian forestlands. Both studies occurred shortly after the devastating wildfires of 2015. In this article I will summarize the findings and provide a brief update on the ongoing activities generated from the studies.

Because impacts from devastating wildfire will likely continue to increase into the foreseeable future, the ITC does not want to lose track of the issues identified and lessons learned from the studies.

The first study—*Wildfire on Indian Forests-A Trust Crisis* completed by members of the Indian Forest Management Assessment Team (IFMAT) including: Vincent Corrao, John Bailey, John Gordon, Adrian Leighton, Larry Mason, Mark Rasmussen, and John Sessions.

In the first study, the ITC asked the IFMAT, to investigate the following five topics and provide statements regarding the 2015 fire season:

1. DOI BAER plan estimates of rehabilitation costs - is the methodology appropriate and are cost estimates reasonable?
2. Previous IFMAT warnings about the consequences of failing to provide adequate resources to fulfill fiduciary trust responsibilities.
3. The need for timely action to minimize environmental damage from the 2015 wildfires.
4. The need to harvest the timber damaged by wildfires to recover as much value as possible.
5. Other losses, such as impact on future timber supply, jobs, etc.

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## IFMAT Recommendations

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<th>IFMAT Recommendations</th>
<th>Response</th>
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| 1. Recognize and treat Indian Forest Trust Lands as “property” when prioritizing suppression resources. | NMAC National Priority Setting: The single, overriding priority in all actions is the protection of human life – both that of firefighters and the public. National priorities and drawdown plans will consider the following criteria:  
   1. Maintain GA initial attack capability  
   2. Protect communities and community infrastructure, other property and improvements and natural and cultural resources.  
   When competition for wildland fire resources occurs between wildland fire and non-wildland fire incidents, NMAC will communicate priorities to agency, department, and executive level leadership |

**Follow-up:** The current policy lists ‘other’ property and improvements and natural resources with communities. We recommend that additional training for Tribal and agency fire management staff, GMAC and NMAC representatives to ensure that Tribal priorities are known early in the season and during times when suppression resources are limited.

| 2. Establish and maintain a pool of funds and resources for immediate emergency post-fire salvage, rehabilitation, and restoration activities all available within days of final suppression. | Currently a National Burned Area Emergency Response team is dispatched to major incidents. The team plans post fire recovery recommendations. The DOI OWF allocates the national BAR funding to each bureau based on a 10-year rolling average and not on annual need. The annual allocation for BAR is $18 million for the entire DOI bureaus. BIA’s share of the allocation is approximately $4 million per year and again is not based on annual need. Tribes have accessed additional funding pools from other federal and state agencies to help support the post fire recovery needs. There remains a large backlog of post fire recovery needs throughout the nation. If reforestation is not funded from BAER/BAR within 5 years of the fire, the reforestation need become part of the tribal/agency backlog.  
Each Tribe/Agency is usually responsible to plan, layout and implement salvage timber sale operations as appropriate |

**Follow-up:** Discussions continue with DOI OWF about BAR allocation process. Discussions also continue with BIA BAER Specialist about BAR funding needs.  
The National Wildfire Leadership Council (WFLC) is also discussing post fire mitigation and how best to address the overwhelming cost of restoration and rehabilitation.  
BIA Forestry has discussed developing a task team of timber sale experts that would be available to support Tribes/agencies development of timber sale packages including salvage. |
Provide adequate compensation for long-term economic impacts of fires, most of which are not taken into consideration under the present funding system. Additional research is needed.

Provide adequate funding to the BIA for preparedness, fuels and prevention. The ITC has advocated for an increased fire budget, including preparedness, fuels and prevention. The ITC position has been that increased ‘active management’ needs to occur on tribal lands that would reduce the overall negative impact of destructive wildfire. We need to get more ‘good’ fire on the landscape to prevent the ‘bad’ fires. ITC has also advocated that federal agencies should reduce the funding silos and allow tribes and agencies to be more creative with the funding they receive.

Re-evaluate the preparedness and fuels treatment risk-based models to give more weight to Tribal trust forestlands and the adjacent federal lands that pose a risk to Tribal lands. These models are being evaluated. Current direction is pushing the identification of ‘risk’ to each of the agencies. It is very politically difficult to alter the funding allocation percent of the total fire budget from one agency to another. We have seen this with FPA, HFPAS, and the new Risk Based models.

Fund revision of forest plans for Tribal forests impacted by catastrophic fire. Funding for Forest Management planning comes from BIA Forest Management and Inventory Planning (FMIP). Tribes with forest resources have been included in a rotation of approximately 10-15 year planning cycles. However, if forest conditions change significantly during the period, funds could be requested by the tribe.

Fund Tribal mills to make changes in equipment and production protocols in response to catastrophic fire. Tribal mills are eligible for low interest loans and grants. Many tribes also fund milling infrastructure out of tribal funds as well. Additional research is needed.

Obtain fire insurance for Tribal Forest Lands. This recommendation may be logistically infeasible and cost prohibitive. Additional research is needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Fire Study Question</strong></th>
<th><strong>Recommendations</strong></th>
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| Allocation of Suppression Resources | - Tribes and agencies need to develop a staff succession strategy to recruit, train and retain future fire management staff from natural resources disciplines.  
- Tribes and agencies need to nurture and develop local collaborative partnerships to share fire management resources.  
- Tribes and agencies need to participate in the LMAC and GMAC process to effectively communicate their needs and make them known and understood.  
- Tribes and agencies need to make their suppression concerns and resource priorities known to their regional BIA and GACC during off-season meetings.  
- Tribes also need to include their resource protection priorities within their respective Wildfire Decision Support System. |

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### DOI Administrative Efficiencies

- DOI OWF and BIA and tribes need a consistent consultation policy on issues that affect Tribes and their resources.
- The federal government needs to review the impact of parceling federal allocations on operational efficiency and effectiveness. (i.e. fuels funding is divided into three separate pots)
- Consistent, stable funding is essential to building, developing and maintaining quality workforces now and into the future.
- Federal agencies need to work with Tribes to re-establish traditional use of fire.
- Tribes should make prescribed burning and other active management strategies a priority.

### Emergency Stabilization Rehabilitation and Restoration

- Need for monitoring of natural regeneration to better forecast the real needs versus the perceived regeneration needs and to include local knowledge in addressing restoration issues.
- The current formula is based on a 10-year rolling average and not actual needs. The DOI should consider a hybrid formula based partially on the 10-year average, while maintaining flexibility to meet current need.
- ITC should consider an amendment to NIFRMA allowing the BIA to request supplemental BAR funding for Tribes during times of need.
- DOI OWF needs to verify rehabilitation effectiveness for various treatments and factor effectiveness into allocation strategies.
- Funding allocation must recognize that the DOI bureaus have a fiduciary trust obligation to Tribes.

### Cost Avoidance and Proactive Management

- The BIA and ITC should develop an avoided cost model based on Tribal specific criteria.

### Tribal Wildfire Priorities

- Protection of Tribal resources requires adequate, stable funding along with training and workforce development to ensure that adequate current and future firefighting resources are available to manage wildfire successfully on reservation lands.
- Suppression resources need to be prioritized to meet the trust responsibilities of the federal government in protecting trust assets that are vital to the economic interests and well-being of Tribal communities, members and homelands.
The second study, titled Improving Efficiency, Equity and Effectiveness of Wildfire Impacts on Tribal Trust Lands was conducted by interviewing key fire specialists within the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Tribal, and other organizations across the United States. The goal of the study was to focus efforts on providing an effective process to promote positive change through the use of policies already in place and to look at others that need improvement.

Findings and recommendations of the study are largely based on information gained through the interviews and subsequent analysis to provide a clear understanding of how each of the five questions impact Tribal resources. Specific concerns dealing with fire suppression systems, effective communication, Tribal values and priorities were a key focus of the study.

Opportunities to improve the relationship between Tribes and the federal government exist through increased Tribal consultation, workforce training, a higher level of leadership training, and increased overall communication.

As part of the second report includes an Implementation Strategy for some of the recommendations. The table below provides an update as of June 2019 on the action items:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Update</th>
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<tr>
<td>National Leadership training is needed for BIA and tribal personnel</td>
<td>- BIA NIFC and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) are developing leadership training for Tribal and agency FMO’s</td>
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</table>
| A workforce strategy needs to be implemented across Indian Country | - BIA Forestry and Fire Management is currently developing Workforce Development Strategies.  
- BIA NW Regional Office personnel is working with a workgroup to develop Technician training opportunities.  
- ITC has completed a Workforce Development Strategic Plan and is working on identifying funding for implementation. This plan is available on the ITC web page at https://www.itcnet.org/issues_projects/issues_2/workforce-development/workforce-development.html  
- National Congress of American Indians recently published a Tribal Workforce Development: A Decision-Framing Toolkit. This is available at the NCAI web page or at www.ncai.org/ptg/workforce-development/toolkit. |
| The BIA and ITC are to develop an avoided cost model based on Tribal Specific criteria | - DOI OWF and BIA are working within NIFC Fuels Committee on an Avoided Cost (like) model.  
- BIA and ITC have yet to develop criteria for a Tribal-specific model. |

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Wildland Fire Technical Specialist
by Jim Durglo

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Interagency policy changes needed

- Discussions with DOI OWF continue about the fragmentation of fuels funding into many pools with additional application and reporting requirements which lead to inconsistent funding and fluctuations in accomplishments.

Funding for fuels treatments currently is available for programmatic cost, projects, and for Reserved Treaty Rights Lands projects. All funding is based initially on the BIA share of the national fuels funding allocation, then project submittal within the NIFPORS data system. Many tribes have also used funding from the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service to accomplish forest management treatments.

More Tribal consultation is needed—informed, effective, and consensus based

- DOI OWF and ITC will draft an MOU that outlines expectations for communications about proposed policy and directives/initiatives that affect Tribal programs.

Update position descriptions and job duties of HR and administrative staff for wildfire support

- This recommendation would surely provide additional staff within the wildland fire workforce. ITC recognizes that implementation relies on individual Tribal and BIA concurrence and action.

Research Subcommittee
by Adrian Leighton

Greetings from the Research Subcommittee. Happy Summer everyone, and many thanks to the Seminole Tribe of Florida for hosting another amazing Symposium. Speaking of the Symposium, I would also like to thank Dr. Jim Allen, Kelly Hetzler, Cody Desau-tel, Stephanie Cowherd and my research co-chair Dr. Serra Hoagland for an excellent and thought-provoking panel on workforce development. It was clear from the questions at the end that this is a topic of great importance to the attendees.

The Subcommittee is continuing to collect the ITC Research Needs Survey, if you have not yet filled it out, please do so. If you have not heard from us recently or the link is lurking somewhere in your email, you can type in: https://umn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_56Li-T3USQrmNP1P

Alternatively, email me at forestry@skc.edu and I can provide the link electronically. Initial analysis (and the selection of the winners of the 8th Generation blankets!) should occur during the September Board Meeting. We will continue to collect surveys (and remind you all to fill them out) throughout the summer. Earlier in June, Serra and Jim Durglo had the opportunity to present the research needs project to the USFS Office of Tribal Relations National Meeting hosted by the Pueblo of Santa Clara in Española, New Mexico.

I would also like to acknowledge and mourn the passing of Dr. Janet Leak-Garcia, our colleague and the impetus behind the new ITC Research Needs survey. Her passion and drive will be missed. Our thoughts and best wishes go out to her family, friends and co-workers. In other news, the Subcommittee is continuing its work with USFS Research & Development to create a new national agreement to fund the ITC Tribal Research Scholarships.

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Research Subcommittee
by Adrian Leighton

This agreement, which has been hosted by the USFS Southern Research Station since its inception, has benefitted numerous Native American graduate and undergraduate students conducting tribally relevant research. I hope that there will be more to announce on this front by fall.

Finally, the 2018 Farm Bill contained an important provision which allowed tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) with a forestry degree at the Associates level or higher to access federal McIntire Stennis forestry research funds (currently this program is funded at about $34 million annually). If you have a TCU near you or work with one on projects, make sure they know about this new opportunity and feel free to contact me for more details on this exciting (and long overdue) development.

Enjoy the sunny summer weather, fill out lots of surveys, and when in doubt... think research!

Awards Committee
by Will Putman

The 43rd National Indian Timber Symposium is now behind us, and many thanks are due to the Seminole Tribe of Florida for hosting a great week. The final event of the symposium, as always, was the annual Awards Banquet held on Thursday evening at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, and a key part of any Awards Banquet is the presentation of awards. This past year the ITC Awards Committee was pleased to receive a number of worthy nominations for awards, and those awards were recognized and presented.

ITC Bright Star Award
KC Sharon Randall from the San Carlos Apache Tribe was recognized with an ITC Bright Star Award as a bright young leader who was taken from us too soon.

2019 Earle R. Wilcox Awards

Individual Achievement

- Richard Botto, Forest Planner, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Warm Springs, OR
- Phillip J. Cernera, Director, Coeur d’Alene Tribe, Lake Management Dept., Plummer, ID
- Mark Higley, Wildlife Biologist, Hoopa Valley Tribal Forestry, Hoopa, CA
- Nathan Lojewski, Forestry Manager, Chugachmiut, Anchorage, AK

Forester of the Year
And, in what was assuredly the emotional high point of the evening, ITC’s former President accepted his award.

- Phil Rigdon, Deputy Director, Yakama Nation, Dept. of Natural Resources, Toppenish, WA

Our congratulations go out to this year’s recipients. It’s a great thing to see our peers step up and nominate worthy people for these awards, and it’s a genuine pleasure to serve on the Awards Committee and receive those nominations. This next winter we will be soliciting nominations for the 2020 Wilcox awards, and we encourage everybody to help us find those worthy individuals that deserve nomination for these awards. You know who those deserving individuals are, and we encourage you to put forward their names and nominate them for an award.
First off, I would like to introduce myself. I am Nicole Stiffarm. I have recently had the honor of being selected as Chair of ITC’s Education Committee. I am an enrolled member of the Chippewa Cree Tribe and hold a forestry degree from Salish Kootenai College. I am currently the Program Manager for SKC’s Center for Tribal Research & Education in Ecosystem Sciences (SKC TREES). I would like to congratulate the Seminole Tribe on their excellent work hosting the 43rd annual ITC Symposium in Florida. The staff were exceptionally accommodating and supportive throughout the week.

The Education Committee worked diligently this spring to assign scores to individual applicants based on their completed application packets. This year, ITC has awarded 21 scholarships totaling $51,000 to students representing 13 different tribes. Congratulations goes out to each one of them.

**2019 TRUMAN D. PICARD SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS**

**High School $2000**
- Jordan Brooks
- Tanner King
- Samantha Yazzie

**Undergraduate $2500**
- Kelly Bolton
- Justin Fasana
- Cody Goklish
- Nizhoni Harvey
- Kelsey Jensen
- Yvette Leecy
- Michael Leecy
- Deland Olney
- Kaylei Ryan
- Rachel Tom
- Christopher Villarruel

**Graduate $2500**
- Alfred Balletto
- Kylee Butler
- Elisha Flores
- Chad Brown
- Cameron Macias
- Kathryn Thompson
- Maggie Tallmadge

**RAFFLE**

During the symposium, the raffle proceeds totaled $7,924. All of which will go to supporting future scholarship recipients. Since 1988, ITC has awarded 498 scholarships totaling over $987,000. We are so close to reaching the million-dollar mark! None of this would be possible without the continued generosity of those of you who donate raffle items, buy raffle tickets, attend Monday workshops, purchase inserts for symposium packets, and become exhibitors during the symposium! On behalf of the Education Committee and the hundreds of scholarship recipients over the years THANK YOU! I look forward to building upon the important work accomplished by our previous chair Victoria Wesley.