



INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL TIMBER NOTES

Summer ~ 2023



Howard Teasley, Jr.

2023 ITC SYMPOSIUM CONCLUDES

We celebrated ITC's 46th year of the National Indian Timber Symposium hosted by the Intertribal Timber Council and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe at the Northern Lights Casino in Walker, MN, held June 12 -15, 2023. The theme for this year's symposium was *"Landscape: The Forest Through the Trees."*

Few take aways - Ojibwa Forestry & Fire knocked it out of the park with their hospitality. This was a great opportunity for individuals to feel comfortable with meeting in person and traveling again.

Liloyc'a & Qe'ci'yew'yew!! Blessings & Thank you.

I know a several individuals took advantage of coming in early and enjoying Northern Minnesota. This is one of the biggest reasons



Photo of 2023-2024 ITC Board of Directors from L to R. Tommy Cabe, John Bryson, Jr., Jason Robison, Bing Matt, Clinton Northway, Robin Harkins, Phil Rigdon, Howard Teasley, Jr., Jeff Lindsey, Tim Miller, and Cody Desautel

for having each tribe show case their locations, which gives participants the opportunity to explore, make extended stays and visit the sites.

Monday, June 12: We offered five Pre-Symposium workshops. The first workshop "USDA-NRCS Funding & Opportunities" had 8 individuals attend. The second workshop "Wildland Fire" had 43 participants. The third workshop "Crafting Rice Knockers" had 5 in attendance. The fourth workshop "Tour of Mississippi Headwaters at Lake Itasca" had 17 in attendance. The last workshop "Fishing Trip on Leech Lake" had 21 participants.

I want to extend a special thank you to the Leech Lake Crew and the Eastern Bank of Cherokee Crew! Our complete operation

happens behind the scenes happens on this day. Thank you to Laura Alvidrez and Monica Rushworth for their endless dedication to our Intertribal Timber Council family. I always want to stress the importance of the income created from the Pre-symposium workshops are

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President's Message

by Cody Desautel



Cody Desautel

It was great to see everyone at the symposium last month. I also want to thank Keith Karnes and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe staff for all the work and amazing hospitality. I always enjoy seeing the diversity of cultures and forest types that exist across Indian country. In addition to the symposium, we got to see the final version of the fourth IFMAT report. I have mentioned this before, but I want to again thank all the tribes that participated in the site and virtual visits. The information and data we gather as part of this process is critical to inform our priorities at ITC. For this report I will focus on workforce, IFMAT implementation, co-stewardship/management, and firefighter compensation.

In the months since my last report,

we have completed a workforce series in cooperation with the Forest Service. The series consisted of four virtual sessions focused on funding, workforce capacity assessment, recruitment and retention, and policy and implementation. In addition, ITC is partnering with Salish Kootenai College's Center for Tribal Research and Education in Sciences to implement the ITC workforce strategic plan. The Forest Service and BIA will fund this work. Initial steps will include reviewing and updating timelines for strategic actions included in the plan.

The fourth Indian Forest Management Assessment (IFMAT-IV) is complete and was shared with all that attended the symposium. The report has not been presented to Congress yet, but we continue to work with the committee on what we hope will be a field hearing. IFMAT-IV has similar findings with conditions worsening in some respects. ITC will enter into three separate contracts to ensure we have the material needed to message the finding of the report. These materials and the feedback we receive will help focus our efforts for IFMAT implementation. An implementation team is being developed along with the plan to

ensure we have the capacity needed to make progress on these important findings. We will continue to provide updates as we make progress in the coming months. The report is available for download on ITC's website visit <https://www.itcnet.org/>.

At the general members meeting there was a lengthy discussion about what co-stewardship and co-management means to tribes. While both are progressing in tribe's efforts to conduct active management on adjacent federal land, there was a strong interest in co-management where tribes would have some part in the decision making and project prioritizing. There are many co-stewardship agreements across the country now, and many more pending. We appreciate the progress that federal agencies have made in recent years and look forward to growing this relationship and land management responsibility.

The ITC has worked with the Department of Interior over the past year to ensure tribal firefighters received the same benefits that federal firefighters received as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Consultation sessions were held on May 1, 2, and 4 to provide com-

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Symposium Committee

by Howard Teasley, Jr.

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solely dedicated to the Truman D. Picard Scholarships. Thank you for your attendance. If individuals do have ideas for future pre-symposium workshops, please contact us. Leech Lake Icebreaker was held after the events of the day and took place at the Northern Lights property.

Tuesday, June 13: Started with Opening Ceremonies, Invocation, Posting of the Colors, and Welcomes by our hosts, ITC President and the Keynote was given by Levi Brown. Ami Klobuchar, US Senator of Minnesota gave a virtual welcome and remarks. After the morning break, we had a discussion on Land Base and the Return of Tribal

Ancestral Lands with Case studies by Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and Bois Forte Band of Chippewa; and this was followed by a panel on the IFMAT-IV – It's Not Just Another Report and the final presentation was given by our LLBO Host Tribe. We finished the day

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President's Message

by Cody Desautel

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ments and feedback on the methodology to determine tribal wildland firefighter Full Time Equivalents (FTE's). We appreciate the Departments continued work on this issue. We understand the funding has already been transferred to BIA, and a letter requesting information for the FTE calculation

should be sent to Tribes soon.

I want to close by extending an invitation for those wanting to help with IFMAT implementation. There are so many talented, dedicated, passionate people working in Indian Country, and we want to ensure Congress and federal agencies have the opportunity to engage with them. We also want to ensure

that our representation is consistent with the demographics we have in Indian country. Particularly for those young leaders that want to experience working with the highest levels of government. We welcome your participation.



Symposium Committee

by Howard Teasley, Jr.

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with the Host Tribe Welcome on the lake at the Onigum Community Center.

Wednesday, June 14: Our day started in the field. I heard a quote during Stop 2 from the USDA Forest Service Chippewa National Forest Supervisor, Michael Stansberry, "If you want to grow as a human being get into a relationship with a sovereign nation." It is encouraging to hear statements such as these across Indian Country to help rebuild our relationships with the Department of Agriculture. The Tour included Stop 1 RTRL Sand Plains Pine Project Monitoring, Stop 2 Multiple TFPA site for Red Pine Plantation Ecosystem Restoration, Stop 3 Lydick Prescribed Burn, Fire Restoration TFPA Site, and Stop 4 Snowshoe Hare Habitat Restoration Tribal Forest Protection Act Pilot Project. Our day concluded with the General Membership Meeting at the Northern Lights Casino Conference Center.

Thursday, June 15: The day's activities started with the ITC President's Report, then updates from the DOI - Office of Wildland Fire, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Legislative, and a USFS Office of Tribal

Relations. Immediately following the updates, our three ITC Workshop got underway simultaneously with Workshop 1: Cross-Boundary Shared Stewardship Opportunities, Workshop 2: Forest Technology Applications and Their Use for Assessing Fire Risk Across a Landscape, and Workshop 3: Indian Trust Asset Reform Act (ITARA).

2023 ITC Board Elections: After the workshops concluded, the Annual Business Meeting of the Member Tribes was held. All five

Tribes – Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Quinault Indian Nation, and Tanana Chiefs Conference were reelected to the executive board for two more years. I would like to congratulate Robin Harkins, Coquille Indian Tribe, as the new Secretary of our Executive Board and congratulate President Cody Desautel, Confederated Tribes of Colville; Vice President Phil Rig-

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Photo of BJ Gotchie & Howard Teasley, Jr. holding a Traditional Indian Lacrosse Sticks and Ball, made by Mr. Gotchie. Howard put a significant amount of raffle tickets in the buckets for these sticks and didn't come away with one. It is all for the students!

Symposium Committee

by Howard Teasley, Jr.

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don, Yakama; Treasurer, Timothy Miller, Grand Portage in retaining their positions. Menominee Indian Tribe in Wisconsin committed to host the 2026 symposium and San Carlos Apache in Arizona for 2027. Congratulations to them! Thank you!!

Membership: General Membership is offered to tribes for \$250 annually and Associate Membership is offered to individuals for \$25 annually. Membership applications can be found on our website http://www.itcnet.org/about_us/.

Total Attendees: This year's symposium enabled our attendance to increase to 300, which included 94 pre-symposium participants, 40 participating Tribes, ANSCA Corporations, and tribal organizations, 42 federal agencies and other organizations, 42 speakers, 29 students, and 9 exhibitors – Anew, National Experienced Workforce Solutions,



Photo of 2023 ITC Symposium Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Tribal Tour. Stop 3 Lydick Prescribed Burn, Fire Restoration TFPA Site.

National Indian Carbon Coalition, SKC TREES, The AKANA Group Inc., USDA Forest Service, U.S. Government Accountability Office, University of Georgia, Langdale Center for Forest Business, and USDA APHIS. Thank you to everyone that participated. The 2023

Final Proceedings will be mailed to the 2023 Symposium participants in the fall.

Lastly, a special thank you to the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Keith Karnes and all of the staff. It was a wonderful experience and it felt good to get back into the swing of things. We had to compete for space and rooms due to the good old boys' concert that happened on Thursday evening. I would like to give my most sincere apologies for the inconvenience for individuals that had to make alternative hotel arrangements midway through the symposium.

2024 Symposium: The 47th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium will be hosted by Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, May 13-16, 2024, in Cherokee, NC. Take Care and God Bless. Qe'ci-yew.

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Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo



Jim Durglo

Although the ITC covers national level initiatives, I try to keep an ear out for issues that our local Fire Program Managers are dealing with. It seems that most

are not focused on national level initiatives like those mentioned in the report below but are focused on much of the details of implementation. They are interested in the 'How' things would be rolled out to the tribes or agencies. An example of this would be the recent announcement of the Tribal firefighter pay compensation issue. DOI OWF's report of April 2023 to the ITC stated that Interior has allocated funding to the Bureau of Indian Affairs to be made available to Tribal nations so that they may increase compensation of Tribal wildland firefighters. This sparks a lot of questions

from the field about how the funds would make their way to Tribal programs, when of course, how much, and how would the BIA know how many tribal employees are eligible, and so on.

The recent Tribal Leader letter acknowledges that there is not a methodology to accurately determine the number of tribal wildland firefighter full-time equivalents. Such a methodology is needed for the Office of Wildland Fire to inform annual funding allocations to tribal wildland fire management programs and inform out-year budget proposals. DOI led consul-

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Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo

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tation occurred in early May, but results from the consultation are not yet available.

The ITC continues to be engaged in the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). I have included a couple updates from those groups.

Addendum to the National Wildfire Cohesive Strategy: WFLC presents the Addendum Update, (<https://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/documents/strategy/natl-cohesive-wildland-fire-mgmt-strategy-addendum-update-2023.pdf>) to spotlight wildland fire critical emphasis areas and challenges that were not identified or addressed in depth in the 2014 National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (Cohesive Strategy) framework. It includes enhanced strategic direction and approved modifications



Photo of the Prim Meadow area, NW Montana on land owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy near the Flathead Indian Reservation. This area is part of Usual and Accustom occupation sites of the Salish and Kootenai people since time immemorial. Managed fire on this land has helped retain the large old ponderosa pines. Some of these old pine trees bare evidence of tribal cambium peeling. Consumption of cambium provided valuable nutrients after the long winter months. Photo credit Jim Durglo, June 2023.

to address the identified areas and challenges to Cohesive Strategy implementation over the decades to come.

Implementation of Complex In-

cident Management (CIM): The NWCG Executive Board recently drafted a memo that summarizes Complex Incident Management Implementation Decisions to-date. The purpose of this memorandum is to consolidate the NWCG decisions related to the implementation of CIM to date and to communicate the pathways for Type 3 Command & General Staff (C&G), Unit Leaders, and Division Supervisors (DIVS) to Complex C&G positions.

Consolidated CIM implementation information is available on the Incident Workforce

Development Group (IWDG) webpage, <https://www.nwcg.gov/partners/iwdg>.

I wish everyone a safe and enjoyable summer.



Awards Committee

by Robin Harkins



Robin Harkins

2023 EARLE R. WILCOX AWARDS RECIPIENTS

The 46th National Indian Timber

Symposium Annual Banquet, held in Walker, Minnesota provided an opportunity to recognize outstanding achievements by Indian Forestry professionals with the 2023 Earle R. Wilcox Awards.

National Award Forester of the Year: Don Motanic, Retired ITC Technical Specialist, a member of the Umatilla Nation with strong cultural ties to the Yakama Nation was presented an Earle R Wilcox National Award for his continued and exemplary service to Indian Forestry. Don's contributions over the past two decades have impro-

ved tribal opportunities that would not have been possible without his commitment and dedication. Don took on leadership roles for many important ITC projects including IFMAT Reports, Branding & Marketing studies and workforce development. His advocacy for developing and sustaining lasting relationships with the environment will continue to positively impact tribal forestry education and tribal professionals long past his recent retirement.

Individual Achievement Award: Adrian Leighton, Director & Na-

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Awards Committee

by Robin Harkins

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tural Resources Dean at Salish Kootenai College, was recognized with an Earle R. Wilcox Individual Achievement Award. Adrian has dedicated his career to forestry and natural resource education, designing curriculum for a bachelor's degree program and assisting with development and launch of the college's first master's degree program in Natural Resources Management. His efforts to collaborate closely with Tribe's and carry their vision into his teaching philosophy and holistic approach to resource management does not go unnoticed. Adrian is a dedicated ITC volunteer, mentor, and friend to many.

Congratulations to both award recipients and thank you to those



Photo of Wilcox Award Winner Don Motanic

who nominated these well-deserving individuals. It is an honor to work with the awards committee and learn about the accomplishments of those who have made and continue to make huge contributions to Indian Forestry.

The awards committee will be seeking nominations for the 2024



Photo of Wilcox Award Winner Adrian Leighton

Earle R. Wilcox Awards next winter. It is never too early to start thinking about those deserving individuals and pulling together materials and information for a nomination.



Legislative Update

by Matt Hill



Matt Hill

GOOD NEIGHBOR LEGISLATION MOVING, ITC TESTIFIES

There is movement on bipartisan legislation to fully extend eligibility for the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) program for federal forest restoration and management

projects to Tribes and counties as well as increase opportunities for cross-boundary restoration. The House and Senate bills – called *Treating Tribes and Counties as Good Neighbors Act* - are sponsored by U.S. Senator Jim Risch (R-Idaho), Congressman Russ Fulcher (R-Idaho), and Congresswoman Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D-Wash.) sponsored the

The GNA program has allowed the U.S. Forest Service to partner with states on federal forest restoration and management projects to improve wildlife habitats, enhance watersheds, and reduce wildfire risks. In the 2018 Farm Bill, Congress amended GNA to make Tribes and Counties eligible to enter into Good Neighbor Agreements. However, Tribes and

Counties were not afforded the same authority as states to retain GNA project receipts to reinvest in conservation, reducing a significant incentive to partner on forest management projects.

The *Treating Tribes and Counties as Good Neighbors Act* provides Tribes and Counties with the ability to reinvest receipts in authorized restoration and enables all GNA partners to perform restoration not just on federal lands, but also on lands approved under the project's Good Neighbor Agreement.

In May, ITC President Cody Desautel testified in favor of the legislation before the House Subcommittee on Federal Lands. In his testimony, Desautel stated that

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Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

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“without an ability to retain revenue to support tribal capacity, it is unlikely Tribes will contribute already limited tribal revenue sources to conduct work on adjacent federal land.” Desautel continued that if the legislation were enacted, GNA would provide “greater latitude in retaining project revenues and building additional capacity.”

Debt Ceiling Deal Includes NEPA Reform: In June, President Biden signed the “Fiscal Responsibility Act,” suspending the debt ceiling until January 1, 2025, and putting caps on non-defense discretionary spending. The debt deal passed with bipartisan support and included a set of significant changes to the NEPA process.

The bill institutes legislative limitations on the free-form NEPA process for the first time ever. Among other things, it requires Federal agencies to complete Environmental Impact Statements in two years and an Environmental Assessments in one year. It restricts EAs to 75 pages and EIS’s to 300 pages (with some exceptions). It allows any Federal agency to adopt categorical exclusions used by other Federal agencies (something the Forest Service contemplated doing in its 2019 NEPA procedures update – but chose not to). It tightens requirements for potential litigants and allows Federal agencies to rely on programmatic environmental documents to a greater extent.

The new law institutes a “shot clock” – limiting the time agencies have to complete EA’s and EIS’s once they propose a draft EIS. The bill does allow “project sponsors” to propose preparation of an EA or EIS, and then allows



Photo of ITC President Cody Desautel testifying in favor of the legislation before the House Subcommittee on Federal Lands

that project sponsor to go to court to enforce compliance with the timeframes for completion of the environmental documents.

The NEPA reforms also direct Federal agencies to analyze only “reasonably foreseeable” environmental impacts, to only analyze “reasonable” alternatives that actually meet the purpose and need statement, makes it clear that the agencies are not required to do original research to complete a NEPA document, and eliminates the need to conduct NEPA on non-discretionary actions. It also states that there is no need for documentation of the use of Categorical Exclusions, which would be a notable change to current Forest Service NEPA practice.

Farm Bill and Forestry Reforms: House Agriculture Committee Chairman G.T. Thompson (R-PA) and Forestry Subcommittee Chairman Doug LaMalfa (R-CA) are eager to advance a Farm Bill with a strong forestry title to further streamline forest health treatments on federal lands. This may include proposals to expand

or create new Categorical Exclusions for forest thinning projects. Republicans in both chambers are also eager to advance a legislative fix for the Cottonwood decision, a longtime priority of Senator Steve Daines (R-MT).

Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) is unlikely to support the inclusion of federal forest reforms that lack bipartisan support. There are a handful of bills that enjoy bipartisan support, including H.R. 1450, which would expand the full Good Neighbor Authority to tribes and counties, rather than the current limitation to states. Daines’ Cottonwood fix, S. 1540, was also approved in a bipartisan vote of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

BLM Conservation Rule: The Bureau of Land Management’s proposed “Conservation Rule” has generated significant controversy on Capitol Hill and in western states. On June 15, the House Natural Resources Committee held a hearing on H.R. 3397, legislation

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Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

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from Rep. John Curtis (R-UT) to require the Director of the BLM to withdraw the proposed rule. Wyoming Republican Governor Mark Gordon and South Dakota Republican Governor Kristi Noem joined committee Republicans in criticizing the proposed rule.

BLM Deputy Director Nada Wolff Culver also faced tough questions from committee Republicans while most Democrats defended the rule as a long overdue effort to put conservation on equal footing with other uses of BLM lands.

Timber industry associations assert that the proposed rule would rewrite the goals and implementa-

tion of FLPMA without Congressional authorization, limit public input and transparency in land management decisions, restrict multi-use management and public access of federal lands, and create new confusing, arbitrary standards and regulations that impede efficient and effective implementation of land management plans.



Operations Committee

by Jason Robison



Jason Robison

Hello, my name is Jason Robison. I am the Lands and Resources Officer for the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe. I am a member of the Tribe's executive leadership team where I provide leadership to a diverse team of professionals in the areas of Natural Resource Management, Forest Management, and Land and Realty. I have worked with Tribal governments for the past 17 years. I currently serve as an ITC Board Member. I am a graduate of Oregon State University with bachelor's and master's degrees in fisheries and wildlife management. I am thrilled to take over the role of Operations Committee Chair and look forward to

working with ITC member tribes and partners. I can be contacted by email at jrobison@cowcreek-nsn.gov. Thank you to Tony Incashola, Jr. for his time serving as the previous Operations Committee Chair.

Summer has swiftly approached, marking the passing of yet another eventful year. The Operations Committee has been actively engaged in various initiatives, from successful symposiums and assessment team reports to workforce development efforts and collaborative partnerships. The Operations Committee is pleased to provide the following comprehensive updates:

Timber Symposium: The 46th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium was an exceptional triumph. During the annual business meeting held on Thursday, June 15th, I delivered an annual operations update. Alongside the updates presented below, I also provided detailed information on various topics at the annual meeting, including Funding Opportunities and Priorities, Tribal Wood Sourcing, Society of American

Foresters Partnership Opportunities, and the Forest Service Office of Tribal Relations' newfound prospects.

IFMAT-IV: Concluding its work on May 15, 2023, the fourth Indian Forest Management Assessment Team (IFMAT-IV), led by Co-chairs John Gordon and John Sessions, the Team made significant strides to capture findings and recommendations from the various IFMAT task items. The team conducted virtual meetings with 41 tribes and conducted on-site visits to 37 tribes.

The report derived from their efforts and subsequent recommendations shed light on the funding disparities within Indian country, drawing comparisons to other federal land management agencies. Moreover, it underscores the remarkable achievements that can result from modest investments in Indian forestry and fire management. While some findings align with previous reports, others reveal increasingly pressing challenges. The report particularly emphasizes Tribes' self-governan-

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Operations Committee

by Jason Robison

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ce endeavors, with specific attention given to the Indian Trust Asset Reform Act.

The ITC IFMAT-IV Oversight Committee has been diligently formulating an implementation plan to address the report's numerous findings and recommendations. This plan will enable the ITC to concentrate its efforts on the intricacies involved in devising a comprehensive implementation strategy. Towards the end of May, the ITC reviewed and proposed media delivery contractors. Through the implementation plan, we aim to effectively disseminate the report's findings and recommendations to ITC members, Congress, ITC affiliates, and other pertinent organizations. Furthermore, the ITC has identified esteemed partners, such as The Nature Conservancy, National Association of State Foresters, National Congress of American Indians, Wildland Fire Leadership Council, and others, to amplify our message.

On June 12, 2023, the ITC Board approved a motion to authorize three contracts (Eco-trust, Evergreen, and Wood and Company), totaling up to \$161,000, dedicated to communications and messaging.

New Wildland Firefighter Pay: The ITC remains actively engaged in collaborative efforts with various agencies to identify a long-term solution that establishes a sustainable and well-supported firefighting workforce. This workforce must be adequately equipped to address the escalating threat of wildfires, even after the temporary salary supplements provided

by BIL have been exhausted. The ITC and numerous member tribes have reached out to the Secretary of the Interior to seek a resolution to this pressing matter.

Workforce Development: Securing funding for the Workforce Development Coordinator position through the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Department of the Interior's Office of Wildland Fire (DOI OWF) has been a resounding success. This position, overseen by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Division of Wildland Fire Management, will play a pivotal role. It will be based at Salish Kootenai College and entrusted with implementing and coordinating the ITC's Workforce strategic plan. The Workforce Development Coordinator will update the strategic plan, incorporating current timelines, and spearhead its implementation. Furthermore, the Operations Committee approved the scope of work during the April meeting. Salish Kootenai College has confirmed the receipt of \$850,000 over a five-year period from the Forest Service, a substantial contribution to the project's execution. Additionally, the ITC will provide supplementary funding from the BIA to support the strategic planning aspect of the Scope of Work, while actively collaborating with the BIA to reallocate funds for this initiative.

Tribal Co-management/Stewardship: Joint Secretarial Order 3403, signed by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, outlines a progressive path for Co-management and Co-stewardship of federal lands. Co-stewardship encompasses various approaches such as co-management, collaborative and

cooperative management, and tribally led stewardship. These approaches can be implemented through cooperative agreements, memoranda of understanding, self-governance agreements, and other suitable mechanisms. The ITC has been actively engaged with the USDA and DOI to enhance clarity surrounding the definition of Co-Management/Stewardship. Additionally, we strive to develop a comprehensive understanding of how tribes can apply different approaches within their respective Tribal interest areas on federal lands.

Annual SAF Meeting: We are honored to announce that the ITC has been invited to participate in the 2023 Society of American Foresters Annual Meeting, scheduled to take place in Sacramento, CA, from October 25th to 28th. The meeting will cover a range of crucial topics, including Indigenous Traditional Knowledge and its relationship to Fire in Forestry, the significance of the 4th Indian Forest Management Assessment Team Report for Tribes, Foresters, and Forests on a national scale, considerations for Tribal Workforce Development and Education in the 21st Century, insights into Cross-Boundary and shared stewardship experiences as witnessed by the Yakama Nation, an overview of Lands Back Approaches and their correlation to Indian Forest Management, and Indigenous Strategies to Address Climate Change.

Other Items: The Operations Committee convened a special meeting on May 16, 2023, to address several important matters. These included providing comments and recommendations on

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Operations Committee

by Jason Robison

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the Old Growth definition, engaging in rulemaking discussions, and determining next steps. Furthermore, a thorough review of Forest Service Policies was conducted to ensure the protection,

conservation, and effective management of the national forests and grasslands in the face of climate resilience challenges. The committee also examined the proposed rule by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) aimed at safeguarding intact landscapes, restoring

degraded habitats, and promoting sound management decisions based on scientific evidence and data (BLM Conservation Rule).



Education Committee

by Nicole Stiffarm



Nicole Stiffarm

2023 TRUMAN D. PICARD SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Greetings ITC family, I hope you are reading this in good health and enjoying your summer. This year we had 18 complete applications come in for the Truman D. Picard Scholarship. It was a difficult task to rank the applications as they were all remarkable. I would like to thank the members of the Education Committee for their time and in selecting this year's scholarship recipients. This year, ITC

has awarded 16 scholarships totaling \$47,500 to students representing 12 different tribes. Since 1988, ITC has awarded 558 scholarships totaling \$1,144,500! During the past ten years there have been 86 forestry majors awarded scholarships. On behalf of the ITC Board and Education Committee we offer our sincere congratulations to each of this year's recipients! We look forward to seeing you all complete your education and hope your career paths will bring you back to the ITC family.

GRADUATE - \$2,500

- Austin Durglo
- Mickki Garrity
- Kristi Olney
- Ashley Russell

UNDERGRADUATE - \$2,500

- James Douthwaite*
- Randall Finley*
- Richard Green III*
- Bryce Norling*
- Gabriel Passes*
- Yvette Picard*
- Gabriel Taylor*
- Shannon Taylor*

- Thomas Trahan*

HIGH SCHOOL - \$2,000

- Riston Bullock
- Aidan J. Davis
- Marielle Gomez

The Education Committee would like to thank Green Diamond Resource Company for their generous donation of \$50,000 - the largest donation in ITC's history! Per their request \$30,000 will go to support the ITC Annual Symposium in 2023, 2024, and 2025. The remaining \$20,000 will go towards the Truman D. Picard Scholarship Fund. This year, we as a committee have opted to utilize some of this funding to increase the award to students majoring in forestry by an additional \$1,000, bringing the total to \$3,500 for those students indicated by an asterisk*. Each student that received a scholarship this year will also receive a complementary membership to The Society of American Foresters. Thank you to SAF for supporting our scholars. We would also like to thank Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and Vincent & Diane Corrao for their donations.

Funding for the scholarship each year is generated in part through
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Education Committee

by Nicole Stiffarm

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Photos of Picard Scholarship Winners at the Annual Awards Banquet. Pictured from L to R: Randall Finley, Richard Green III, Bryce Norling, Gabriel Passes, Yvette Picard, Ashley Russell, and Thomas Trahan.

the raffle held at the Annual Timber Symposium. This year, hosted by Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe had some incredible raffle items donated. We are so humbled by the craftsmanship and generosity of our donors as well as those who support the scholarship by purchasing tickets. A new addition this year was a Silent Raffle for a Guided Bear Hunt & a Guided Fishing Trip for three donated by Quinault Indian Nation and John Bryson, Jr. Thank you so much for your support of the Truman D. Picard Scholarship. I am excited to report that the combined total for the raffle and silent auction generated \$13,962 to support the scholarship. This is the largest sum we

have raised during a Symposium!

Lastly, I have stepped down as Chair of the ITC Education Committee. Mr. Shawn deFrance, who is a former scholarship recipient, current program manager for Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribal Forestry Dept. has agreed to take over as Chair. It has been an honor to serve. Thank you to the ITC Board, Laura, Monica, and the whole ITC family for all of the support and guidance.



BIA Forestry and Wildland Fire Management

by Peter Wakeland



Peter Wakeland

PLANNING AND PRIORITIES

Communication: If there is anything that you would like to discuss with the Chief Forester, please feel free to call at 541-294-0431, or send an email or video call invite to peter.wakeland@bia.gov.

Indian Trust Asset Reform Act (ITARA): BIA Forestry, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, the Coquille Indian Tribe, and a Tribal Forester recently presented information relevant to ITARA at the National Annual Timber Symposium in Walker, MN. The workshop was well attended, and we hope that attendees found the information useful as they evaluate and consider the benefits derived from participating in the ITARA Demonstration Project.

We encourage Tribes to review the ITARA for eligibility and process. Interested, eligible Tribes can still apply to participate in the Demonstration Project and technical assistance is available from Central Office BIA Forestry upon request. For more information, please contact Pete Wakeland,

Chief Forester; peter.wakeland@bia.gov.

Continuing Initiatives: Forestry GIS Data Standards and GIS Data Base – This initiative aims to better track and communicate accomplishments utilizing spatial data. In the past, BIA Forestry did not have a well-defined and developed system or database for GIS, while many Tribes and other agencies have. This has been an ongoing effort over the past couple of years, and timely progress has been made. We hope to do a roll-out before the end of the calendar year. Updates will be provided.

Tribal Forestry Summer Youth Camps – The BIA values and supports Tribal youth. Tribal Forestry Summer Youth Camps can be an effective tool to provide education relevant to Forestry and Natural



Photo of kids in the woods at Coquille Indian Tribe

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BIA Forestry and Wildland Fire Management

by Peter Wakeland

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Resources, as well as communicating career opportunities with the BIA and the Tribes. To allow time for planning, Tribes may wish to



Photo of Rocky Boy Firewood processing yard

consider developing proposals now for camps starting in the summer of 2024. Additional information will be made available soon.

Budget / Funding for Forestry Projects: Now is the time to develop proposals at the tribal level for FY 2024. We know there is a lot of work that needs to be accomplished out there. If you have questions about any of your projects or how to develop them, please contact your Regional Forester, or Caleb Cain, Projects Forester caleb.cain@bia.gov or Pete Wakeland, Chief Forester peter.wakeland@bia.gov.

Funding for Portable Infrastructure Projects (PI): The BIA Forestry will continue to support portable infrastructure project proposals as funding becomes available. An end-of-year Forestry Projects funding announcement was sent out to the Regions on June 20, 2023. The PI proposals

can be included with Timber Harvest Initiative project proposals. Examples of appropriate PI proposals would be the purchase of a portable mill, firewood processor, woodchipper, hammer mill used



Photo of Rocky Boy employees processing firewood

in conjunction with a pellet mill, other equipment needed to support the proposed project, and any necessary or beneficial training. PI proposals should be requested for \$250,000 or less. For more information, please contact Pete Wakeland at peter.wakeland@bia.gov, or Orvie Danzuka, Timber Sales Forester at orvie.danzuka@bia.gov.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) - Ecosystem Restoration and Good Neighbor Authority (GNA): This is the time to coordinate with your Regional Foresters to discuss and submit Ecosystem Restoration (ER) project proposals. ER projects can include a variety of activities including reforestation, thinning, revegetation, and restoration on tribal forest lands impacted by disturbance, as examples. Proposals can also include capacity building and equipment and materials costs.

Project proposals do not have to be submitted in a particular format, but should include a clear description of the project, the goal of the project, the timeline to start and complete the project, and an estimated budget. Periodic progress reporting is required but is not overly burdensome. There may be additional funding coming to continue the support for Tribal Greenhouses, so please include those if your Tribe has a need for that.

Funding is available for GNA projects. GNA is a BLM authority and Tribes interested in developing or expanding a GNA project should contact Wade Salverson at wsalvers@blm.gov. We strongly encourage Tribes to read the ER portion of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and be creative in coming up with ideas / projects for possible funding. BIA Forestry staff is available for any questions or technical assistance.

Timber Sales Operation Group: All harvest of forest product contract and permit forms have been updated and are available at <https://www.bia.gov/policy-forms/online-forms/specific-forms-and-guidance>. [BIA.gov](https://www.bia.gov/policy-forms/online-forms/specific-forms-and-guidance) is the go-to site for updated policy documents including manuals, handbooks, policy memoranda and online forms. The Harvest of Forest Products Manual and Handbook revisions have made it to RACA for a second and hopefully final review. Once released an announcement will be made and the documents will be available at [bia.gov](https://www.bia.gov).

TAAMS Updates: One Introductory TAAMS Forestry, one Advanced TAAMS Forestry, a TAAMS Forestry Management Overview,

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and a two-hour TAAMS Forestry update webinar have been offered this fiscal year. Additional courses are not scheduled for this fiscal year at this time but are an option based on need. Please provide training needs to your Regional Forester or Regional TAAMS Forestry point of contact.

We are continually working on enhancement proposals to improve the TAAMS Forestry module. Several enhancements implemented in the past year have come from suggestions from the field. If you have suggestions, please let us know. We are currently in User Acceptance Testing for the next updates which will include updates to the Statement of Completion, the ability to input invoice due dates, and the ability to upload images from the document toolbar.

Timber Team: This past spring, the Timber Team completed over 771 stand exam plot measurements for the Chehalis, Nisqually, and Makah Reservations of Washington, 85 continuous forest inventory (CFI) plots for the Alabama Coushatta Tribe of East Texas and cruised 258 plots across loblolly pine plantation for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. The team also assisted the Blackfeet Reservation with timber sale layout and marking and helped Uintah and Ouray prepare a roadside hazard tree removal project. In addition to field measurements, the team also continues to work on a large-scale GIS forest cover-type mapping project for the Southern Plains Regional Office totaling over 31,000 acres so far. The Timber Team schedule is finalized for the remaining calen-

dar year and are looking forward to assisting tribes across the nation.

- July 10 – 21: Rocky Boys Reservation Sale Prep; Rocky Mountain Region – Montana
- July 31 – August 11: Uintah and Ouray Reservation Sale Prep; Western Region – Utah
- August 21 – September 1: Flathead Reservation Sale Prep; Northwest Region – Montana
- September 10 – 23: Colville Reservation LiDAR cruise; Northwest Region – Washington
- October 2 – 13: Warm Springs Reservation Sale Prep; Northwest Region – Oregon
- October 30 – November 10: Swinomish Stand Exams; Northwest Region – Washington
- December 4 – 15: Stockbridge Munsee Reservation Sale Prep;



Photo of Mississippi Choctaw Timber Cruising

Midwest Region - Wisconsin

The Timber Team would also like to welcome five new full time permanent foresters to the team;

Albert Cayson, Aree Bray, Madison Kresse, Saben McKinnon, and Tyson Miracle. Each new forester will bring individual talents and skills from presale experience, GIS, and silviculture backgrounds that will further strengthen the Timber Team's knowledge of natural resource management. Welcome to the Timber Team, everyone!

We are seeking proposals for FY24 and federal/tribal staff that would like to work with the Timber Team on any assignment this year. Talk to your Regional Forester if you would like to join the team for any of the planned trips, we have scheduled this year. It is a great way to gain additional experience. For more information regarding the Timber Team, please contact Caleb Cain at caleb.cain@bia.gov or Philip "Ryan" Frandino at philip.frandino@bia.gov.

Forest Health: BIA Forestry is



Photo of Makah Stand Exam Site Index Measurement

working with the US Forest Service to distribute funding for approved projects. Central Office will make funding available as
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soon as accounts have been set up. There are two tribes within BIA that have been approved and project totals are \$110,901.00. Examples of forest health projects include insect and disease infestations, mistletoe, blister rust, oak wilt, sudden oak death, etc. The project requests are usually due to the Forest Service around the first week of October, so plan accordingly. For more information, please contact Orvie Danzuka, Timber Sales Forester at orvie.danzuka@bia.gov.

BRANCH OF FOREST INVENTORY AND PLANNING (FIP)

FIP Projects: The FIP team is busy preparing the CFI materials for 7 CFI projects that will begin this fall. Most of these materials are near completion, and collaboration continues with the regions and tribes to finalize the materials. The lead foresters prioritize cleaning and processing efforts on 4 projects so the forester can return these projects to the region or tribe to begin the FIA. In addition, we are currently supporting 38 projects at the Region, Agency, and Tribe in collecting data, writing their FIA, or cleaning data to return to FIP. If you have questions or are looking for a status update for your forest inventory, please visit the FIP Planning Tool on Teams or send a request to dawn.patterson@bia.gov to be added to the Teams channel. The FIP inventory foresters update the Planning Tool daily to keep the region, agency, and tribes informed.

Standardization: The standardization for the CFI process has been a journey, and we are get-

ting close to completing a national standard for CFI projects. The branch has completed the standardized field names and codes for plots, trees, and regeneration with the help of IPOG. As a result, the master database has also been completed and tested. The programmers made several updates to the master database during the development to ensure all tables in the database reference the correct field names and codes. The programmers have also delivered a single national analysis program for verification. Minor updates are needed in the application coding to reference the new field names to be read by the application correctly. The foresters will commit 8 hours a week to the verification process after the report assignments have been issued for each team member. The goal is to document the verification process, what variables are required, and how the statistics are calculated, which will eventually support a user guide on the application.

Policy 53 IAM Chapter 8: The summer field season has slowed progress, but we are continuing to move forward. The first draft of Forest Inventory for Real Estate has been completed and is being reviewed by the small group assigned to it. We are also working on the review of the Cultural, Traditional and Other Values section and should have that section completed during the next meeting. We are also preparing for our 2nd in-person meeting. This meeting will be in Lakewood, CO, scheduled for 17-21 July 2023.

Policy 53 IAM Chapter 9: The 53 IAM Chapter 9 manual revision work group delivered the draft revised manual to RACA for their edits and comments on April

26, 2023. After receiving RACA's comments, the work group discussed the comments and forwarded the draft revised manual on for internal review prior to returning the draft revised manual to RACA on June 21, 2023. RACA has notified the work group that another review of the draft revision will occur in mid-July 2023.

Policy Update: FY 2023 FMI&P A-123: In an effort to improve accountability in Federal programs and operations, OMB Circular A-123 is a US Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Government circular that defines the management responsibilities for internal controls in Federal agencies.

The purpose of the A-123 audit, specific to Forest Management Inventory and Planning (FMI&P), is to obtain information on how the 12 BIA Regions are implementing their FMI&P programs per the Code of Federal Regulations and BIA policies. The audit is implemented by reviewing the selection of five Key Controls and their components. The five Key Controls for FMI&P A-123 audits are Mapping for Inventory, Forest Inventory, Forest Inventory Analysis, Forest Management Planning, and Data Management Performance. The components of each Key Control include quantitative metrics that provide a measure of how well programs are being implemented in relation to the regulations and policies that are in place.

The FY 2023 FMI&P A-123 review team consists of members from the BIA Central Office, Branch of Forest Inventory and Planning, and regional forestry staff. During May 2023, the review

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team conducted four in-person site visits to the selected regions. For each site visit, the team provided an in-briefing and an out-briefing to the Regional Director, Deputy Regional Director, and regional forestry staff notifying them of the observations, findings, and recommendations for improvement to their FMI&P program.

To serve as a follow-up to the regional site visits, a memo from the Director, BIA to each Regional Director has been prepared. The intent of the memo is to provide each Regional Director with a summary of the review results for their region's FMI&P program, including an informative list of observations and findings. When a region was determined to need a correction action plan (CAP), that would also be noted for each key control that was deemed deficient, along with a target completion date in which to become compliant with the relevant regulations and policies.

While the observations and findings varied from region to region during each of the site visits, the review team commends each region's forestry staff for their efforts to maintain and align their FMI&P programs with the current regulations and policies with the intention to better serve regional programs.

During the regional site visits, one recommendation was consistently made with regard to each FMI&P program. The review team recommended maintaining adequate staffing levels in order for each region to adequately serve their program's forest management, inventory, and planning needs.

Staff Updates: FIP will advertise one vacant GS-11 forester position on USAJOBS. A forester has accepted the tentative offer for one of the two vacant GS-11 forester positions. FIP Team Members Dawn Patterson, Branch Chief; Warren Armijo, Administrative Officer; FMIP Foresters are Benjamin Bagdon, Stephen Singleton, Violet Holley, Thomas Lowell, Forest Analyst are Jesse Wooten, Christopher LaCroix, and one tentative offer was accepted; and contractor program developer David Stitt. Welcome team members.

Jesse Wooten joined the FIP team in August 2022. Previously, Jesse was a Natural Resources Specialist with Jefferson County Open Space in Golden, Colorado, where he helped develop their forest inventory program and wrote prescriptions for forest health and wildfire mitigation treatments. Jesse received his master's degree in Forest Sciences from Colorado State University in 2021, where he studied post-fire forest recovery.

Christopher LaCroix joined the FIP team in September 2022. Before joining FIP, he was an Urban & Community Forester with 10+ years of experience working in the public and private sectors. Christopher spent most of his professional career working in various roles in Southern California as an International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist specializing in promoting urban forestry principles and arboriculture knowledge to clients and stakeholders. He has a diverse portfolio of project experience, including risk assessments and internal decay studies of urban trees, wildland and community fuels reduction identification and mitigation, protected tree species inventory and mapping, pre-development analy-

sis and construction monitoring, invasive insect trapping and monitoring, utility forestry, and state/municipal vegetation code enforcement. Christopher graduated from California Polytechnic State University of San Luis Obispo in 2012 with a B.S. in Forestry and Natural Resources Management, with a concentration in Wildland Fire and Fuels management. Outside of work, Christopher enjoys mountain biking, fly fishing, camping, and spending time with his wife and 18-month-old son, Steel.

Warren Armijo joined the FIP team as an Administrative Officer in August 2022. Prior to FIP, Warren began his career with the Bureau of Indian Education as a Business Technician at Jemez Day School located in Jemez Pueblo, New Mexico. Warren is excited to be a part of the FIP team and is looking forward to learning and using his administrative skills to assist the FIP Team and Native American Tribes across Indian Country.

DIVISION OF FIRE AND WILDLAND FIRE

National Wildland Firefighter Day: National Wildland Firefighter Day takes place annually on July 2. The day recognizes the hard work and devotion of all wildland firefighters and support personnel who are the backbone of the wildland fire community. These adults work to save lives, property, infrastructure, and precious natural and cultural resources every year, and we are incredibly thankful for their professional skills and efforts. A news conference took place at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, ID, on June 27, to recognize the day with all national agencies involved.

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Firefighter Mental Health: As part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the BIA is funded and plans to hire two mental health positions - BIA Mental Health Coordinator and Tribal Mental Health Liaison. These positions will help the BIA determine mental health needs, direction, and program development among BIA Federal Firefighters and coordinate mental health collaboration with Tribal, Indian Health Service, and other mental health providers for Tribal Firefighters. The positions will also provide direct coordination with the Department of the Interior and the Department of the Agriculture Mental Health Coordinators along with serving on Interagency workgroups and committees. The Division is currently working to interview and fill the positions with Public Health Officers through a contract with the United States Public Health Service.

Wildland Fire Decision Support System: An effort to update the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) has begun. Over the next few years, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS) Research Development & Application will be building a new user interface and updating underlying system architecture to incorporate new technology available since WFDSS was first built in 2007.

The current operational version of WFDSS will be maintained in its current state of Operations and Maintenance with no Development Modernization or Enhancements taking place. Completing patching, technical upgrades and making necessary changes to comply with policy and hosting environment re-

quirements will continue until the Next Generation WFDSS is ready for production use.

0456 Series Update: Suites of position descriptions in the specialty areas of Fuels, Planning, and Prevention up to GS-11 have been submitted for Department review and approval. Current work continues to discuss state/regional/national positions. The group is eagerly awaiting the issuance of the GS-456 Qualification Standard from OPM to begin posting positions in the new series. On June 21, 2023, DOI Office of Human Capital recognized over 30 employees in an award ceremony including five from BIA for their ongoing efforts to complete the new series rollout.

Staff Update: Gregory “Tyler” Burleson, a member of the Cherokee Nation, was hired April 28, 2023, as the Wild Urban Interface/Fire Prevention Specialist (Vice the late Pat McDowell) for the Eastern Oklahoma Region. Tyler can be reached at Gregory.Burleson@bia.gov.

Cameron Paulk, a member of the Muscogee Creek Nation, was hired May 8, 2023, as the Deputy Post-Wildfire Recovery Coordinator (vice Juliette Jeanne) for the Division. Cameron can be reached at Cameron.Paulk@bia.gov.

Both of our new hires have a background in higher education and firsthand experience related to their roles. We are happy to have them on our team!

FUELS MANAGEMENT

National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System: Development of the next generation National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NextGen NFPORS),

also referred to as INFORM Fuels, continues to move forward. The Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) has been testing the new system with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service since late March. The BIA and Bureau of Land Management will begin testing July 18, 2023. Testers have been identified from Tribes, Agency, Regional and National users. The goal identified by OWF is to develop and test a “Minimum Viable Product” for all Bureaus to start utilizing on October 1, 2023. The new system is geospatially founded, and project attributes are tied to treatment shapefiles. Development and refinement of NextGen NFPORS is expected to continue after the proposed transition to the new system on October 1. The BIA will be providing information and training on the use of the new system once the transition takes place.

Base Funding: The Base program in Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) currently provides for 442 Tribal positions which equates to 347 Tribal full-time equivalent staff (FTE). The Bureau continues to work with the DOI to recognize Tribal FTEs as part of our workforce for all budget calculations. The Base program has distributed all funding for FY23. The acre target for the base program this year is 126,785 acres. To date we have accomplished 119,466 acres.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL): The Office of the Inspector General is conducting audits and reviews of BIL Funding expenditures in the DOI and USFS. They have selected 5 states to audit and review expenditures, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, and Oregon. Five Indian Country locations in four regions have been identified for this audit and review. The acre

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target for the BIL program this year is 109,571 acres. To date we have covered 10,930 acres.

Reserved Treaty Right Lands (RTRL): In FY 2023, the RTRL program received a funding increase of \$5 million, bringing the total program budget to \$15 million. The funding was split into two funds this year, one part in base and one part in BIL. We have received the Base RTRL funding of \$6 million and have funded existing projects and two new projects to date. The BIL RTRL funding of \$9 million is being held at OWF until projects are entered and approved in NFORS. Currently we have several project proposals being developed.

National Wildland Fire Prevention: The development of the Wildfire Prevention Strategies Spatial Assessment and Planning Strategies regional manager rollout is well underway. This feature is being added to enable regional managers to have greater capability to monitor program progress and provide quicker responses to data calls. A national rollout feature will be added when this is completed.

In Indian Country, we currently have 37 programs with staff in place and six programs with vacant positions; backfilling vacancies has been challenging. Turnover in the program has increased which has led to increased training needs. The greatest need in the prevention program currently is for qualified wildland fire investigators. A national training event is being considered with input from the programs currently being solicited.

FIRE OPERATIONS

2023 Wildfire Activity (to date):

The traditional fire season in the western states begins in June, but June 2023 has been remarkably “slow” - in fact, it will have the second least amount of burned acres nationwide in the month of June since the tracking of such statistics began in 1990. This below-normal trend has been true across most of Indian Country too. Since the beginning of Calendar Year 2023, there have been 1759 wildfires reported on Indian lands (or lands protected by BIA), burning a total of about 117 thousand acres (all ownerships combined). In comparison to the prior 10 years, 2023’s activity in Indian Country is about 60% of the average number of fires burned in the period spanning January through June, and 86% of the average total acres burned during that period.

Most this year’s burned acreage in Indian Country, so far, has occurred on land protected by units in BIA’s Eastern Oklahoma Region, most notably at Osage Agency, where over 100 wildfires have burned nearly 100,000 acres this year, with most starts being in March and April. Seven other units (involving three other Regions – Midwest, Northwest, and Western) have seen fires larger than 300 acres. Most recently, as of June 30, there was a large fire burning on Southern Ute lands called the Arkansas Loop fire. The fire ignited on June 27 and is currently reported at 127 acres, with some hotspots near the perimeter and the potential to grow larger.

Outside the U.S., the 2023 fire season has ravaged Canada, and the European Union is expecting a busy summer fire season as well. Starting in early May, large fires began emerging in the Canadian boreal forests in British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan, where

winter moisture had been significantly below normal (in contrast to the Sierra and Rocky Mountains in the U.S., which saw abundant snowfall). Within a few weeks, large forest fires arose in other areas including the eastern provinces of Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Quebec, as well as the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

Fire activity in Quebec has been unprecedented, with more acreage burning in a 20-day period in June than the prior 20 years combined. As of June 30, Canada has over 250 “out of control” wildfires burning, involving every province and territory, with at least 5 fires that exceed 1 million acres and 20 additional fires that are larger than 250 thousand acres. Total burned acreage has exceeded 15 million acres and may be closer to 23 million. Many of the fires are burning in remote areas, disproportionately affecting First Nations peoples and communities, several of which have been completely evacuated. The international response to assist Canada with their worst-ever fire season (with many weeks of summertime burning conditions remaining) has been significant. The U.S. has provided the most personnel and resources, with over 1300 personnel assigned to Canadian wildfires to date. Other supporting nations include Mexico, Costa Rica, Chile, France, Portugal, Spain, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and South Korea.

2023 Fire Season Outlook Update: Despite the slow start to the 2023 fire season, the transition in climate cycles from La Niña to El Niño is expected to have broad impacts and spur above-normal fire activity in some areas of the country. The seasonal monsoon that normally arrives in late June and

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quells fire activity in the Southwest, central and southern Rocky Mountains, and parts of the Great Basin regions is expected to be weak this year. Indeed, both fire danger and fire activity are increasing in those areas now, at a time when wildfires normally start to diminish. With regard to risk for significant wildfires to emerge, above normal potential is now expected through July for parts of the Southwest, but especially in the Pacific Northwest and Great Lakes regions, where fuels are already dry and becoming increasingly available to burn. Those areas are forecast to have above normal significant fire potential into September and possibly later. Posted on the National Interagency Coordination Center's Outlooks webpage <https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/predictive-services/outlooks>, a new National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Seasonal Outlook https://www.nifc.gov/sites/default/files/document-media/monthly_seasonal_outlook.pdf is updated on the first of each month and covers the following four-month period. Due to the earlier and stronger than expected onset of El Niño, the July 1 issuance of the Outlook will show more areas flagged as having above normal fire potential than the prior months' predictions.

Long-term Severity Update: In conjunction with the fire activity to-date and the seasonal outlook noted above, BIA has bolstered readiness for fire response (along with additional prevention planning and activities) in Southwest, Western, and Midwest Regions via Long-Term Severity funding.

National Multi Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC): Fire Op-

erations is continuing to actively participate in NMAC to provide international aid Canada due to their high fire activity since early May. The NMAC has been meeting weekly, making decisions, and providing direction to all geographic areas, including federal agencies, to help fulfill requests to mobilize resources to Canada for wildland fire assistance.

Training and Workforce Development: The Complex Incident Management (CIM) response organization is progressing at a rapid pace. Type 1 qualifications will soon disappear and all trainees who were previously working on Type 1 C and G qualifications should convert to the CIMC position task book. In 2024 all regions will adopt CIM fully. A consolidated summary memo from NWCG is forthcoming which will outline all decisions made up to this point, timelines and the approved plan for Type 3 C and G staff to move up into the CIM status.

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group Training Modernization Project (IPTM): National Wildlife Coordinating Group (NWCG) Training has recently awarded the Group Purchasing Organization contract to the contractor who will be responsible for revising all 125 NWCG courses over the next five years. This is a big step forward as coursework has been delayed as NWCG has been attempting to better modernize the training system with up-to-date task books, incident positions, a more intuitive website and shorter and more pointed blended learning coursework.

Engine Operator (ENOP) Course N-9018: Wildland fire training personnel have been actively engaged in coordinating and helping BIA

Regions to instruct Engine Operator (ENOP) Training for Wildland Fire Engine personnel. Spring of 2023, ENOP courses took place in seven regions including Western, Southwest, Pacific, Rocky Mountain, Great Plains, Northwest, and Midwest regions. The seven training courses encompassed 170 total student course completions across seven BIA regions.

AVIATION

Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS):

Is again, demanding significant attention. Remote pilot training courses have been scheduled, inter-agency agreements for assistance and collaboration have been established, and aircraft orders with the aviation acquisitions office have been placed. An Aviation Operations Specialist position is currently being hired to manage UAS operations.

BIA Exclusive Use and On-Call Managed Contracts:

- Rotor wing use: 29 hours
- Fixed wing use: 13 hours
- UAS use: 0 hours

BIA light-fixed-wing air tactical aircraft (ATGS) contracts are complying with modernization requirements for next generation technological advancements. The technology includes state of the art sensors to support wildland fire detection, mapping, and tactical support. The aircraft can also be made available for non-fire support, such as education, resource, and law enforcement. These aircraft will primarily service BIA and Tribal lands, then support our interagency partners as needs arise. BIA is the only DOI bureau engaged in this aerial capability.

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Budget: Fiscal reviews of three regional fire management programs have been conducted: Rocky Mountain, Southwest, and Eastern. In addition to distribution of \$158M in regularly appropriated funds, other funding has been distributed as follows: \$72M in BIL, and \$77M in Disaster Relief. The budget office is on standby to distribute tribal firefighter compensation pending receipt of personnel data.

POST-WILDFIRE RECOVERY

Mid-Year Accomplishments:

Staff continue to work with Tribes on approved Post Wildfire Recovery (PWR) projects. PWR is working with the Office of Wildland Fire to transfer FY23 funds for these projects. PWR will then transfer out funds with the BIA Regions thereafter.

Staff continue to work with Tribes and BIA Regional Offices on getting accomplishment reports. The BIL necessitates updating post-wildfire reporting direction. This updated policy provides consistent departmental direction on authoritative data sources and due dates for post-wildfire related planning and accomplishment reporting. Staff will continue to work with Regional Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) coordinators and assist with inputting and updating the National Fire Plan Operations Reporting System (NFPORS). NFPORS is DOI's System of Record and Authoritative Data Source for planned and completed post-wildfire actions. Funding transfer to bureaus for Burned Area Rehabilitation actions is contingent on the bureaus' entering an

approved program of work in the NFPORS.

Staff is serving as the BIA's representative on the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Resource Advisor Sub-Committee. The PWR staff serves as the Primary member with this group. This group is currently at a transition stage. The Chair and Vice Chair positions are up for rotation. Depending on final recommendations, the BIA primary Representative may become the Chair within the next two years.

The Staff is working with DOI Interagency BAER Leaders on framework for BIL-BAR plant material. We are developing sideboards for prioritizations, and the ranking criteria (i.e., projects that collaborate with neighboring land management agencies. PWR is working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife on seeking out Tribes to collaborate on vegetation production and materials for post wildfire work. Some nurseries need infrastructure upgrades or staffing personnel; however, the end goal is to increase Tribes overall productions of seedlings/year.

The Staff has met with Eastern and Southwestern regional staff and their local contacts in their respective regions to discuss previous years BAER plans and planned accomplishments utilizing the Emergency Stabilization (ES) and Burned Area Rehab (BAR) funds that were distributed.

Opportunities: As Wildland fire budgets continue to increase, the PWR program is taking steps to evaluate the current program and seek to expand staffing positions. There has been a proposal submitted to the Office of Wildfire for restructuring of the current organi-

zation. If approved, this will allow the Post Wildfire Recovery program to meet the increasing post wildfire restoration needs of tribes and partnering with other agencies.

BIA pathways program has provided an opportunity for one of their pathway students to join the Post Wildfire Recovery Program this summer. We are seeking to provide students with valuable post-fire restoration experience. Pathways covers all Student Trainee salaries, overtime, and travel. Pathways and PWR are continuing to meet regarding this topic.

Future Projects: Wildland fire season is quickly approaching, and the Post Wildfire Recovery program will continue to work with Tribes and other agencies as we engage in post wildfire recovery work. Staff will travel and assist with the National DOI BAER teams to ensure Indian Country needs are being met. Staff will also assist with developing BAER plans.

Best Practices: PWR developed a SharePoint site to provide information with updates and centralize documents for both internal and external use. Tribes and other agencies have access to key documents for training and other resource management guides. Both SharePoint sites were developed to increase our communication internally and externally. PWR will continue to maintain and keep updated.

FY2023 Challenges: The Post Wildfire Restoration program currently has one vacancy, the National BAER Coordinator. The Natural Resources Watershed Specialist and the National BAER Deputy Coordinator positions were recently filled.

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BIA Forestry and Wildland Fire Management

by Peter Wakeland

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Forest Development: FY 2022 Accomplishment Data						
Region	Reforest- ation	Stand Improve- ment	Timber Volume		Timber Harvested	
	Planted Acres	Thinned Acres	Offered (MBF)	Sold (MBF)	Volume (MBF)	Value (\$)
Alaska	0	16	44	0	0	\$0
Eastern	0	0	4,563	4,507	6,760	\$363,438
E. Oklahoma	29	320	97	97	97	\$11,490
G. Plains	150	0	42	42	42	\$985
Midwest	745	2,081	72,655	72,655	55,922	\$5,054,124
Navajo	0	0	43	43	43	\$280
Northwest	19,650	20,487	267,840	267,840	226,793	\$71,145,249
Pacific	1,236	544	3,245	3,245	4,661	\$1,325,070
Rocky Mt.	1,451	215	467	467	467	\$250
S. Plains	0	0	0	0	1,050	\$17,474
Southwest	231	1,676	3,173	3,173	2,924	\$137,734
Western	135	990	14,260	14,260	14,509	\$994,470
TOTAL	23,627	26,329	366,629	366,329	313,268	\$79,050,564



Photo from the 2023 ITC Symposium from L to R. Aaron Baldwin, Pete Wakeland, Caleb Cain, Jesse Wooten, Terry Baker, Warren Armijo, and Christopher LaCroix.

Symposium Committee

by Howard Teasley, Jr.

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Photo of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Tribal Tour



Photo of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Tribal Tour.

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Symposium Committee

by Howard Teasley, Jr.

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Photo of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Tribal Tour



Photo of Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Host Staff at the Annual Awards Banquet



INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL

PO BOX 11790

Portland, Oregon 97211

First Class
