



INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL TIMBER NOTES

Spring ~ 2024



Howard Teasley, Jr.

REGISTER NOW FOR THE 2024 ITC SYMPOSIUM!

The Intertribal Timber Council (ITC) family would like to invite you to the Smoky Mountains of Appalachia. We are very excited to have the 47th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium to be held **May 13-16, 2024**, at Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort & Convention Center, hosted by ITC and Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in Cherokee, NC. The theme of this year's symposium is *"Restoring Tribal Relations and Values to the Land."*

Online registration closes May 6. Visit the event website for details: <https://www.eventsquid.com/event/23216>. You can now plan to make the necessary reservations for your stay, vehicles, and activities. Car Rentals should be reserved in advance. Check office hours to ensure you will be able to



Photo of Keynote speaker Tom Belt.

pick up and drop off around your flight times. Visit the event website for closest airports and lodging information. Please purchase guest tickets for the Tuesday Luncheon and Thursday Awards Banquet online by May 6. No onsite sales will be available.

Fees for the optional **Monday, May 13: Pre-Symposium Workshops** directly fund the Intertribal Timber Council's Truman D. Picard Scholarship, dedicated to the support of Native American students pursuing a higher education in Natural Resources. All workshops are provided with refreshments and lunches. Please dress appropriately for field workshops.

Pre-Symposium Workshop 1: Forest Technology. An overview of Lidar technology and new de-

velopments regarding forestry applications. Register online by May 6. Maximum attendees 50.

Pre-Symposium Workshop 2: Fire Ecology and Traditional Knowledge - Sharing Experiences and Knowledges to Restore Relationships with Peoples and

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President's Message

by Cody Desautel



Cody Desautel

I hope 2024 is off to a good start for everyone. Let's start with the bad news. With a presidential election coming this fall we expect changes in the administration over the next nine months, and that some legislative priorities will be pushed into 2025. We also have a potentially challenging wildfire season ahead with an El Nino winter across most of the country, and the Smokehouse Creek fire that has already consumed more than one-million acres in Texas. Now the good news. We have two rare opportunities with the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission, and IFMAT reports circulating with recommendations to improve the management and staffing for tribal and federal forests. With all those considerations I am expecting an exciting year.

With the Wildfire Commission hosting its last meeting on March 13, 2024, the formal commission will sunset. I want to take a second opportunity to recognize the work of Bill Tripp and Gary Jackson, who did an amazing job representing tribes and tribal interests on the commission. ITC and our member tribes owe you both a well-deserved "thank you." However, there is significant work to do on implementing the recommenda-

tions that were outlined in the report. I would encourage tribal natural resource managers to review both the full wildfire commission report and its 148 recommendations, and aviation report with its 19 recommendations. If there are specific recommendations that ITC should focus on, or if member tribes want to lobby for legislation that supports any of the recommendations please reach out to a board member or Laura Alvidrez, ITC Program Manager. The report was very comprehensive and provided recommendations on a number of cross-cutting issues. ITC will continue to engage with Congress to implement those recommendations that benefit Indian country.

I want to take the remainder of this report to recognize another achievement for ITC and our member tribes. On the afternoon of March 13, 2024, I had the opportunity to attend the Forest Service "Chiefs Award" ceremony in

Washington DC. At that event I had the honor of accepting the Chiefs Award on behalf of a number of tribal leaders and forest service staff. ITC's longtime friend, Deputy Chief John Crockett, presented the awards for "Developing Tribal and Equity-Centered Partnership." Collectively we were recognized for "Tribal Forest Protection Act and Forest Service Co-Stewardship Projects and Accomplishments of Integrating Caring for the Land with Tribal Custodians and Indigenous Ecological Knowledge." The tribal partners included the ITC, Bill Tripp (Karuk), Jason Robison (Cow Creek), Tommy Cabe (Eastern band of Cherokee), Austin Lowe (Sault St. Marie), Whitney Gravelle (Bay Mills), Melvin Baker (Southern Ute), and Ed Denville (Shaan Seet Inc.). Our Forest Service partners included Colleen O'Brian, Sandra Dingman, Nolan Colegrove, Jacob Winn, James Brammer, Reese Sewell, Cavan Fitzsimmons, Bridget Darr, Paul



Photo of Deputy Chief John Crockett, Chief Randy Moore, ITC President Cody Desautel, and Associate Chief Angela Coleman at the 2023 Chief's Award ceremony.

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President's Message

by Cody Desautel

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Thompson, Eric Rebitzke, and Rita Mills. Following is a link to the award website: www.fs.usda.gov/inside-fs/recognition/chiefs-awards

To understand the importance of this award we should look back at what it took for us to get there. Many of us serving on the board and working with ITC remember when the crazy idea of getting 638 contract authority for work with the Forest Service came up about a decade ago. Through extensive lobbying efforts over the years, we were pleasantly surprised in December of 2018 when the Farm Bill was passed just before the winter recess for Congress. I remember being in DC the week before the Farm Bill was approved mak-

ing the final push to expand Good Neighbor Authority to Tribes, and 638 contracting authorities for the Forest Service. We were told by staff on the hill that the forestry provisions were too controversial and would likely be removed to ensure the proposed language could pass through both the House and Senate. Ironically the tribal forestry provisions were some of the very few forestry provisions that stayed in the final text. With this new authority we undertook a lengthy process with our Forest Service partners to determine how 638 contracting would work within USDA, drafted 638 agreement templates that were similar to the 638 contracts that tribes were familiar with but were consistent with USDA contracting requirements, and held a number of training sessions to ensure tribes

and the USFS knew how to use this new authority. In all this process took several years of lobbying, and another two years to see projects utilize the new authority.

In my experience we are a very forward-looking organization, but sometimes we need to look back at all the work that got us to the place we are today. For both past and present staff, board members, and federal partners that put in an immense amount of work to improve natural resource management for tribes I say thank you. Your passion and dedication are truly inspiring, and I look forward to continuing that work with you in 2024.



Symposium Committee

by Howard Teasley, Jr.

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Places. This workshop will provide participants the opportunity to gain understanding from cultural burning knowledge directly from researchers, scientists and tribal practitioners using shared learning and workforces. There will be a field tour to explore three prescribed fire projects. Register online by May 6. Maximum attendees 50.

Pre-Symposium Workshop 3: Mask Carving. Traditional and modern mask carving will be taught by Butch and Louise Goings of Qualla Arts & Crafts Mutual, Inc. Register online by May 6. Maximum attendees 25.

Pre-Symposium Workshop 4: Basket Making. Local basket weavers Mary W. Thompson and Betty Maney will review the his-

tory of Cherokee basketry, culture, and art. Participants will also make a small round Reed basket. Register online by May 6. Maximum attendees 25.

Private Event: Native Women & Allies in Forestry Luncheon. The event aims to create space, foster connection, and community for women and allies within the forestry sector as well as share professional and personal experiences. Please email jaimie.yazzie@nau.edu if you are interested in attending this or future Native Women in Forestry events. RSVP with the link provided in your email invitation to reserve your space. Visit the event website for more details.

The Symposium Officially Begins, and Registration for all attendees starts at 3:00 pm, and runs until 600 pm at the Cherokee

Convention Center: Registration. Check in and pick up your name tag before heading to the Host Ice-breaker.

Host Tribe Ice Breaker from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm at Unto These Hills Outdoor Theater. Enjoy hors d'oeuvres and mingle with attendees. Guests welcome. Musical performance. Parking available. Shuttle starts at 4:45 pm.

Tuesday, May 14: Registration at the Cherokee Convention Center, Exhibits, and the Raffle begin at 7:00 am. The symposium officially starts at 8:00 am with the **Opening Ceremony** – Invocation, Posting of the Colors, and Welcomes. **Keynote** by Tom Belt, Elder / Earthkeeper, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The morning Panel will present **Building a Re-**

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Symposium Committee

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silient Workforce in Tribal Forestry & Wildland Fire. Followed by the **ITC Luncheon** and **Panel: Turning Recommendations into Action – IFMAT-IV Implementation & Outreach Strategies.** Ending with the **Host Presentation.** This will conclude the afternoon sessions and the evening events will start at 6:00 pm with the **Host Tribe Welcome Dinner** at the Wolfstown Community Building. Guest Welcome Parking Available.

Wednesday, May 15: Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Tribal Tour: Bus loading from 7:30 am - 8:00 am at **Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort: Lobby.** Lunch (provided) at Cowee Mound. Guests welcome. Permethrin tick spray will be given to treat clothing and shoes prior to departure. Wear long pants tucked into your boots or socks and check for ticks after returning from wooded areas. **Stop 1: Waterrock Knob:** Cultural stop to discuss the origin of Waterrock Knob and its significance to Kituwah, songs, and medicine. Tribal Elder Tom Belt will lead this stop to discuss air quality and relative work including climate trends and prescribed burns. **Stop 2: Cowee Mound: Tour this diplomatic site and its history and significance to Cherokee and the Trail of Tears.** Attendees will be shuttled up to Eagle Mountain Community Forest to discuss prescribed burned and oak management.

After the tour, there will be a **General Membership Meeting** at Cherokee Convention Center, which will be an open forum with topics of discussion given later. This will also give member Tribes the opportunity to communicate

with the ITC Board of Directors about their concerns.

Thursday, May 16: The day's activities will start at 8:00 am with the **ITC President's Report**, then the **Updates:** from Department of Interior Office of Wildland Fire, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Legislative, and U.S. Forest Service Office of Tribal Relations. Immediately following the Updates our ITC Workshops will start simultaneously at 10:30 am and end at 4:15 pm.

Workshop 1 Engaging Federal & Non-Federal Partners to Meet Tribal Management Objectives.

As tribes continue to face ongoing challenges of workforce development, the need to identify non-traditional partnerships is increasing.

Workshop 2 Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). Providing participants an opportunity to share their own visions, examples, and challenges with using TEK as a basis for natural resource management.

Workshop 3 Carbon Compliance & Voluntary Market Opportunities. To share opportunities in carbon space, BIA inclusion/exclusion in the process, and tribal examples to demonstrate the potential..

Following the workshops there will be the **Annual ITC Business Meeting** at the Cherokee Convention Center.

The 47th Annual National Intertribal Timber Symposium will conclude with our **Annual Awards Banquet** to honor and recognize the recipients of any regional or national Earle Wilcox Awards, and the recipients of the Truman D. Picard Scholarship. And finally, the winners of the various Education Committee Raffle prizes will be presented at this time.



Photo of Basket Maker Mary W. Thompson.

Come and visit North Carolina! The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and Intertribal Timber Council will see you in May.

Donation of raffle items for the symposium. Through your generous donations, the ITC generated \$13,962 at the 2023 symposium. All the funds go towards the ITC Truman D. Picard Scholarship. This scholarship supports Native American students seeking college degrees in the field of natural resources. To date, the ITC has awarded \$1,228,000 in scholarships to 542 native students.

Feel free to bring your gifts to the ITC Symposium or you may send your gifts to:

FedEx or UPS must be used to ship items. U.S. Postal Service will be returned as undeliverable.

Attn: Josh Parris, Forest Mgr. – ITC Raffle

Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
1840 Paint Town Rd.

Cherokee, NC 28719

Use a trackable shipping service and send the tracking number to joshparr@ebci-nsn.gov.

To help the ITC Education Committee catalog your donated items, please provide the following information:

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Symposium Committee

by Howard Teasley, Jr.

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- A brief description of the item.
- Estimated value of the item (information desired but not required).
- Donated by (i.e., Tribe, enterprise, individual, etc.).
- Donor's name and address.

This information will help the Committee give credit to the correct donors and send letters of appreciation after the symposium. Donations are tax deductible, and receipts are available upon request.

Help: Intertribal Timber Council is a nonprofit organization and is always looking for donations and/or sponsorships during the Annual Timber Symposium. ITC will accept banquet sponsorships that can be of any amount. If a Tribe or business is interested in donating, please contact ITC directly.

Here are the future Symposium dates for planning purposes:

2025 – 48th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium hosted by **Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, MT**

2026 – 49th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium hosted by the **Menominee Indian Tribe, Keshe-na, WI.**

2027 – 50th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium hosted by the **San Carlos Apache Tribe, San Carlos, AZ.**

Searching for a Host Tribe: Each year, the member tribes of Intertribal Timber Council vote by ballot and choose a future site for a tribe wanting to host the event. This occurs during the Annual Business Meeting on Thursday, May 16, 2024, after the Symposium workshops. During the meeting, there is an **Election of Board Members**

and a decision on the next location.

2026 – 51st Annual National Indian Timber Symposium is open for a tribe wanting to highlight their reservation area, tribal organization, natural resources, and resort casino. ITC has developed a planning document, which outlines every aspect of hosting, both in the forefront and behind the scenes. This will answer any questions and help weigh in on a tribe's decision. Is your Tribe interested in hosting. Please contact us.

Li'loyca Godnim Ha'awtnin ee was. Qe'ciyew'yew.

If you are not on the ITC symposium mailing list and would like to receive the annual symposium agenda in the mail, please contact the ITC Office by email at interrtribaltimbercouncil@gmail.com.



BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin



Aaron Baldwin

DWFM WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING SPECIALIST, MICHAEL BLACK,

RECEIVES FIRST NWCG AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

On February 22, 2024, Michael Black, BIA DWFM Workforce Development Training Specialist, received the first National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Award for Excellence along with other Incident and Position Standards Committee (IPSC) members that focused on 0456 fire job series position standardization in 2023 and development of position standards and training for the implementation of complex incident management teams. The award was presented at the NWCG annual executive board meeting that

took place in Boise, ID, this past month.

“At the NWCG Executive Board meeting this week we issued the IPSC, and all its individual members, the NWCG Award for Excellence,” said Garth Fisher, DWFM training program manager. “Mike Black is our BIA representative to that committee, and I would like to recognize his consistent challenging work on the committee and for attaining that award. Thank you, Mike, for all the work, time, and effort, and for ensuring BIA and Tribal concerns have an excellent and thoughtful representative amongst this very influential NWCG committee.”

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BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin

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The IPSC provides national leadership in the development of wildland fire incident management standards and incident position standards that all NWCG agencies utilize for national mobilization while maintaining a long-term strategic perspective. As part of this committee, Mr. Black has been instrumental in moving forward very time sensitive and critical solutions to complex problems, benefitting not only the BIA and Tribes, but also playing a crucial role in interagency interoperability and increased collaboration within fire operations.

The Division recognizes Mr. Black for his many achievements within BIA operations and training, and primarily for being issued this prestigious award by the NWCG Executive Board, which was prompted by the committee's unwavering commitment to the monumental task issued to move the DOI Office of Wildland Fire forward in issuing the standardized 0456 job series, which broke ground this year.

The NWCG Executive Board is comprised of a large Federal,

State, Tribal and Department of Defense cohort, recently including NASA as a new member. The board decision to dedicate this new award to IPSC, and Michael Black as a member, was a unanimous decision amongst all member agencies.

Wildland Fire's Federal Workforce Development Program Kicks Off with Virtual Workshop: February 26, 2024, to March 1, 2024, the new interagency Federal Workforce Development Program (FWDP) kicked off its first online development training, Establishing a Coaching Habit Workshop, with 40 participants. The workshop included a week of development sessions focusing on teaching both new wildland firefighters and seasoned managerial firefighters about micro-learning opportunities.

Micro-learning opportunities are day-to-day opportunities that managerial wildland fire staff can provide to staff during for day job/personal growth than Fireline qualifications. The intention of this training is to better prepare field employees to move up within the ranks of federal, state, and local government fire programs.

At this time, the training is offered as a personal growth course, allowing anyone to sign up to participate in the learning opportunity.

The mission of the FWDP is to provide a defined workforce development program centered on learning, experiences, leadership, tangible, and intangible growth tied to job roles throughout an individual's wildfire career in land management. The FWDP will establish comprehensive training and workforce development programs from identified competencies for fire personnel throughout their career development. With a greater emphasis placed on the appropriate timing of skill building and career development, agencies can ensure employees gain the knowledge and abilities required to perform current and future job duties.

BIA DWFM Connects with Society of Range Management on Indian Country Range Management Support: January 28, 2024, to February 1, 2024, the Division's Post Wildfire Recovery watershed specialist, Jennifer Hickman, took part in the Society of Range Management's, "Change on the Range" conference in Sparks, Nevada. During the conference, the society contributed a full day to a three-part "Women Changing Range Symposium" hosted by the Society's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee. The symposium focused on highlighting the important ways that women perceive and interact with land, break barriers within range management, promote sustainability, and create change on rangelands in the United States.

During this highlight in the conference, Jennifer Hickman presented



Photo of Michael Black on a fire assignment in 2023



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BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin

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on the Division's Post Wildfire Recovery Program (PWR) and how part the Division's program plays a part in range management within Indian Country. PWR's primary objectives include repairing impacts due to firefighting actions, minimizing post-fire threats to life or property, non-emergency repair/restoration of damage caused by fire and returning fire-affected land to a resilient landscape.

In 2023, there were 13 fires that impacted six Tribes on federal trust lands. PWR staff supported emer-

gency stabilization and burned area rehabilitation response to the lands, resulting in \$3.1 million in emergency stabilization and rehabilitation funding for Tribes to restore land.

Jennifer Hickman was also invited to and participated on a panel at the end of the symposium day where she responded to anonymous questions and responses from symposium attendees.

During this discussion, moderators shared anonymous stories submitted by society members, held space for attendees to voice

their ideas and perspectives, and then hear from panelists. From this discussion, the society aimed to synthesize both challenges and opportunities for building engagement and inclusion in range management.

"The symposium was a great opportunity to gain experience, exchange knowledge and share ideas on how we can work together to empower women who work in natural resources and fire," said Jennifer Hickman.



Education Committee

by Shawn de France



Shawn de France

The Education Committee met virtually on February 13, 2024. The meeting was well attend-

ed with several participants. The deadline for this year's Truman D. Picard scholarship was on January 26, 2024. There were 20 undergraduate and 7 graduates applicants. Several members from the Education Committee volunteered to review and score the applicants. A great big thank you to those volunteers for their hard work and dedication to our students! At the February meeting, the committee reviewed the applicants and submitted our recommendations to the finance committee. The 2024 Truman D. Picard Scholarship recipients will be listed in the summer newsletter.

A quick reminder that we will be holding the raffle fundraiser during the 2024 Symposium in May. 100% of the proceeds go to the Truman D. Picard Scholarship. Please consider donating items. We hope to see you in Cherokee!

A planning committee is developing the Student Summit in Missoula, Montana October 8-10, 2024. I'll share more information on how students can participate in our next newsletter.



Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo

In early March, the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) hosted a panel discussion about Cultural Burning facilitated by Mary Huffman, Coordinator, The Nature Conservancy, Indigenous Peoples Burning Network. Panel members

included:

- Bill Tripp, Director of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy, Karuk Tribe
- Gesse Bullock, Fire Management Specialist, Alabama-Cous-

hatta Tribe of Texas

- Tommy Cabe, Tribal Forest Resource Liaison, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
- Mark Jackson – Director of Fu-

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Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo



Jim Durglo

els Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs (Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs)

- Nolan Colegrove, Sr., Orleans District Ranger, USFS Six Rivers National Forest (Hoopa Valley Tribe) - virtual

They discussed successes, barriers, and a path forward to get more fire on the landscape for cultural resource benefit. The Panelists showcased successful integration of cultural burning practices and identified barriers that prevent tribes from applying fire for cultural resource benefits.

Merrel Herrel, WFLC Co-chair, stated that the point of the panel was to spotlight the barriers and opportunities. She would like to have examples of vehicles that have worked to allow for cultural burning application, as well as a time when you expected to be able to set fire to the landscape, but there was a barrier that prevented the application. Stay tuned for more information about the panel discussion and next steps from WFLC.

Fire for Cultural Use and Benefit is distinctly different from Rx burning. The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes recently noted that Cultural burning is the deliberate intentional application of fire to a

landscape with the intent to benefit resources of interest to the tribes. Tribal elders have said that this type of burning was done by a highly knowledgeable person(s) with great skill, that knew when, where, and how fire should be applied to achieve specific goals. Whereas Contemporary Rx burning, and fuels management currently focuses on reducing fuel loading by thinning, pile burning, and understory burning with broad goals of reducing fuel loading and restoration of historic fire regimes.

Currently, the way prescribed fire is applied to the land is primarily determined by the direction and restrictions of the federal funding source. Fuels funding that comes from the Bureau of Indian Affairs primarily focuses on altering fire regimes by reducing hazardous fuels, with prescribed fire used as a follow up to active management. This does not include explicit application of fire for cultural resources benefit. While there have been some success stories where fire has been applied for cultural resources benefit, there needs to be more widespread integration of local cultural knowledge and place-based prioritization.

Current federal fire policy and guidance allows for application of wildfire use and prescribed fire, as directed in land and fire management plans.

Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (February 2009) can be found at: <https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/2009-wfm-guidance-for-implementation.pdf>

Wildland fire is a general term describing any non-structure fire that occurs in the wildland. Wildland

fires have been categorized into two distinct types: Wildfires – Unplanned ignitions or prescribed fires that are declared wildfires and Prescribed Fires (Rx Fire) or planned ignitions. The new terminology of Cultural Use Fire is being tossed around with strong support that it should be specifically used and developed by and for each tribe.

An important component of the federal policy is that it directs management response to a wildland fire on federal land based on objectives established in the applicable Land/Resource Management Plan and/or the Fire Management Plan. This allows local jurisdictions to decide their own objectives and response strategies.

Federal fire policy also states: Use planned and unplanned ignitions to achieve land and resource management goals. Fire management is one tool in the restoration toolbox and should be integrated with other land management activities. Preference will be given for natural ignitions to be managed in meeting the role of fire as an ecological process. Decision support processes encourage strategies to manage fire to restore and maintain the natural fire regimes were safe and possi-



Photo of CSKT Division of Fire staff applying fire on the Flathead Indian Reservation, Montana. This type of application lacks song and ceremony, and deliberate focus that some may demand in the practice of fire for cultural benefit.

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Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo

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ble. Incident objectives will identify resource objectives for wild-fires managed to achieve resource objectives. Beneficial accomplishments will be measured through specific quantified objectives.

I continue to find that not only do you need to specifically outline wildland fire and prescribed fire management objectives in local planning documents, but also require the support and engagement of local knowledge carriers and Tribal leadership. Revision of local fire and forest management

plans, federal fire policy and guidance, may need to occur to include cultural burning. Federal funding streams may also need to be more flexible to achieve local burning for cultural resource benefit.



Awards Committee

by Robin Harkins



Robin Harkins

The ITC Awards Committee met virtually in February during the ITC Board meetings to review the

applications received for the Earle R. Wilcox Memorial Awards. Committee members were provided with the submitted nomination packages and were able to evaluate and score them independently before the committee meeting. Scores were tallied by Awards Committee Chairperson; Robin Harkins and each nomination was discussed by the group. The accomplishments of your peers in Indian Forestry continue to be impressive. Thank you to the individuals who coordinated application packets for their peers and the committee members who took the

time to review and provide input on award recipients.

Award recipients will be announced and recognized during the 46th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium hosted by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in Cherokee, NC May 13-16th, 2024. Hope you can join ITC in-person to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of the award recipients.

Legislative Update

by Matt Hill



Matt Hill

FY24 GOVERNMENT

FUNDING UPDATE

Since last October, Congress has passed a series of temporary “continuing Resolutions” to keep the government funded at Fiscal Year 2023 levels. In early March, the U.S. Senate cleared a House-passed, six-bill funding package for Fiscal Year 2024. The \$459 billion measure was signed by President Joe Biden desk just in time to thwart a partial government.

The bill takes care of budgets for more than a dozen federal departments and independent agencies,

including the Department of the Interior, the U.S. Forest Service and the Indian Health Service.

The now-enacted law reduces BIA “Trust/Natural Resources Management” by almost \$4 million over the FY23 enacted level. This includes a disappointing \$3.1 million reduction to BIA Forestry.

The law addresses federal firefighter funding by providing “amounts to continue uninterrupted the Federal wildland firefighter base salary increases provided

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Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

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under section 40803(d)(4)(B) of Public Law 117-58 and maintain current firefighting capacity. The Department was provided the authority by Public Law 118-15 to exercise its flexibility regarding wildfire personnel-related costs beyond those that are covered by Preparedness, as well as other ongoing operating requirements needed to maintain fire readiness and firefighting capabilities.”

It is unclear if this provides DOI with sufficient flexibility to continue working with tribes to ensure that equitable funding is provided to tribes for contracted federal firefighting functions.

FY25 Budget Released: In early March, the Biden Administration released its “skinny” budget – which is a quick outline of its proposal to Congress for funding federal agencies in Fiscal Year 2025 (which begins October 1, 2024). As the FY24 appropriation demonstrated, Congress is in no way bound to the President’s proposal.

The budget proposal recommends a \$344.8 million increase in BIA operations – including a proposed \$26.2 million increase over the 2024 Continuing Resolution amount (which was basically flat from FY23). This includes a proposed \$3.1 million increase in BIA Forestry (which would reverse the reduction in the FY24 enacted bill).

For DOI Wildland Fire, the budget proposes \$186 million above the FY24 Continuing Resolution level. The budget reiterates the Administration’s request for congressional legislation to establish a special base rate salary table for

wildland firefighters, create a new premium pay category that provides additional compensation for all hours a wildland fire responder is mobilized on an incident, and establish a streamlined pay cap that provides waiver authority to DOI. The Biden budget includes an increase of \$75.0 million, including \$50.0 million in Preparedness and \$25.0 million in Fuels Management, to cover the costs of the new special base rate table for Federal wildland firefighters and similar pay increases for Tribal firefighters.

Farm Bill Update: CR #2 (signed into law in December) includes funding through September 2024 for most major farm programs and food assistance. However, there doesn’t appear to be much progress on writing the new Farm Bill.

Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) continues to warn of a partisan impasse on the Farm Bill. Republicans have proposed putting restrictions on USDA’s food assistance programs. Republicans have also proposed taking some of the almost \$20 billion in budget authority for climate-related conservation programs to use for other purposes.

To date, neither party in either chamber of Congress has produced even a draft farm bill for public review or discussion.

EPA Agrees with ITC on Renewable Fuels Standard: In October 2023, the ITC wrote a letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) requesting that the agency consider biomass generated from tribal forests as “non-federal” – allowing it to qualify for the federal Renewable Fuels Standard (“RFS”). Accord-

ing to the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA), fuels must be produced from qualifying renewable biomass to qualify under the RFS program. EISA specified seven categories of biomass that qualifies as renewable biomass.

Specifically, the ITC letter stated that:

“The legal distinctiveness of Indian lands – whether in federal trust or not – should allow for biomass sources from Indian lands to be considered ‘non-federal’ for EPA’s RFS. To do otherwise would unfairly and inappropriately preclude tribes from participating in biomass agreements that other, private forestland owners would be able to do.”

On February 2, 2024, the EPA Office of Air and Radiation wrote a response to the ITC’s letter. In it, EPA wrote:

“The renewable biomass definitions further clarified that non-federal forestlands and tree plantations on non-federal land include, respectively, forestlands and land belonging to an Indian tribe or an Indian individual that is held in trust by the U.S. or subject to a restriction against alienation imposed by the U.S. therefore, biomass sourced from these forestlands and lands could be used to produce qualifying renewable fuel under the RFS program, provided the other requirements are met.”

Forest Service Mature and Old Growth Planning: In December 2023, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced a proposal to amend all 128 forest land management plans to conserve and steward old-growth forest conditions

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Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

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on national forests and grasslands nationwide.

Land management plans provide direction for how national forests and grasslands are managed for their many uses, including conservation. The proposed amendment will purportedly use the best available science, including Indigenous Knowledge, to provide consistent direction related to old-growth forest conditions across national forests and grasslands.

On February 2, 2024 the ITC filed formal comments to USDA's Notice of Intent to create a national Environmental Impact Statement. Some of ITC's main points in the letter were:

- The speed of the amendment process could conflict with the Forest Service's responsibility to consult with tribes on forest plan amendments.
- The Forest Service must therefore have direct, government-to-government consultation with each Indian tribe potentially affected by the proposed EIS as it applies to individual forest plans.
- Increasing complexity of Forest Service plans make it difficult for the agency to respond to threats to old growth such as wildfire.
- The proposed strategy requires each National Forest to establish specific areas to retain and promote old growth, which could potentially create a new land allocation without site-specific tribal consultation.
- The EIS should explicitly acknowledge cultural burning to be part of baseline conditions, given cultural burning's role in shaping ecosystem (and socio-ecosystem)

resilience, and also explicitly acknowledge that cultural burning falls within the sovereign authority of Tribes and Tribal law.

- Restoration of fire regimes based on Indigenous Knowledge and restoration of conditions conducive to the Tribal revitalization of cultural burning should be included within the desired future conditions.

Northwest Forest Plan Update:

While the national process for amending forest plans to address old growth unfolds, the Forest Service simultaneously launched an amendment to the Northwest Forest Plan, which guides National Forests in western Oregon, Washington and northern California.

The ITC also filed comments (February 2024) on this proposed action, focusing on the following points:

- The Forest Service has not provided a plan for achieving tribal consultation requirements, which should --at the very least-- individual government-to-government processes with each tribe affected by Northwest Forest Plan.
- The FACA-charted NW Forest Plan Committee's recommendations should have been allowed to develop prior to any public process for amending the Northwest Forest Plan.
- Coordination With Tribal Land Management
- The Forest Service to reconsider the whole notion of rigid reserves that work well on paper but not on the ground.
- Traditional and cultural burning practices can only be accomplished where forest conditions

are appropriate. Significant active treatment and stand density reduction will be needed across the landscape before tribes can safely reintroduce fire.

- The Forest Service works with the ITC to provide capacity support to tribes within the Northwest Forest Plan area. This could include funding for technical support, analysis, mapping, meeting facilitation, field visits, etc.
- Any amendment to the Northwest Forest Plan must consider the effects on the tribal treaty and reserved rights and other tribal cultural and subsistence interests on National Forest System lands.
- It is important to consider species other than the Northern Spotted Owl and values significant to tribes. Single species management has not been effective, as is evidenced by the significant loss of old growth forests for wildfire.

House GOP Intro's Wildlife Conservation Bill: Natural Resources Committee Chairman Bruce Westerman (R-AR) and other Republicans (including Rep. Cliff Bentz) recently introduced a wildlife conservation bill, which rivals an existing "Recovering America's Wildlife Act." Westerman's bill --the "American Wildlife Habitat Conservation Act"--is focused more on ESA-listed species recovery.

This legislation proposes a series of policy reforms that include requiring the federal government to establish objective, incremental recovery goals for listed species. Once those goals are established, the legislation builds incentives by providing incremental relief from ESA regulations as recovery

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Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

(Continued from page 11)

goals are met. Over time, this creates an off-ramp toward state management of at-risk and listed species after recovery goals are met and in preparation for the delisting of the species.

The AWHCA would spend \$320 million annually in grant funding to states for wildlife habitat conservation, providing additional resources for state governments to enact their congressionally mandated state wildlife action plans. Specifically, the bill would fund habitat restoration and forest management projects and promote collaboration with private partners to conserve habitat for at-risk and listed species. The AWHCA will also provide \$20 million per year to fund habitat restoration projects and forest management on tribal lands.

The tribal section funds tribes through a noncompetitive grant program according to guidelines,

to be determined by the Secretary. The funds could be used:

- To carry out, develop, or enhance wildlife and habitat conservation and restoration programs;
- To assist in the restoration of habitat for species found in the lands and waters of such Tribe that are listed as endangered species, threatened species, candidate species or species proposed for listing;
- For management of animals, including harvesting;
- For the conservation and restoration of habitat for Tribal species of greatest conservation need whose range is shared with another State, territory, Indian Tribe, or foreign government;
- To manage, control, and prevent invasive species, disease, and other risks to the habitat of Tribal species of greatest conservation need; and

- For forest and vegetation management activities if the primary purpose of such activity is to modify, improve, enhance, or create wildlife habitat or reduce the risk of damage or destruction to wildlife habitat due to wildfires, insects, or disease.

The tribal funds could NOT be used to “rewild” (restoration without human management) or the re-introduction or management of a species in a manner not supported by the applicable Tribal fish and wildlife management authorities.

The bill would also expand Good Neighbor Authority to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, including projects with tribes. Bill text can be found here: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/7408/text#toc-H2C1DA32389774B64A15E0B928F125804>



Operations Committee

by Jason Robison



Jason Robison

As we navigate through the winter season, I am pleased to provide you with the key highlights from

the virtual meeting of the ITC Operations Committee held on Monday, February 14, 2024. The meeting, conducted from 9:00 am to 12:15 pm PST, covered a diverse range of topics and updates. You can access the agenda and supporting documentation in the February Board Book.

ITC Staff Expansion Plans: ITC is contemplating the expansion of its staff to augment capacity and alleviate the workload on board members. The proposal encompasses the recruitment of an executive director, with potential future team growth. Ensuring sustainable funding sources, including

BIA and forest service agreement and supplemental like Navigator Funds and Keystone Agreements, is crucial for the successful implementation of our strategic plan.

The primary focus of this expansion effort is to fill the executive director’s position, with a particular emphasis on its full-time sustainable nature. Subsequently, the committee has identified the need to fill additional key positions to support ITC in managing grants and meeting financial commitments.

During our discussions, the com-

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Operations Committee

by Jason Robison

(Continued from page 12)

mittee underscored the value of our existing staff and Board members, highlighting the tremendous amount of work they are capable of handling. Recognizing their dedication and contributions, we acknowledge the importance of leveraging their expertise while strategically expanding ITC's capacity.

Keystone and Navigator Agreements: The committee reviewed a draft agreement prepared by ITC President, Coady Desautel. The agreement outlined a staffing structure based on ITC's strategic plan and organizational needs. The draft will be sent to the Forest Service for further review and discussion. Approximately \$30 million has been set aside for engagement with Tribes.

IFMAT-IV Implementation: Stephanie Lucero presented an update on the IFMAT-IV Implementation Plan, providing an overview of the four goals and specific actions within each goal. Some notable actions and outputs include updates at the ITC symposium, the development of a potential June field hearing with bipartisan support, and the establishment of a tribal law symposium. The operations committee will review these goals and action items at each meeting to ensure successful implementation.

Northwest Forest Plan Revision and Old Growth: The committee addressed comments provided in response to the Notice of Intent (NOI) for an environmental impact statement on land management plan direction for "old growth" forest conditions. Letters were sent by ITC on February 1, 2024, emphasizing the need for

tribal engagement, management flexibility, and active management. The committee also discussed the potential formation of a subcommittee to address ongoing discussions regarding the impacts of federal actions and policies on Tribal lands.

Workforce Development Strategic Plan: Adrian Leighton PhD, Director & NR Dean, SKC TREES, presented a summary of the Workforce Development Strategic Plan for 2023-2028. The strategic plan provides a roadmap for tribal, intertribal, state, federal, and ITC organizational efforts to develop a sustainable tribal natural resource workforce. The strategic plan outlines specific outcomes and action steps for implementation over the next five years. Three core areas of the plan include: Reach and recruit, Educate and Prepare, and Train and Retain.

Adrian noted that Tribalforests.org is now operational, offering tribal forestry resources and job postings. The goal is to offer comprehensive resources touching on tribal forestry, with a focus on creating an easy platform for tribes to post available jobs. Efforts to increase awareness of this site are underway.

Nicole Stiffarm, SKC TREES, shared details about an upcoming summit and symposium in collaboration with the University of Montana Tribal Forestry and Wildlife Fire. Scheduled for October 14-16, 2024, the three-day event includes a field day, with specific locations yet to be determined. Space is limited, aiming for around 40 student attendees. SKC TREES has funding available for student transportation and is planning a workforce development panel for the symposium.

Wildland Fire Technical Specialist Update: Jim Durglo provided a comprehensive review of his Wildland Fire Technical Specialist report, focusing on the priorities of the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC). These priorities encompass the development of a cultural burning speaker panel scheduled for the upcoming meeting on March 5-6 in Atlanta, Georgia. Additionally, the report highlighted the imperative of enabling cross-boundary support for RX fire, emphasizing the enhancement of resource ordering processes.

Jim shared updates from the Wildfire Resistance Coalition, underscoring their recent submission of a letter advocating for maintaining federal firefighter pay at its current elevated level. The Coalition has received limited feedback and is actively discussing next steps. Notably, the letter includes tribal pay incentives, and a finalized copy will be shared with ITC upon completion.

Furthermore, Jim outlined the priorities for the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCWG). These include the development of NWCWG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications, PMS 310-1, Wildland Fire Learning Portal, Incident Performance and Training Modernization, Implementation of Complex Incident Management, and the proposed NWCWG Prescribed Fire Practitioners Qualifications Alternative Pathway.

Research Subcommittee: Mike Dockry, PhD, Assistant Professor, University of Minnesota, and Serra Hoagland, PhD, Acting National Program Lead Tribal Research,

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Operations Committee

by Jason Robison

(Continued from page 13)

USDA Forest Service R&D, provided updates from the recent Research subcommittee meeting.

A white paper addressing research needs was discussed and made available to the ITC board at the last meeting. Collaborative efforts with the Intermountain West group are currently underway to brand the paper as an ITC initiative, with the goal of presenting it at the upcoming symposium.

In relation to mature and old growth forests, a meeting is scheduled for March 4-6, 2024, in Washington, DC. Mike inquired about sharing the ITC letters sent in early February with the subcommittee, there were no objections.

The discussion also touched upon the FRAC letter, covering four main points. These points include emphasizing the importance of funding, advocating for the inclusion of tribal colleges in funding considerations, directing funds towards graduate student tuition and research, addressing gender and diversity, equity, and inclusion in forestry, discussing advancements in wildfire science and technology, and stressing the significance of expanding research communication and scientific translation. The conversation further explored the evaluation and promotion criteria for federal scientists, emphasizing the recognition of tribal government sovereignty as international work for federal science promotion.

Other discussions included the need for Forest Service data sovereignty, Traditional Ecological Knowledge guidance, and general conversations on upcoming conferences. There was also a discussion about the Karuk research pro-

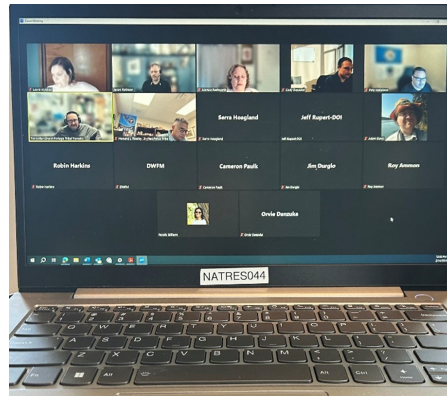


Photo of virtual Operation Committee Meeting on Monday, February 14, 2024.

cedure and a review of the National Academy of Sciences report on the co-production of knowledge.

Additionally, Serra highlighted that a former scholarship participant provided an overview of their research work, indicating a potential format for future presentations from other scholarship recipients.

Fire Subcommittee: Jim Durglo, ITC Wildland Fire Technical Specialist contractor, provided a succinct update from the Fire Subcommittee, touching on various key areas. Priority topics included the significance of Cultural Burning as a WFLC priority, the funding outlook, and potential increases for wildfire firefighters, and the insights into “Good Fire Two.” The subcommittee delved into several discussions, covering the 2024 Wildfire Risk Reduction Infrastructure Team Tribal Roundtable, the FY24 Fire Budget outlook encompassing preparedness, fuels, and BAR, along with updates on firefighter pay increases.

Furthermore, the discussions extended to an update on the long-term strategy for DOI Bureaus, with a particular focus on BIA and Tribes. Additional updates were shared, including the BLM’s implementation of cross-boundary collaboration efforts, insights into

BIA NIFC programs and initiatives, such as the tribal firefighter pay supplemental funding allocation processes for FY24, and NIFC staffing updates.

The update also covered the progress on the National Wildland Fire Cohesive Strategy Addendum, Wildfire Commission Recommendations, and ongoing WFLC priorities.

Other Items: Tim Miller provided an email on the Executive Order reforming federal funding support. The committee discussed a process to continue engagement with the Society of American Foresters.

On February 7, 2024, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced a final rule to strengthen the nation’s National Ambient Air Quality Standards for fine particle pollution. The committee discussed potential impacts on tribal operations, particularly burning, and the need to review and comment on the new standards.

Cameron Paulk from BIA provided an overview of the Tribal Green Houses program, funded by Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Proposals are due by May 31, 2024, with the aim of providing rare, cultural species for planting after a fire.

Thank you for your continued engagement. The next committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday April 10, 2024, from 1:15-5:00 pm PST at the Blue Lake Casino Hotel in Blue Lake, CA.

Wishing you all a wonderful spring season!





Peter Wakeland

PLANNING AND PRIORITIES

Communication: If there is anything that you would like to discuss with the Chief Forester, please feel free to call at 514-294-0431, or send an email or video call invite to peter.wakeland@bia.gov.

Temporary Duty Changes: Pete Wakeland will be assigned to a detail in Washington, DC as the Acting Chief of Staff for 120 – 240 days. We anticipate this will happen within the next couple of weeks. Caleb Cain will assume the duties of the Acting Chief Forester until Pete’s detail ends. Pete and Caleb will continue to coordinate on Forestry related issues, and both will be available for questions or information.

Policy: Three key Manual Chapters have been updated and issued. The following Manual Chapters are available at bia.gov/policy-forms/manual:

- Chapter 53 IAM 3, “Harvest of Forest Products,” release date March 4, 2024.
- Chapter 53 IAM 8, “Inventory & Monitoring,” release date January 17, 2024.
- Chapter 53 IAM 9, “Silvi-

culture,” release date August 10, 2023.

In addition, the 53 IAM 3-H handbook was released March 4, 2024, and combines and replaces both the previous versions of the 53 IAM 3 and 4 handbooks. The handbook is available at bia.gov/policy-forms/handbooks. All of the “Illustrations” from the previous handbook versions were updated and are now available as “Examples, Exhibits and Form Templates” within the Division of Forestry website at bia.gov/guide/forestry-documents/3H. All of the contract and permit forms and standard provisions were revised in the last year and are available at bia.gov/policy-forms/online-forms/specific-forms-and-guidance (all begin with Forestry in title to help locate the forms at the site). The Branch of Forest Inventory and Planning and working teams are also making good progress on the 53 IAM 8-H and 53 IAM 9-H.

Budget: We are currently operating under a Continuing Resolution that funds our operations until March 22, 2024. Once the full FY2024 Forestry budget is passed, we will work with the Regions to get the funds distributed to the field units as soon as possible

Indian Trust Asset Reform Act: The Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians (CTCLUSI) have submitted a draft Indian Trust Asset Management Plan (ITAMP) for review by Central Office and the Office of the Solicitor. If the Secretary approves the plan, CTCLUSI will be the third Tribe with an approved ITAMP. The Quinault Indian Nation is currently developing their ITAMP.

Forestry Annual Report to Congress: Staff has completed com-

piling FY2023 year-end reporting data for the FY2023 Report on the Status of Indian Forest Lands. Timber sales prepared and offered for sale, as well as timber sales revenue were all down significantly in FY2023.

A-123 Internal Control Review of Harvest of Forest Products and Forest Development: The Division is preparing for this year’s implementation of internal control reviews required by OMB Circular A-123. Forestry programs requiring review this year are the Harvest of Forest Products and Forest Development programs and activities.

All BIA Agencies with forested acres are required to complete the assessments, and tribes that receive a request to complete the review are strongly encouraged to respond to strengthen the process. The Division of Internal Evaluation and Audit has been critical of the percentage of programs with forested acres evaluated in past years. The audits are used by Regional Directors and the Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in making assurance statements of program compliance with laws, regulations, and controls ensuring the programs are operating well.

Central Office staff have revised the field test forms for this year’s assessments. The Harvest of Forest Products test form was revised with the assistance of the TSOG. Questions have been added to the Harvest of Forest Products form aimed at ensuring Harvest Schedules are being followed and that TAAMS is being utilized. The Forest Development form was streamlined in an effort to make the review process more efficient. The DOF is planning site visits to

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the Alaska, Midwest, and Southwest Regions to audit these Regions assessments in accordance with a predetermined schedule.

Ecosystem Restoration: Projects have been selected for the FY2024-FY2026 funding cycle. However, projects submitted by BIA Forestry will not be funded until FY2025. Tribes receiving funding for their Ecosystem Restoration Projects will be notified through their Regional Offices.

Portable Infrastructure Projects: For many Tribes, the lack of foresters, local lumber markets, and milling infrastructure make selling timber and treating forest stands difficult, or impossible. Treating forest acres is essential in keeping Tribal forests healthy both in the woodlands, and in other undertreated forest types. In 2018, BIA Forestry began funding Portable Infrastructure Projects such as portable sawmills, portable chippers and pelletizers, and portable firewood processors. Through the use of Portable Infrastructure Projects, Tribes can bring milling, chipping, pelletizing, and firewood processors to the source of the wood fiber. Doing so treats forest acres, improves forest health, reduces hazardous fuels, creates products otherwise unavailable, provides local jobs to Tribal members, and provides training opportunities.

Over the past five years, BIA Forestry has provided approximately \$4.6 million to support over 20 projects. Now it is time to start gathering data and assessing the status of those projects.

This spring, Central Office will be coordinating with the Regions to assist in the collection of data

on the performance of the projects, and to conduct site visits to various project locations. We are excited to see what you all have done.

For more information, please contact Pete Wakeland at peter.wakeland@bia.gov, or Orvie Danzuka, Timber Sales Forester at orvie.danzuka@bia.gov.

Office of Trust Services Quarterly Newsletter: The following link will direct you to the BIA Trust Quarterly newsletter archive: www.bia.gov/service/trust-newsletter. Here you can find stories regarding portable milling projects and other great projects in Indian Country.

We know that a lot of good work is accomplished on tribal lands, and we want to help showcase what you do. So please send us your success stories! The Quarterly Newsletter is read by many people, including BIA and Department Leadership. Your work deserves recognition. For more information, contact Orvie Danzuka.

Tribal Interior Budget Council (TIBC): The next TIBC meeting is scheduled for March 18-22, 2024, in Washington, DC. These meetings provide a venue to discuss issues critical to Indian Forestry and Natural Resources. The Chief Forester will attend the meeting to discuss budget items with the Land, Water, and Natural Resources Subcommittee.

TAAMS Training: A reminder, the TAAMS forestry training schedule is available on DOI Talent:

- Course: TAAMS Forestry Management Overview, March 13-14, 2024, Online

- Course: Advanced TAAMS Forestry, March 19-22, 2024, Portland, OR

An Introductory TAAMS Forestry class was completed February 6-9, 2024, at the Northwest Regional Office with a full class. Additional courses may be scheduled this fiscal year based on need.

Timber Team: The Timber Team is fully staffed and have been very busy since the early winter of 2023. The team consists of one supervisory forester and six professional foresters from all over the country. The Timber Team more recently completed a two-week timber cruising assignment for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians in the Eastern Region in January. During this same time, the supervisory forester completed his third module of the National Advanced Silviculture Program, held in Flagstaff, AZ. Once the program is completed, the Team can add written silvicultural prescriptions to the list of timber sale activities they are able to perform for Tribes.

February and March have also kept them busy, as they started off with a two-week assignment performing stand exams and sale layout for the Seneca Cayuga Tribal Nation and the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of the Eastern Oklahoma Region. These sale areas will be the first sales prepared in the past seven years out of Eastern Oklahoma Region.

More recently the Timber Team attended the Northwest Region Timber Sales Workshop hosted by the Quinault Reservation. Here the team learned about post field work duties in timber sales, more specifically about writing Forest

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Officer Reports, appraising sales, completing a road package, and learned about updates in the BIA Timber Sales Handbook. After the workshop, the Timber Team traveled to assist the Chehalis Reservation with completing their stand-based inventory project that the team began collecting data for in December of 2021 (see photo). The Chehalis Tribal Natural Resource Department can now use this information to update their forest management plan and begin preparing timber sale operations for the future. In late March, the Timber Team is scheduled to assist the Skokomish Reservation and foresters from the Northwest Regional Office with completing a reservation-wide stand-based inventory project.

Following is a list of the Timber Team's tentative schedule for FY 2024 year:

- March 18 - March 29, 2024: Skokomish Reservation, Northwest Region (Stand Exams)
- April 8 - April 19, 2024: Colville Reservation, Northwest Region (Sale Prep)
- April 28 - May 4, 2024: Warm Springs Reservation, Northwest Region (Planting Contract Inspections)



Photo of Picuris Pueblo staff milling boards.

- May 13 - May 17, 2024: ITC Symposium, Cherokee, NC
- May 17 - May 24, 2024: Cherokee Reservation, Eastern Region (Sale Prep)
- June 3 - June 21, 2024: Yakama Reservation, Northwest Region (Sale Prep)
- July 15 - July 26, 2024: Warm Springs Reservation, Northwest Region (Sale Prep)
- August 11 - August 23, 2024: Pueblo of Jemez, Southwest Region (Sale Prep)
- September 8 - September 21, 2024: Pueblos of Acoma, Southwest Region (Woodlands Survey)

We are seeking proposals for winter, spring, and summer of FY25 and any federal/tribal staff that would like to work with the Timber Team on an assignment this year.

Timber Team has a new web page hosted on BIA.gov, complete with a project request form and information about the Timber Team, visit at: <https://www.bia.gov/service/timber-team>.

Forest Health: The BIA Division of Forestry received Forest Health proposals in November 2023. The proposals were ranked in-house and uploaded to the



Photo of rough sawn logs in drying kiln.

Forhealth database for review by Forest Service team. The Forest Service team is currently reviewing the proposals and will contact BIA when they have determined whom will be awarded. Central Office Staff will work with Office of Trust Services to get the funding out to the Region and/or Office of Self-Governance so that Tribes can begin fieldwork. For more information, please contact Orvie Danzuka, Timber Sales Forester at orvie.dazuka@bia.gov.

BRANCH OF FOREST INVENTORY AND PLANNING (FIP)

Staffing: Advertised a vacant FMIP forester position on USAJOBS and received the certification from HR. The panel will interview applicants and return the selection to HR by March 15, 2024.

Inventory Projects Update: The team is actively working on eleven forest inventory projects. Currently, 22% of the inventory projects are at FIP, and 78% are with the region, agency, or tribe. The Cheyenne River and Standing Rock signed FIA was received and logged into the National Indian Forestry Library to closed out the project. The Spokane, Tule River, and CSKT CFI projects were returned to the regions and tribes to begin the FIA. Passamaquoddy, Acoma, Fort Hall, San Carlos, and Skokomish projects are being cleaned and Hualapai, Colville PD, Colville, Yakama, Seminole, Mi'kmaq CFI materials are being developed, and some are

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near completion. The Miccosukee and St. Regis Mohawk project are in the pre-planning inventory stage and waiting on the region for pre-planning materials. The foresters continue to provide excellent support to the field units when requested.

Projects at FIP:

- Initiation at 2024 = 3
- Initiation at 2025-2026 = 2
- Cleaning/Processing = 5
- Analysis = 1
- Total = 11 / 22%

Projects at Region, Agency, Tribe:

- Data Collection = 13
- Cleaning = 1
- Processing = 0
- FIA = 25
- Total = 39 / 78%

National Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI): The foresters continue to assess new releases of the FIP Desktop Application as soon as it becomes available and provide prompt feedback to the programmers. We have come a long way in standardizing our process for CFI and FIP will implement for all upcoming projects.

FIP Application Suite Status: The FIP application suite continues to progress through its development cycle. The tablet and desktop components are currently being adjusted to match a revamped and more standardized CFI project database schema. Updated report formatting and capability on the analysis results are planned to follow this new database schema. In addition, the

tablet and desktop components continue to receive operational corrections and improvements as needs are identified.

National Advanced Silviculture Program (NASP): The NASP is a valuable training for any journey-level forester tasked with the preparation of silvicultural prescriptions at the Bureau, Agency, or Tribal level. NASP Modules are designed to be rigorous, graduate-level instruction led by



Photo of Timber Team Forester coring a Douglas-fir to help determine the stand's site index

University Professors. The four NASP Modules cover ecological systems, inventory and decision support, landscape ecology, and advanced topics in silviculture.

The BIA sponsors up to five candidates for each NASP Class based on the number of spaces allotted by the US Forest Service. Tuition, Travel, Salary, and Per Diem are covered for BIA employees. In addition, the BIA pays for the tuition of selected tribal candidates (tuition usually covers most of the housing and meals). The candidate's home unit covers travel,

salary, and additional per diem.

NASP 17: Four candidates were selected to attend NASP 17 during FY2023 and FY2024. Three are BIA, and one is a Tribal employee. These four students have successfully completed the first three modules. One module, module 4, remains for the students to complete. This training will cover Advanced Silviculture Topics at Virginia Tech University for two weeks during April – May 2024. One additional Tribal employee that was unable to attend NASP 16, module 4 due to personal obligations was successfully approved for attendance during NASP 17, module 4 in order to complete their national-level training.

NASP 18: Five candidates were selected to attend NASP 18 during FY2024 and FY2025. Three are Tribal, and two are BIA employees. The five selected students were notified by the USFS National Silviculturist by email on 3/5/2024 that they were selected. Each student was also provided with a schedule and pricing for each module.

Policy Revision: A Chapter 9 Silviculture Handbook revision team is meeting biweekly to work on updates to the handbook guidance in a manner that is consistent with the Chapter 9 Manual Revision that was completed in August 2023 and further revised for clarification of Regional Director Roles and Responsibilities during February 2024. This update is still pending approval by the Director of BIA – OTS.

National Policy Memo 45 A1 – Certified Silviculturist Position Task Book “Requirement” for BIA Foresters: A micro revision

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was currently made to the National Policy Memo (NPM) to provide better clarification of Regional Director Roles and Responsibilities. The NPM micro revision was completed during February 2024.

The 53 IAM Chapter 8 Manual was published on January 17, 2024. The Handbook team continues to meet regularly on Teams and in-person working on the handbook throughout the calendar year.

What You Missed at the 2024 ProGreen Expo by Christophehr LaCroix / Highlights and Takeaways: FIP Forester Chris Lacroix attended the 2024 ProGreen Expo, which was a three-day event that took place from January 30 - February 1, 2024, at the Colorado Convention Center in Denver, Colorado. The ProGreen expo is described as “the only green industry conference in the Rocky Mountain Region of its kind” and has occurred in Denver every year since 1993.

ProGreen Expo: The ProGreen expo famously attracts more than 5,000 green industry professionals from the public and private sectors that engage in fields such as urban and community forestry, arboriculture, landscaping, and turf.

ProGreen is an excellent opportunity for attendees to not only keep up with green industry trends, but also network and connect with like-minded industry leaders. For example, Chris Lacroix had the pleasure of connecting with Dana Coelho, Urban & Community Forestry National Program Manager with the USFS, which will hopefully create a new partnership and funding source for tribes and tribal nations to complete urban

and community forestry projects. Chris received an excitedly open invitation for a representative from the BIA forestry team to be a guest on the industry favorite podcast titled ‘Discovering Forestry’ after introducing himself to the host of the podcast, Korey Lofy.

The expo offers a variety of educational sessions with opportunities for International Society of Arboriculture certified arborist and other credentialed professionals to earn continuing education units to keep their certification up to date.

Day 1: Education presentations from respected industry members and Colorado State University extension staff covered topics such as Colorado urban tree identification, tree appraisal, the role of pH in tree success in Colorado, how to properly plan for trees when designing/redesigning landscapes, Dutch Elm Disease, the science of leaf color, firelight, Japanese beetle, and rejuvenating parks through community tree restoration. This is just a short list of 100+ educational sessions that attendees could attend over the course of the three-day event.

Day 2: The second day of the expo kicked off with an unforgettable keynote speech titled ‘The Art of Amazement...How to Create More Value’ led by Jon Petz. Jon Petz is a telecommunication salesperson turned professional magician that used his magic to captivate the audience and spread his message of creating a wow effect in the workplace and going the extra mile to get increased engagement and attention in everyday mundane workflows. The expo has an expansive show room floor that features over 100 exhibitors highlighting the latest products, services, and technologies for green

industry.

Arborist Corner: Also found on the expo floor is the “Arborist Corner”, which features a live 30-foot ash tree in which volunteer expo climbing arborists with the ISA Rocky Mountain chapter demonstrate and educate attendees on topics such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and how to routinely check climbing gear, rigging and climbing tips and tricks, aerial rescue, tree risk assessments, discussions on the American National Standards Institute 2133 safety requirements for arboriculture operations, plant health care demonstrations, and tree removal to name a few.

Indigenous People Underrepresented: ProGreen offered a variety of topics and interests, but it did not address the role of Indigenous people and their land in the green industry. Indigenous people and their land underrepresented at ProGreen is a missed opportunity for Indigenous people to display their contributions and challenges in the green industry.

Chris attended an educational session that started with a prayer from a Native American from Spirit of the Sun, an Indigenous-led non-profit in Denver, was the only instance of Native American presence. There were no booths or speakers representing Indigenous perspectives or projects. Future ProGreen expos should include more participation and collaboration from Native American nations, to highlight the benefits of collaborating with tribes and tribal communities, the potential of urban forestry on tribal lands, and the opportunities for Indigenous people in the green profession.





INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL

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First Class
