



INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL TIMBER NOTES

Fall ~ 2026



Robin Harkins

Recognizing Excellence in Indian Forestry

Every day, exceptional people in forestry, wildland fire, and natural resources help our community thrive. Many of these contributions happen behind the scenes, without acknowledgment. The **Earle R. Wilcox Memorial Awards** are your chance to celebrate that work. If someone's dedication has inspired you or strengthened your program, consider submitting a nomination to honor their impact.

Nomination Timeline

Nominations will open later this fall, with **completed online applications due—Friday, January 15, 2027, by 5:00 pm Pacific Time.** A nomination checklist will be provided to ensure all required materials are included. Letters of reference must be submitted in a separate single email.

If you have considered nomina-

ting someone in the past, now is the time to revisit that idea and begin gathering the necessary information. Please note the earlier deadline this year due to the timing of the Annual National Indian Timber Symposium. Recipients will be recognized in person at the 2027 Annual Awards Banquet.

About the Wilcox Awards

The awards honor Mr. Earle R. Wilcox, remembered for his decades of service to Indian people and their forests.

His 33-year career with the Bureau of Indian Affairs—interrupted only by World War II and the Korean War—culminated in his role as Chief of the BIA Forestry Program until his retirement in 1973.

Following retirement, Mr. Wilcox continued to support Indian forestry and natural resources and played a key role in the development of the Intertribal Timber Council, exemplifying integrity, dedication, and a commitment to the greatest good for Indian people and their forests.

Submitting a Nomination

Anyone may submit a nomination. Full details and online application requirements will be mailed to Tribes in November and will also be available at: www.itcnet.org/about_us/awards.html.

Nominations will be evaluated for both regional and national

awards based on the nominee's level of contribution and impact.

For questions or guidance, contact Robin Harkins, ITC Awards Committee Chairperson at robinharkins@coquilletribe.org or call the ITC office at (503) 282-4296.

Getting Involved

The Awards Committee meets next via Zoom on January 29, 2027, to select award recipients prior to the virtual ITC Board meeting on February 8–12, 2027. If you're looking for a way to participate more actively in ITC, consider joining the Awards Committee by contacting Robin Harkins or the ITC office to express your interest.

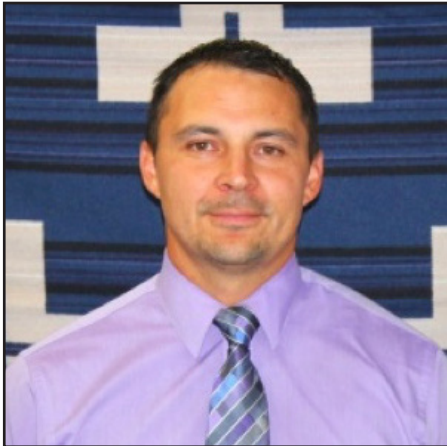


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President's Message

by Cody Desautel



Cody Desautel

Federal Priorities and Emerging Unknowns

As we close out Fiscal Year 2026 and move toward a mid term election, we face a number of unknowns on the horizon. We continue to work on several critical issues, including the build out of the U.S. Wildland Fire Service (USWFS), the Northwest Forest Plan, Roadless Rule rescission, the Farm Bill, and the looming December 11, 2026, CR date. Alongside these federal priorities, we remain engaged with partners such as The Nature Conservancy and the National Alliance of Forest Owners (NAFO) on shared areas of interest.

My time on ITC priorities has been limited over the last few months due to another busy fire season on the Colville Reservation. We saw three large wildfires burn more than 200,000 acres this summer. Fire season started early, with our first incident management team ordered in mid June, and we just in briefed what we hope will be the final team of the year to assist with suppression repair.

Legislative Updates

There has been little movement

on the forestry related bills we've supported over the last year and a half. One notable accomplishment was the 10 year extension of the Indian Trust Asset Reform Act demonstration project. Secretary Burgum signed the extension just before the authority expired in June. We appreciate the support from BIA and DOI staff in securing this important milestone. We also continue working to expand the types of trust assets that can be included in these plans. More work will be needed in the next Congress to advance those improvements and pursue legislation that would make the pilot authority permanent.

The Senate version of the Farm Bill passed out of the Agriculture Committee, but with Congress in recess until the election, it's unclear what progress can be made in the remaining months of this session. If either chamber flips, progress becomes less likely. Additional work is needed to restore the tribal forestry provisions included in the 2024 House version, so if the Farm Bill does not pass, that may give us more time to work with new leadership to bring those authorities back.

USWFS and Post Fire Needs

With fire season winding down, the USWFS continues to fill critical roles and organize the structure of the geographic areas. We will keep engaging with USWFS leadership to advocate for tribal parity and for an organizational structure that ensures Tribal trust obligations are met, including full incorporation of PL 93 638 programs. Based on our experience during suppres-

sion at Colville this year, the new structure appears to have created flexibility within DOI fire staff that resulted in more resources being available to support tribes.

As we transition into post fire rehabilitation, the next challenge will be securing adequate Burned Area Rehabilitation funding (BAR) funding to meet the needs of Indian Country alongside the needs of other DOI bureaus.

Northwest Forest Plan and Roadless Rule

Progress has slowed on both the Northwest Forest Plan and the Roadless Rule rescission. We continue to track these efforts and have meetings scheduled with USDA Forest Service staff to receive updates. ITC has been active on both issues and remains hopeful that our engagement will result in tribal priorities and recommendations being reflected in each. We welcome feedback from member tribes—our work is strongest when we hear directly from you.

ITC Staffing and Capacity

ITC continues to grow its staff, with a workforce position currently under review and the Administrative Director position being advertised before this article will be published. Requests for tribal participation continue to increase, and we want to ensure we have the capacity to provide strong tribal perspectives.

I hope to see many of you at our in person board meeting on December 8-10, 2026, in Rancho Mirage, CA.



Executive Director's Message

by Cal Mukumoto



Cal Mukumoto

Stewardship & Policy Momentum

As we move into the fall season, I am encouraged by the momentum we continue to build across Indian Country and with our many federal, nonprofit, academic, and industry partners. Over the past several months, we have made progress advancing Tribal forestry priorities, expanding workforce development opportunities, strengthening Tribal-federal partnerships, and elevating Tribal leadership in forest stewardship discussions nationwide.

ITC continues to advance Tribal co-stewardship, Shared Stewardship, and Good Neighbor Authority opportunities by coordinating with Tribal leaders, the BIA, the U.S. Forest Service, and federal partners to keep Tribal perspectives central to forest policy and wildfire resilience. Key efforts include exploring a Tribal Shared Stewardship Task Force and strengthening research on Tribal implementation of stewardship authorities.

Braided Canopy Initiative

A major driver of this work is the Braided Canopy initiative, through which ITC collaborates with the USDA Natural



Photo of John Bryson, Jr. addressing the Braided Canopy NRCS Workshop at the Quinault Beach Resort & Casino.

Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to strengthen and increase NRCS-funded projects on Tribal lands. Built on relationships, technical support, and sustainable funding, the initiative connects Tribal forestry and wildland fire professionals with NRCS resources, ensuring Tribal priorities, sovereignty, and traditional ecological knowledge direct future conservation work.

Putting this collaboration into action, ITC recently hosted a workshop and tour on the Quinault Indian Nation reservation. The event brought together Tribal leaders, USDA NRCS staff, natural resource professionals, to share strategies for forest resilience and soil health. Events like these reinforce the value of bringing people together on the ground to learn from one another, share successful approaches, and strengthen relationships.

National & International Policy Engagement

In addition to our work on stewardship and restoration, ITC has remained deeply engaged in several major policy initiatives affecting Tribal forestry at national and international scales. We continued advocating for Tribes in the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), working with Tribal leaders, federal partners, and international stakeholders to ensure that Tribal Forest management systems, Tribal sovereignty, and Tribal forestry practices are appropriately recognized within emerging international market requirements. These discussions have provided an important opportunity to elevate Tribal perspectives in global conversations about sustainable forestry, supply chains, and responsible forest management.

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Executive Director's Message

by Cal Mukumoto

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Northwest Forest Plan Modernization

Closer to home, ITC has remained actively involved in discussions on modernizing the Northwest Forest Plan. As federal agencies evaluate the future of forest management across the Pacific Northwest, we have consistently emphasized the importance of meaningful Tribal consultation, durable co-stewardship arrangements, incorporating Indigenous Knowledge, and expanding opportunities for Tribes to participate in landscape-scale restoration and active forest management. The Northwest Forest Plan presents an important opportunity to strengthen Tribal influence in shaping the future of public land stewardship throughout the region.

Forest Based Economic Development

Economic development through healthy forests remains another key priority. Over the summer,



Photo of Steve Rigdon (Sustainable Northwest) and Christy Fianders (Yakama Forest Products) at Timberlab (a Mass Timber producer) in Millersburg, OR.

ITC continued working with partners to expand market opportunities for Tribal Forest products and advance investments in Tribal wood utilization infrastructure. Discussions focused on opportunities to increase manufacturing capacity, support biomass and wood-energy initiatives, and strengthen markets that create jobs while

improving forest health.

We also joined national conversations on market development and forest-based economic opportunities for Tribal communities. A particularly exciting milestone was the joint announcement highlighting collaboration among ITC, Sustainable Northwest, and the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities.

Workforce Development & Timber Teams

This effort represents an important step toward strengthening Tribal participation in emerging forest-product markets, supporting investment in Tribal forestry infrastructure, and building long-term economic resilience in Tribal communities. Workforce development continues to be one of the most important investments we can make in the future of Tribal forestry. During the past several



Photo of Ken Zweck, USDA Forest Products Lab, Madison, WI, explaining new biochar products during the Market Matters Tour. The ITC participated on the steering committee for the Market Matters Initiative.

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Executive Director's Message

by Cal Mukumoto

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months, ITC devoted substantial effort toward strengthening our workforce programs, recruiting qualified professionals, and expanding opportunities for Tribal forestry practitioners. Recruitment activities, workforce planning discussions, and Timber Team development all reflect our commitment to preparing the next generation of Tribal natural resource leaders.

National Forestry Events

We have also continued preparations for several national events that will showcase Tribal leadership in forestry and natural resources. Planning for the Society of American Foresters National Convention has included coordinating with Tribal hosts, assisting in land acknowledgment activities, and creating opportunities to elevate Tribal voices in conversations about sustainable forestry, wildfire resilience, and forest management.

Growing Collaboration Across Sectors

Beyond these specific initiatives, I have been encouraged by the growing interest from organizations, researchers, conservation groups, policymakers, and private-sector partners seeking to collaborate with Tribes on forestry, wildfire, and stewardship issues. Whether through partnerships with conservation organizations, engagement on climate resilience strategies, participation in national policy discussions, or collaboration with universities and research institutions, ITC continues to serve as a trusted voice for Tribal



Photo of Chief Delvis Heath Sr. at Cottonwood State Park, September 2013.

al forestry interests.

Looking Ahead

As we move into the final months of the year, ITC remains focused on advancing Tribal self-determination through policy leadership, workforce development, market expansion, and stewardship partnerships. From implementing Shared Stewardship and Good Neighbor Authority projects to engaging on the Northwest Forest Plan, EUDR, Braided Canopy, and emerging forest-product markets, Tribes continue to show that healthy forests, resilient communities, cultural values, and strong economies are mutually reinforcing goals.

Thank you for your continued support of the Intertribal Timber Council and our shared mission to advance Tribal sovereignty, stewardship, and prosperity through forestry. Together,

we are ensuring that Tribal leadership remains central to the future of forests across the United States and beyond.

Note of Remembrance: Chief Delvis Heath Sr.

Delvis Heath Sr., Hereditary Chief of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs for 42 years, passed away in March of 2026. A revered elder, cultural ambassador, and steadfast advocate for tribal sovereignty, he dedicated his life to upholding his people's traditions. Chief Heath held a deep connection to the land and often emphasized his ancestors' duty to care for the land, water, and wildlife that sustain life, viewing the Tribe's presence in the region as permanent.

Chief Heath strongly supported and befriended the Intertribal Timber Council and served as a Board Member. Delvis was a

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Executive Director's Message

by Cal Mukumoto

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mentor, educator, and leader to me and countless others.

Beyond his formal leadership role, many cherished him as

a gifted storyteller and avid horseback rider who later took up golf—and as someone whose contagious grin could break down barriers.

I will miss Delvis for his stories,

lessons, and positive example in a world where such examples are few.



BIA Division of Forestry

by Caleb Cain



Caleb Cain

As we begin a new fiscal year, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) remains committed to advancing Tribal forestry across Indian Country. Through expanded Timber Team assignments, new internships, shared expertise, and continued collaboration, we are strengthening partnerships, supporting Tribal professionals, and promoting resilient forests. Thank you for your dedication to shaping the future of our lands and communities.

FY 2027 Continuing Resolution

Funding for FY 2027 is currently provided under a Continuing Resolution (CR) through December 11, 2026. During this period, BIA Forestry will continue essential operations and support Tribal forestry programs, subject to available funding and applicable CR restrictions. Program planning and project

scheduling will continue as additional FY 2027 funding information becomes available. For urgent Forestry Projects funding needs, please contact your Regional Forester.

Timber Team

The BIA Timber Team has consistently maintained its commitment to supporting Executive Order 14225 and fulfilling trust responsibilities to Tribal entities, despite being challenged by staffing shortages and multiple vacancies. Since the previous ITC Board Report, the Timber Team has successfully completed projects with six distinct Tribes throughout the United States. Their contributions have included timber sale layout and marking, timber cruising, continuous forest inventory (CFI), and GIS forest cover type mapping.

Team members provided support to the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe of Colorado for CFI installations, collaborated with Warm Springs Tribal Forestry on timber cruising, assisted the Menominee Reservation with timber sale preparation and participation in the Intertribal Timber Council Symposium, and conducted timber sale preparation tasks for the Hoh Tribe, Lower Elwha Indian Community, and the Confeder-

ated Tribes of the Colville Reservation. These efforts mark the conclusion of the fiscal year 2026 for the BIA Timber Team.

Annual achievements encompassed: completion of 139 CFI plots, 25 stand examinations, 51 regeneration surveys, 264 timber cruising plots, planting of 350 trees, preparation of nearly 2,391 acres for timber sales, and completion of GIS forest cover type mapping for 58,000 acres.

The fiscal year 2027 BIA Timber Team schedule is currently under development as project requests from Tribes nationwide continue to be submitted. An updated schedule will be distributed once additional requests are received and dates have been confirmed.

The BIA Timber Team's schedule for FY 2027:

- October 13–23, 2026: Hualapai Reservation, AZ, WR – Timber Sale Preparation
- November 9–20, 2026: Choctaw Nation, OK, EOR – Ranch House Timber Cruising
- November 30–December 11, 2026: OPEN
- January 19–29, 2027: OPEN
- February 16–26, 2027: Hoh

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Tribe, WA, NWR – Timber Sale Preparation Trip #2

- March 8–19, 2027: OPEN
- March 29–April 9, 2027: ITC Symposium (Tentative White Mountain Apache Timber Sale Prep)
- April 26–May 7, 2027: OPEN
- May 17–28, 2027: Spokane Tribe of Spokane Reservation, WA, NWR – Rail Creek Timber Sale Preparation
- June 13–25, 2027: OPEN
- July 19–30, 2027: OPEN
- August 16–27, 2027: OPEN
- September 13–24, 2027: Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians, OR, NWR – Lower Smith River Timber Sale Preparation

We are still seeking proposals starting in January of 2027 and beyond and any federal/tribal staff that would like to work with the Timber Team on any upcoming assignment.

To find the project request form and more information about the Timber Team please visit <https://www.bia.gov/service/timberteam>.

Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)

BIA Forestry will report on two annual GPRA performance measures in early October. Performance Measure 2437 is newly added for FY26 and is also designated as an Agency Priority Goal. DOF continues to maintain a retired performance measure related to timber volume har-



Photo of the Timber Team Forester designating a harvest block corner tree on the Copper Creek Timber Sale for the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

vested. Together, these three measures represent the full timber production cycle process—from preparing and offering timber for sale, to selling the product, and ultimately harvesting it.

Performance Measure 2295: Timber Sales Prepared and Offered. Tracks the annual volume of timber prepared and offered for sale or free use.

Performance Measure 2437: Percentage of Annual Timber Volume Sold. Measures the proportion of annual allowable tim-

ber volume that is sold.

Performance Measure 2097 (retired): Percentage of sustainable harvest of forest biomass utilized for energy and other products (all wood harvested).

ITARA

The Department has signed the 10 year extension of the Indian Trust Asset Management Demonstration Project authorized under ITARA, ensuring its continuation through June 22, 2036. This renewal reaffirms the Department's com-

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mitment to supporting Tribal self determination in the management of trust assets. The extension reflects strong and consistent support from Tribes, who emphasized the value of the Demonstration Project in strengthening local decision making and improving resource stewardship.

Use of New BLM Categorical Exclusions (CE's)

BIA has authority to apply categorical exclusions under NEPA. Two new BLM forestry CE's expand the scope of forest management activities that may proceed without preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), provided that no extraordinary circumstances exist. These CE's provide for:

Forest and woodland density management: Allows modification of tree density on up to 5,000 acres through selective thinning, group-selection openings (up to 2 acres), slash disposal, underburning, and necessary replanting—subject to road use limits (≤ 5 mi permanent, ≤ 2.5 mi/1,000 ac temporary) and extraordinary circumstances screening by the Responsible Official.

Timber salvage harvest: Enables removal of dead/dying trees over up to 1,000 acres (or larger where $\geq 3,000$ ac is affected,

capped at 1/3 of disturbance or 5,000 ac), including associated yarding, burning, seeding, and minimal road construction—again subject to extraordinary circumstances review.

The expanded authorities enable faster implementation of density management treatments that strengthen forest resilience, reduce hazardous fuels, and support regeneration of desired species. They also allow more timely salvage operations to recover economic value from dead and dying trees, address safety hazards, and improve post disturbance recovery while maintaining full NEPA compliance.

Density Management CE: Federal Register : National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures for the Bureau of Land Management

Salvage CE: Federal Register: National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures for the Bureau of Land Management

TAAMS Training Updates

See chart below.

Branch of Forest Inventory and Planning (FIP)

Project Status Overview- The FIP team is making strong progress this year, keeping inventory projects on schedule, and maintaining a high standard of accuracy. Looking ahead to 2027,

six new projects are already in the initiation phase, with one more currently in processing. Across our Regional and Tribal partners, 11 projects are actively collecting field data, and 20 are moving through the Forest Inventory Analysis phase.

FIP is directly managing about 18% of all inventory projects, while the remaining 82% are successfully led at Regional, Agency, or Tribal levels highlighting the continued strength of shared stewardship across Indian Country.

InfoDat Reporting Improvements: Year-end reporting is about to get easier! The FIP team is upgrading InfoDat to improve consistency in accomplishment reporting, Catalog of Forest Acres, and funding requests. The refreshed interface is designed to be more intuitive and welcoming, making data entry smoother.

Chapter 8 Handbook Revision: The updated front matter sections of Chapter 8 have been shared with Regions and Tribes for review. The FIP team is incorporating feedback and making refinements where needed. While the full chapter draft is complete, several sections are being polished ahead of the next round of regional and tribal review.

Silviculture & NASP Highlights: This year has brought exciting gains in national silviculture training and interagency collaboration. Updated curriculum reviews strengthened alignment between NASP training modules and field needs. A new interagency certification and mento-

Class	Location	Start	End	CGI/In-house
Forestry Presale (Pre-requisite for other classes)	MS Teams	11/18/26	11/18/26	In-house
Introductory Forestry	Ft. Vancouver	12/08/26	12/10/26	CGI
Advanced Forestry	Ft. Vancouver	01/26/27	01/28/27	CGI

Upcoming TAAMS Training for Fall/Winter (available for registration in DOI Talent)

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ring MOU developed by the BIA is now in formal review with the USFS and the BLM.

The Division also delivered direct stand exam and prescription support to a Tribal forestry program and advanced development of the Plot Weasel Field Logger and Desktop analysis tools. Regional engagement increased awareness of certification requirements and NASP pathways. Four foresters completed NASP Class 19, four Tribal foresters advanced through Class 20, and Regions are preparing nominees for Class 21 under updated prerequisites.

NASP Module 4: Glaciers, Sand, and Fire

by Casey Sigg

As my flight began descending into Marquette, Michigan for the last NASP module, I pressed my face to the window and took account of the surroundings coming into view. I saw large expanses of jack pine giving way to hardwoods, the footprint of a copper mine to the south, and knew the dark blue waters of Lake Superior lay to my north. This is the perspective students are expected to take at the last module of NASP, called “Landscape Ecology.”

The glacial origin topography of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula (UP) and rich history of forest ecology studies from the state’s universities became our venue for building the skills needed to gain this landscape-level perspective and ultimately harness it for silviculture decisions at varying scales of forest plan-



Photo of NASP 19 Graduates from L to R: Michael Waukau, Menominee Tribal Enterprises; Casey Sigg, BIA; Chad Brown, Sante Fe National Forest; Raven Honga, Hualapai Tribe; and Conner Ormond, Spokane Tribal Forestry.

ning.

Michigan Technological University hosts the module at their Ford Forest. This 3,700-acre forest of northern hardwoods and outwash plain conifers have quite a history. The Ford Motor Company donated the land and associated village of Alberta in 1954. Alberta was meant to be a model community showcasing work/life balance centered around a sawmill with some of the lumber providing paneling on pre-WWII automobiles known as “Woodies.” Today it serves as a quaint educational campus for students and natural resource professionals. True to the Finnish heritage of the UP, one the buildings had a wood-fired sauna in the basement which became the spot to unwind after classwork.

Moraines, geomorphic processes, aeolian deposits are terms most foresters may remember from college but are not at the forefront of our daily work. Re-integrating these landscape concepts began with several assigned readings. One paper that stuck with me had the subtitle, “Geomorphic features of

the earth’s surface regulate the distribution of organisms and processes.” Factoring this concept into the duties of a silviculturist is the core of the module. Our journey in this effort began with a lecture in “TEU” meaning Terrestrial Ecological Unit Inventory which is a spatial classification system for landscape factors. Some folks questioned how this was applicable to their work, prompting one senior silviculturist sitting in on the module to pipe up and explain that most National Forest plans are dependent on this system.

Classwork quickly turned into fieldwork as we were tasked with uncovering the “Ecosystem of Mystery” as our professor called it. We split into teams then were dropped off across different cover types in the Ford Forest with an assigned transect. At each plot along the line inventory measurements were made as my crew battled flies in a black spruce swamp with our focus on what came out of the soil auger. A soil core was dug several feet down to reveal the horizons and as we sifted the soil through our sweaty hands

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the real detective work began. Soil texture tells a lot about the landform processes. Throughout the northern Lake States, meltwater miles from the glacier formed outwash plains. Fine sediments such as silt and clay remain suspended in the water during this process and transported far away. As the braided outwash streams move water, heavy particles like sand

are sorted out becoming deposited across the area. Sand is large enough we can see individual particles with our own eyes. Aggregated together sand particles do not have much surface area, meaning they lack the negative charge to hold vast amounts of cations like calcium and magnesium. We have all spent a day at the beach and noticed how quickly sand dries out. Thinking about these characteristics one was easily able to

understand why jack pine dominates the outwash plains. Jack pine has an ecological niche of surviving on nutrient-poor sites that are dry enough to promote the frequent fires necessary for its regeneration.

Back in the classroom each team presented on how they “solved” the mystery of why the patterns in forest vegetation and topography exist across the Ford Forest and how they were created by the physical processes of the glaciers. Professors poked holes in students’ arguments and jokes were made, but the pieces started to come together on moving landscape ecology from a series of theories to an applied science we could use.

We also took a tour across the UP with an overnight trip to the town of Sault Ste. Marie. Here the class met with staff from the Hiwatha National Forest and natural resource department of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians to discuss some of their collaborative landscape initiatives. Meeting early one morning in the field as the sun rose, the iconic Kirkland’s Warbler sang almost on cue as we were inspired to hear about the successful prescribed burns and trust built between Tribal and Forest Service staff. The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe has been able to use silviculture and burning to meet restoration goals. Traditional travel corridors between the Great Lakes are becoming reestablished, which is improving wildlife habitat and promoting the growth of plants important for medicinal purposes or food such as



Photo of a NASP student measuring a soil pit.

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blueberries.

One professor kept the enthusiasm alive for detecting landscape patterns during all our field tours. Along with describing changes in landform, he would yell out, “Free Digging!” when coming across a road cutbank that exposed soil horizons. Clues to the process that structure the forest was always around us.

It would not be a NASP module without group work and a final project. Module four concludes with presenting a comprehensive forest management plan of the Ford Forest via ArcGIS StoryMap instead of PowerPoint. Landscape processes must be defined and competing objectives balanced. The camaraderie of the eight weeks spent as a NASP class was felt during the presentations on the last day with plenty of humor and memorable talks. In the evening celebrating, each wondered how our careers and paths may cross in the coming years.

An assigned paper and associated lecture in this module titled, “Silviculture, Landscape Ecosystems, and the Iron Law of the Site” was the most poignant of my NASP experience and provided a north star moving forward. It was written by Burton Barnes, a deceased professor from the University of Michigan. You probably have a copy his forest ecology textbook from your undergraduate course sitting dusty on a shelf somewhere. In the paper, he calls on foresters to embrace the challenges of 21st century management by using a landscape ecology ap-

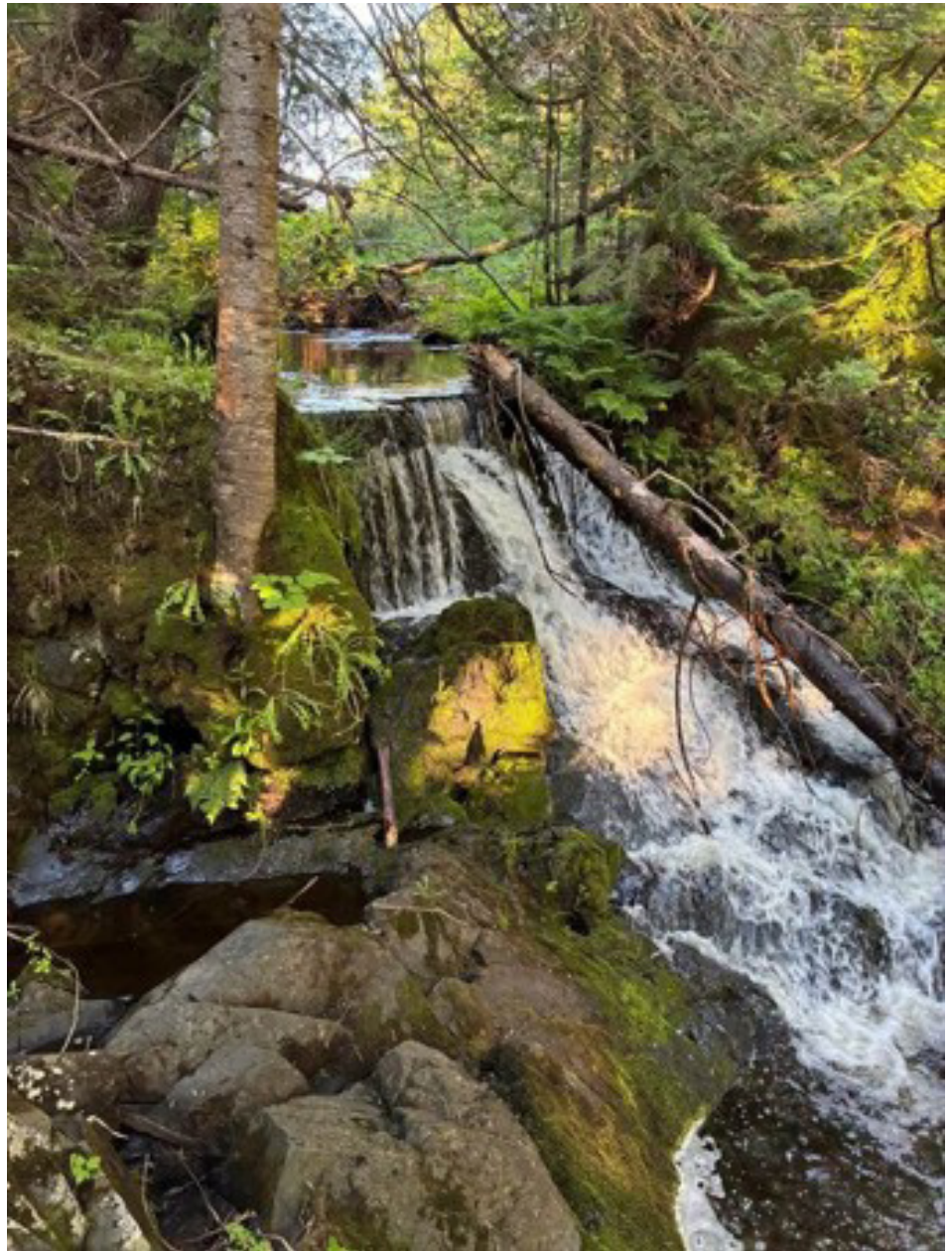


Photo of a waterfall at Michigan Tech's Ford Forest.

proach. Without it one is apt to fail at obeying the “Iron Law of Site” and see narrowly focused silviculture treatments falter as it conflicts with the ecological processes at play. Burton ends the paper by stating silviculturists need to, “lead the way by focusing on ecosystems rather than on the individual species and organisms that are parts of them.”

Forestry, like all professions,

continues to change at a rapid pace with artificial intelligence. Promises of abundance in data and easy analytics abound. It seems like each year will be the one where every stand in a forest is inventoried using LiDAR. AI and remote sensing will no doubt be crucial to every silviculturist's toolkit, but it remains incumbent on each one of us to deeply know the ecosystems we

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BIA Division of Forestry

by Caleb Cain

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steward. Sometimes that may

take digging a soil pit or a simple walk in the woods to give

your prescription what it needs.



Education Committee

by Shawn de France



Shawn de France

2027 Truman D. Picard Scholarship Update

The Education Committee met virtually on September 15, 2026, to review plans for the 2027 Truman D. Picard Scholarship. Next year's application deadline will be earlier—**Friday, January 2027, at 5:00 pm Pacific Time**—and the announcement will be posted soon on the ITC website.

Scholarship award levels for 2027 are as follows:

- **\$4,000** – College and graduate students studying **Forestry or Fire**
- **\$3,000** – College and graduate students studying **Natural Resources**
- **\$2,000** – Graduating high school seniors pursuing **Natural Resources, Forestry, or Fire**

Applications will be submitted through an **online application system**, designed to make it easier for students to upload all required documents. The ITC website will also be updated with additional guidance and tools to support applicants. **Descendants of federally recognized tribes remain eligible** to apply. We anticipate that these improvements will expand access and significantly increase the number of applicants.

Education Committee Projects

The committee also discussed several ongoing initiatives. The **Project Learning Tree Tribal Forestry & Wildland Fire Voices: A Career Guide** is currently in development. ITC has been interviewing resource professionals from across the country to highlight the wide range of career opportunities in Forestry and Fire. The completed guidebook will be showcased at the next Symposium.

2027 Student Summit

The **Tribal Forestry and Wildland Fire Student Summit** will be held **April 27–29, 2027**, hosted by ITC and Oregon State University, in Corvallis, OR. Students will participate in cultural fire demonstrations, campus and laboratory tours, visits to mass timber facilities, and trips to cultural-

ly significant tribal sites. The summit offers an outstanding opportunity for students to connect with resource professionals from across the nation.

Scholarship Funding & How to Apply

The Truman Picard Scholarship is funded in part through the annual raffle held at the National Indian Timber Symposium. The 2027 Symposium will be hosted by ITC and the San Carlos Apache Tribe in April 2027.

The scholarship announcement will be available for download at: www.itcnet.org/about_us/scholarships.html

Applicants are encouraged to review the **“FAQs” on ITC’s scholarship page** for step by step instructions on completing the Picard Scholarship application. Please help us spread the word about these important funding opportunities to students in your networks.



Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo



Jim Durglo

NWCG Seeks Tribal Committee Members and SME Participation for Wildland Fire Position Reviews

Why Tribal Representation Matters

Tribal fire programs bring valuable experience, knowledge, and perspectives to the wildland fire community. Yet Tribal wildland fire personnel have historically had limited participation in National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) committee work and in Subject Matter Expert (SME) opportunities supporting the review and development of wildland fire positions.

One reason may be that many Tribal fire staff are simply unaware that these opportunities exist or may not know how their experience and expertise can contribute to NWCG's work.

As of September 2026, Tribal participation in NWCG committee work and position review activities remains limited. Increasing participation provides an opportunity for Tribal fire programs to bring their experience and perspectives into national discussions that affect wildland fire training, qualifica-

tions, standards, and incident operations.

Garth Fisher, Tribal Training Specialist, U.S. Wildland Fire Service (USWFS) noted, "The consolidation of DOI bureaus resulted in a lapse in Tribal representation within committees and subcommittees. Because non-direct service fire programs are not designated as member entities, they are disproportionately impacted. As a result, Tribal fire programs are left without a consolidated mechanism to influence or participate in governance discussions below the NWCG Executive Board."

What is NWCG?

The NWCG provides national leadership to enable interoperable wildland fire operations among federal, state, local, Tribal, and territorial partners.

A primary function of NWCG is to establish wildland fire position standards, qualification requirements, and performance support resources—including training courses, job aids, and other materials—that help agencies implement those standards consistently.

NWCG's work is conducted through a structure that includes an Executive Board, Program Staff, Management Committees, and project teams.

The Executive Board provides strategic direction, policy guidance, and resources. It represents federal, state, Tribal, and other partner interests and helps align NWCG work with national wildland fire needs. And the NWCG Program Staff support the organization's day-

to-day activities and coordinate major initiatives, including efforts associated with incident performance and training modernization.

The ITC has been a primary member of the NWCG Executive Board since 2001 and has had difficulty getting Tribal participation in NWCG committee work or as SMEs when courses are reviewed and updated.

The Role of NWCG Committees

NWCG management committees represent major functional areas of wildland fire management. These committees and their subordinate groups provide leadership and expertise that support consistent and effective wildland fire operations across the country.

The current management committees include:

- Command Management Committee (CMC)
- Operations Management Committee (OMC)
- Public Information Management Committee (PIC)
- Safety/Risk Management Committee (SRC)
- Aviation Management Committee (AMC)
- Finance/Business Management Committee (FBC)
- Fire Planning Management Committee (PMC)
- Logistics Management Committee (LMC)
- Integration Management

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Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo

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Committee (IMC)

- Qualifications Management Committee (QMC)

Tribal fire personnel with experience in these functional areas may have knowledge and perspectives that can contribute directly to committee discussions and related working groups.

Incident Performance and Training Modernization

The Incident Performance and Training Modernization (IPTM) effort is intended to modernize the way wildland fire personnel are trained and supported in performing incident positions.

One component of this effort is the development of performance-based training and comprehensive performance support packages for NWCG incident positions identified in the NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications, PMS 310-1.

IPTM depends on the knowledge and experience of the broader wildland fire community. SME's play a key role by bringing operational experience to the review and development of position standards, training, performance requirements, and related materials. To learn more about IPTM, check out this website <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/1f46750e7d-c94b208cfeeb51d7f7c26c>.

How Tribal Fire Personnel Can Participate

Tribal fire programs have experienced personnel working across many aspects of wildland fire, including incident manage-

ment, operations, aviation, fire planning, safety, logistics, training, and qualifications. That experience can be valuable to NWCG.

Tribal participation can help ensure that national standards, training materials, and position requirements reflect the operational realities and experience of the entire wildland fire community.

If you have experience in a wildland fire position, have served on incidents, have training or qualification expertise, or have other relevant operational knowledge, you may be able to contribute.

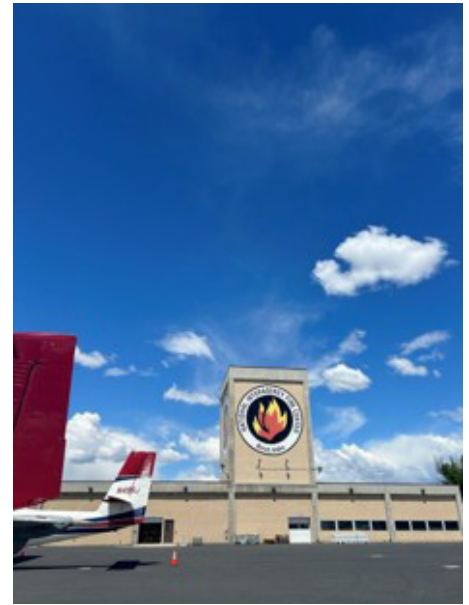
Start by contacting your local or Tribal fire leadership if you are interested in:

- Serving as a Tribal representative on an NWCG committee or subgroup,
- Being considered as an SME for a wildland fire position review,
- Contributing Tribal perspectives to wildland fire training and qualification standards, OR
- Learning more about opportunities to participate in NWCG activities

You may also contact **Jim Durglo** at jimdurglo@gmail.com or **(406) 531-6172**. He can help make the appropriate connections within NWCG and identify opportunities for participation.

Your Experience Matters

Tribal fire personnel have extensive knowledge and experience that can contribute to national wildland fire standards



A photo of the National Interagency Fire Center.

and practices.

If you have the experience, consider getting involved. Your participation can help ensure that Tribal perspectives and operational experience are represented in the national wildland fire community.

Thank you to **Garth Fisher, USWFS**, and **Sarah Lee, NWCG** for their contributions to this article.



National Native Conservation Network Coordinator

by Kathy Ferge



Kathy Ferge

A recent two-day workshop, *Building Effective Partnerships with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)*, underscored the value of mutually respectful relationships. Hosted by the Quinault Indian Nation and the Intertribal Timber Council's Braided Canopy Initiative, the event combined updates from Washington NRCS staff with Tribal success stories. The following sections highlight the workshop's key presentations and discussions.

Alternative Funding Arrangements

Although the workshop covered the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Regional Conservation Partnership Program, Acting State Conservationist Keith Griswold highlighted two newer opportunities for Tribes. An Alternative Funding Arrangement is a flexible agreement between NRCS and a federally recognized Tribe to carry out EQIP or CSP conservation proj-

ects on Tribal-controlled lands. It gives Tribes greater flexibility in managing and implementing projects and allows them to request funding for large efforts.

Griswold said, "We really want to make this program work for Tribes. While we need shovel-ready projects, I'm ready to do whatever it takes to garner funding."

Regenerative Pilot Program

The Regenerative Pilot Program (RPP), another new NRCS tool, operates as a subset of EQIP and CSP. In Washington, approximately one-third of the funding for each program has been set aside for the pilot. Griswold said, "Learning how to make this program work for Tribes is a priority."

That priority shaped the workshop's soil-health discussion. RPP participants must track soil health throughout the five-year contract—a new requirement in NRCS forestry programming.

"Act Now" Authority Streamlines the Application Process

Griswold also explained under the "Act Now" authority, it's important for tribes to submit their project applications as soon as they are ready to begin planning a project. Act Now allows NRCS to quickly approve and oblige a ranked application in a designated ranking pool when an eligible application meets or exceeds a state-determined, minimum threshold, ranking score. Qualifying applications may be automatically approved and move forward in the process without waiting

for all applications to be ranked during a given period.

Get Involved

Stressing the importance of staying involved with all aspects of the agency, Griswold invited Tribes to participate in the State Tribal Advisory Council. Contact for the WATAC is Laura Starr, state Tribal liaison. The WATAC provides a tribal voice to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on conservation issues that are important to Washington tribes at the state and national levels.

Tribes can also have a voice at the local level by participating in their Local Work Groups. These groups provide local input on natural resource priorities, conservation programs, and funding allocations and are one way for tribes to expand their community partnerships.

Washington Tribes Collaborate with NRCS

Keith Johnson, a forester with the Makah Tribe, described more than 20 years of collaboration with NRCS staff at the Port Angeles Service Center. Early work through the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, now part of EQIP, opened forest and meadow habitat for deer and elk; five bull elk were seen in the rehabilitated area soon after the work was completed. More recent EQIP projects have focused on improving stands of western hemlock, Douglas fir, and silver fir through extended harvest rotations. The Tribe operates its own sawmill, creating Tribal jobs, processing lumber, and supporting housing con-

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National Native Conservation Network Coordinator

by Kathy Ferge

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struction on the reservation. It also continues to improve wildlife habitat by thinning forests to increase food access for elk and deer and restoring streams to support salmon recovery.

Phil Rigdon, superintendent of the Yakama Nation Natural Resources Department and ITC vice-chair, described several projects supported by NRCS. The Yakama Nation focuses on restoring treaty resources both on and off the reservation. Two of the region's largest Regional Conservation Partnership Program projects were multifaceted, multi-partner efforts conducted at a landscape scale. Their goals included conserving water, enhancing fisheries, expanding wetlands, and improving irrigation efficiency.

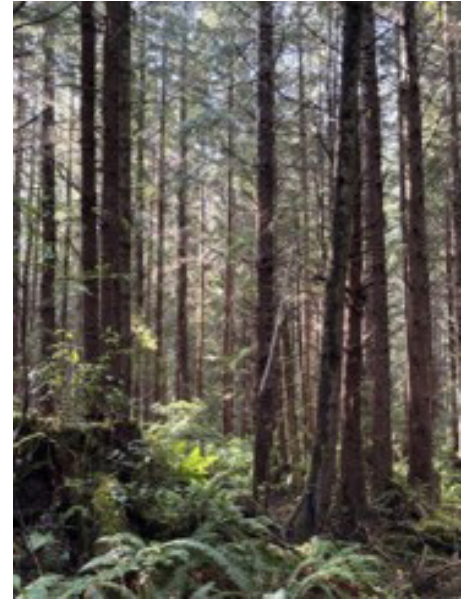
Rigdon encouraged smaller Tribes to build strong relationships with NRCS and their local conservation districts, noting that Tribes can accomplish more by working with their neighbors. He also identified the NRCS State Tribal Advisory Council as a forum where Tribes can learn from NRCS and share their cultural interests and natural resource management needs, helping NRCS serve them more effectively.

Spus Wilder, forest manager for the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, said the Tribe received both AFA and RPP funding for the Tunk Block Fire Rehabilitation Project. After losing 243,753 acres during the 2015 fire season, the Tribe began planning its restoration response and identified 26 priority project areas. Because

some planning was already complete, the Tribe was able to meet the Alternative Funding Arrangement's requirement for a shovel-ready project. The project focuses on restoring five forest roads affected by severe washouts, erosion, damaged culverts, accumulated woody debris, and other problems. The Tribe selected the AFA because the large project did not include partners, which are required under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

The Quinault Tribe has worked with NRCS for more than 20 years. Parker Hill, an environmental planner with the Tribe, explained that in the 1990s much of Quinault's land was fractionated: commercial forest holdings were interspersed with allotments owned by Tribal families, making land management difficult. Over time, the Tribe consolidated its holdings by acquiring both trust and non-trust land, building its current ownership to 208,000 acres. The forestry program aims to sustain forest-product harvests for the benefit of trust landowners, conserve or improve fish and wildlife habitat, and maintain access to traditionally used forest lands and resources. Quinault uses a wide range of NRCS practices, primarily through EQIP, to improve fish and wildlife habitat, roads, and forest management. The Tribe has also received an RPP award providing an additional \$400 million to support holistic management and establish baseline measures for tracking results.

Looking ahead, Hill said the Tribe will seek EQIP-RPP sup-



A photo from the Quinault Indian Nation Tribal Tour.

port for additional soil-health monitoring and Alternative Funding Arrangements for large, multifaceted efforts, including carbon-based and watershed-scale projects.

Quinault Field Trip Shared Tailored Forest Plan and RPP Forest Soil Testing

On the workshop's second day, participants visited Quinault forest lands for the first field component of a Braided Canopy event. The visit illustrated how Tribal forestry management can differ from other approaches. Mary Rollins, a stand improvement forester, explained that the Forestry Department manages the multiple uses outlined in the Tribal Forest Plan. These include sustainable timber production; secondary forest products, such as food and firewood; cultural resources and traditional gathering; wildlife enhancement; and recreation. The dominant tree species are Douglas fir, red cedar, western hemlock, and Pacific silver fir.

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National Native Conservation Network Coordinator

by Kathy Ferge

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Other species of interest include red alder, Sitka spruce, lodgepole pine, and western white pine.

The tour also built on the previous day's soil-health discussion. Tom Sauer, an ACES forester with SHD, introduced a Forest In-Field Soil Health Assessment designed to help participants evaluate soil health on site. Sauer guided the group through a visual site assessment, while Max Ross, the state resource soil scientist, demonstrated how to collect a soil sample and led participants through the scoring exercise.

Focused on Tribes and Their Forests

The workshop showed that successful conservation partnerships depend on trust, flexibility,

and sustained collaboration. NRCS funding tools—including Alternative Funding Arrangements, the Regenerative Pilot Program, and “Act Now”—can help Tribes advance projects that reflect their priorities, from forest restoration and soil-health monitoring to wildlife habitat and watershed management. The experiences shared by the Makah, Yakama, Colville, and Quinault Tribes also demonstrated the value of strong relationships with NRCS staff, conservation districts, and neighboring communities. Continued Tribal participation in advisory councils, Local Work Groups, and future workshops will help ensure that conservation programs remain responsive to Tribal knowledge, goals, and stewardship needs.



A photo of RPP Forest Soil Testing.

Legislative Update

by Matt Hill



Matt Hill

Fiscal Year 28 Appropriations Update

On September 1, the House passed a bipartisan continuing resolution by a 370-48 vote under suspension of the rules, fol-

lowing the Senate's 90-6 approval on August 8. President Trump signed it into law the next day as Public Law 119-103. The measure funds most federal agencies and programs at fiscal year 2026 levels through December 11, 2026 (or until the relevant full-year appropriations bills are enacted), averting a government shutdown when FY2027 begins on October 1.

This short-term CR does not enact full-year FY2027 appropriations—none of the 12 regular bills have cleared both chambers—and instead, delays past the November midterms for negotiations. The House has al-

ready passed a handful of those bills, but the Senate Appropriations Committee has reported none.

Congress will still need to pass another measure or the regular bills by mid-December to avoid a later lapse; the FY2028 process itself typically begins with the President's budget request in early 2027.

Congressional Schedule

The House of Representatives began its “October Recess” on September 15. This means the House will be out of session through at least November 9.

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Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

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The Senate will be in recess from October 2 until November 9.

Farm Bill Update

No new five-year Farm Bill has been enacted. The 2018 Farm Bill remains in effect through a series of one-year extensions, the most recent of which runs through September 30, 2026. Major commodity, crop insurance, and some conservation pieces were separately reauthorized and modified through the 2025 budget reconciliation law. Remaining titles (such as Forestry) and many discretionary/mandatory programs still depend on the 2018 framework or another extension.

As of now...the House passed its first version of the Farm Bill in April 2026. It is a relatively “skinny” bill focused on programs not already managed in reconciliation. Senate Ag Committee Chairman John Boozman released his Farm Bill discussion

draft on June 23. A committee markup on August 6 failed 10–11 along party lines, mainly over SNAP state cost-sharing implementation timing (Republicans offered a one-year delay; Democrats wanted two years).

On September 16, the Committee took Boozman’s bill back up and passed along party lines by a 12–11 vote. Now the measure is pending review by the full Senate.

The September 30 extension deadline is the practical cutoff for either a new bill or another short-term extension. Full Senate passage would still require 60 votes and a House-Senate conference.

Roadless Rule Rescission

On August 18, 2026, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Forest Service published a proposed rule to rescind it in its entirety, along with a draft environmental impact statement. The proposal would lift the national prohibitions on road construction, road reconstruc-

tion, and most timber harvesting in inventoried roadless areas covering nearly 45 million acres of National Forest System lands (Idaho and Colorado remain under their own separate state-specific roadless rules).

Management decisions would instead be left to individual forest plans and local forest managers. The agency has framed the change as a way to enable more flexible, locally tailored forest management and wild-fire-risk reduction; it does not require any new roads or logging.

A 30-day public comment period on the proposed rule and draft EIS was open through midnight on September 21, 2026, and then extended until October 6. After comments close, the Forest Service will complete its environmental review and issue a final rule; the existing 2001 protections stay in place until that process concludes. Additional public hearings related to subsistence uses in Alaska are

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Operations Committee

by Jason Robison



Jason Robison

As we move into fall, the work of the ITC Operations Committee continues to reflect how quickly the landscape surrounding Tribal forestry is changing. Our September 15 meeting covered federal policy, shared stewardship, workforce development, markets, wildland fire, research, and the continued growth of ITC itself.

What stood out to me is how connected these issues have become. Workforce affects our

ability to manage forests. Federal policy affects self governance. Markets influence whether active management is economically viable. Fire policy directly affects Tribal communities and resources. Increasingly, the role of the Operations Committee is to connect those pieces while keeping Tribal priorities at the center.

Building Partnerships and Markets

(Continued on page 19)

Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

(Continued from page 18)

also planned. Legal challenges are widely expected if a final rescission is issued.

Legislative efforts to permanently repeal the rule (including H.R. 7695 and S. 140) have also advanced in Congress but are likely to be signed into law

this year. Purely administrative repeal of the roadless rule is reversible by a future administration through new rulemaking. Statutory repeal with an explicit prohibition on substantially similar rules creates a durable barrier that the Forest Service cannot overcome on its own—it would require Congress to act

again.

If one or both chambers of Congress flip to Democratic control next year, we can expect legislative proposals to statutorily lock in the Roadless Rule, rather than to permanently repeal it.



Operations Committee

by Jason Robison

(Continued from page 18)

One of the most significant actions coming out of the September meeting was the committee continuing to advance the proposed partnership between ITC and Sustainable Northwest. This partnership has been developing over the past year and is intended to create a framework for collaboration around Tribal leadership, natural resource stewardship, wood markets, infrastructure, workforce development, policy coordination, and data sovereignty. The September board book provides more definitions around that work. The proposed five-year Tribal Wood and Biomass Initiative is designed to establish a Tribal-led Wood and Biomass Hub at ITC, helping Tribal communities turn forest stewardship priorities into viable market, business, workforce, infrastructure, and capital projects. The framework keeps Tribal partners in the primary decision-making role while Sustainable Northwest provides technical support in areas such as feasibility, market analysis, business planning, financial modeling, supply chains, and

infrastructure development.

The potential opportunities are substantial. ITC and Sustainable Northwest have been awarded a five-year grant of approximately \$1.7 million through the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities to help Tribes develop small wood and biomass economic opportunities. The partnership also anticipates helping align at least \$5 million in infrastructure investment while leveraging other complementary resources. Discussions included expanding markets for Tribal forest products, modernizing Tribal milling and wood processing infrastructure, developing renewable energy infrastructure, building workforce capacity, coordinating policy work, and developing shared tools that can help Tribal forest products businesses grow.

This builds on work we have already been discussing around the Tribal wood products market and the need to better connect forest management with economic development. Healthy forests and strong Tribal economies should not be viewed as competing objectives. In many Tribal communities, they are

directly connected.

Federal Policy, Self Governance, and Shared Stewardship

Federal policy remains a major part of the committee's work. September discussions included the Fix Our Forests Act, the FOREST Act, Farm Bill forestry provisions, the Northwest Forest Plan, ITARA related legislation, co management proposals, Forest Service reorganization, and other federal actions affecting Tribal forestry.

The committee also discussed an emerging concept with the Trust for Public Land involving a possible federal funding mechanism that could help Tribes acquire forest lands and place them into trust for management as Tribal forest lands. The concept remains under development, but it reflects the kind of innovative policy discussion ITC should continue exploring.

Self governance work also continues to advance. This summer, the Department of the Interior approved a ten-year extension of the Indian Trust Asset Man-

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agement Demonstration Project through June 22, 2036. The September BIA report noted that since the extension, one Tribe is operating under a new Indian Trust Asset Management Plan, another has been accepted into the Demonstration Project, and another has submitted a request to join. That is meaningful progress and another reminder that self governance authorities become stronger when Tribes have time and opportunity to put them into practice.

Our relationship with the USDA Forest Service is evolving as well. The Forest Service Tribal Action Plan was moving through final departmental review at the time of the meeting, and ITC has secured \$500,000 for FY 2027 shared stewardship work. A September shared stewardship webinar conducted with the National Tribal GIS Support Center drew roughly 400 registrants. Across Indian Country, Tribes are demonstrating the expertise, cultural knowledge, workforce, and institutional capacity to play a larger role in planning, restoration, fuels reduction, cultural resource protection, and long-term landscape management beyond reservation boundaries.

Workforce and Organizational Capacity

Workforce development remains one of the most serious challenges facing Tribal forestry. The team developing ITC's workforce video presented storylines focused both on opportunities for young people and on what is at stake if the workforce shortage continues. Tribal forestry

staffing has declined over time, many current professionals are approaching retirement, and Tribes compete with other employers for a limited pool of qualified people.

At the same time, there is real opportunity. The Board approved a \$2 million modification to the ITC and BIA Forestry and Natural Resources Workforce Initiative to support Tribal personnel serving on deployment teams and student internships. BIA is also developing a second timber team model that can deploy qualified Tribal technicians and developing professionals on short term assignments while building experience across Indian Country. Forestry can offer young Tribal members a career connecting culture, science, stewardship, community, and service.

ITC itself must also have the capacity to support this growing workload. Executive Director Cal Mukumoto presented a three-year organizational capacity and expansion plan covering staffing, financial planning, organizational structure, and alignment with grants and agreements. The committee supported advancing the plan for further review, including efforts to strengthen administrative and budgeting capacity. These internal investments may receive less attention than national policy, but they are essential if ITC is going to continue expanding its service to member Tribes.

Fire, Research, and Emerging Issues

Wildland fire generated substantial discussion. The transi-

tion to the U.S. Wildland Fire Service raises questions involving communication, organizational boundaries, reimbursement, fuels programs, post fire programs, self governance, treaty rights, sovereignty, and cultural values. A proposed five-year, nonfinancial MOU between ITC and the Wildland Fire Service would provide a framework for collaboration, including a Tribal Wildland Fire Managers Forum, Indigenous prescribed burning and rehabilitation, workforce development, training, and information sharing.

ITC also continues to hold a seat on the National Wildfire Coordinating Group Executive Board, providing an avenue for Tribal perspectives in national fire governance. Discussions included Tribal participation in NWCG committees, qualification pathways, Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge, cultural burning, and ensuring Tribal values are incorporated into agreements from the beginning.

Research and data are another growing area of work. The Research Subcommittee discussed Tribal research priorities, workforce, fire, emerging technology, artificial intelligence, and improved relationships among Tribal Nations, federal scientists, and universities. The Better Baselines Tribal lands mapping concept could improve information about Tribal lands for future research and policy discussions. At the same time, increased use of data and advanced analytics makes questions of ownership, access, Indigenous knowledge, and Tribal

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Operations Committee

by Jason Robison

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data sovereignty even more important.

The committee also continued tracking the European Union Deforestation Regulation. ITC has worked with the National Alliance of Forest Owners, the BC First Nations Forestry Council, and others to raise concerns about potential impacts on Tribal Forest products and the need for meaningful Indigenous engagement. As international sustainability standards evolve, Indigenous Forest managers need to be part of those conversations.

Continuing the Momentum

When I look at everything covered during a single Operations Committee meeting, I am reminded of how broad Tribal forestry has become. We are discussing Congressional policy and international markets

alongside workforce recruitment, biomass, wildfire, research, cultural burning, organizational capacity, and Tribal data sovereignty. That breadth can be challenging, but it is also one of ITC's greatest strengths.

The September meeting produced tangible next steps. We advanced the Sustainable Northwest partnership, the ITC organizational capacity plan, and the proposed Wildland Fire Service agreement for further consideration. We continued developing the workforce video and moving work forward around wood markets, shared stewardship, research, fire, and federal policy.

There is plenty of work ahead, but Tribal forestry is at a critical point in its history. Tribal Nations are bringing proven management experience, generations of knowledge, strong professional programs, and in-

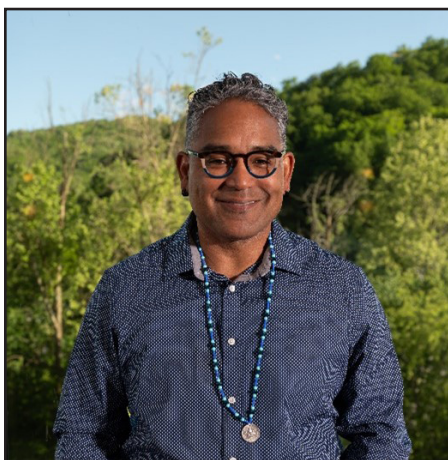
novative ideas to some of the most difficult natural resource challenges facing the country. The Operations Committee will continue working to make sure those voices help shape what comes next.

I want to thank our presenters, ITC staff, committee members, and partners who continue contributing their time and expertise. And as always, I invite ITC members who want to become more involved to join the Operations Committee. Whether your interests are forestry policy, wildfire, workforce development, research, markets, self governance, or partnerships, there is room at the table. New voices and new perspectives make this committee stronger, and there is no shortage of meaningful work ahead.



Symposium Committee

by Howard Teasley, Jr.



Howard Teasley, Jr.

2027 Symposium – Save The Date

Mark your calendars for **April 5–8, 2027**, when the Intertrib-

al Timber Council returns to **San Carlos, Arizona** for the **50th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium**. The Symposium Committee is preparing an exciting program in partnership with our hosts, the **San Carlos Apache Tribe**, who last welcomed us in 2016. Expect field tours, learning sessions, and activities for every interest. A full update will be shared in the winter newsletter.

The San Carlos Apache Tribe is honored to host this milestone gathering as we celebrate **Fifty Years of Gathering: Shared Wisdom, Sovereign Leadership**. This 50th anniversary

marks decades of Tribal forestry leadership, stewardship, and partnership across Indian Country.

Attendees will come together in **Western Apache Territory**; a homeland deeply rooted in Apache culture and tradition. Spanning **1.8 million acres**, the San Carlos Apache Reservation is cared for through traditional knowledge, science, forestry, vegetation management, and fire management—an approach that reflects their enduring responsibility to sustain healthy forests, ecosystems, wildlife, and communities.





50th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium

Fifty Years of Gathering: Shared Wisdom, Sovereign Leadership



Save the Date • April 5-8, 2027 • San Carlos, AZ

**Hosted by Intertribal Timber Council
& San Carlos Apache Tribe**



A photo from the 2016 Symposium Tribal Tour hosted by the San Carlos Apache Tribe in San Carlos, AZ.



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

Submit Online



Online Application

- ☐ **Complete the form at <https://ezfd.app/a9db86/picard-2027> and upload all required documents.** No account is required. The form will not save your progress; therefore, you must have all required documents prior to starting the application. The Education Committee will review and rank applicants who completely address each section.
 - Name, Tribe, email, phone, best method for contacting you, and permanent mailing address
 - Award category, school you are currently enrolled in or applied/accepted to, major category, declared major, school you will attend in fall 2027, expected graduation date, full-time status requirement, and GPA

Required Documents

- ☐ **Write a 1–2-page essay** discussing the following **three (3) questions**. Be specific and avoid using AI to write.
 1. Academic interest in Forestry, Wildland Fire Management, and/or Natural Resources
 2. Commitment to education, community, and your culture
 3. Financial need
- ☐ **Resume**
- ☐ **You must provide three (3) letters of reference on letterhead, signed, and dated** (read requirements carefully).
 - If no letterhead is available through the reference’s organization, they must create their own.
 - Digital and electronic signature accepted. Typed signatures designed to look handwritten are not accepted.
 - The letter must be dated within the last six months.
 - Open any sealed documents, if applicable. Reference letters are not accepted directly from referrals.
 - Forged documents are strictly prohibited. If any materials are found to be inauthentic, you will not be allowed to apply for future scholarships. Letters cannot be recycled from previous scholarships.
 - Referrals should address letters as follows:

Education Committee
Intertribal Timber Council
PO Box 11790
Portland, OR 97211
- ☐ **Evidence of validated enrollment or descendant enrollment in a federally recognized Tribe or Alaska Native Corporation**, as established by the U.S. Government. Proof of parent enrollment or birth certificate is NOT accepted; applicant must submit a copy of the applicant’s enrollment.
 - Accepted documents include a copy of applicant’s enrollment card or descendant card, front and back;
 - Or completed BIA Form 4432 Verification of Indian Preference for Employment <https://bit.ly/BIAForm4432>.
- ☐ **Transcripts and GPA:** ALL students must include unofficial or official transcripts.
 - **High school students** must provide a **college acceptance letter** and **class schedule** to verify before a check is released.
 - **College students** must provide proof of their **declared major and current class schedule**.
- ☐ **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):** ALL students must complete the FAFSA and the Submission Summary. If it has not been completed, include last year’s report. **View your FAFSA Submission Summary** by logging in to your StudentAid.gov account Dashboard at <https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/sign-in/landing>, select your processed FAFSA submission from the “My Activity” section, and click “View FAFSA Submission Summary” or contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-433-3243 and request a mailed copy (10–14 days).
- ☐ **Submission Deadline:** Applications must be submitted **before** the close of business (5:00 p.m. Pacific Time) Friday, **January 22, 2027**. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.
- ☐ **Questions:** Contact the ITC office by email intertribaltimbercouncil@gmail.com or by phone (503) 282-4296.



INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL
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