



INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL TIMBER NOTES

Spring ~ 2020



Howard Teasley, Jr.

2020 SYMPOSIUM POSTPONED UNTIL 2021

On behalf of the Symposium Committee, I regret to inform you that the 44th Annual National Indian

Timber Symposium scheduled June 1-4, 2020, has been postponed to a new date in 2021, to be announced later.

Given the current global health concerns, actions and CDC recommendations surrounding the coronavirus (COVID19), it is too difficult to plan a conference at this time. In expecting attendees from across Indian Country, we are very much concerned for the health and safety of all of you and the uncertainties surrounding travel over the next months that the coronavirus pandemic presents.

The 2020 Annual Business Meeting will be planned as an alter-

native meeting. Member tribes should watch for future communication from the ITC office.

The ITC and Tanana Chiefs Conference hope to see you next year in Fairbanks, Alaska. Updates will be posted to our website www.itc-net.org, as they become available.

We very much regret and understand the inconvenience this creates for many. Thank you all for your flexibility and patience. We wish you many blessings and good health.



Awards Committee

by Will Putman



Will Putman

The ITC Awards Committee met at the winter ITC Board meeting, with the primary agenda item being the

review of award nominations and selection of 2020 Earl R. Wilcox Memorial Award recipients. A number of award nominations had been received by the January 24, 2020, deadline, and committee members had a chance to review the nomination packages for about a week prior to the meeting. Many thanks are due to the individuals who stepped up to help review award nominations this year. It was a great group, and there were good discussions about the nominees. Many thanks are also due to the folks out in Indian country who took the time to

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President's Message

by Vernon Stearns, Jr.



Vernon Stearns, Jr.

Greetings and best wishes to all of our tribal communities! We are now well into 2020 and what a ride it has been thus far. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the entire global community including the ITC family. The way we conduct business has changed in the short term and has influenced some of the activities we had planned.

First, I regretfully announce that this year's Annual Timber Symposium, scheduled for June 2020 in Fairbanks, AK has been postponed until 2021. Second, our planned ITS/USFS Tribal Stewardship workshop, scheduled for May 2020 in Spokane Valley, WA, has also been postponed. Due to uncertainties around travel restrictions, size gathering limitations, logistical considerations, and the ongoing pandemic, it made the most sense to postpone both events. There are so many unknowns that we are all dealing with in our personal and professional lives. Maintaining our safety welfare has to be the primary consideration for our daily activities.

Although we all have experience with working through times of uncertainty, there seems to be a different feeling with the current pandemic. Nevertheless, business continues and the ITC will carry on

the mission of improving the management of natural resources of importance to Native American communities. The manner in which we get work accomplished has certainly changed as we move to a more virtual business model. Challenges associated with technology slows activities down a bit, patience becomes a virtue to work through COVID-19. The following report include activities that the ITC will continue to work.

In Washington, D.C., I appreciate the Colville Tribes' Cody Desautel for representing the ITC in congressional appropriations testimony. Protecting the BIA Forestry and Wildland Fire Management budget is one of the more important tasks the ITC has, and Cody did an outstanding job carrying the torch. The President's proposed budget for FY 2021 has been released and there is some good and bad for forestry and wildland fire. Nevertheless, we know the President's budget is only a start and we will keep close tabs as the federal government develops budget proposals for the coming year.

Down the road, the ITC is preparing for the fourth iteration of the Indian Forest Management Assessment Team (IFMAT) report. This congressionally mandated report occurs every ten years, with the next one due in 2023. The ITC Oversight Committee is in place and we are working through the planning process. We have recruited co-chairs for the Team and our next task is to identify study parameters and questions to be asked. Funding to carry out the IFMAT IV report has been assured to us by the BIA; however, as I write up this update the ITC has not received a budget yet. As far as a timeline, the Oversight Committee feels like we are

in a good place. Updates to IFMAT IV progress will be forthcoming through future quarterly updates.

Shared stewardship continues to be a hot topic and seems to be expanding. Discussions within the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) are now relating shared stewardship to activities that can be taken before, during and after wildland fires. Mitigating post fire affects through Interior's Burned Area Emergency Response program is what most tribes typically deal with for post fire recovery and restoration efforts. The WFLC is working on a roadmap concept that will assist in identifying gaps and opportunities that come with the challenges of coordinating post fire response efforts.

One other important topic the ITC has been engaged with Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) on is developing a Leader's Intent for Strategic Engagement Across Jurisdictions for the Fire Year message. Although this is not a new concept and many tribal fire management programs already meet with their local cooperators, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought uncertainty to the ability to respond to wildfires this year. Having early discussions and maintaining communication with your neighbors will be ever so important this year to ensure protection of your values. Please look at the letter and consider it as we prepare for the wildfire suppression season. You can find it in this issue of Timber Notes and it is posted on the ITC website.

ITC continues to help federal agencies implement new forest management authorities that enhance cross boundary management efforts. Our agreement with the U.S. Forest Ser-

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President's Message

by Vernon Stearns, Jr.

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vice provides for ITC's outreach to tribes to learn about and take advantage of both Good Neighbor Authority and the development of the new "638" contracting authority for the Tribal Forest Protection Act. Both of these authorities were the result of successful lobbying by the ITC in the halls of Congress over several years. The Forest Service – ITC agreement will facilitate learning opportunities around the new and existing authorities

while focusing on developing projects that address tribal priorities on neighboring lands. As I mentioned at the beginning of this report, one workshop has been postponed to a later date. The ITC-FS Oversight group will still be holding monthly conference calls to facilitate the best path forward in delivering workshops and webinars.

As spring and summer seasons approach hopefully the pandemic settles and everyone will get more

time to be out and about enjoying the important responsibility of land stewardship. Please stay safe and maintain your health. The roots of resilience run deep throughout Indian Country and we will get through these difficult times. As always, I am proud of all the work ITC does and the support we receive from member tribes. Thank you all for your ongoing support of the ITC and its mission.



Education Committee

by Nicole Stiffarm



Nicole Stiffarm

Greetings ITC family, I hope this spring season finds you in good health. The education committee convened this past February in sunny Palm Springs, CA. We discussed the upcoming Tribal Forestry Summit being hosted at Northern Arizona University, October 6-8, 2020. Since it is scheduled in October 2020, we have decided to continue the planning of the summit. It is shaping up to be a dynamic discussion regarding the theme of workforce development in tribal forestry and wildland fire. The summit has a save the date webpage at <https://eri.nau.edu/native-american-for->

[est-management-program/](https://eri.nau.edu/native-american-for-est-management-program/). As more information becomes available, the webpage will be updated. For any questions regarding the summit, please email tribalforestrysummit@nau.edu. Mark your calendars. We hope to see you there!

The committee also discussed the current outreach for the Truman D. Picard Scholarship. We have worked to increase the volume of notices going out through digital platforms such as Facebook, email, as well as from the directly from the ITC website. We are focused on identifying and supporting the next generation of forestry professionals through their academic careers. The application for the 2020 Truman D. Picard Scholarship closed on March 13, 2020. The next education meeting will take place digitally to select scholarship recipients. Stay tuned for a list of 2020 Truman D. Picard Scholarship recipients!

There has been an extension to scholarship availability in the Accelerated Master of Forestry Programs at Oregon State University for Native American students. Students now

have until June 30, 2020 to apply. For more information, please email John Sessions, Sustainable Forest Management Advisor at john.sessions@oregonstate.edu.

Our meeting concluded with a quick discussion about the ITC Student representative position. We have completed the process of developing the duties associated with the position. In that process we have identified a few key points that we will need to discuss further. We are hopeful that we can get the position finalized soon.

As you are all aware, the 2020 ITC Symposium has been postponed and will be rescheduled for a date to be announced in 2021. While we in the ITC organization are saddened by the cancellation, we are hopeful that you all and your families will stay safe through the COVID-19 pandemic. With that, I will conclude my update. Please practice social distancing and stay safe, I wish you all the best health and resilience as we go forward.



BIA Central Office Forestry

by Pete Wakeland



Pete Wakeland

PLANNING AND PRIORITIES

Central Office Staff: By the time this is in print, we hope to have two or three central office foresters on board at the Central Office. It has been a long time since we have been staffed up, and we are looking forward to providing more effective and efficient services to the tribes.

The positions currently under consideration, or out for advertisement are the Timber Sales Forester; Forester Analyst; and Projects Forester. We are planning to advertise one more GS-14 Forester, and one GS-12 Forester within the next 60-90 days.

Regional Forester's Meeting: A Regional Foresters' meeting is being planned for the week of April 27, 2020. The location has not been finalized yet.

ITARA, 2018 Farm Bill, and S-245 Indian Tribal Energy Act:

Two tribes have been approved to participate in the Indian Trust Assets Reform Act (ITARA) demonstration project and are currently developing the Indian Trust Asset Management Plans required under ITARA. Technical assistance is available to tribes that are approved for or who are considering participation in the demonstration project. For more information, contact Pete

Wakeland, Chief Forester.

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

WFLC: The next Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) meeting is scheduled in Washington, D.C. on May 6, 2020. The Chief Forester and the Wildland Fire Director will attend the meeting. Contact Pete Wakeland or Leon Ben for more information.

Funding and Positions Analysis: Work has started on data collection for the Funding and Position Analysis that will be used in the development of the next IFMAT Report. Information and instructions on how to complete the request for data have been sent to the Regions. Tribal data is very important in accurately describing the status of Indian forestry, and we strongly encourage Tribes to participate by submitting their data to the Regions. The IFMAT Report is mandated by NIFRMA, and the next report is projected to be complete in 2023. Contact Dawn Patterson for more information.

Timber Strike Team: Central Office staff continues to stand up the Timber Strike team that was approved by the BIA Director this

past summer. Strike Team positions have been advertised. Once implemented, the strike team will be dispatched to locations where help is needed to complete timber sale planning and layout. This provides a great opportunity to participate in forestry projects outside of one's immediate location. Contact John Baskette for more information.

Earth Day and Arbor Day: As you know, forestry and forest development activities such as planting trees are important elements in caring for our tribal lands. With Earth Day and Arbor Day approaching, the BIA Director recently sent out a memo to the Regional Directors requesting event proposals that advance the BIA's forestry and wildland fire objectives, and support community awareness relevant to the good stewardship of our tribal lands. This year we will provide support for five events. We look forward to future year activities, and the success of these events in the tribal communities.

BRANCH OF FOREST RESOURCES PLANNING (BOFRP)

CFI Application: We are currently working on improvements to the CFI data translation necessary for FVS use. There are plans to improve the processing functionality of BOFRP Applications for quicker data processing turnaround. BOFRP plans to update the field-data collector program for use on a Windows-based tablet. The tablet data collector will have the desktop version of BOFRP Apps and will include more thorough error checking, reporting errors at time of data entry. The Funding Position Analysis reporting application has been a priority and we are currently reviewing the data that has been

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collected during the recent deployment.

FIRST: BOFRP continues to work with IT to ensure the FIRST reporting application is brought back online as soon as possible. The application was taken off line January 2020, and we will continue to work with IT requirements. The end of the year reports were run in December 2019, you can request a copy of these reports if needed. We will keep the Regional Foresters informed of the operational status of FIRST.

National Forest Library: The scanning of the forestry documents in the BOFRP library is still a work in progress. We are currently scanning the Regional documents; the goal is to complete scanning the entire library within a year. Robin has completed the scanning of Western, Alaska, Eastern Oklahoma, and Eastern Region.

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

BRANCH OF WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

Update and Planning Efforts for COVID-19: The safety of the public and all wildland fire responders is always our number one priority. Currently, the BIA Division of Forestry and Wildland Fire Management along with the Department of the Interior are taking the necessary steps to ensure its ability to deploy firefighters for wildfire response. Tribes and wildland fire management programs are actively assessing potential risks and devel-

oping plans to mitigate those risks as the response to COVID-19 continues. While COVID-19 circumstances are rapidly evolving, and federal guidance continues to adapt with the situation, the wildland fire agencies are prepared for wildland fire activity and will be ready to respond during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The interagency wildland fire community is preparing its response using the Pandemic Response and Preparedness Plan for the Federal Wildland Fire Agencies. The plan provides interagency guidance to ensure the safety of our employees. Additionally, the Infectious Diseases Guidelines for Wildland Fire Incident Management Teams plan, developed by the National Wildland Fire Coordination Group Risk Management Committee's Emergency Medical Subcommittee, provides recommended guidelines for incident management teams when confronted with a potential infectious disease outbreak during wildfire response.

For more information and updates on the COVID-19 response and planning efforts please go to: www.bia.gov/covid-19.

Operations: The BIA has the responsibility to protect over 57 million acres of trust lands. Within this landscape, tribal homes, home sites, and other infrastructure intermix with natural vegetation occupying approximately 30% (nearly 18 million acres) of the BIA's trust land base. For the most recent five year period (Fiscal Year 2015 - Fiscal Year 2019), Indian Country experienced an annual average of 4,500 wildfires that burned over 510,000 trust acres which directly affect tribal communities and governments. Based on the five-year aver-

age, the BIA expends nearly \$12.5 million annually on activities associated with managing wildfires and providing wildfire assistance to our federal, state, and other local government cooperators.

From November 2019 through Current, the United States has been assisting Australia with their unprecedented fire season that resulted in numerous, very large, devastating wildfires. The BIA provided assistance by sending nine BIA employees in various waves to fill overhead positions as requested from Australia. Positions that were filled by BIA employees include 2 – Air Tactical Group Supervisor (ATGS), 1 – Air Support Group Supervisor (ASGS), 3 – Division Group Supervisor (DIVS), 1 – Taskforce Leader (TFLD), and 1 – Operations Section Chief 2 (OSC2). No Tribal personnel were included in the mobilization to Australia due to contractual/agreement issues, which do not allow the BIA or the United States to mobilize Tribal personnel internationally.

Fire Planning is working on a Strategic Plan to develop a new process to inform Regional funding allocations and to determine resource need. This process may replace the Fire Management Planning Analysis (FMPA), which is outdated. Fire Planning is also researching options for Wildland Fire Fleet management, which may include transitioning to the DOI Fire Fleet Program through the BLM Working Capital Fund.

Fuels Management Program: The FY 20 Wildland Fire Fuels Program budget increased \$5M from FY 19, bringing the total budget to \$194M. Of that, the BIA received an allocation \$44.5M. This

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BIA Central Office Forestry

by Pete Wakeland

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includes \$34.5M of Base and \$10M for Reserved Treaty Rights Lands (RTRL). DOI Bureau allocation percentages have been kept the same as directed in the 2017 Connor Memo.

The Southern Border Protection Initiative (SBPI) remains a priority for the Secretary of the Interior as well as reducing wildfire hazard in California. As such, the OWF has set aside \$9M of the \$194M to focus on those priorities.

Spend plans will remain a requirement by the Department of Interior for all Fuels Management Program funding. The Bureaus and OWF have worked to develop a NFPORS export to accommodate the spend plan requirement. Additionally, quarterly NFPORS updates of fuels treatments and activities accom-

plishments are now required.

Wildland Fire First Aid Program: In 2019, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) joined the BIA in its First Aid Program. They are implementing the two levels of first aid training in an inter-agency effort led by the BIA.

The first aid program has completed three of the scheduled six, forty-hour trainings for FY 2020 with over sixty students. These qualified students have started teaching the eight-hour OSHA compliant first aid class internally for their local fire programs.

In FY2020, under the supervision of the DOI medical director, the program continues working on a first aid reporting system that will provide information into the DOI SMIS, in an effort to provide better data related to injury and illness patterns.

Two trainings are currently offered:

A forty-hour Medical Incident Technician (MIT) training course. The intent is to have a minimum of two MITs per crew that will be qualified and capable of teaching the eight-hour Medical Incident Leadership (MIL) training course internally.

An eight-hour MIL training course utilizing the same approach as the MIT, only in a condensed period. This is the first-ever wildland fire-specific Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) compliant eight hour class taught internally by any land management agency. The intent is to have all field personnel trained internally using MIT instructors.



SAVE THE DATE!!

October 6-8, 2020

Tribal Forestry Student Summit

"Investing in the Future of Tribal Forestry & Wildland Fire"

Northern Arizona University
Native American Cultural Center
Flagstaff, AZ

The purpose of this summit is to convene students in forestry or related resource management programs across the country with land managers and practitioners for in-depth discussions on tribal forestry and wildland fire issues.

Operations Committee

By Cody Desautel



Cody Desautel

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

I started this update a couple months ago by stating, “I want to start by wishing everyone a happy and prosperous new year. I expect 2020 to be an interesting year with the upcoming election.” Oh how the world has changed in the last two months. There has been limited activity over the winter and with COVID-19 dominating almost all aspects of our lives. This report will include updates from the February board meeting.

IFMAT IV

At the February board meeting the Operations committee reviewed proposals for the IFMAT Co-chairs, and I am pleased to announce Dr. John Gordon and Dr. John Sessions

will lead this effort again. Team selection can proceed under the guidance of the Co-Chairs and the ITC IFMAT oversight committee. We recently identified funding to begin this work, and hope to have a complete scope of work and contract in place within the next month. Site visits will be right around the corner, and we look forward to seeing the amazing work in Indian country.

FARM BILL/INDIAN ENERGY WORKSHOP

The Farm Bill/Indian Energy workshops have been postponed with travel restrictions across the country. The decision was made to reschedule these workshops in 2021, and focus on developing the webinars for distribution later this year. We will continue to work with our BIA and Forest Service partners to develop templates, contracts, and projects that can serve as real world examples when we have the opportunity host the workshops. We will continue to provide updates through the quarterly ITC newsletters, or interested tribes can contact the ITC for interim updates.

CLIMATE CHANGE & CARBON SEQUESTRATION

There continues to be conversations about climate change and carbon

management, both nationally and internationally. President Trump affirmed a commitment to the “One Trillion Trees Initiative” in his State of the Union Address. In response the BIA has reviewed planting and forest health accomplishments across the country. Not surprising to those of us from Indian Country, but the BIA is responsible for the majority of both within the Department of the Interior. As awareness of this issue grows I expect tribal examples to help inform decisions made by other land management agencies.

I will close by expressing my disappointment in the difficult decision to postpone the 2020 ITC symposium. Obviously, the health and safety of each of you is our top priority, so the decision to postpone the symposium was the right decision. Sometimes you don’t realize how important certain events are until those opportunities are taken away. I hope everyone stays safe and healthy, and I look forward to the next opportunity to see you all.



Awards Committee

by Will Putman

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took the time to submit nominations.

2020 Wilcox Award recipients were to be announced and recognized at the awards banquet on the final night of the 44th National Timber Symposium being hosted by the Tanana Chiefs Conference in Fair-

banks, Alaska on June 1st to June 4th, 2020. The 2020 symposium, of course, has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so 2020 Wilcox Award recipients will be notified by mail. However, we still feel it is important for Award recipients to be personally recognized by their peers, so they will also be recognized at the 44th Sym-

posium in Fairbanks, Alaska when it is rescheduled in 2021. Congratulations to this year’s Wilcox Award recipients. We hope to see you next year in Fairbanks. Stay safe!



Technical Specialist

by Don Motanic

PARTNERSHIPS WITH INNOVATION, FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND MENTORSHIP



INNOVATION

Pickup trucks with high-sided trailers line up at the Nez Perce Tribal Senior Firewood Program Facility as a log is being sawed, then split and placed up a conveyer belt. The firewood is then placed in a rotating drum to clean off any small residual pieces before going into the trailer.

The Tribal Program and video can be viewed at their website: <https://nezperceforestryandfire.com/senior-firewood-program>.

“The Nez Perce Tribe is able to control and maximize the volume delivery potentials by owning its own self-loader to haul from Tribal Trust, Allotted, Federal, State, and Private. During project usage, a logging contractor on tribal property will be required to use the Tribe’s services, which will decrease appraised trucking cost and allow the Tribe to be paid for services and receive higher stumpage rates. There will be an in-

crease in product values which stem from using our own truck. The truck will have the ability to make back hauls from service areas that will also reduce costs. With the capability of make alternate hauls with other products, such as firewood, saw logs, poles, ton wood, float logs, cabin logs, and specialty logs would benefit the Tribe and the local communities. All that equipment was bought by the Tribe to help with our senior firewood program. The truck allows us to trade hauling for firewood or a reduced rate (cost of logging only). We produce 400 cords per year for our elders, seniors, disabled, and single parents. Basically, two cords a piece or a trailer load that is equivalent to two cords.”

-Howard Teasley, Jr., Nez Perce Tribe

The BIA has a Small Milling Infrastructure Program that has funded six projects, similar the firewood program, totaling \$1.2 Million Dollars out of 26 proposals sent in nationwide that totaled \$5.2 million dollars. The unfunded need of 20 proposals at \$4 million dollars has created an opportunity for partnerships.

The new Farm Bill has placed an emphasis on these types of projects to create opportunities for tribes. The Forest Service Forest Products Lab has list of Regional Marketing and Biomass Coordinators to assist tribes with the unmet needs, increase partnerships and innovations.

A list of Forest Service Biomass Coordinators for each region can be found on the ITC Webpage at:

https://www.itcnet.org/issues_projects/issues_2/marketingbranding/marketingandbranding.html.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

The Affiliated Tribes and NW Indians has created a Food Sovereignty Sub-Committee to address the regional and national needs for first foods. The subcommittee is gathering input through a survey. Please take a few minutes to participate in the Food Sovereignty Policy Priority survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ATNIFoodSov>. This information will assist the ATNI Food Sovereignty Sub-Committee in developing a policy platform to ensure that NW Tribe’s interests and concerns are heard at the national level. It will also serve as a way to advocate for policies and funding to address these issues. If you have any questions, please contact Nora Frank-Buckner at nfrank@npaihb.org or Buck Jones at buck@critfc.org.

Additional resources:

- Model Food Code link: <https://www.tribalfoodcode.com/>
- Food Sovereignty Assessment Tool – 2nd Edition:
- <https://www.firstnations.org/publications/food-sovereignty-assessment-tool-2nd-edition/>
- Celebrating Our Strengths: Authentic Partnerships for Nation Building:
- <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/celebrating-our-strengths-au>



Don Motanic

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Technical Specialist

by Don Motanic

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thentic-partnerships-for-nation-building/

- Indigenous Food Sovereignty in the United States, Restoring Cultural Knowledge, Protecting Environments, and Regaining Health Edited by Devon A. Mihesuah, Elizabeth Hoover, Foreword by Winona LaDuke: <https://www.oup.com/books/15107980/indigenous-food-sovereignty-in-the-united-sta>

MENTORSHIP

300 students and mentors gathered at the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) Leadership Summit in Temecula, CA at the Pechanga Casino Resort on February 16-18, 2020. The



Summit was hosted by the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians. The students participated in workshops conducted by some of the mentors and enjoyed a field trip to visit a 1000+ year old California Live Oak that's near the resort and also still producing acorns every two to three years.

Students and mentors from the Advancing Agriculture Science Opportunities for Native Americans (AASONA) Program attended the Summit and enjoyed student-mentor dinner. About half of the 35 students and mentors in the AISES AASONA Program have also received the ITC Truman D. Picard Scholarship. There are a million paths students can take in life,

some are scenic, some are cumbersome, and very few are short. Mentorship provides students with extra knowledge, and direction, to find the path, which needs to be walked.

The AASONA Program still needs mentors and especially female mentors. The AASONA Scholarship and Mentor Program application deadline is May 15, 2020, which the priority deadline was March 31, 2020. www.aises.org/scholarships.

AASONA Graduate Assisting Tribal Forestry and Fire Management Program: Joelene Tamm (Squaxin Island) is a Natural Resource Specialist with the La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians, Pauma Valley, California. She recently graduated with a Bachelor's degree focused in Biology, General from California Baptist University, Riverside, CA. Joelene also participated with the AASONA Program and recently participated with a GoTo Meeting webinar to talk about her experience as a student and graduate. The Goto Meeting was hosted by AISES with Don Motanic, mentor, graduate student Joelene Tamm and AASONA Program Coordinator Dr. Johnny Poolaw. Joelene's current funding with the Tribe is part of a new state grant will help a consortium of San Diego-area agencies restore and maintain local forests.

A key priority for the multi-agency effort funded by the Cal Fire Forest Health program will be saving the last mixed-conifer forest in the region through combustion-fuel reduction and reforestation, according to the greater San Diego County Resource Conservation District. The dense wooded area on Palomar Mountain has experienced heavy losses in the last two decades due to severe drought and wildfire, ac-

cording to forestry officials.

"Our collaborative, which includes state, federal, tribal and private landowners, is joining forces to prevent another catastrophic loss of forest habitat in San Diego County," RCD Executive Director Sheryl Landrum said.

The Cal Fire grant was made available through California Climate Investment, a statewide program that puts billions of cap-and-trade dollars toward achieving the state's climate-change goals.

"With these newly awarded funds, we can now partner with like-minded agencies in delivering multiple sustainable benefits to Palomar Mountain to improve forest health, wildlife habitat and community protection" Landrum said.

"Taking part in the project along with the RCD will be the Fire Safe Council of San Diego County, Cleveland National Forest, La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians, Pauma Band of Mission Indians, Caltech, and Palomar Land & Cattle Co." – MyLANews.com – March 19, 2020

Joelene is working on furthering the program for the Tribe by gathering funding resources that include information outlined in the BIA's Pacific Region Forestry folders in bit.ly/BIADISC and Information shared through partnerships like the AISES AASONA Program and ITC.



Legislative Update

Matt Hill



Matt Hill

COVID-19 LEGISLATION AND INDIAN COUNTRY

Congress has passed multiple pieces of legislation to address the medical response and economic fallout related to COVID-19. Each of these laws contain important elements for Indian Country:

Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act (Public Law 116-123) [aka, COVID-1]: This legislation provides at least \$40 million dollars for “tribes, tribal organizations, urban Indian health organizations, or health service providers to tribes, to carry out surveillance, epidemiology, laboratory capacity, infection control, mitigation, communications, and other preparedness and response activities.”

Families First Coronavirus Response Act (Public Law 116-127) [aka, COVID-2]: The legislation guarantees free coronavirus testing, establishes paid leave, enhances Unemployment Insurance, expands food security initiatives, and increases federal Medicaid funding. The act specifically allocates \$64 million to the Indian Health Service to cover the costs of COVID-19 diagnostic testing for Indians receiving care through the Indian Health Service or through

an Urban Indian Health Organization. The Act ensures coverage of testing for COVID-19 at no cost sharing for Indians receiving contract health services. Additionally, the Act provides nutrition services for older Native Americans.

Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act (Public Law 116-123) [aka, “CARES Act”]:

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORIZATIONS

This comprehensive legislation provides extensive assistance to Indian Country. The law ensures Indian Tribes, Tribally-owned businesses, and Native owned business have equal access to federal COVID-19 economic recovery resources.

Coronavirus Relief Fund: Establishes an \$8 billion relief fund at the Department of Treasury for Tribal governments and Tribally-owned entities of those governments to use for expenditures incurred due to the COVID-19 public health emergency in the face of revenue declines. The Treasury Secretary is required to develop a funding distribution model for this fund based on identified need and in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior and Indian Tribes. At the time of publishing, the Treasury Department is consulting with tribes on the allocation formula.

Tribal Business Concerns: The bill intended to make Tribes eligible for the Small Business Act Section 7(a) Paycheck Protection Program, which will provide 100% federal loan guarantees up to \$10 million to cover costs like employee salaries, paid sick leave/medical leave, mortgages/rents, and employee health insurance premiums.

However, SBA guidance may preclude tribes with significant gaming operations from participating in this program. Tribes have asked for clarification on their inclusion in this program.

Unemployment Insurance: Allows Indian tribes to be reimbursed for half their incurred unemployment benefit costs through December 31, 2020.

Federal Education Waivers: Authorizes the Department of Education to waive provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, except civil rights laws, that are necessary and appropriate due to the COVID-19 declaration of disaster for all BIE schools, including Tribal 638 contract schools and Tribal 297 grant schools.

Special Diabetes Program for Indians: Extends the SDPI mandatory authorization at FY2020 levels (i.e., \$150 million per year) through November, 2020.

FUNDING

The CARES Act contains over \$2 billion in emergency supplemental funding for federal programs that serve Indian Tribes, urban Indian health centers, and Native families. This funding will ensure important Indian health, public safety, child welfare, and safety-net programs can continue operation despite increased strain caused by the COVID-19 public health crisis.

Indian Health Service (IHS): Provides \$1.032 billion in critically needed resources to support the tribal health system during the pandemic. Including expanded support for medical services, equipment, supplies and public health education for IHS direct service, tribally operated and urban Indian health

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Legislative Update

Matt Hill

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care facilities; expanded funding for purchased/referred care; and new investments for telehealth services, electronic health records improvement, and expanded disease surveillance by tribal epidemiology centers.

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA): Includes \$453 million to provide aid to tribal governments; support welfare assistance and social service programs, including assistance to tribal members affected by the coronavirus crisis; expand public safety and emergency response capabilities; increase BIA capacity for teleworking so the agency is better prepared to assist tribes; and meet increased staffing and overtime costs.

Bureau of Indian Education (BIE): Provides \$69 million for response needs at BIE-funded schools, including staffing, transportation, telework, and cleaning activities and assistance for tribal colleges and universities across the country to help respond to the crisis.

HUD Office of Native American Programs: Provides \$200 million for the Native American House Assistance and Self Determination Act (NAHADSA) Block Grant program with a formula designed to assist Tribally Designated Housing Entities most in need of funding related to COVID-19 response. And \$100 million to the Indian Community Development Block Grant to respond to COVID-19 in tribal communities.

Food Distribution Program for Indian Reservations: Provides \$100 million to the program that provides USDA commodity foods to low-income households, includ-

ing the elderly, living on Indian reservations.

Older Americans Act Tribal Nutrition: Provides \$20 million for the delivery of nutrition services to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiian elders.

Indian Child Care Development Block Grant: Provides between \$70-96 million for Indian child care programs that serve low-income families to help defray the costs of COVID-19 response, including for continued payments to child care providers during center closures and to provide emergency child care for health care workers, emergency responders, and other COVID-19 “front line” workers.

FY2021 APPROPRIATIONS UPDATE

In February, the Trump Administration released its budget justification for Fiscal Year 2021. For BIA Forestry (projects + Tribal Priority Allocation), the Administration is once again requesting about a \$1 million reduction in funding. To be exact, this would be a \$1.37 million reduction from the enacted FY20 level (which was about \$100,000 lower than FY19). Here is the specific language from the budget document:

The FY 2021 budget includes \$209.7 million for natural resource management programs:

\$54.1 million for Forestry programs supporting active forest management on Indian forest lands managed by 300 Tribes across 18.7 million acres.

For perspective, the Trump budget generally proposes a reduction of BIA programs — to the tune of roughly \$130 million.

Shortly after the Trump Administration budget was released, ITC Operations Committee Chairman Cody Desautel testified in front of the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee is support of increased funding for BIA forest management and greater availability of resources for tribes who experience large wildfires.

At this point, Congress is in the early phases of drafting FY21 appropriations bills and the ITC will continue working Capitol Hill to protect the BIA Forestry budget. However, timing will generally be impacted by COVID-19 response and the new congressional schedule.

GOOD NEIGHBOR FIX IN THE WORKS

The 2018 Farm Bill attempted to extend federal “Good Neighbor Authority” (GNA) to Indian tribes and county governments. Prior to that, GNA allowed states to perform forest restoration work on federal lands. Many states in the West have launched aggressive GNA programs on federal lands within their boundaries.

At the request of the Intertribal Timber Council, the 2018 Farm Bill specifically added tribes (as well as counties) to the entities authorized to carry out GNA projects on federal lands. However, in subsequent legislative language clarifying that receipts derived from GNA timber sales could be used to plan future projects, Congress inadvertently left out tribes and counties. That is a key component of building capacity in a GNA program and tribes have been reticent to utilize the authority.

Rep. Fulcher (R-ID) and others are drafting legislation that would

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amend the Farm Bill language to authorize tribes and counties to use timber receipts from one project to carry out future projects. The draft bill would also require states (but not tribes) using GNA to share 25% of timber receipts with the applicable county. This is intended to reflect how traditional timber sales work – outside of GNA and Secure Rural Schools Act “safety net” payments to counties (which have expired). Finally, their draft legislation would allow GNA contractors (states, tribes or counties) to return timber sale revenue to the Forest Service and allow the agency to carry out required reforestation work with those funds.

CEQ PROPOSES COMPREHENSIVE CHANGES TO NEPA REGULATIONS

On January 9, 2020, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPR), proposing a major overhaul to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations that were originally issued in 1978. This proposed rulemaking is the first significant revision to NEPA regulations in over four decades. The NPR explains that the “lengthy, costly, and complex” NEPA process has slowed or prevented the development of certain new infrastructure. The proposed rulemaking is aimed at “modernizing NEPA regulations and facilitating more efficient NEPA reviews. However, the proposed changes carry a dramatic shift in NEPA review procedures. Congressional Democrats have already pledged to take legislative action (via a Congressional Review Act resolution) in response to the proposal.

Here are some of the highlights re-

garding the proposed changes:

Applicability of NEPA: The proposed rules would revise the definition of a “major federal action” to exclude “non-federal projects with minimal federal funding or minimal federal involvement where the agency cannot control the outcome of the project.” CEQ notes this revision might exclude a project from NEPA review if a small amount of federal funding is provided to help design the project that is otherwise funded through private or local funds.

With respect to categorical exclusions, the proposed rules retain the requirement that agency specific NEPA regulations will provide for extraordinary circumstances in which, actions falling within the scope of a categorical exclusion may still have significant environmental effects, and, therefore, may no longer be categorically excluded. In addition, agencies may consider whether mitigating circumstances or other conditions will avoid significant environmental effects.

Definition of Effect: The proposed rules eliminate the categories of effects such as “direct,” “indirect,” or “cumulative” that exist in the current regulations. The proposed rules also expressly state the analysis of cumulative effects is not required. Under the proposed effects definition, “effects must be reasonably foreseeable and have a reasonably close causal relationship to the proposed action or alternatives; a ‘but for’ causal relationship is insufficient to make an agency responsible for a particular effect under NEPA.” The proposed rules clarify that effect should not be considered significant if they are remote in time, geographically remote, or the result of a lengthy

causal chain.

Page Limits: The proposed rules establish a 75-page limit for Environmental Assessments (EAs) and clarifies that an agency does not need to include a detailed discussion of each alternative or alternatives eliminated from analysis in an EA. For Environmental Impact Statements (EIS), there is a 300-page limit unless a senior agency official provides written approval to lengthen the document.

Time Limits: The proposed rules set presumptive time limits for an agency to prepare an EA (one year) or an EIS (two years) unless a senior agency official approves a longer period.

Applicant-Prepared NEPA: With respect to private projects seeking government approval, the proposed rules formalize what is current practice for many agencies, for example, the preparation of EISs and EAs by the applicant or applicant’s contractors.

Functional Equivalent: The proposed rules add a new regulation that clarifies that the analysis prepared pursuant to other statutory or Executive Order requirements may serve as a functional equivalent of the EIS and may be sufficient to comply with NEPA.

Public comments on the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking were due on March 10, 2020. We can expect an additional comment period when the actual proposed rule is published in the Federal Register.



Research Subcommittee

by Adrian Leighton



Adrian Leighton

Greetings from the Research Sub-Committee. The sub-committee met on February 4, 2020 at the Rancho Mirage in Palm Springs, CA. and have continued to work on issues and projects both in person and through conference calls since then. Here are a few of the exciting updates and projects in progress:

The Tribal Research Needs Survey results are in draft form and initial findings were shared with the committee. Mike Dockry, Serra and I are continuing to work on the analysis of the results, and have been aided by Bree Duever and Amit Pradhananga, who are research associates at the University of Minnesota and have brought a layer of statistical know-how to the study (factor analysis, anyone?) that promises to yield some interesting results. We were looking forward to sharing our initial findings at the Symposium, but will figure out the best ways to get the word out to the membership, and will have plenty of time to do even more awesome statistics before we all meet again in Fairbanks in 2021. A peer-reviewed publication, submitted late summer or early fall, will also be in the works.

On a related note, congratulations to the winners of the 8th Generation throw blankets that were offered as prizes to encourage participation in

the research needs survey. The winners are Reuben Cash, Brian Kummert, Mike Wilson and Tim Miller. The blankets were mailed out to the lucky winners early this year, except for one, which Serra and I presented to Tim at the Board Meeting.

The Tribal Forest Summit will be held at NAU in Flagstaff, AZ on October 6-8, 2020. Save the date. The planning is still proceeding, though we are also monitoring the situation

of the USFS Southern Research Station, but will now be moved to the Washington Office. Many thanks to Cody Desautel from ITC and Estelle Bowman, Alicia Bell Sheeter and Karl Lucero from the USFS for working out the details during Cody's recent Washington, DC visit. We look forward to sending out a request for Scholarship applications later this year.

We are sorry that we will not get a



Tim Miller being presented his 8th Generation throw blanket by Adrian Leighton and Serra Hoagland.

with COVID-19 and will update everyone in the event of a postponement. There will be multiple speakers from amongst the ITC board and membership, and we are hoping to provide travel support for Native forestry students from around the country. Stay tuned as details and an agenda emerge.

We have recently been informed that the USFS Office of Research and Development has committed to supporting the ITC Research Scholarship for another five years. In the past, this scholarship was funded out

chance to visit with everyone this June in Fairbanks, though safety is the most important concern in these extraordinary times. Please feel free to reach out to Serra or myself if you have any questions about the committee or any research related issues.



Wildland Fire Leadership Council

LEADERS' INTENT FOR STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT ACROSS JURISDICTIONS FOR THE FIRE YEAR

The Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) has discussed at several meetings the opportunity to increase the engagement and coordination at the beginning of each fire year across and among the organizations represented on WFLC around key national and local issues and opportunities. The intent is to drive additional coordination before wildland fires occur and agree upon appropriate engagement points locally as wildfires occur.

WFLC wished to express leaders' intent for engagement locally in several core areas:

1. Recognizing that many local conversations are already occurring, agencies and partners shall annually build from positive results, develop a list of best practices and examples and employ the opportunities in other locations and geographies.
2. Encouraging annually the use of new and emerging technology tools to help facilitate the co-management of risk and risk-tradeoffs and explore management options that may positively impact surrounding landowners and wildfire response.
3. Utilizing key principles for including in each locally led engagement across federal, state, tribal and local partners:
 - a. Respect differences in policy and guiding documents for each jurisdiction and reconcile any that may create differences in response actions.
 - b. Each agency and organization will have an opportunity to discuss their key priorities for the upcoming fire year.
 - c. Each agency and organization is expected to take into consideration the opportunity for increasing their involvement by supporting their partner organizations even if partner priorities are not top of the list for others;
- d. Each agency and organization shall respect the priorities of their partner organizations.
- e. Each agency will review any documents (MOU, agreements etc) as part of an annual review and adjust if necessary, to take into account any changes in priorities or legal requirements over the past year.
- f. Each agency and organization will be candid with concerns and perspectives but will be respectful of differences and find common ground in which to coalesce.
4. WFLC member agencies and organization are committed to working through their respective organizational structures to communicate this leaders' intent and to develop consistency in approach each fire year.



Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

Jim Durglo



Jim Durglo

TAKING ANOTHER LOOK AT EXECUTIVE ORDER 13855 AND WILDLAND FIRE FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

The Executive Order 13855, titled "Promoting Active Management of America's Forest, Rangelands, and Other Federal lands To Improve Conditions and Reduce Wildfire Risk". On December 21, 2018, President Trump issued EO 13855 declaring it to be the "policy of the United States to protect people, communities, and watersheds and to promote health and resilient for-



Photo courtesy of CSKT Division of Fire

ests, rangelands, and other federal lands by actively managing them through partnerships with States, Tribes, localities, non-profit organizations, and the private sector."

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Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

Jim Durglo

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Directives of the EO include:

- A. Include Fire Management Best Practices to All Land Management Plans
- B. Coordinate and Collaborate with Land-Managing Partners and Stakeholders
- C. Utilize Active Land, Vegetation, and Wildfire Management Techniques that are Supported by Best Practices and Best Available Science
- D. Maximize the Wildfire Management Benefits of Physical Features within Landscapes

It is noted that the EO is intended to draw upon administrative mechanisms that protect people, communities, and watersheds from the catastrophic impacts of wildfire by actively managing lands to reduce wildfire intensity, size, and duration that supports efficient suppression efforts and promotes sustainable recovery of damaged lands.

Under Section 2 of the EO (i) The Secretary of the Interior shall review the Secretary's 2019 budget justifications and give all due consideration to establishing the following objectives for 2019, as feasible and appropriate in light of those budget justifications, and consistent with applicable law and available appropriations:

- A. Treating 750,000 acres of Department of the Interior-administered lands to reduce fuel loads
- B. Treating 500,000 acres of DOI-administered lands to protect water quality and mitigate severe flooding and erosion risks arising from forest fires
- C. Treating 750,000 acres of



Photo courtesy of CSKT Division of Fire. Showing fire crew repairing bridge damaged by the Liberty Fire using either Emergency Stabilization or BAR funding, Flathead Indian Reservation, Montana 2017

DOI-administered lands for native and invasive species

- D. Reducing vegetation-giving rise to wildfire conditions through forest health treatments by increasing health treatments as part of DOI's offering for sale 600 million board feet of timber from DOI-administered lands.

DOI-administered lands include those lands managed by primarily four of the seven Interior agencies including the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service. The other agencies are US Geological Survey, US Bureau of Mines, and the Bureau of Reclamation, respectively.

The Fiscal Year 2020 enacted budget level of funding for DOI wildland fire programs is \$952.3 million. Of this, approximately \$716.4 million (75.2%) is dedicated for Preparedness and Suppression Operations. This provides approximately \$194 million for fuels management (20.3%) and a smaller amount for Burned Area Rehabilitation, Facilities, and for the Joint Fire Science Program. Of the FY2020 Wildland Fire Management Allocation amounts, the Bureau of Indian Affairs received a total of \$150.45 mil-

lion. With this funding the BIA and Tribes treated:

- 153,965 acres for fuels reduction (750K acre target), approximately 20% of the DOI accomplishment for FY19
- 3,855 acres to protect water quality and mitigate flooding (500K acre target)
- 478 million board feet of timber harvest (600 MMBF target), and
- 6,106 acres treated for invasive species (750K acre target)

Of the \$150.45 million, approximately \$101.3 million is for Suppression and Preparedness programs, approximately \$44.024 million for Fuels Management, approximately \$4.578 million for Burned Area Rehabilitation, and smaller amounts for Facilities.

Is there greater opportunity to leverage the Preparedness and non-fire funding sources to help meet wildland fire treatment goals? The ITC will continue to work with the DOI Office of Wildland Fire, BIA leadership, and members of the Wildland Fire Leadership Council to address 'Active Management' needs across lands managed by our Tribal Nations. Stay tuned!





INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL
1112 NE 21st Avenue, Suite 4
Portland, OR 97232

First Class
