



INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL TIMBER NOTES

FALL ~ 2019



Don Motanic

\$700,000-SCHOLARSHIP AND MENTOR PROGRAM – WE NEED YOU

The American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) has received \$700,000 for the Advancing Agricultural Science Opportunities for Native Americans. The funding provides scholarships for students as well as a mentorship program that includes forestry degrees.

STUDENTS

The AISES Advancing Agricultural Science Opportunities for Native Americans (AASONA) is for students interested in or pursuing agriculture related STEM degrees, with an eventual career in agriculture and/or ranching. Students receiving this scholarship must agree to become a part of a cohort of other Native students in the same field. Travel to the AISES National Conference and AISES Leadership Summit is required and travel scholarships are available for cohort members. Also included, is a mentorship with current Native foresters, farmers and ranchers with meetings both virtu-

al and in person at the conferences. Participation in the mentorship is required for all scholarship recipients. Students in this program are eligible to apply for research awards to fund research related to farming, ranching, and related science that includes forestry.

Eligible Degrees for the program include all agriculture related STEM degrees. Examples of those degrees include: Agriculture, Concentrations in Agriculture: Business, Economics, Engineering, Food, Production, Technology; Animal Science; Bioengineering; Biology; Botany; Chemistry; Environmental Sciences with Concentrations in Environmental Sciences: Water Resource Management, Rural Development, Land Management; Equine Science; Food Science; Forestry; Horticulture; Microbiology

Plant Science; Soil Science; Soil Ecology and Zoology.

MENTORSHIP

Develop your mentor skills by helping Native undergraduate and graduate students in Forestry!

A primary goal of the AISES Advancing Agricultural Science Opportunities for Native Americans (AASONA) is to increase the number and persistence of Native Americans in the forestry, farming and ranching professions. AISES will provide agricultural education, financial assistance, and advocacy services to Native American students interested in agriculture and related agriculture fields so that they may become successful foresters, farmers and ranchers.

To achieve the goals, AISES recruited ten Native Professionals in Agriculture to mentor members of a cohort of 20 native students. Each professional will mentor two students in the cohort.

1. Mentor two native students currently studying agricultural sciences and/or related fields by phone, in person, or virtually through video conferencing.
2. Attend the AISES National Conference and Leadership Summit to meet with your students. Travel expenses for the mentors will be provided by the program.
3. Professionals may also chose to present a session at the 2020 Leadership Summit.
4. AISES Student Chapter Regional Meetings (optional).

The second cohort and mentor applications will be available this fall for the 2020-2021 program.

For more information about the program see:



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Technical Specialist	1
President's Message	2
BIA Central Office Forestry	3
Education Committee	7
Legislative Update	8
Awards Committee	11
Wildland Fire Technical Specialist	12
Research Subcommittee	14
Operations Committee	15

President's Message

by Vernon Stearns, Jr.



Vernon Stearns, Jr.

Greetings and farewell to summer! This year was a mild fire season across most of Indian Country, which allowed us to focus on our “day jobs”.

Coming off the success of our annual symposium in Florida, the ITC is ramping up efforts to work with federal agencies to implement new federal forest management authorities. The ITC has an agreement with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to bring participants from each organization and interested tribes together to familiarize themselves with new authorities including P.L. 93-638 authority for Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA) demonstration projects, Good Neighbor Authority for tribes, and projects under the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act Amendments of 2017. The end goal of the ITC/USFS agreement is to develop and implement tribal proposals and projects that achieve mutual benefits on USFS managed lands. The Steering Group for this effort is a mixture of ITC and USFS representatives

that will be collaborating on putting together two (2) workshops for project proposal coordination and two webinars on P.L. 93-638 TFPA implementation.

Unfortunately, the legislative language granting Good Neighbor Authority to tribes was ambiguous about tribes’ ability to retain program income and apply it toward future projects. ITC is working on potential remedies to this so that tribes have the same authorities that states have to make GNA a success.

The ITC is also 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. Before then, an IFMAT team must be identified, study parameters set, and funding secured. ITC is working on all of these fronts to make sure that IFMAT-4 will be a strong document that continues to help guide and improve the management of Indian trust forests in all regions of the country. In preparation of organizing for IFMAT-4 efforts, an IFMAT-3 after action review was articulated to assist with improving processes and coordination on this next assessment of Indian forests and forest management.

Planning for the 2020 Annual Timber Symposium kicked off at the most recent ITC Board meeting held at the host site in Fairbanks, AK. Evaluations and recommendations from the 2019 symposium were reviewed to assist in planning efforts as we move forward. Discussion regarding workshop topics, speakers, tour stops, and enhancing student participation is ongoing up until the next symposium. Please mark your calendars for June 1-4,

2020 and I hope to see you all in Fairbanks, AK.

Despite the approaching end of the fiscal year, federal appropriations levels remain in limbo. Congress is poised to pass a “continuing resolution” to keep the government funded for a few weeks until FY2020 appropriations can be finalized. ITC does not anticipate any significant cuts to BIA Forestry and we are advocating for Congress to continue investing more resources in Indian forest management.

We have tracked the ever-changing line-up of officials at the Department of the Interior. The Department appears to be moving forward on its plan to reorganize all of its agencies except BIA into unified regions with regional directors, or “field assistants,” Matt Hill reports more on this in his report.

As always, I am proud of all the work ITC does and the support we receive from member tribes. If you are interested in engaging in ITC activities please consider attending a quarterly board meeting, I know we are all very busy so any help and assistance is always welcomed and appreciated. Thank you all for your ongoing support of the ITC and its mission.



BIA Central Office Forestry

by Matt Anderson



Matt Anderson

PLANNING AND PRIORITIES

CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF

Pete Wakeland's detail as the Acting Associate Deputy Bureau Director, Natural Resources has been extended. Matt Anderson will continue serve as Acting Chief Forester. Caleb Cain has likewise extended his service to Central Office Forestry. Any BIA employee interested in gaining experience from the national perspective is welcome to take a turn through Central Office on a temporary assignment ranging from 2 weeks to 120 days. Please contact Matt Anderson for further information.

REGIONAL FORESTER'S MEETINGS

The next Regional Foresters' meeting is currently being planned and expected to be held December 10-12 in Albuquerque. Anyone interested in assisting with logistical planning should contact Acting Southwest Regional Forester John Cervantes, and anyone interested in helping to develop the agenda or in speaking to the audience should contact Forester Kurt Mettler of the Northwest Region.

INDIAN ENERGY ACT

The Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act Amendments of 2017 directs the Secretaries of Agriculture and the

Interior to establish 4 Tribal Biomass Demonstration Projects annually, whereby the Forest Service and BLM enter into agreements with Tribes to provide a reliable source of feedstock for biomass energy production. A Department of the Interior meeting with representatives from Indian Affairs, BLM, and the Solicitor's Office concluded that development these agreements are primarily the responsibility of BLM and the Forest Service and the individual Tribes. BIA Forestry intends to play an active role promoting these Demonstration Projects and providing technical advice to the Tribes as well as helping the Federal agencies to communicate effectively in setting up these agreements. Any Tribe interested in developing biomass energy resources is encouraged to contact BIA Central Office Forestry staff.

NATIONAL TIMBER TEAM

The Division is in the process of standing up a national timber team to commence work in FY 2020. The team will implement forestry projects in support of locations where local capacity or expertise has been exceeded. Projects are expected to consist mainly of timber sale preparation but will include contract administration, forest development, forest inventory and other critical projects. The timber team will consist of 5-6 foresters ranging from GS-5 to 11 and based out of the Rocky Mountain Regional Office in Billings, Montana. Hiring for this team will commence soon. The team expects to be deployed in the spring of 2020.

TAAMS UPDATES

The TAAMS Forestry training schedule has been proposed for FY 2020, awaiting consideration and approval from BIA's TAAMS Change Management Board. Courses each

of TAAMS Forestry I (Intro) and TAAMS Forestry II (Advanced) have been proposed as follows.

- TAAMS Forestry I, January 13-16, 2020, BIA, Northwest Regional Office, Portland, OR
- TAAMS Forestry I, January 27-31, 2020, BIA, Northwest Regional Office, Portland, OR

A set of trainings had also been proposed for November but were found to conflict with other TAAMS training sessions deemed higher priority by BIA leadership.

BRANCH OF FOREST RESOURCES PLANNING (BOFRP)

FMI&P WORKING GROUP

The Branch of Forest Resources Planning completed a draft document of 53 IAM Chapter 8, Inventory and Monitoring, which was circulated internally to Regional Foresters and Forest Management Inventory and Planning Foresters for review and comments. Comments are currently being compiled and the draft 53 IAM Chapter 8 document will be updated following careful consideration of the comments. The FMI&P Working Group will have a conference call on September 24, 2019 for another working session to develop the draft.

CFI APPLICATION

An updated version of the CFI processing program is currently undergoing verification to ensure program reliability. BOFRP has put the project to develop a version of the field data collector to a Windows-based tablet operating system on hold in order to meet deadlines for the Funding and Position Analysis database. Ensuring that the CFI database and the BOFRP Application are operational for CFI database development, processing

(Continued on page 4)

BIA Central Office Forestry

by Matt Anderson

(Continued from page 3)



Fort Apache Fuels Crew Receives the Prestigious Pulaski Award

and analysis remains a top priority for BOFRP, but the current high workload and diminished staff prevent progress from being made at the desired pace.

FIRST

The Forest Information Reporting Statistics and Tracking (FIRST) system is ready for FY 2019 data entry. FIRST training materials and presentation slides are available and requests for these should be directed to Robin Lovato at BOFRP. Training in FIRST is available from BOFRP staff, and an online training will be developed in the future.

PROJECT STATUS

- CFIs are nearly completed (BOFRP is processing data and running it through the analysis program): Fort Apache, Southern Ute, Zia, Santa Clara Pueblo Woodland, and Yakama.
- CFIs competed (data books or analysis program provided to Agency, Tribe or Contractor for use in FIA report): Warm Springs, Colville, Northern Cheyenne, Nez Perce, Makah, Blackfeet, Ute Mountain, Mississippi Choctaw, Umatilla, and Fort Belknap.
- CFI in the data cleaning: Jicarilla Timber/Woodland, Santa Clara Pueblo Timber.

- CFI data collection in progress: Passamaquoddy, Uintah and Ouray, Fort Hall, Crow, Hoopa Valley, Tule River, Round Valley, Mescalero, Taos, Picuris, Acoma, Zuni, and Laguna.
- Upcoming CFIs: Penobscot, Flathead, Coeur d'Alene, Tulalip, 29 Palms, Yurok, Isleta, San Carlos, Swinomish Skokomish, Ramah, Navajo, Rosebud, Pine Ridge.
- Stocking studies in progress: Santa Clara, Acoma, Jicarilla, Southern Ute, and Zuni.

BRANCH OF WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

In June, the Governing Board at the National Interagency Fire Center selected the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Fort Apache Agency and the Coronado National Forest, Sierra Vista Ranger District to be recipients of the 2019 Pulaski Award. This marks the first time BIA has received this prestigious award.

The Pulaski Award recognizes groups demonstrating outstanding performance in the areas of interagency collaboration, cooperation and coordination; safety of wildland firefighters or the American public during a wildfire; outstanding group performance in fire management and fire operations activities; outstanding performance on a wildland

fire management project or activity; and development of partnerships or communication tools.

Tribes reserve the right to use ancestral and reserved treaty right lands for religious and cultural purposes such as hunting, fishing and gathering, and the BIA has a trust responsibility to protect, restore and reduce the impacts of wildfire on these lands. In conjunction with the White Mountain Apache Tribe, Yavapai Apache Nation, Fort Apache Agency and the Coronado National Forest, BIA's Western Region facilitated the development of a collaborative RTRL proposal, thereby demonstrating interagency collaboration and outstanding performance on a Reserved Treaty Rights Land (RTRL) project.

RTRL program funds enabled tribes; the Forest Service and the BIA to participate in this collaborative project to address shared interests that enhanced the health and resiliency of the Oak Savana ecosystem and helped protect culturally and spiritually significant areas to the Apache people. Among the beneficiaries of this work were the Fort Apache Fuels crew members who helped protect their ancestral lands from potential wildfires.

The Fort Apache Fuels crew treated (cut and piled) over 100 acres and supported the Coronado's implementation of a 1,160 acre prescribed burn designed to create a resilient and sustainable Oak Savana ecosystem. By performing these vegetation management treatments, the project helped address Apache concerns about the Chi Ch'il, the acorn from Emory oak, which is an important food source for the Apache people and cultural element the ecosystem supports. In the future, the crew, along with the Ari-

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

zona Department of Forestry and Fire Management, will assist the Douglas and Santa Catalina Ranger Districts with vegetation treatment work taking place on Mt. Lemmon near Tucson, Arizona.

Congratulations to all who received this prestigious award and for the important work accomplished through these outstanding collaborative efforts!

WILDFIRE PREVENTION

The Wildfire Prevention Program continues to find new ways to serve and provide leadership for Indian Country's wildfire prevention efforts.

The new model, Wildfire Prevention Spatial Assessment and Planning Strategies software is nearing release. BIA's Prevention Program and the BIA's prevention specialists are leading the software development by providing much of the model's foundations. The new model will include an improved risk assessment, prevention planning, and accomplishment reporting functions. Operational release is expected in early 2020.

BIA's prevention specialists are currently revising and updating a series of Wildfire Prevention guides to address wildfire prevention topics including Inspections, Prevention Communications Techniques, Prevention Education, Prevention Accomplishment Reporting, Prevention Risk Assessments, and Prevention Planning. The guide series expects to be completed in calendar year 2020.

The Prevention Program continues to support the BIA's Youth Fire Intervention Program by renewing the contract for the Program Coordinator. The goal of this community-focused program is to help youth who

misuse fire or who have started dangerous and unsupervised fires learn their responsibility to protect their family, tribal community and natural resources from fire. The program requires youth to complete community service projects to earn back the trust of their tribal community; and, educates youth about fire safety, fire survival and the serious legal, financial and social costs of setting fires in Indian Country. Agencies and Tribes are encouraged to utilize this program as a deferred sentence for those youth who are misusing fire. Learn more about this program and the services it provides at:

<https://www.bia.gov/bia/ots/dfwfm/bwfm/wildfire-prevention-and-education/youth-fire-intervention-program>

FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND PROJECT FOR THE SOUTHERN BORDER FUELS MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE UNDERWAY AT COCOPAH INDIAN RESERVATION

Located along the Colorado River 13 miles south of Yuma, Arizona, and 15 miles north of San Luis, Mexico is the Cocopah Reservation.

Its unique boundaries border Mexico, Arizona and California. Thriving along the banks is an invasive and dangerous plant called salt cedar. Its roots drink deeply, helping to lower the water table and adding large deposits of salt to the soil. As its roots and branches grow, its prolific and highly flammable branches threaten wetland ecosystems and create a significant fire hazard to neighboring communities when wildfires occur. It is also choking out the native willow, cottonwood, and mesquite trees the Cocopah people use for cultural and spiritual purposes.

While removing salt cedar is a common management practice along the



It is estimated over 40% of arson fires in Indian Country are set by youth under the age of 18. To earn back the trust of the Tribal community and demonstrate responsibility, intervention programs require youth to complete community service projects.

Photo: BIA Web Page.

Colorado River, this \$563 thousand, four-year treatment plan, funded by the Department of the Interior, Office of Wildland Fire Southern Border Fuels Management Initiative (SBFMI), is a first-of-its-kind project that is making history due to its unique partnerships.

BIA, Fort Yuma Agency has the trust responsibility to provide vegetation management and wildfire protection services across the 6,500-acre Reservation. Coordinating with the Cocopah Tribe and the Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Patrol, the BIA applied for, and received funding for the SBFMTI project in 2018.

The project is occurring in a high-risk priority area that will help protect the West Reservation from wildfires. It spans a combined total of nine miles along the Colorado River, which is approximately 36% of the West Reservation's land mass. In total, 1,359 acres of invasive and foreign salt cedar will be treated, preserving the tribe's valuable economic investments and cultural and traditional native species they use for cultural and ceremonial purposes.

Due to the treatments strategic placement along the Mexican border, the Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Patrol is contributing equipment that

(Continued on page 6)

BIA Central Office Forestry

by Matt Anderson

(Continued from page 5)



Firefighters from Fort Apache Agency remove invasive salt cedar brush from the Cocopah Reservation as part of the Southern Border Fuels Management Initiative, 2019. Image courtesy of the Cocopah Indian Tribe.

will help remove the cedar, widening their visibility into Mexico.

To accomplish the project, the tribe is providing resource management specialists to ensure the natural and cultural resources are protected while wildland firefighters from the BIA are using masticators and front-end loaders to remove dense stands of foreign and invasive vegetation. They are also using chainsaws to prune and trim the willow, cottonwood and mesquite trees in order to help them thrive. When conditions cool and become wetter, firefighters will also burn the piles created from the debris, returning nutrients to the soil.

This important project not only improves the natural and cultural species and restores the riparian area; it also provides valuable economic opportunities to wildland firefighters by employing them during the winter months when fire activity is low. Through their work, they will gain training and experience that strengthens fire qualifications that are necessary to advance their careers.

During 2018, firefighters treated 150 acres, which they will continue making progress this fall and winter. The Agency plans to hire a well-disciplined BIA hand crew to further the work.

BIA FINANCE SECTION SETS A BAR HIGH –

IMPLEMENTS PROPER FINANCE PRACTICES TO SUPPORT LOCAL BIA INCIDENT MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS



For San Carlos Agency, this was a fire year that just wouldn't end. Fire activity not only required extensive operations and logistical coordination to respond to the wildfires, it also demanded a well-organized and highly functioning finance section to accurately track costs.

The high fire occurrence resulted in the establishment of an ad hoc BIA finance section capable of tracking and accounting for the costs attributed to all severity resources that were supporting San Carlos Agency. The end result was the documentation and tracking of 156 incidents within four E-ISuite databases. Combined, these databased tracked a total estimated cost of \$4,710,309.50. (Yes, down to the penny!)

The finance team was able to support the fire resources by providing a presence to teach, explain, and correct any issues pertaining to incident business or fire finance. This presence familiarized and taught firefighters, old and new, about several incident business timekeeping issues, specifically about hazard pay policy established by the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The finance team was able to ensure that proper documentation was created and maintained to justify excessive shifts and work/rest mitigation, in field promotions, property damage

and loss, and the processing of Administratively Determined (AD) batch payments through the Casual Payment Center. In total, the finance team left the local agency with nine document boxes full of all the finance records for all 156 incidents that were tracked.

The small but mighty finance section was led by Amanda Boatright, Rocky Mountain Region Fire Business Lead with Regina Hoffmann, Northwest Region Fire Business Lead; Julie White, Pacific Region Natural Resources Admin Officer; Lena Almeter, Northwest Region Fire Budget Analyst; and Robin White, BIA Branch of Wildland Fire Management Administrative Officer. Their specialty and unique experience makes them experts at understanding the nuances of BIA's incident business requirements.

The work of the ad hoc finance section had a significant contribution to San Carlos Agency this fire season. Their work and success led to the discussion of developing BIA's own Type 3 finance section capable of supporting any BIA region/agency or our tribal and interagency partners. In the future, the section anticipates being able to provide training opportunities that will improve fire finance capabilities throughout Indian Country.

BRANCH OF WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT MEDIA TEAM PLANS TO RELEASE NEW OUTREACH PRODUCTS FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS

In the summer of 2019, Robyn Broyles, National Fire Communication Specialist and Kye Funk, Media Specialist, traveled the Western and Northwest Regions taking pictures and performing interviews of Indian Country's Wild-

(Continued on page 7)

BIA Central Office Forestry

by Matt Anderson

(Continued from page 6)

land Fire Management personnel for outreach and training material.

Their assignments collectively took them from the Arizona border in Yuma all the way to northern Washington on the Colville Reservation. In between, they stopped at the San Carlos, Fort Apache, Salt River, Yuma, Cow Creek, Spokane, Colville and Flathead Agencies to interview firefighters, agency superintendents and the Missoula Model 52 Engine Center employees. The Branch will use this material to develop public service announcements and training videos to help wildland firefighters correctly use and maintain fire engines. It will also assist future agency superintendents

with understanding the important roles and responsibilities they have during large fire incidents.

The Branch will release the first of several outreach products (posters and post cards) focused on workforce recruitment at the beginning of the 2020 calendar year (pending funding availability). This will also include social media assets social media content managers can use leading up to their respective hiring season.

It is the Branch's intent to release batches of new content the next three years. Once released, the material will be able to view on the Branch's primary hiring web page: www.bia.gov/firejobs.



Sample outreach poster. Firefighter working on the San Carlos Fuels Management module drags fire with him to help contain a wildfire burning on the San Carlos Reservation. Photo by Kye Funk



Education Committee

by Nicole Stiffarm



Nicole Stiffarm

Greetings ITC, I hope you are all enjoying the fall back-to-school season. We have just recently completed our quarterly board meeting held in beautiful Fairbanks, Alaska. The Education committee convened and discussed the upcoming Truman D. Picard Scholarship announcement. The official announcement will be coming out this fall.

In conjunction with the research subcommittee, we have also discussed creating a tribal student representative position within ITC. Elisha Flores (Hoopa), graduate student at Oregon State University and former recipient of the Truman D. Picard Scholarship attended the meeting and will be assisting in the development of the new student rep. position. The final plan should be completed at the December board meeting.

One other item we discussed is planning a Tribal Forestry Student Summit to be hosted at Northern Arizona University in the fall of 2020. The theme of this summit is tentatively focused on workforce development. As planning continues, we will keep you informed. Following the meeting, there was an opportunity through the local

Forest Service unit and University of Alaska affiliates to take a quick tour of the beautiful Tanana River ecosystem.

I hope you all have a healthy and productive fall, stay tuned for the Truman D. Picard Scholarship announcement.



Legislative Update

Matt Hill



Matt Hill

FY2020 APPROPRIATIONS

Under the Trump budget, proposed earlier this year, DOI would see an overall 14% decrease, with significant cuts coming from BIA programs. The Trump Budget proposed a near-\$1 million reduction in BIA Forestry. However, Congress ultimately cuts the check and it is running out of time before the end of the current Fiscal Year.

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

In May, the House Interior Appropriations Committee released its version of the bill, which proposes a smaller cut from BIA Forestry, around \$118,000. Either way, this is the first time in many years that the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, now under Democratic control has proposed a reduction in BIA Forestry.

The House also included the following report language clarifying how the funds should be allocated:

“Within the \$55,473,000 provided for Forestry, the Committee recommends \$28,524,000 for Forestry Program (TPA), \$142,000 below the enacted level and \$684,000 above the budget request, and \$26,949,000 for Forestry Projects, \$24,000 above the enacted level and \$30,000 above the budget request.”

As of the writing of this newsletter, the Senate has yet to produce its version of an Interior appropriations bill, with only a couple weeks left in the Fiscal Year. To avoid a government shutdown, the House will take up a “Continuing Resolution” (aka, “CR”) the week of September 16 to keep the government funded into the new fiscal year (around November 21) while lawmakers finish work on their 12 annual spending bills. Work on the bills in the Senate had been stalled until Democrats reached agreement with the White House this summer on overall funding limits for the government for fiscal 2020 and 2021.

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT RE-ORGANIZATION

In August, the Department released the specifics of its plan to consolidate 49 regional offices of eight sub-agencies into 12 standard regions and move some employees out of the national capital area. Meanwhile DOI will appoint high-level “field assistants” and regional “field committees” to carry it out. All of this excludes BIA, OST and BIE. The regional map is below, as is the list of regional “field assistants” who will oversee each region: (*please see the map and table on the next page*)

To assist in the transition to the consolidated regions, former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, John Tahsuda, has moved upstairs at DOI. He is now Counselor to Secretary David Bernhardt, where he will continue to

oversee Indian affairs as well as the reorganization and other matters.

In other changes at the Department, 85 federal jobs will move to Colorado as part of a Bureau of Land Management headquarters relocation. In a letter to U.S. senators, BLM formally announced it will place its new headquarters in Grand Junction, but most of the new Colorado positions will be located at an existing Lakewood office. While the move was praised by Colorado lawmakers, it was criticized by House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), who stated - “Putting BLM headquarters down the road from Secretary Bernhardt’s home town just makes it easier for special interests to walk in the door demanding favors without congressional oversight or accountability. The BLM officials based in Washington are here to work directly with Congress and their federal colleagues, and that function is going to take a permanent hit if this move goes forward.” Grijalva’s Natural Resources Committee held an oversight hearing entitled “BLM Disorganization: Examining the Proposed Reorganization and Relocation of the Bureau of Land Management Headquarters to Grand Junction, Colorado.” During the hearing, Grijalva threatened to issue a subpoena to the department for relocation information, including specifics related to costs and personnel.

BOOKER REFORESTATION BILL

Presidential hopeful, Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) released a climate change bill focused on voluntary farm and ranch conservation practices, massive reforestation, and wetlands restoration. The Climate Stewardship Act of 2019, inspired by measures implemented in President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New

(Continued on page 9)

Legislative Update

Matt Hill

(Continued from page 8)

All of this excludes BIA, OST and BIE. The regional map is below, as is the list of regional “field assistants” who will oversee each region:



Deal, would support voluntary climate stewardship practices on more than 100 million acres of farmland, and plant more than 15 billion trees to revive deforested landscapes and expand urban tree cover. Rep. Deb Haaland (D-NM), Chairwoman of the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands will lead companion legislation in the House of Representatives.

Booker’s staff worked closely with the ITC for feedback on the reforestation portion of the bill, which would:

- Provide mandatory funding (\$4.5 billion from the Reforestation Trust fund) for the US Forest Service and the Department of Interior to plant 2.5 billion trees by 2030, and 9.5 billion total trees on federal land by 2050.
- Requires all reforestation to employ ecologically based practices that are informed by climate change science and that enhance forest health, resilience, and biodiversity.

Dedicates funding through the **Bureau of Indian Affairs** for reforestation on Indian trust lands:

- 12,500,000 trees in each of calendar years 2021 and 2022;
- 25,000,000 trees in each of calendar years 2023 and 2024;
- 37,500,000 trees in each of calendar years 2025 and 2026; and
- 50,000,000 trees in calendar year 2027 and each calendar year thereafter.

Priority to reforestation is given to:

- Land that was subject to a mortality event caused by a high intensity wildfire, pest infestation, invasive species, or drought or other extreme weather;
- Projects that will restore and maintain resilient landscapes;

REGION	FIELD ASSISTANT	BUREAU / OFFICE
1	Thomas Shope	Office of Surface Mining Reclamation & Enforcement
2	Shannon Goessling	Office of the Solicitor
3	Tony Sullins	Office of the Solicitor
4	Lars Herbst	Bureau of Safety & Environmental Enforcement
5	Linda Walker	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
6	Mike Celata	Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
7	Alan Mikkelsen	Office of the Secretary
8	Ray Suazo	Bureau of Land Management
9	Alan Mikkelsen	Office of the Secretary
10	Stan Austin	National Park Service
11	Steve Wackowski	Office of the Secretary
12	Cindy Orlando	National Park Service

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

- Land on which the planting provides increased habitat connectivity for wildlife; and
- Areas that will provide the largest potential long-term increase in carbon sequestration.

Booker's bill also:

- Creates a grant program where tribes, states, local governments and non-profits can receive funding to plant trees ("Reforest America Grant Program");
- Significantly increases forestry and climate research funding available for tribal colleges.

YUOK LANDS ACT

In September, the House Subcommittee on Indigenous Peoples of the United States held a legislative hearing on H.R. 1312, the Yurok Lands Act – sponsored by Democratic Congressman Jared Huffman.

Under the H.R. 1312, the Yurok Lands Act of 2019, the Secretary of Agriculture is directed to transfer to the Secretary of the Interior administrative jurisdiction over approximately 1,229 acres in the Yurok Experimental Forest and Six Rivers National Forest in northern California. The Secretary of the Interior would then hold the land transferred in trust for the benefit of the Yurok Tribe. The land would not be eligible, or considered to have been taken into trust, for any gaming activity under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act or for old growth logging.

The bill also confirms the 2006 "Cooperative Agreement between the Department of the Interior and the Yurok Tribe for the Cooperative Management of Tribal and Federal Lands and Resources in the Klamath River Basin of California" and authorizes the Secretary to take

such actions as are necessary to make the agreement.

The Department of the Interior testified that it "supports the goals of H.R. 1312 and encourages other federal departments and agencies to enter into similar cooperative management agreements with tribes across the country when authorized." However, the Department acknowledged that other federal departments and agencies more impacted by this legislation (such as the Forest Service) has concerns and believes H.R. 1312 needs technical changes to address a number of issues identified by surrounding tribes.

ENDANGERED SPECIES RULES FINALIZED, LITIGATION FILED

On August 11, 2019, the Department of the Interior released final revisions to its Endangered Species Act (ESA) regulations. On August 21, 2019, several environmental litigators sued to block the rule changes. The complaint alleges that the rule changes violated NEPA by not publicly disclosing the impacts of the rule revisions, and alleges that the final rule included new materials that were not available for comment in the draft, thereby violating the Administrative Procedures Act. The new rules try to clarify consideration of economic factors in listing decisions, and to set clearer criteria for recovery for delisting purposes.

SPECIAL FOREST PRODUCTS LEGISLATION INTRODUCED

U.S. Representatives Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-WA) and Kurt Schrader (D-OR) have introduced a bill permanently reauthorizing the U.S. Forest Service's (USFS) Special Forest Products pilot program that allows the sustainable harvest of special forest products on lands in the National Forest System. The

program allows the public to harvest natural forest resources for personal or commercial use; these special products include mushrooms, roots, seeds, Christmas trees and firewood, among others.

Individuals who intend to harvest at a commercial level must obtain a permit and pay a fee to the USFS, the revenue from which helps administer the program. Those harvesting products for personal-use are exempt from permit requirements. Gathering of products by federally recognized Indian tribes for traditional or medicinal use is permitted under the personal-use exemption. Threatened, endangered or rare products are protected from harvest under the pilot program.

NOMINATION FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE DIRECTOR

The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works has held a hearing on Aurelia Skipwith's nomination to be Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Skipwith currently serves as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks at the Department of the Interior. Chairman John Barrasso (R-WY) said Skipwith's educational background, including an advanced degree in molecular genetics from Purdue University and a law degree from the University of Kentucky, would allow her to understand the legal and regulatory issues associated with wildlife management. Ranking Member Tom Carper (D-DE) expressed disappointment about Skipwith's former ties to Monsanto and other corporate interests, as well as criticized the Trump administration's recent Endangered Species Act regulations.

Democratic Representative Lacy Clay (D-MO) testified in support of Skipwith, highlighting the Monsan-

(Continued on page 11)

Legislative Update

Matt Hill

(Continued from page 10)

to Sustainable Pledge Award Skipwith received for her groundbreaking crop research, and noted that if confirmed, Skipwith would become

the first African-American to head the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Skipwith highlighted the need to work with private landowners and states to ensure that land is produc-

tive and species are cared for. She also discussed the need to create policy solutions based on the best available science within the realm of the law.



Awards Committee

by Will Putman



Will Putman

Recently the ITC Board held its quarterly meeting in my hometown of Fairbanks, Alaska, and was able to get a brief look at autumn here in Interior Alaska. For those of us in northerly locations there are plenty of signs that winter is once again looming... and a reminder that for the ITC Awards Committee it's time to start our process for soliciting nominations for the Earle R. Wilcox awards.

Once again, the Intertribal Timber Council will be accepting nominations for the Earle R. Wilcox Individual Achievement and National Forester of the Year awards. Our congratulations go out to the recipients of these awards this past year, recognized at the National Indian Timber Symposium hosted by the Seminole Tribe of Florida and held in Hollywood, Florida this past June. The Wilcox awards are how ITC recognizes individuals who have made valuable contributions to Tribal forestry. Good work is too easily taken for granted and deserves recognition, and it's important that we all step up to find

and recognize those people whose contributions have had significant and positive impacts to our forestry programs. ITC is a forestry-centric organization with "Timber" in the name and there will always be an emphasis on individuals working directly in forest and fire management, but please keep in mind that people whose contributions come from the broader array of natural resource disciplines are also eligible for the awards.

You may know somebody in your office or somebody that you interact with regularly that has made some sort of special contribution through their work in Tribal forestry, and you may be wondering how this person can be considered for an Earle R. Wilcox Award. The details of how to do this can be found on the ITC website or by telephoning the ITC office at 503-282-4296. A quick summary:

- The application requires filling out a form and getting 2 letters of support.
- The awards are focused on contributions to Tribal forestry programs at local to national levels. Other natural resource specialists whose work is significant and benefit tribal forests will be considered as well.
- You can email, mail or fax the applications to ITC.
- Letters of support need to be on official letterhead when appropriate and possible.
- Candidates can be nominated for regional awards or the national award based on their contributions to Tribal efforts.

- If someone was nominated in the past but did not receive an award, they can be nominated again. Regional award recipients can be nominated again, but not within ten years of receipt of first or prior award. Past winners of the National Award cannot receive the award again.
- Please ensure that all information is filled out completely and accurately and all supporting documentation is included. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Earl R. Wilcox award nominations packets will be mailed out later this fall to ITC members and other interested parties. Applications can be prepared and submitted to ITC after November 1, 2019, and the submission deadline for the 2020 awards is January 24, 2020.

In addition to finding deserving nominees for the awards, we are also always looking for interested folks to participate in the Awards Committee. Current work being done by the Committee includes working to ensure that award announcement documents, award criteria, and nomination scoring guidelines are consistently worded and appropriate, and of course there is always a brief period of significant effort required to review and evaluate submitted nominations later this winter. As always, I greatly appreciate the Committee's work on this. If you'd like to get involved and are able to attend any of the ITC Board meetings, let us know.



Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo



Jim Durglo

It seems that this year was a slow fire year. The Bureau of Indian Affairs has reported in the National Interagency Coordination Center, Incident Management Situation Report (<https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/sitreprt.pdf>) that acres burned as of September 6, 2019 was 137,799 acres from 2,398 fires. Nationally, 34,775 fires have burned 4,122,283 acres. The 10-year average (2009-2018) shows 46,417 fires burn 5,795,377 acres to-date. The state of Alaska had a busy fire year, accounting for about half of the total acres burned at 2,592,536 acres from 685 fires.

Even with a slow fire year in the lower 48, many tribes are still trying to rehabilitate the forest resources burned in past large fire events.

The Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs recently issued a memo dated August 12, 2019, with regard to a recent Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) After Action Review. After visiting with staff from the Colville, Yakama, Warm Springs Reservations, respectively, as well as staffs from the BIA Northwest Regional Office, he states that they have received some solid input, which will help focus efforts to improve the Post-Wild-



Liberty Fire 2017

fire Recovery Program's service to Indian Country. The BIA have drafted the following action items:

1. BAER Training-provide the latest information regarding DOI BAER program to Tribes and Agencies. Include introductory topics that provides program process, funding, and policy. Advanced topics may include current practices, treatment effectiveness, and technological developments for the field, including the latest research and science in post-wild-fire recovery.
2. Funding Flowchart-develop a schematic to demonstrate funding sources, various mechanisms on how funding transfers to the Agency and Tribes. Important to identify which programs and departments will be responsible for which treatments to ensure they receive the appropriate funding amount. Improve notification, at all levels, of when funds become available.
3. BAER Briefcase-build a doc box with the latest templates, examples plans including treatments and risk assessment tools. Dis-

tribute to Tribes and Agencies. Also, include less-familiar treatments like horse gathers and rangeland treatments for noxious weeds. Provide examples of BLM rehab plans that include rangeland treatments.

You will be hearing more about these plans in the coming months. Any questions about BAER should be directed to Darryl Martinez, BIA BAER Coordinator, at (505) 331-3514 or darryl.martinez@bia.gov.

The Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) has confirmed a strategic partnership between WFLC and Western Governors Association (WGA) to examine issues around mitigating post fire impacts, including:

- Continue development of a roadmap to fully describe what programs can and cannot do on both federal and non-federal lands to mitigate post fire impacts.
- Jointly define gaps and hurdles to be jointly addressed.
- Work with partners to collect and produce ways to more effectively

(Continued on page 13)

Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo

(Continued from page 12)



Liberty Fire 2017

- distribute best practices and education resources for community consumption.
- Develop “navigators” to help serve as knowledgeable resources that can be utilized and accessed in times of need.
- Determine if the ICS model can better accommodate post fire recovery work (can we add a general staff position to coordinate post fire and/or how could the response system (IMT) better accommodate and set up the community for longer-term success in post fire

mitigation. Is there a greater role for NIMO in post fire?

- Set leader’s intent for expectation of incident commanders to consider post fire before winding down (delegation of authority included – better training agency administrators).

The ITC will participate in the Western Governors’ Working Lands Roundtable in Boise, Idaho, on October 3-4, 2019. We will participate in a breakout session on “Mitigating Post Fire Impacts” and will examine current federal disaster response programs and discuss opportunities to improve inter-agency cooperation in post-disaster response and restoration activities.



SAVE THE DATE!!

June 1—4, 2020

44th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium

Hosted by:

**Intertribal Timber Council
& Tanana Chiefs Conference
in Fairbanks, AK**



Research Subcommittee

by Serra Hoagland



Serra Hoagland

Guu-wat-see (Greetings) ITC! Happy Hunting and Back-to-School Season! The Research Subcommittee recently held their quarterly meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska in conjunction with the ITC Board Meeting. During the meeting we had a variety of guest speakers (grad students and Forest Products Lab representatives) as well as a short discussion on the Tribal Research Needs Assessment. We received over 50 responses to the Needs Assessment throughout Indian country and will work over the coming months to analyze the results.

Our Research Subcommittee has been asked to help coordinate and plan another Forestry Summit (similar to the one held at Yale in 2015 for Native students) at Northern Arizona University in the fall of 2020. We are working with Jon Martin and Wally Covington at Economic Research Institute, as well as Jim Allen at the School of Forestry to make the event a success.

We are continuing to work with the USFS Research & Development branch to draft a new agreement to provide another five years of funding for the Native American Research Scholarship with agreement



International Arctic Research Center on University of Alaska, Fairbanks campus

finalization TBD. The Research Subcommittee is also assisting with sorting out the feasibility of having a Native student representative to the ITC with a final plan to be presented at the December Board Meeting. Lastly, several interesting research publications by Native authors and/or covering Indian forest management topics have come out in the last year. If you would like PDF copies of the publications email Serra Hoagland at serra.j.hoagland@usda.gov.

During the visit to Fairbanks, we visited the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus where the Syun-ichi Akasofu, the International Arctic Research Center is located (photo 1), which focuses on collaborative climate change research and Arctic science. After the board meeting we had a quick visit with other USDA Forest Service scientists and University research affiliates to tour the Tanana River. One of the stops along the river was in a nine-year-old fire scar where one of the long-term experimental plots and data logging units was located (photo 2). This lightning ignited fire resulted in a change in the depth of permafrost and what was originally a black spruce forest has now turned into a hardwood stand, which managers are concerned about impacts to the fire return interval. Come to Alaska this June to learn more!



Tanana River in a burn scar from a fire in 2010
- Left to right: Jamie Hollingsworth, Site Manager, Boreal Ecology Cooperative Research Unit; Nicole Stiffarm, Education Committee chair; Elisha Flores, Oregon State grad student; and Jason Downing, Data Management Specialist, Boreal Ecology Cooperative Research Unit

We hope you have a wonderful fall season and if you have any suggestions for the Research Subcommittee please don't hesitate to reach out to provide feedback! Da-wa-eh (thanks) and we hope to see you in Fairbanks!



Operations Committee

by Cody Desautel



Cody Desautel

The September board meeting brought me to Alaska for the first time. Tanana Chiefs was a wonderful host, and I look forward to returning in June for the symposium. This report will include updates from the September board meeting.

FARM BILL

Since my last update, we have identified a steering committee to continue progress on these new authorities. This includes Forest Service representatives Gary Church, Will Dienst, and Sharon Nygaard-Scott. The BIA is also working to appoint staff to work with the ITC and Forest Service on this project. ITC has partnered with the Udall foundation to facilitate a series of webinars and workshops. The webinar will focus on P.L. 93-638, and two spring workshops will focus on the 2018 Farm Bill authorities and Biomass demonstration projects. The steering committee intends to have the webinar available before the end of the year.

ITC continues to look for opportunities to correct language in the Farm Bill pertaining to Good Neighbor authority. We hope to identify a fix that allows Tribes to retain program income/retained receipts, similar to the authorities granted to the state.

IFMAT IV PLANNING

On September 4, 2019, a meeting was held with past IFMAT co-chairs John Gordon and John Sessions. ITC has established a tentative oversight committee to begin this process. Those included to date are Cody Desautel, Vernon Stearns, Phil Rigdon, Jim Durglo, Dee Randall, Will Putman, George Smith, Darin Jarnaghan, and Tim Miller. Early steps will include a review of the After Action Review from IFMAT III, and defining the IFMAT IV team.

There was further discussion about topics to include in addition to the eight legislatively required questions. Climate change was discussed as an additional item, along with continued conversation about workforce development. Operations also reviewed the recently updated the strategic plan to ensure we have alignment between both documents. I will continue to provide updates as we make progress.

ITARA (INDIAN TRUST ASSET REFORM ACT)

In December 2018, the BIA started accepting applications for ITARA demonstration projects. Both Coquille and Cow Creek were accepted into the demonstration project in April of 2019. The tribes have met with Central office staff to review Indian Trust Asset Management Plans (ITAMP). Those ITAMP's are expected to be approved by spring of 2020. This is exciting news, and we look forward to continued updates on implementation of this legislation and demonstration projects.



Williams Flats

WILLIAMS FLATS FIRE ON COLVILLE RESERVATION

Big fires on the Colville Reservation seem to be like birthdays, you have one every year. On August 2, 2019, the Williams Flats fire started on the southeast corner of the reservation in the Hellsgate Game Reserve. Over the next two weeks the fire burned approximately 45,000 acres. While some of that burning happened under very high temperatures, low humidity's, and high Haines Index the post fire severity had a low percentage of high severity fire. The BARC map showed only 2,913 acres of the highest fire severity. I know tribes around the country do a great job managing forests and fuels, and I wanted to share this example of the benefits of tribal management.





INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL

1112 NE 21st Avenue, Suite 4

Portland, OR 97232

First Class
