



INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL TIMBER NOTES

Fall ~ 2023



Aaron Baldwin

BIA NAVAJO SCOUTS LEARN THE ROPES TO SUPPORT INCI- DENT COMMAND

POST SUPPLY UNIT

Camp crews are the backbone to maintaining a clean camp environment and supplying firefighters and administrative staff with all major needs related to the fires' incident management. The camp crew maintenance and camp crew supply units set the incident command post (ICP) up for success. They do this by setting up the camp layout, safety signage and barriers, supplying ice, water, and sports drinks, maintaining ICP grounds daily and supplying camp and firefighter needs to maintain a clean and fully stocked camp to meet incident needs.

The camp crew supply unit provides a vast number of needs for incident staff, such as hose, pumps, chain saw equipment, Meals Ready-to-Eat (MRE), fire resistant clothing



Photo of the incident command post camp crew for the Cottonwood Ridge, Snake Ridge, Mustang Ridge, and Spoon fires.

(nomex), batteries for radios and headlamps, tables, and chairs. Supplies that need to be restocked are ordered from the closest of the 16 regional fire caches throughout the nation. For this assignment, supplies are being ordered from the Prescott Interagency Fire Cache. Supplies are ordered using a specified form and can be delivered to a ground unit or by air, if necessary.

10 Navajo Fire Scouts, part of a Type 2 initial attack (IA) crew, from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Fort Defiance Agency has helped fill the critical shortages for the camp crew needed at the ICP for the Cottonwood Ridge, Snake Ridge, Mustang Ridge, and Spoon fires. Four of the 10 Scouts have opened a task book to become qualified as Receiving and Distribution Managers (RCDM) to sup-

port wildland fire response needs in the future.

“The whole crew has been so professional and has been helping us maintain a good, clean and well-stocked supply unit and yurt,” said Receiving and Distribution Manager Brad Kramer. “It’s great to have

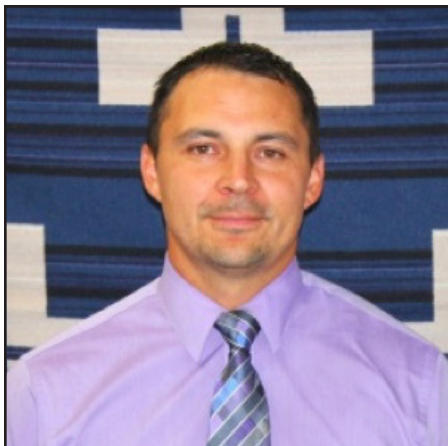
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President's Message

by Cody Desautel



Cody Desautel

As we move into fall, we have a number of important issues on the horizon. There is a looming government shutdown and pay cliff for federal firefighters that will be priorities for Congress as we close out the fiscal year. In addition, we should see the public release of the Wildfire Management and Mitigation Commission report in the last week of September, and we continue to work with the Congressional committees to schedule a hearing on the fourth IFMAT report.

Before we jump into those items, I would like to express my appreciation for the staff within the Department of Interior, Office of Wildland Fire, and Bureau of Indian Affairs for their work to extend the firefighter pay provisions authorized in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to Tribal firefighters working under 638 contracts. ITC has worked with the Department and Bureaus over the last year to correct this oversight in the Law. Through that collaborative work we have found a pathway to calculate and compensate Tribal firefighters with those same benefits. I am happy to report that the additional funding arrived at Colville last week, as I hope it has for other tribes across the country. We also appreciate the support we received from Tribes,

and Tribal fire management programs to find a solution for our dedicated and deserving staff.

In my previous report I mentioned the partnership between ITC and Salish Kootenai College's Center for Tribal Research and Education in Sciences to implement the ITC workforce strategic plan. It will be critical to start this work immediately, especially considering the potential implications of the federal firefighter "pay cliff" issue. Based on initial reports, there could be substantial capacity losses if a solution is not approved by Congress in the coming weeks. A reduced federal firefighting workforce impacts not only management and suppression on adjacent federal land, but overall capacity in the system including the ability to partner on co-stewardship activities with Tribes. Our hope is Congress will find a solution, but if they can't there may be an opportunity for Tribes to recruit those firefighters leaving federal service. Of course, this will all depend on the passing of a fiscal year 2024 budget, or a continuing resolution to provide funding while Congress continues negotiations. Matt Hill will provide more detail about the FY 2024 budget in his report.

The Wildfire Management and Mitigation Commission are scheduled to deliver their report to Congress in the last week of September. There has been an immense amount of work from the commission and support staff over the past year to develop recommendations to the challenges we face today and expect to face in the future in the wildfire space. Although the report will be complete, additional work is needed to share those recommendations and answers questions from Congress, the adminis-

tration, and public about the scope of our work and reasoning behind the recommendations. Many of the recommendations will require Congressional action, but many can also be implemented under existing authorities. With the final report complete, it is now time to think about implementation and how we utilize the recommendations to improve wildfire outcomes collectively in the future. This will take coordinated effort across all agencies with suppression and land management responsibilities. ITC stands ready to support this effort, and our Tribal communities impacted by wildfire.

We have a similar situation with the Fourth IFMAT report. Although the report is completed, we are now moving to the crucial step implementation. As noted in the current and previous reports Indian Country continues to suffer from underfunding and limited staffing. While there have been consistent funding increases over the past decade, we continue to lose ground to other federal agencies with land management responsibility, most notably the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. ITC continues to work on the implementation plan, and has contracted with our good friend Jim Peterson, Ecotrust, and Wood & Co. to improve the messaging of this report. We also continue to work with Congressional staff on presentation of the report. This has proved challenging with many competing priorities for Congress, and the added complexity of a pre-election year. Implementation of the IFMAT report recommendations will remain a high priority over the coming year.

To wrap up this quarterly report

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President's Message

by Cody Desautel

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there are a couple items I would like to mention. The next Farm Bill appears to be on Congress's agenda for next year. ITC has several recommendations that we will continue to work on with other inter-tribal organizations and Congressional staff. One of those issues was an amendment to the Good Neighbor Authority, which we have discussed in previous newsletters. It appears the "program revenue" issue may be addressed

with standalone legislation in the coming months. We will provide updates as that legislation makes its way through the process. ITC also continues to work with federal agencies on defining co-stewardship and co-management. We are making some progress on that front and hope to see new or expanded authorities in the coming Farm Bill that build on this momentum.

Although I included this in the previous newsletter, I want to restate

the invitation to help with IFMAT implementation. The report has powerful information, and we need representatives from Indian Country to share in that messaging. I also want to restate the invitation to those young leaders that want to experience working with the highest levels of government. We welcome and need your participation.



BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin

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them, because as experienced firefighters, they already know what the supply cache needs are for our firefighters, which helps the cache run smoothly with quality control of orders."

Becoming qualified as an RCDM provides the Scouts that have open task books with the opportunity to become qualified as an asset in another capacity within fire response. Currently, camp crew supply units have critical shortages for RCDM, ordering manager, and supply unit manager positions throughout the nation. These positions are needed within every ICP on fire to fill incident supply needs.

"I like learning all about how we generate orders, supply and support firefighters," said Jefferson Curtis, BIA Navajo Scout Type 2 IA and RCDM task book holder. "I also like being able to socialize and meet everyone who supports fires. Normally, as firefighters, we go out with our crews, work, come back, eat, sleep, get ready then do it all over again, so we do not get to meet everyone who supports the



Photo of Crewmembers of the BIA Navajo Scouts Type 2 IA and the receiving and distribution managers supporting the Cottonwood Ridge fire incident command post outside Show Low, Arizona.

fires."

When asked what the firefighters came to the supply cache for most, supply unit cache staff confirmed it was for clean nomex, gloves and paper towels. Personal hygiene is important to firefighters to stay healthy to keep doing the job they are doing to keep communities and values safe from wildfire.

BRANCH OF FIRE USE & FUELS

2023 SAF Conference: The Division has reserved four booth spaces and is planning to attend with partners as an exhibitor for the 2023 American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) National Conference. The exhibitor day will be October 20, while the con-

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ference will take place October 19-21. The purpose of attendance is to recruit for wildland fire management positions within science and math. Fuels Management partners will be presenting on the innovative technologies used to assist the BIA and other agencies with wildland fire management needs.

IAA: Fuels Management recently completed an Inter-Agency Agreement (IAA) with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and BIA for the development of Wildland Fire Risk Methodology that specifically addresses inclusion of tribal non-monetary and monetary values.

Delivery of Services: Fuels, Forestry and Abandoned Mines Lands programs and Tribes have been collaborating to improve delivery of services for Tribes.

RTRL BIL: Tribes and Fuels have collaborated to develop and fund at least \$8.7M of Reserved Treaty Rights Lands (RTRL) Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). BIL funds were identified this spring for RTRL to increase the RTRL budget to \$15M (\$9M BIL, \$6M Base). Fuels projects greater than \$5.8M of RTRL Base funds will be allocated to Tribes by the end of FY23.

National Women's Leadership Module Lead: Fuels is close to advertising for a new National Women's Leadership Module Lead that will work with the National Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Center (NIPFTC) to expand the program. We will also be hiring a National Fire Ecologist and a National Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation Coordinator.

Collaboration: Fuels is collaborating with the National Aviation Office for the development of Unmanned Aircraft utilization.

Fire Prevention: National prevention staff provided subject matter expertise regarding the development of the Standard Position Descriptions for the Prevention GS-0456 series. These have been completed through the GS-11 grade. Development of the GS-12 grade for prevention is ongoing.

National prevention staff along with Regional Prevention staff have reviewed and updated The Wildland Fire Investigation Handbook and 90 IAM 6 Wildland Fire Management Wildfire Investigation Manual. The final copies have been submitted to RACA for approval.

Further development of the Wildfire Prevention Spatial Assessment and Planning Strategies (WPSAPS) software application is ongoing. BIA staff provides leadership and technical guidance for the development team. The staff also continues to assist interagency partners with WPSAPS by providing training support in the form of lead and unit instructors and updating student and instructor training guides. To date, over 270 individuals have attended the training with BIA supporting all the training sessions.

Post Wildfire Recovery: Since June, the Post Wildfire Recovery Program (PWR) has assessed over 52,000 acres of Tribal Trust land that were affected by wildfires. Members of the Department of Interior Interagency Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Team have been utilized to evaluate soil burn severity and post-wildfire threats to human life, safety, and property as well as critical natural

and cultural resources important to each tribe. The interdisciplinary team engages with Tribal leadership and staff to develop a collective system of emergency treatments to reduce flooding, debris flow and erosion threats to critical values.

The Team has also developed burned area rehabilitation (BAR) treatments to initiate the path to long-term recovery and highlighted the opportunity for Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding to continue ecological restoration and recovery of burned lands. In total, proposed emergency treatment funds include \$914,000 for spring and cultural site protections, road stabilization, flood warning systems and more. BAR treatments include \$3 million for reforestation, invasive and noxious weed treatment, and replacement/repair of resource protection and fences. PWR has continued to utilize emergency stabilization, BAR and BIL BAR funds to assist Tribes and Pueblos with implementation of treatments.

BRANCH OF FIRE OPERATIONS

Training: The Division is now implementing the Wildland Fire Apprenticeship Program (WFAP.) We are looking to hire and enroll up to 20 apprentices for the 2024 fire season. Currently, apprentices will be funded using BIL funding. This program is set up for GS 3, 4, and 5 entry-level personnel and dedicated to the professional qualities and training needed to be successful in wildland fire management. Announcements for the WFAP will be available at USAjobs.gov in Spring 2024. The benefits to participating through the WFAP is that it does not require college degree and per-

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BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin

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sonnel who complete the program can convert, non-competitively, into an open GS-5 senior firefighter position.

2024 Engine Operator (ENOP) courses and planning is already taking place. The Great Plains and Western Regions have eagerly scheduled ENOP courses. Regions looking to host an ENOP course need to coordinate with BIA Training Specialist Mike Black, who will coordinate funding requests, logistics and course preparation. This course is complex and can be complicated to teach and plan. Using a coordinator to help with plan-

ning makes a significant difference in its overall success and merit.

The Federal Fire Workforce Development Program (FWDP) is also in phase 1 of its implementation. Initial staff are being hired, an up-to-date competency analysis is being performed by the Office of Personnel Management to refine exact qualifications and characteristics needed for GS 3-9 fire personnel across many functional areas. The FWDP seeks to fill in the gap between NWCG incident position coursework, day job duties and to properly prepare people for the next stage of their fire career.

National training staff continue to serve as fire subject matter ex-

perts for the development of the DOI GS-0456 standard position descriptions. Work is currently being done to implement dispatch, regional, national and WFAP positions through the new standard.

Branch of Budget: Funds have been transferred to three regions in Preparedness for tribal firefighter compensation for FY22. Funding for the remaining regions will be transferred as data is received and processed. Requests for FY23 data will be sent out in October, with funding to follow shortly thereafter.



Education Committee

by Shawn de France



Shawn de France

2023-2024 ITC SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hello, my name is Shawn de France. I am a member of the Confederated Salish, Pend d' Oreille, and Kootenai Tribes. I am the Program Manager of Inventory & Planning for CSKT's Division of Forestry where I have been working since 2014. I was recently selected as the new ITC Education

Chair. I received a Bachelor of Science in Forestry Degree from Salish Kootenai College in 2014, and I was selected to attend the sixteenth session of the National Advanced Silviculture Program in 2022. Thank you to Nicole Stiffarm for your time served as the previous Education Chair. I look forward to working with the committee.

The Education Committee met on September 12, 2023. The meeting was well attended with 18 participants. The committee approved the Truman D. Picard Scholarship deadline for 2024 and the announcement is now available. The Education Committee is pleased to announce that we approved accepting decedents from a federally recognized tribe for the Truman Picard Scholarship. We believe that this will provide more opportunities for our students and increase the number of

applicants significantly. The funds for the USDA Forest Service Research and Development Native American Natural Research Scholarship were previously defunded; however, ITC resubmitted a new agreement and we are hoping to have that agreement in place prior to the December deadline of this year. The scholarship, when approved, will provide up to \$25,000 per year for the next three years to support tribally relevant, natural resource-based research being conducted by Native American scholars enrolled in a graduate program.

The Education Committee discussed additional ways we can reach out to more students and how to assist them in the application process. Adrian Leighton, Salish Kootenai College, and Stephanie Gutierrez, Ecotrust, will work together to develop webinars that will walk the students through

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Education Committee

by Shawn de France

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the process and will utilize social media to promote the scholarships. The links will also be made available at ITC's website.

Adrian Leighton presented to the Education Committee on the workforce strategic plan. The BIA is currently developing a workforce development program and we will work together to develop a plan that will work for everyone. A separate meeting will be held in Boise, Idaho in October to develop the plan. The final plan will be presented to the ITC Board in December.

2023 Native American Natural

Resource Research Scholarship: The Research Scholarship is open to graduate students who are conducting tribally relevant research projects. **Deadline is Friday, December 1, 2023, 5:00 p.m. PT.** Amounts awarded will vary based on the applications received, and selected applicants will receive up to \$5,000.

2024 Truman D. Picard Scholarship: The Picard Scholarship Program is dedicated to the support of Native American Students pursuing a higher education in forestry, wildland fire and other natural resource fields. **Deadline is Friday, January 26, 2024, 5:00 p.m. PT.** The award amounts for applicants are as follows - \$2,500 for college

students (number of awards varies per year); \$2,500 for graduate students and graduating college seniors that are applying or accepted for graduate school; and \$2,000 for graduating high school seniors.

Both scholarship announcements are available for download on ITC's website: https://www.itc-net.org/about_us/scholarships.html. Also available for download is the "how to" guide designed to assist applicants with the Picard Scholarship application process. As always, please help spread the word on these funding sources to students in your networks.



Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo



Jim Durglo

High sustained winds in western regions combined with dry fuels have contributed to the spread and intensity of wildfires into communities. High winds also hamper firefighting efforts as they hinder the use of aerial support like helicopters and fixed wing air tankers. Even though Red Flag warnings were in place community residents were killed and homes lost due to wildfires being pushed through

communities by high sustained winds. Red Flag weather warnings are typically issued when there is expected low relative humidity, dry vegetation, and high winds. When a Red Flag warning is in effect, it serves as an alert to fire agencies, land managers and the public about the heightened risk of wildfires. We need to better communicate about Red Flag warnings and what they mean to be better prepared to react when wildfires occur near communities during these warnings.

Wildfires can have significant impacts on communities, affecting both the environment and the people who live in the affected areas. Following are key points regarding the impacts of wildfires on communities:

Wildfires have caused injuries and tragically, loss of life. Firefighters, residents, and wildlife have all

been affected. The heat, smoke inhalation, and accidents related to firefighting operations can lead to injuries, while the fast-moving nature of wildfires sometimes make it difficult for people to escape to safety.

The most visible impact of wildfires is the destruction of homes, buildings, and community infrastructure. Wildfires can quickly engulf residential areas, leading to the loss of houses, schools, hospitals, and other essential facilities. This displacement can cause a severe disruption in people's lives and can take generations to fully recover from.

Wildfire smoke from community infrastructure contains harmful pollutants such as particulate matter, carbon monoxide, and volatile organic compounds, which can have adverse effects on air quality and human health. The smoke

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Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo

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Photo by CSKT Division of Fire showing Boulder 2700 Road Fire as it burns structures during high wind event on the Flathead Indian Reservation in 2021.

can irritate the respiratory system, exacerbating conditions like asthma and bronchitis. Prolonged exposure to smoke can also increase the risk of heart and lung diseases.

Communities heavily reliant on tourism, agriculture, or forestry can experience significant economic losses because of wildfires. The destruction of natural resources, infrastructure, and disruption

of businesses can have long-lasting impacts on local economies, leading to job losses and decreased revenue.

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Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo

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Overall, the impacts of wildfires on communities can be devastating, affecting not only the physical landscape but also the lives of individuals and the social fabric

of a community. Effective strategies for prevention, mitigation, and post-fire recovery are crucial in minimizing these impacts and building resilient communities.

As more people move into the wildland, we should be more in-

tentional about community awareness and readiness when Red Flag warnings are issued.



Awards Committee

by Robin Harkins



Robin Harkins

2024 EARLE R. WILCOX ANNOUNCEMENT

As fall approaches it is time to start thinking about recognizing our peers and others who have made significant contributions to Indian forestry and natural resources through their work in our industry. Nominations are open for the Earle R. Wilcox Memorials Awards with applications due in the ITC Office by January 26, 2024, at 5:00 PM Pacific Time. The committee made some revisions to the nomination form last year to streamline

the process and believe it worked well. If you have thought about nominating a peer in the past, please give it some more thought and get those nominations started.

Earle R Wilcox Memorial Awards: Honor individuals who have made significant contributions in the field of Indian forestry and natural resources. The awards are given in honor of Mr. Earle R. Wilcox, who will always be remembered for his significant achievements on behalf of Indian people and their forests. Mr. Wilcox's career spanned some 33 years with the Bureau of Indian Affairs across the country, being interrupted by World War II and the Korean War and culminating with his position as Chief of the BIA Forestry Program with his retirement in 1973. After his retirement, Mr. Wilcox continued to serve Indian forestry and contributed greatly to the development of the Intertribal Timber Council and what it stands for, giving with a spirit that exemplifies a man

who believed in the greatest good for Indian people and our forests. His integrity and tenacious spirit inspired those who were privileged to have known him.

Anyone can nominate someone for the award. Details on how to nominate and the application packet requirements for the Earle R. Wilcox Award were mailed to Tribes on November 3, 2023, can be found on the ITC website https://www.itcnet.org/about_us/awards.html or can be obtained by calling the ITC office at 503-282-4296. Nominations will be considered for both the regional and national award based on level of contribution and effort. If you have questions or need guidance on completing a nomination, please contact myself at robinharkins@coquillet-ribe.org or the ITC office.

Award selections will be made during the virtual February Board meeting.



Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

As of the drafting of this article, the federal government is on a col-

lision course with a government shutdown on October 1, 2023, the beginning of Fiscal Year 2024. Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy has repeatedly tried

to appease his hard-right flank by agreeing to the steep spending cuts they are demanding to keep government open. But no deal is on

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Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

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Matt Hill

the horizon and federal agencies are preparing plans for a shutdown situation.

Either way, the previously enacted debt ceiling deal provides that if all the appropriations bills are not enacted by September 1, 2023, there is a 1 percent across-the-board cut to current program levels. Since Congress did not meet the requirement of passing all the bills by October 1, this mandatory 1 percent cut will be in effect, although it is a total number, not specific to each individual program or line item.

In conjunction with the Office of Management and Budget, every agency in government maintains a contingency plan for a lapse in appropriations. That includes exactly which work it will continue to conduct despite not receiving annual funding, as well as which employees it will require to continue working to carry it out.

The White House, through OMB, maintains some latitude in the exact consequences of a shutdown. Federal employees funded through mechanisms other than annual appropriations, as well as those necessary to protect life and property, are considered either “exempted”

or “excepted” and work throughout shutdowns on only the promise of backpay. The rest of employees are sent home on furlough without pay, though, following the record-setting 35-day shutdown in 2018 and 2019, those workers are now also guaranteed backpay.

When Congress gets around to finishing its work on the FY24 appropriations bill, we know that the

Senate version of the Interior appropriations bill provides the following:

Tribal Forestry: The bill provides \$66,106,000 for BIA Tribal Forestry, an increase of \$89,000 more than the enacted level accounting for an internal transfer and a program increases of \$1,000,000. Of these funds, \$30,478,000 is provided for Forestry Projects and \$35,628,000 for base funding.

Tribal Firefighters: The Appropriations Committee notes that the Biden Administration had proposed a package of pay-related legislative proposals (included creating parity for contract tribal firefighters). However, the Appropriations Committee is waiting for those proposals to be enacted through the relevant committees of jurisdiction.

Wildfire Recovery: The Service should partner with Tribes to prioritize recovery on lands impacted by wildfire.

Wildfire Protection: The bill directs the DOI to promote and expand the use of agreements with Indian Tribes to protect Indian trust resources from catastrophic wildfire, insect and disease infestation, or other threats from adjacent Federal lands, as authorized by law. The Committee directs the Bureau to continue to coordinate with the

Office of Wildland Fire to submit a report describing how the Department determines the use of wildfire suppression and rehabilitation resources and prioritizes Indian forest land.

House Passes Tribal “Good Neighbor” Fix: In September, the House of Representatives passed bipartisan legislation that fixes a problem from the 2018 Farm Bill regarding tribes. Specifically, the “Treating Tribes and Counties as Good Neighbors Act” clarifies that tribes and counties are able to conduct “Good Neighbor” forest management agreements with federal agencies with the same authorities that states currently possess. At issue was the retention of timber receipts from forest management projects that allow planning of future projects. Without that authority, building a forest restoration program is incredibly difficult and limited tribal participation in the program. The bill is supported by the Intertribal Timber Council.

House Passes “Acres” Act: After investigative reporting found that agencies, like the U.S. Forest Service, have been overstating their fuel reduction work for decades, Rep. Tiffany (R-WI) introduced the ACRES Act to hold federal land management agencies accountable in the work they are doing to reduce the amount of fuel for wildfires on public lands. Specifically, H.R. 1567 would require the Secretaries of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Department of the Interior (DOI) to carry out a yearly hazardous fuel reduction report based on the actual number of acres that the respective agencies treated over the past year. This includes a breakdown of treatment in WUI and areas of vari-

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Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

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ous wildfire risk, type of treatment, including “resource benefit” wildfire, cost of treatment per acre, etc. In September, the House passed the ACRES Act by a vote of 406-4.

Farm Bill Update: On July 26, ITC President Cody Desautel testified before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs’ hearing on “Native priorities for the 2023 Farm Bill Reauthorization.” Cody’s testimony focused on ITC’s main priorities. During the hearing, Sen. Daines (R-MT) re-stated his supporting of changing GNA authority to fully allow tribes to participate in the program. Daines questioned Cody about what tribes would be able to do with full GNA authority.

Cody responded that most tribes don’t have funding to manage their own lands, let alone adjacent federal lands – thus the need for receipt retention authority under GNA.

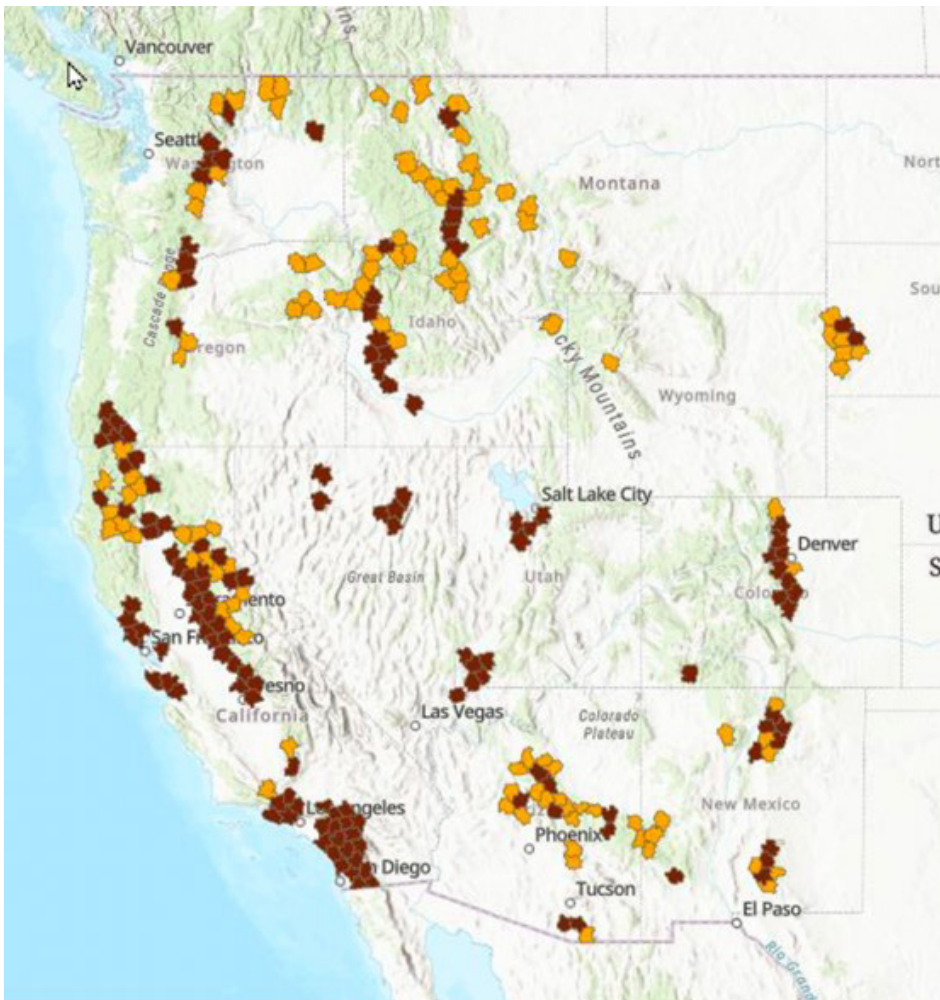
Overall, it is highly unlikely that the Farm Bill work will be completed this year. The House Agriculture Committee Chairman --G.T. Thompson (R-PA)-- recently said in an interview that Congress is ‘probably going to need an extension’ of the existing farm bill — the most direct acknowledgment yet by any senior agriculture lawmaker that delays mean Congress is unlikely to complete work on the Farm Bill before large portions of it expire in September, let alone in calendar year 2023. Neither chamber has produced a draft of its Farm

Bill reauthorization.

Debt Ceiling Deal = NEPA Reforms: 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 also included a set of significant changes to the NEPA process.

The bill institutes legislative limitations on the generally 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 EA’s 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 ultimately chose not to). It somewhat tightens requirements on 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. Of course, a land management agency could game the system by issuing a “notice of intent” to prepare an EIS. The bill does allow “project sponsors” to propose preparation of an EA or EIS, and then allows that project sponsor to go to court to enforce compliance with the timeframes for completion of the environmental documents. Unfortunately, the page limitations in the bill do not apply to “citations or appendices,” which creates a signifi-



Map of Forest Service High-Risk Firesheds

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Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

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cant loophole.

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 significant change to current Forest Service NEPA practice.

Forest Service Firesheds Map, Management Authorities: The Chief of the Forest Service recently issued a letter to regional foresters urging them to use emergency management authorities in priority firesheds across the country. In fact, the July 19 letter states that new NEPA authorities provided in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law should be the “default way of conducting environmental reviews and before consideration of our normal practices.”

These authorities include:

Categorical Exclusion: For fuel breaks up to 1,000 feet in width, not more than 3,000 acres of treatments and located primarily in the wildland-urban interface or a public drinking water source area; if located outside the wildland-urban interface or a public drinking water source area, an area within Condition Class 2 or 3 in Fire Regime Group I, II, or III that contains very high wildfire hazard potential; or an insect or disease area designated by the Secretary concerned as of the date of enactment of this Act.

Emergency Actions: A new statutory tool that authorizes the Secretary to determine that an emergency situation exists on National Forest System lands and allows treatment to be carried out pursuant to the Secretary’s emergency situation determination. If the Secretary determines that an authorized emergency action requires an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement the Secretary shall study, develop, and describe only—(A) the proposed agency action; and (B) the alternative of no action. Requires the opportunity for public comment during the preparation of both environmental assessments and environmental impact statements for authorized emergency actions. Actions under this section are not

subject to the objection process and a court shall not enjoin an authorized emergency action under this section if the court determines that the plaintiff is unable to demonstrate that the claim of the plaintiff is likely to succeed on the merits.

Map of Forest Service High-Risk Firesheds

Northwest Forest Plan Re-Write: There will be significant tribal representation on a federal panel designed to re-write the controversial Northwest Forest Plan, covering federal lands in California, Oregon, and Washington State. The 21-person committee will meet over the next year across the Pacific Northwest, the first virtual meeting took place in July and the first in-person meeting occurred in early September. Meetings will be open to the public. It is chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act and thus is able to make formal recommendations that can be adopted by federal agencies. Tribal representatives on the panel include Bobby Brunoe - Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Elaine Harvey - Yakama Nation, Ann House - Snoqualmie Indian Tribe, and Angela Sondenaar - Nez Perce Tribe.



Operations Committee

by Jason Robison

It’s hard to believe that summer has swiftly passed, ushering in the fall season. The ITC Operations Committee remains dedicated to addressing key issues affecting member tribes. On September 13, 2023, the Committee convened virtually to discuss crucial agenda items, which are detailed further below.

Review of Tribal-Federal Shared Decision-making Agreements: The Government Accountability Office team, led by representatives Keesha Luebke, Anna Maria Ortiz, Lesli Pollock, Casey Brown, and Jose Altamaro, detailed their ongoing study. Mandated by the U.S. Congress, this study scruti-

nizes federal agencies’ collaboration with tribal entities, focusing on the uneven distribution of decision-making power. Despite joint responsibilities, tribes often find themselves sidelined. Their research aims to comprehend the nuances and challenges of such

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Operations Committee

by Jason Robison

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Jason Robison

agreements. By Fall 2024, a report will be released, offering strategic guidelines for improved collaboration.

If you'd be willing to have an additional conversation with us after this meeting to expand upon any of these topics, please share your thoughts with Anna Maria Ortiz, Director, at OrtizA@gao.gov or (202) 518-2788; Leslie Pollock, Assistant Director, at PollockL@gao.gov or (303) 572-7344; or Kee-sha Luebke, Analyst-in-Charge, at LuebkeK@gao.gov or (303) 572-7481.

Tribal Wood Marketing: Micah Stanovsky, representing Sustainable Northwest from Portland, highlighted the significance of fostering tribal wood markets in the Pacific Northwest. The Green Markets team, under his leadership, is committed to strengthening wood supply chains that echo both cultural heritage and environmental sustainability. With consistent support from ITC, they anticipate expanding their cooperative efforts, further reinforcing this valuable alliance.

The Stewardship Project: Intro-

duced by Don Hankins, Scott Stephens, and Sara Clark from CSU Chico, the "Stewardship Project" seeks to weave together the fabric of indigenous knowledge with the rigor of western science. Targeting climate vulnerabilities, they aim to create a policy nexus that aligns federal protocols with proactive indigenous stewardship methodologies. Their seeking ongoing support from ITC to move forward with their focus areas.

IFMAT-IV Implementation: Stephanie Lucero updated the team on the IFMAT implementation process, which comprises three phases: Communication Distribution, Assessing Recommendations, and Setting Priorities. The IFMAT report has been released, with ongoing work on crafting messages, creating materials for distribution, and preparing content for Congress. There are planned presentations at various conferences (ATNI, SAF, NCAI, etc.), and efforts are underway to analyze and categorize the key findings. Of the 38 recommendations, the ITC can directly oversee only 3-4, with specialized teams handling evaluation and prioritization. Implementation meetings occur monthly.

Workforce Development Update: Adrian Leighton and Nicole Stiffarm provided updates on workforce development, highlighting that the strategic plan is currently being revised, consolidating the initial five strategic pillars into three core themes: Recruitment, Outreach and Education, and Training and Education. Each theme has six action steps, designed with a five-year funding perspective. Feedback will be gathered with two planned review sessions, aiming to present the finalized strategy at the ITC meeting

in December. Additional endeavors include an upcoming discussion at the SAF meeting, a new website focused on tribal forestry jobs, and preparations for the Tribal Forestry and Fire Student Summit in Fall 2024 at the University of Montana, with subsequent summits being planned. For more details, Adrian is available for contact.

Farm Bill Coalition Update and Tribal Firefighter Pay: Matt Hill provided insights on the progress of the Farm Bill Coalition and the pressing concerns about tribal firefighter pay. The impending expiration of the current Farm Bill has instigated active lobbying from the Farm Bill Coalition, urging the Senate and House Agriculture Committees to emphasize tribal priorities, all of which have been incorporated and align with ITC's stance. Despite this alignment, the nearing expiration date, coupled with the present political milieu, suggests a likely delay in the approval of a renewed Farm Bill. Instead, there's an expectation of a short-term extension followed by a full legislative process in 2024. President Cody Desautel, has been proactive, participating in hearings and furthering a standalone bill addressing the "good neighbor" clause, which is predicted to receive House endorsement soon. Another significant initiative is the bid to acquire congressional endorsement for transferring small federal forest land parcels to tribes.

On the matter of firefighter pay, there have been notable developments. Funds earmarked for back pay have been efficiently channeled to the respective regions. While President Biden's FY2024 proposal made strides towards recognizing federal and tribal contract

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Operations Committee

by Jason Robison

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firefighters, a gap persists, as the current legislative drafts fail to acknowledge tribal firefighters. This oversight underscores the urgent need for administrative intervention to advocate for tribal-specific resolutions. Additional details are available in Matt Hill's legislative update.

Wildland Fire Technical Specialist Update: Jim Durglo provided a general overview of his updates which included the following: In the western regions, high sustained winds and dry conditions have intensified wildfires, pushing them into communities and impeding aerial firefighting efforts. Despite Red Flag warnings, which indicate heightened wildfire risks due to factors like low humidity and strong winds, there were significant casualties and property damage. The need for clearer communication regarding these warnings to ensure better community preparedness is evident. The Wildland Fire Leadership Council's western committee is initiating a proactive approach, engaging diverse stakeholders, including emergency management and elected officials, to develop a cohesive strategy for addressing these fire-related challenges.

ITC remains actively involved with the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC), the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG), and a subset of the WFLC, the Wildfire Resilience Coalition. The WFLC will conduct an All-Lands Wildfire Resilience Framework Workshop from September 26-28, 2023, in Denver, Colorado. The aim is to develop a universal playbook for assessing cross-boundary landscapes and implementing treatments to improve wildfire resilience across various

land ownerships and jurisdictions, in sync with the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. The Wildfire Resilience Coalition is focusing on engaging with the Forest Service regarding the distribution of BIL and IRA funds. They are also advocating to maintain the current elevated pay for federal firefighters to prevent potential staffing crises. Furthermore, the Coalition's Steering Committee has initiated a survey to pinpoint its top policy recommendations, which will be influenced by the Roadmap for Wildfire Resilience, a document published by The Nature Conservancy and Aspen Institute in March 2023.

One primary initiative of NWCG is the full transition to Complex Incident Management (CIM) by April 2024, which would shift away from the traditional Type 1 and Type 2 incident management teams. As of September 5th, 11 Complex Incident Management Teams (CIMTs) have been dispatched. Another critical focus is the enhancement of collaboration with non-traditional partners to bolster workforce capacity in wildland fire management. The discussions revolve around safety, improving mutual engagement, understanding barriers to accessing resources, streamlining standards, and increasing education about NWCG's mission. The Incident Workforce Development Group (IWDG) has identified over 30 groups that can offer additional resources or engagement. Finally, a new voluntary pathway for Prescribed Fire Practitioner Qualifications was presented to the NWCG Fuels Management Committee. The committee recommended that individual agencies develop specific guidelines, as the proposed pathway did not align with current NWCG Standards. The board is

currently seeking clarity regarding conflicts with existing policies.

Tribal Interior Budget Committee (TIBC) Updates: Pete Wake-land briefed on the TIBC meeting from August, which ITC President, Cody Desautel, attended and commented on for ITC. Discussions centered around fisheries funding at NOAA and the importance of ensuring funds reach the tribes. TIBC expressed interest in hearing about tribal project successes directly from tribes rather than BIA. A subsequent meeting is slated for November in DC, and NCAI will coordinate with tribes to present these success stories. Potential future funding for tribes was hinted at, and a consultation call between TIBC and tribes might occur soon.

Request for Support of 2023 Inter-Tribal Ecosystem Restoration Partnership Peer-to-Peer Learning Summit: Lomakatsi Restoration sent a letter to ITC President Desautel seeking participation and endorsement from the ITC for the 2023 Inter-Tribal Ecosystem Restoration Partnership Peer-to-Peer Learning Summit scheduled for November 14-16 in Sunriver, Oregon. This summit aims to enhance tribal involvement in large-scale restoration initiatives by facilitating peer learning. The organizers invite an ITTC representative to discuss the Tribal Forest Protection Act on one of their panels, emphasizing the alignment of the summit's content with ITC's focus areas. They seek ITC's endorsement and permission to use its logo, highlighting the event's potential to foster collaboration between tribes, agencies, and organizations towards the mutual goal of building resilience against climate change's impacts.

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Operations Committee

by Jason Robison

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National Park Service Collaboration on Tribal Nurseries:

On September 8, 2023, discussions were held about a potential partnership between NPS Intermountain Region, BIA Forestry, and the ITC for the restoration of park lands affected by fires. The National Park Service is applying for a grant aimed at rehabilitating fire-damaged park lands and seeks to collaborate with tribes possessing plant nurseries. BIA Forestry is already on board, contributing a list of relevant tribes. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law has earmarked \$325 million for post-wildfire restoration, focusing on rehabilitating landscapes that may not recover naturally. The goal is to ensure that necessary plant materials, including rare, native, and culturally significant species, are available for restoration. While the specifics of the grant and its recipients are yet to be determined, initial efforts are geared towards identifying potential tribal partners.

In essence, the initiative aims to synergize tribal capacity and restoration of native vegetation in fire-affected parklands, with potential funding and partnerships still under discussion. A dialogue between Pete Wakeland and Kim Greenwood unraveled potential opportunities for tribes to tap into this funding for Tribal greenhouses and nurseries. Tribes that have greenhouses or want more information should reach out to Laura Alvidrez for more information.

Canadian Softwood Letter of Support: The Canada-U.S. softwood lumber dispute dates back to the 1980s. The central issue is that much of Canada's softwood lumber is harvested from govern-

ment-owned lands, and the U.S. contends that Canadian lumber is unfairly subsidized by the Canadian government. The U.S. lumber industry believes this puts them at a competitive disadvantage, and they've often sought protective tariffs as a result.

The Meadow Lake Tribal Council (MLTC) located in Saskatchewan, Canada; has requested support from ITC regarding the ongoing United States-Canada softwood lumber trade dispute. The letter requested support from ITC to (1) institute an immediate exemption from the current trade tariffs for 100% First Nations-owned softwood lumber manufacturers that export softwood lumber into the United States; (2) immediately return to MLTC the entire amount of MLTC's accrued softwood lumber tariff charges held on deposit with the U.S. Department of Commerce; and (3) create a permanent exemption for 100% First Nations-owned softwood lumber exporters/importers of record from all future softwood lumber trade tariffs.

The Operations Committee clarified the intricacies associated with the softwood letter, highlighting its wider political ramifications and the importance of well-informed decisions. Further discussions are needed before supporting this initiative. Matt Hill has been assigned to offer a deeper political insight into the matter.

Navigator Funds / Keystone Agreement with USDA Forest Service OTR: The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act will grant \$10.5 billion to the Forest Service to address wildfire crises, ecosystem restoration, infrastructure needs, and forestry projects. In response, the Forest Service is pioneering "key-

stone agreements"—large national-level arrangements aimed at swiftly and effectively executing priority projects. These keystone agreements further encourage local partnerships and foster innovation, community engagement, and equitable distribution of benefits. Several organizations, including the National Forest Foundation, Mule Deer Foundation, and The Nature Conservancy, have already entered or are in the process of entering into these agreements. The Office of Grants and Agreements has also streamlined certain processes to facilitate these partnerships. As part of its equity initiative, the Forest Service Office of Tribal Relations is considering how these agreements can prioritize activities that champion equity, ensuring they cater to underserved communities and align with the agency's Equity Action Plan.

The ITC Operations committee is weighing opportunities to enter into these types of agreements with USDA; however, more work is needed to ensure that ITC can properly plan and implement activities under these agreements.

Wildland Fire & Legislative Specialist Contracts: The operations committee advised moving forward with the Scope of Work and proposals for the Wildland Fire Specialist and Legislative Specialist roles. They stressed the need to include a comprehensive performance monitoring metric in the contracts. The existing contracts will conclude at the end of September. Jim Durglo submitted a proposal for the Wildland Fire Specialist position, while Matt Hill proposed for the Legislative Specialist role.

Base funding for Tribal Forestry

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Operations Committee

by Jason Robison

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Programs: Rachel Tarpey, Forest Manager at Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, brought this discussion to ITC’s attention. Her concern centers on the outdated formula in the Code of Federal Regulations for Tribal forestry financial support, which results in her Tribal

Forestry program receiving no base funding. The formula determines a Tribe’s funding by considering all Tribes’ combined annual allowable cut (AAC) and then the individual Tribe’s AAC. This approach favors Tribes with higher timber cutting capacities.

BIA has already discussed this issue internally and there are a

number of revisions that need to be made to the 25 CFR to provide better support for Tribe’s. The formula is what it is, and everything is based on appropriations. This is something that ITC will continue to support moving forward.



Symposium Committee

by Howard Teasley, Jr.



Howard Teasley, Jr.

erated Salish & Kootenai Tribes in MT.

2026 Symposium: The 49th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium will be hosted by the Menominee Indian Tribe in Keshena, WI

2027 Symposium: The 50th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium will be hosted by San Carlos Apache Tribe in San Carlos, AZ.

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/.

Help: Intertribal Timber Council is a nonprofit organization and is always looking for donations and/or sponsorships during the Annual Timber Symposium. If a Tribe or business is interested in donating, please contact ITC directly.

Mailing List: If you are not on the ITC mailing list and would like to receive the annual symposium

2024 ITC ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM – SAVE THE DATE

Our Symposium Committee and the ITC Executive Board are very excited and honored to introduce the hosts, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in Cherokee, NC and would like to invite our Intertribal Timber Council family to the **47th Annual Nation Indian Timber Symposium, May 13-16, 2024.** The theme of this year’s symposium is “*Restoring Tribal Relations and Values to the Land.*” The agenda is still developing, check our website periodically for updates.

2025 Symposium: The 48th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium will be hosted by the Confed-

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	https://twitter.com/Intertribal_TC

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Symposium Committee

by Howard Teasley, Jr.

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agenda, please contact the ITC online at https://www.itcnet.org/get_involved/mailling_list.html.

Social Media: Follow us on our channels! Check out the media coverage of our recently published Fourth Indian Forest Management Assessment Team (IFMAT-IV)

Report. We would love to connect with you!



BIA Forestry

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.

Policy Revision: The Indian Affairs Manual (IAM) policy and National Policy Memorandum (NPM) have both been signed and issued as of 8/10/23. The IAM has been published online to the IA Policy and Directives website here: www.bia.gov/policy-forms/manual, and the NPM has been published online here: www.bia.gov/policy-forms/memoranda/npm.

Indian Trust Asset Reform Act (ITARA): We have received a new application from Quinault to participate in the ITARA Demonstration Project. We'll be reviewing this over the next couple weeks with the SOL and hopefully make

a recommendation to the AS-IA within 30-45 days.

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.

Tribal Forestry Summer Youth Camps: Proposals for hosting summer youth camps closed on August 25, 2023. The Division received 27 proposals from 7 Regions and if all proposals were funded, it would have the potential to introduce up to 1,200 kids to Forestry and Natural Resources. Proposals are currently being evaluated, and funding decisions should be made in early October. If selected for funding, Tribes will be notified through the Regional Offices. We're very happy with the responses and hope to continue to provide Summer Camp opportunities. Thank you to all the Tribes that submitted this year!

Budget / Funding for Forestry Projects: The deadline for Regions to submit FY2024 Forestry Projects funding requests to Central Office is November 9, 2023. 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

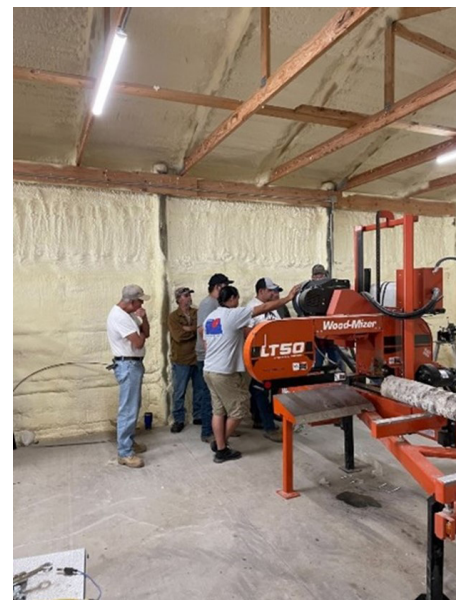


Photo of Turtle Mountain milling demonstration

Forester; or Caleb Cain, Projects Forester; Caleb.Cain@bia.gov; or Peter 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. Two projects from two regions were selected and \$75,000 was awarded. Future proposals will be reviewed by our team and tribes will be notified for accomplishment reports. For more information, please contact Peter Wakeland, or Orvie Danzuka, Timber Sales Forester at Orvie.Danzuka@bia.gov.

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Photo of office partition created by Turtle Mountain

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law - Ecosystem Restoration and Good Neighbor Authority: Twelve projects have been submitted for consideration for the FY2024 – FY2026 funding period. Projects include Prairie and Meadow Restoration; Tribal Greenhouses; Forest Health and Thinning; Habitat Restoration; and Watershed and Fish Passage Improvement. Project proposals will be evaluated over the

next couple of months, and projects should be selected and funded around the first quarter of Calendar Year 2024.

The BLM is seeking to advance Tribal Co-stewardship through funding directed to Good Neighbor (GNA) and Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA) agreements. The following are requirements for IIA Section 40804(b)(2):

Project proposals can be submitted to the local BLM field office in writing or by requesting a meeting through the field office tribal liaison officer (Tribal Liaison Contacts List1). Project details that are useful but not required for the first meeting include: project location and spatial extent, description of land health issue, proposed treatment to address issue, preferred implementation mechanism, i.e., cooperative agreement, 638, contract.

Timber Sales Operation Group (TSOG): The TSOG is waiting for RACA and the Office of the Solicitor to complete reviews of near final drafts of the Harvest of Forest Products Manual 53 IAM 3 and the handbook 53 IAM 3-H and the National Policy Memoranda for Direct Pay and Forest Management Deduction. The previous version of the handbook contained numerous “Illustrations”, The “Illustrations” have been replaced with “examples, exhibits, and templates.” These documents have been uploaded to the Division page at bia.gov along with documents associated with the 7H Trespass handbook. Take a look at these online resources here: <https://www.bia.gov/guide/forestry-documents>.

The group is continually working on TAAMS forestry enhancements with one of the most recent allowing upload of documents into TAAMS from the document toolbar. This allows for easy upload of digital copies of the contract and permits and any important supporting documents such as the signed Statement of Completion. These documents may be uploaded for recording or simply to allow easy access to the documents to TAAMS our System of Record, improving continuity of operations and ease
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of access to information. Additional improvements to the forestry invoice are currently being worked on for approval at the next TAAMS Change Management Board meeting.

The Northwest Region has scheduled in region TAAMS workshops for introductory and advanced level TAAMS users. We have scheduled a similar workshop to be held at the BIA Western Regional Office the week of December 4th. Sign up for the workshop is available in DOI Talent.

The tentative CGI led TAAMS forestry training schedule for FY 24 is as follows:

- Introductory TAAMS Forestry, February 6-9, 2024, TBD or Dallas, TX
- Advanced TAAMS Forestry, March 12-15, 2024, TBD or Dallas, TX

Timber Team: In FY23, the Tim-

ber Team spent 23 weeks traveling to seven states and brought direct forestry services to 12 Tribes throughout the nation. A total of 85 Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) plots, 771 stand exams, 100 stand exam inspections, 563 regeneration/stocking surveys, and 3,281 single tree cruises were completed. In addition, 90,000 acres were mapped, and 405 acres were prepped for timber sales.

This past summer has kept them busy, as they helped the Northwest Region to collect stand exam data for the Nisqually, Chehalis, and Makah Reservations of Washington state. This data will help Tribe's update forest management plans and allow for new timber sales to be prepared and offered in 2024.

The Team also traveled to Browning, MT to assist the Blackfeet Reservation Forestry Department with marking overgrown mixed conifer stands for harvest. The goal was to assist the tribe with creating fuel breaks between the Reservation boundary and Glacier Nation-

al Park. The Team then traveled to the Uintah and Ouray Reservation to help local staff with marking and cruising lodgepole pine stands to remove dead and dying trees. The intent is to remove fuel loads so the tribe can implement more prescribed fire into the landscape.

The Team wrapped up the summer by helping the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of Flathead Nation with regeneration surveys and cruising timber for an aspen enhancement project. In addition, the Team also helped conduct white bark pine surveys in order to help create an inventory database that will help the tribe plant new stock in their locally owned and operated tree nursery.

Timber Team's schedule for FY24 is as follows:

- October 2 – October 20, 2023: New York and Rhode Island, Eastern Region (Stand Exams)
- October 30 – November 9, 2023: Swinomish Reservation, Northwest Region (Stand Exams)
- December 4 – December 15, 2023: Stockbridge Munsee Reservation, Midwest Region (Salvage)
- January 8 – January 19, 2024: Mississippi Band of Choctaw, Eastern Region (Timber Cruising)
- February 1 – March 1, 2024: Open Dates (pending proposals)
- March 17 – March 30, 2023: Anadarko and Concho Agencies, Southern Plains Region (CFI)

We are seeking proposals for FY24 and federal/tribal staff that would like to work with the Timber Team on any assignment this year. Apply online at www.bia.gov/service/timber-team.



Photo of Regeneration Surveys for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of Flathead Nation

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Forest Health: BIA Forestry worked with the US Forest Service to distribute funding for approved projects. Two tribes were approved, and project totals are \$110,901.00. Work has commenced on both projects, and we will be seeking accomplishment reports by October 1, 2023. New project proposals are due on October 1, 2023. Examples of forest health projects include insect and disease infestations, mistletoe, blister rust, oak wilt, sudden oak death, etc. For more information, please contact Orvie Danzuka.

BRANCH OF FOREST INVENTORY AND PLANNING (FIP)

New Hire: Casey Sigg joined the FIP team in August 2023. He comes to the BIA from the Forest Service, where he worked for three years as a as Presale Forester on the Huron-Manistee National Forests and as a pathways intern on the Forest Vegetation Simulator staff. Work on the Huron-Manistee consisted of timber sale preparation, sale contract writing, and supporting a large annual reforestation program. He spent two years with the Wisconsin DNR as a Forestry Technician in Price County prepping timber sales and wildland firefighting. Before deciding to become a forester, he worked as a tour guide at Coldfoot

Camp located in the Brooks Range of Alaska. Casey has a BA in English from Oakland University and a Master of Forestry from Michigan Tech. His favorite forest type is northern hardwoods. In his free time, Casey enjoys spending time with family, skiing, biking, fishing and as a former English major of course, reading.

Inventory Projects Update: The team is actively working on eleven forest inventory projects. Currently, 21% of the inventory projects are at FIP, and 79% are with the region, agency, or tribe.

National Advanced Silviculture Program (NASP): The BIA sponsors up to five candidates for each NASP Class. Tuition, Travel, Salary, and Per Diem are covered for BIA employees. In addition, the BIA pays for the tuition of selected tribal candidates (tuition usually covers most of the housing and meals). The candidate’s home unit covers travel, salary, and additional per diem. Nominations for the next NASP cycle will be due this winter, talk with your Regional Forester if interested.

Silvicultural Certification using Taskbook: The BIA has recently collaborated with the US Forest Service to adopt the Silviculture Certification Task book as the BIA’s method for certifying Silviculturists. It is well known that in the BIA, only successful comple-



Photo of Casey Sigg, FIP Team

tion of the four NASP modules is required for Foresters to write and sign prescriptions. Under the negotiated agreement, successful completion of the Task book allows both Agencies to accept each other’s employees’ Silvicultural certifications.

There is NO time limit to start the taskbook. Anyone who has successfully completed NASP or is currently in NASP or been accepted into an upcoming NASP class can have a taskbook issued should they choose to pursue certification. To date four people have begun turning in tasks from the taskbook for review, editing and approval of those tasks. It is a demanding process, so if you have authorized your employees to begin the certification process remember that they will need time to complete these tasks.



Projects at Forest Inventory and Planning	
Initiation – 2023	3
Initiation – 2024-2026	4
Cleaning/Processing	4
Analysis	0
Total	11
21%	

Projects at Region, Agency, Tribe	
Data Collection	17
Cleaning	2
Processing	0
FIA	22
Total	41
79%	



INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL

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Portland, Oregon 97211

First Class
