



INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL TIMBER NOTES

Winter ~ 2024



Howard Teasley, Jr.

ITC ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM SAVE THE DATE – MAY 13-16, 2024

Our Symposium Committee and the ITC Executive Board are honored to introduce our hosts, **Eastern Band of Cherokee in Cherokee, NC** and would like to invite our Intertribal Timber Council family to the Forty Eighth 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.**”

Registration: ITC is finalizing the agenda soon. Members will be notified once registration is live. Check the ITC website periodically at www.itcnet.org for updates on registration, agenda, accommodations, etc. There will be plenty of room for all attendees to stay in the room block at the host hotel this



Photo of baskets made by local EBCCI artisans in Cherokee, NC.

year.

Monday, May 13: Pre-Symposium Workshops require additional registration fee and advance registration. Fees for the optional Pre-Symposium Workshops directly fund the Truman D. Picard Scholarship, dedicated to Native students pursuing an education in Natural Resources. Registration begins at 7:00 am for workshop attendees only.

Workshop 1 Forest Technology: Overview of Lidar, Digital Inventory, ArcPro, Fire Modeling and drones.

Workshop 2 Fire Ecology and Traditional Knowledge: Sharing Experiences and Knowledge’s to Restore Relationships with Peoples and Places: Giving participant the

understanding of cultural burning knowledge from the scientists and practitioners.

Workshop 3 Mask Carving: Learn traditional and modern mask carving techniques.

Workshop 4: Introduction to Cher-

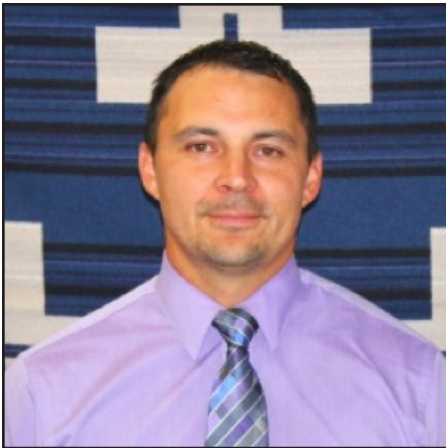
(Continued on page 3)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Symposium Committee	1
President’s Message	2
BIA DWFM	4
Education Committee	7
Wildland Fire Technical Specialist . .	8
Awards Committee	9
Legislative Update	10
Operations Committee	12
BIA Forestry	14

President's Message

by Cody Desautel



Cody Desautel

As we start a new year I want to look back on what has been another busy and productive year for ITC, and what is to come in 2024. Some more notable accomplishments were completion of IFMAT IV, the Wildfire Mitigation and Management Commission report, Implementation of the ITC workforce development strategic plan, and continued work to expand ITC's capacity to support Tribal forestry and fire priorities. In the coming year ITC will be focused on implementing the IFMAT recommendations, continued engagement on the Farm Bill, and development of a Keystone agreement with the U.S. Forest Service.

We are making progress on development of the implementation plan for IFMAT IV. ITC is fortunate to have Stephanie Lucero from the Udall foundation helping with this effort. We are focused on four primary goals, with recommendations from the report supporting the actions needed to accomplish these goals. While we are still working with Congress on scheduling hearings and briefings, ITC member Tribes were given the opportunity to testify in the House Federal Lands Subcommittee on December 5, 2023. The oversight hearing was titled "Examining Opportunities to

Promote and Enhance Tribal Forest Management." Witnesses included representatives from ITC, Mescalero, Menominee, Yakama, and Yurok. I had the opportunity to share IFMAT findings in my testimony, including requesting a full hearing dedicated to IFMAT in the House Committee on Natural Resources at a future date. Following is a link to the recording: <https://naturalresources.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=415219>

The Wildfire Mitigation and Management Commission report was submitted to Congress at the end of September. In total the commission came to consensus on 148 recommendations, which are outlined in the 328-page document. 20 of those recommendations are related to Tribes and indigenous stewardship. Indian country collectively owes Bill Tripp from Karuk, and Gary Jackson from Cow Creek a thank you for all their work and dedication through the development of this report. They did an excellent job raising tribal issues, and pushing the group into difficult conversations to ensure the tribal provisions were discussed and included in the final report. The commission continues to meet and work on messaging to ensure the recommendations outlined in the report are implemented to extent we have congressional support. Following is a link to the full report: www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/wfmmc-final-report-09-2023.pdf

Workforce development and recruitment continue to be a high priority for ITC. While the demographics of the current staffing continue to be a concern with more than 50% of our workforce being older than 50, we did see an in-

crease in the less than 30 age class jumping from 1.5% in IFMAT III to 11% in IFMAT IV (page 99 of the full IFMAT report). As I mentioned in my previous report we have received funding and entered into a contract with Salish Kootenai College (SKC) to lead implementation of the ITC workforce development strategic plan. Recognizing SKC's history for producing tribal foresters, I am confident their staff will make satisfactory progress on implementing the actions identified in the plan.

At the December board meeting there was a recommendation passed to develop an expanded staffing plan for ITC. There continues to be additional funding and authorities for tribes to work across boundaries with adjacent federal and state partners. We have reached our capacity with the board and limited staffing we have. Over the next two months we will draft and vet that plan for consideration at the February board meeting. The intent is to expand the engagement and support ITC provides to Indian country, particularly with the funding available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act over the few years. In addition, we plan to submit a proposal to the U.S. Forest Service for Keystone Agreement, and potentially and Navigator Agreement to ensure we have the resources available to support tribes interested in co-stewardship with their neighbors. ITC will continue to provide updates as we make progress on this plan. Additional staffing will also help support IFMAT implementation, implementing tribal recommendations from the Wildfire Commission report, and tribal authorities in the next Farm

(Continued on Page 3)

President's Message

by Cody Desautel

(Continued from Page 2)

Bill.

I want to close this update by thanking all the hard working, dedicated, enthusiastic staff that work both in Indian country and with our partner federal agencies. The ITC staff and board work tirelessly to support Indian country, and I want

to recognize all the extra time and work they dedicate beyond their responsibilities at home. I also want to thank the partners that continue to support us and the work we do. We would not have accomplished what we have without our friends at BIA, Office of Wildland Fire, Forest Service, Salish Kootenai College, and others.

I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and happy new year. I appreciate the opportunity to be a part of this family and participate in our collective work to improve opportunities in Indian country. I look forward to another productive year in 2024.



Symposium Committee

by Howard Teasley, Jr.

(Continued from Page 1)

okee Basketry. Discuss different techniques and view materials used to weave baskets.

Symposium Officially Begins.

Registration for all attendees at 3:00 pm, check in and pick up nametags. We will end the day with the Host Ice Breaker at 5:00 pm at Unto These Hills Outdoor Theater, while enjoying the music and appetizers.

Tuesday, May 14: Opening Ceremony and General Session.

We will start the day with the Registration and Exhibit Booths, raffle items and tickets sales will begin as well. Opening Ceremony, Invocation, Posting of the Colors, Welcomes, and Keynote will follow. Our morning break will bring us to our two-panel discussions for the day.

Panel 1: Building a Resilient Workforce in Tribal Forestry & Wildland Fire: The future of forestry & fire and a discussion of its complexities moving forward.

Panel 2: Turning Recommendations into Action: IFMAT-IV Implementation & Outreach Strategies: Overview of strategies spearheaded by ITC.

Following is the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Host Presentation. We will end the day with the Host Welcome Dinner.

Wednesday, May 15: Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Tribal Tour.

Stop one will be Waterrock Knob and its significance to Kituwah, song, and medicine. Stop two will tour the diplomatic site of Cowee Mound and the history of the Cherokee and the Trail of Tears. Attendees will also be shuttled up to Eagle Mountain Community Forest. The day will end with the General Membership Meeting.

Thursday, May 16: General Session Updates and Workshops.

Registration and Exhibit Booths will be open, and the raffle will continue. We will first begin the day with reports from the ITC President, Department of the Interior, DOI Office of Wildland Fire, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Legislative, and USFS Office of Tribal Relations. After the updates will be our three breakout workshop sessions.

Workshop 1 Engaging Federal & Non-Federal Partners to Meet Tribal Management Objectives: As tribes continue to face ongoing

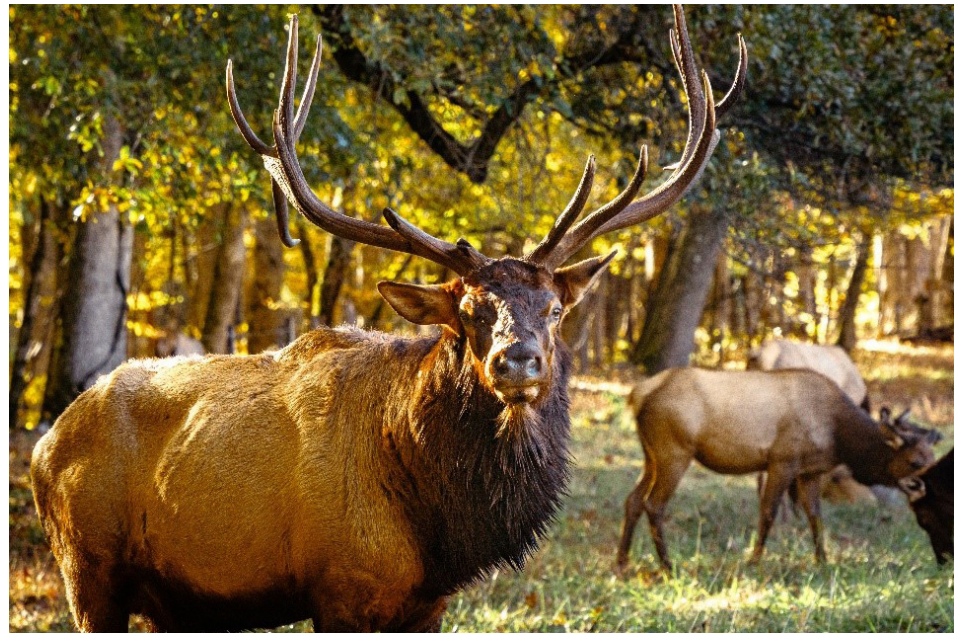


Photo of EBCL elk in Cherokee, NC.

(Continued on page 4)

Symposium Committee

by Howard Teasley, Jr.

(Continued from page 3)

challenges of workforce development, the need to identify non-traditional partnerships is increasing.

Workshop 2 Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK): Providing participants an opportunity to share their own visions, examples, and challenges with using TEK as a basis for natural resource management.

Workshop 3 Carbon Compliance & Voluntary Market Opportunities: To share opportunities in carbon space, BIA inclusion/exclusion in the process, and tribal examples to

demonstrate the potential..

Annual Business Meeting, and Annual Awards Banquet will end the Symposium.

Future Symposium Dates: June 9-12, 2025, ITC Symposium hosted by the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, MT.

2026, ITC Symposium hosted by the Menominee Indian Tribe, Keshena, WI.

2027, ITC Symposium hosted by the San Carlos Apache Tribe, San Carlos, AZ.

Help: Intertribal Timber Council

is 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.

Symposium Mailing List: If you are not on the ITC mailing list and would like to receive the annual symposium agenda, please contact the ITC online at www.itcnet.org/get_involved/mailling_list.html.

Take Care and God Bless you.
Qe'ciyew'yew Godnim Hautnin awas.



BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin



Aaron Baldwin

TRIBAL FIREFIGHTERS RECEIVE INCENTIVE COMPENSATION PAYMENTS EQUAL TO FEDERAL FIREFIGHTERS

In the original Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding that began in FY 2022, Congress approved a federal firefighter retention bonus



Photo of Don Jones showing Tribal Firefighters on the Yakama Nation fuels management crew burning a section of line on the Philip John Fire to pre-treat an area that has multiple starts annually.

for firefighters who met a list of employment guidelines as federal employees. The funding, unfortunately, did not include Tribal fire-

fighters who are not federal employees but do the same work to support federal wildland fire man-

(Continued on page 5)

BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin

(Continued from page 4)



Photo of firefighters watching the fire line on the Hop-Cot Prescribed Burn project in October 2023

agement objectives.

Uniquely, Tribal firefighters are not employees of the federal government, but are Tribal government employees that manage their Tribal fire programs through Public Law 638 contract obligations. In FY 2023, the BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management (BIA DWFM) spearheaded an initiative to ensure that Tribal firefighters are equitably paid to federal employees for the same work provided.

The BIA DWFM worked with each region to gather accurate individual Tribal firefighter data from each Tribe in their region to provide incentive compensation back pay for both FY 2022 and FY 2023. This data included the number of pay periods each Tribal firefighter worked, which program the individual worked in and whether they met the outlined requirements for the funding.

In total, \$23.6 million was paid

Tribal wildland firefighters for FY 2022 and FY 2023 from FY 2023 fuels management and preparedness funding, an additional appropriation provided by the Office of Wildland Fire.

In FY 2023, 944 Tribal firefighter personnel, including 627 full time employees, received a total of \$12.5 million in payments. In FY 2022, 901 total Tribal firefighter personnel, including 557 full time employees, received a total of \$11.1 million in payments.

“The special pay supplements made to Tribal wildland firefighters marks a successful effort on the BIA DWFM’s part to achieve equitable payments for Tribal firefighters compared to federal firefighter retention payments,” said BIA DWFM Budget Director Michael Nutter. “The Bureau celebrates this milestone arrangement and looks forward to continued support of Tribal efforts in wildland fire management.”

The Tribal firefighter compensation payments provided a pay supplement of \$9.62 per hour for all base hours compensated, up to \$20,000 per fiscal year, to all Tribal wildland fire and/or wildland fuels management personnel employed by Tribal wildland fire programs meeting the required employment parameters.

BIA Fuels Staff Complete 336% of 2023 Hazardous Fuels Reduction Goals: BIA regional fuels staff started the FY 2023 fiscal year with a goal of reducing hazardous fuels by 126,785 acres and by the end of the fiscal year, completed a total of 425,442 acres in hazardous fuels reduction (HFR). This total amounted to 336% of HFR goals for the fiscal year using \$40M in FY 2023 fuels management base funding.

HFR work is done in both the wildland urban interface (WUI) and in rural areas. Managing fuels within the WUI is prioritized because reducing these hazardous fuels increases public and firefighter safety, reduces the risk of unwanted wildfire to communities and helps protect important infrastructure such as radio towers, transportation networks, municipal watersheds, and utilities. Outside of the WUI, HFR helps restore and maintain healthy fire-adapted ecosystems, and keeps natural systems balanced while reducing risks to cultural values and historical infrastructure.

2023 HFR projects managed by BIA and Tribes took place throughout the country, focusing on prescribed fire and mechanical thinning as treatment methods.

One of the larger projects was taken on by BIA Fort Apache Agency fuels staff and the Geronimo

(Continued on page 6)

BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin

(Continued from page 5)

Hotshot Crew of eight personnel. The firefighters completed eight burn HFR projects encompassing 26,095 acres. Treatments were conducted using pile burning and broadcast prescribed burn methods throughout the White Mountain Apache Reservation in eastern Arizona. The burns met the need to reduce invasive vegetation fuel loading and restoring natural fire regimes, allowing communities to live more safely in an area prone to wildfire due to high summer heat and condensed understory and vegetation.

A smaller project with a significant

impact was the 15-acre Oak Savannah Understory Prescribed Burn at the Prairie Island Indian Community in BIA's Midwest Region. The treatment was a culmination of years of mechanical treatments to reduce shade tolerant hardwoods and eliminate invasive species. Oak Savannah is one of the most endangered ecosystems within the Nation and the applied HFR treatments generated a re-awakening of the significance of Oak Savannah to the Minnesota Mdewakanton Sioux Culture.

Blue River Reserved Treaty Rights Lands Projects Helps Chickasaw Nation Mitigate Wildfire Risks

By Joshua Williams, BIA Eastern

Region Fuels Specialist: Funds for Tribal firefighter special pay supplements were transferred to the regions or the Office of Self Governance where they are allocated to BIA Regions as appropriate. BIA Regions utilize the Public Law 638 process to obligate the appropriate funding to Tribes who are responsible for individual payments.

The Blue River Reserved Treaty Rights Lands (RTRL) project and partnership between the Chickasaw Nation Office of Natural Resources (ONR) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) began with the initial RTRL program proposal in 2019. The intent of the project being to mitigate significant economic disruptions and catastrophic damage to property resulting from wildfires through the removal of hazardous fuel loads using prescribed fire.

The project and partnership included three separate areas of interest: Lake of the Arbuckles Watershed, Blue River Watershed, and the Chickasaw Penner, Brunk and Bromide Ranches (Chickasaw Nation Fee Title, Fractured Trust, and LLC Lands). Tribal infrastructure in the form of ranches, cultural areas, business enterprises and home sites are intermixed throughout the project area. In March 2022, a massive wildfire near Sulphur, Oklahoma, threatened community infrastructure, Chickasaw Nation properties, caused home, campground and trail evacuations and closed numerous roadways.

Phases I, II, and III of the RTRL have been awarded in the amount of \$1,000,000 for each phase. Phase IV, applying prescribed fire to 4,500 acres of hazardous fuels, has been awarded in the amount of \$1,300,000 of FY 2023 RTRL program funding. Since the incep-

(Continued on page 7)



Photo of Yakama Nation Tribal Firefighters Don Jones and Victor Broncheau leading a dozer up the hill along the Red Sky Fire's edge on the Yakama Reservation.

BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin

(Continued from page 6)

tion of the project and Chickasaw Nation partnership, accomplishments include over 14,090 acres of applied prescribed fire and 2,611 acres of mechanical fuels treatments. These treatments are continuing and will add to the current accomplishments.

Use of prescribed fire and mechanical treatments were identified as important tools in the overarching goal of water quality and quantity sustainability in the Chickasaw Nation Treaty Territory. Use of these

tools was identified by Chickasaw Nation ONR staff and echoed by landowners within the Chickasaw Nation.

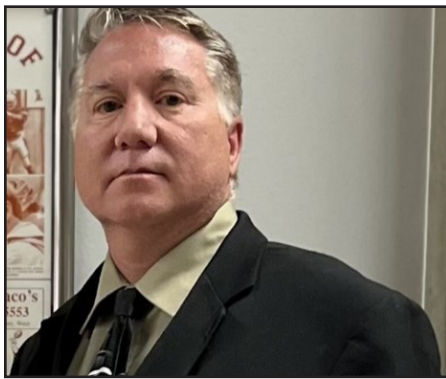
Since 2021, three Chickasaw Nation Tribal staff members have been developed and funded through the RTRL, including the watershed fire planner, watershed fire ecology planner, and an equipment operator. The watershed staff assisted in National Environment Policy Act documentation development and provided field support during prescribed fire and mechanical treat-

ments. The equipment operator removed the lands' eastern red cedar prior to prescribed fire treatments. Project accomplishments occurred with the guidance and leadership of BIA Eastern Oklahoma Region and BIA staff requested from other Regions and states. With the team involved, the prescribed fire treatments were applied under the supervision of highly trained wildland firefighters.



Education Committee

by Shawn de France



Shawn de France

2024 TRUMAN D. PICARD SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

The Education Committee is pleased to announce that the Truman D. Picard Scholarship is now open and accepting applications. There are a few key changes this year.

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. To have your application accepted by ITC you must prove that you are a member or descendant of a federally recognized tribe or Alaska Native Corporation. The Education Committee will select award recipients during the February virtual board meeting.

Picard Scholarship announcements are available for download on ITC's website at https://www.itcnet.org/about_us/scholarships.html. Please visit the ITC website "how-to" guide on our website to assist applicants with the Picard Scholarship application process. As always please help up spread to word on these funding sources to students in your networks.

2023 NATIVE AMERICAN

NATURAL RESOURCE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The 2023 Native American Natural Resource Scholarship deadline was December 1, 2023. The ITC Research Scholarship is designed to support tribally relevant, natural resource-based research being conducted by Native American scholars enrolled in a graduate program. The amount of the award varies, up to \$5,000. The Education Committee met on December 14, 2023. On Friday December 6th, a panel of six met to vote on the applicants for the ITC & USDA Forest Service Native American Natural Resource Scholarship. The committee agreed to fund two of the three applicants for \$5,000 each:

- **Sierra Hampton:** (Chickasaw Nation). Studying at University of California, Berkley. A Ph.D. candidate in Environmental Science, Policy, and Management. Researching "Indigenous Food Sovereignty and Characterizing Agro-

(Continued on page 8)

Education Committee

by Shawn de France

(Continued from page 7)

ecology in the Chickasaw Nation: Culture, Education, and Environmental Governance.”

- **Kristi Olney:** (Yakama Nation). Studying at Salish Kootenai College. To receive a Master of Science Degree in Natural Resource Management. Researching “Meadow restoration project to

restore camas (Cammassia quammash).”

Congratulations to the award recipients and keep your eyes out for next year’s 2024 Native American Natural Resource Scholarship. The Education Committee is dedicated to assisting students to reach their academic goals, thank you to everyone that assisted in the selection process and attending the

quarterly meeting. The committee proposed some exciting ideas to assist our students even better in the future. The logistics of these proposals are currently being reviewed and will be discussed during our February meeting.



Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo



Jim Durglo

Cultural burning is the deliberate intentional application of fire to a landscape with the intent to benefit resources of interest to the tribes. Our Salish Kootenai tribal elders have said that this type of burning was done by a highly knowledgeable person(s) with great skill, that knew when, where, and how fire should be applied to achieve specific goals. Whereas, Contemporary fuels management currently focuses on reducing fuel loading by thinning, pile burning, and understory burning with broad goals of restoration of historic fire regimes.

Colonization resulted in the oppression, the removal and/or extermination of many native peoples, and thus the loss of active



Photo of CSKT camas regeneration after underburn in the area locally termed Jocko Prairie.

fire cultural practices. Some Indigenous Peoples do not consider cultural burning to be a category of prescribed burning, because they consider the two practices to be fundamentally different. In the last two decades, Indigenous Peoples around the globe have reintroduced cultural burning techniques and objectives on a larger scale, although it’s important to note that many Indigenous groups in South America, Africa and Australia never stopped burning. For example, in California, legislation has been passed through extensive work by Indigenous groups that recognizes cultural burners and cultural burning practices. Important to

this is not just the application of fire, but the resurgence of Indigenous knowledge and issues of sovereignty, autonomy, and cultural transmission between generations. Also, important to understand, it’s not only about the application of fire to the cultural landscape but understanding the relationship of the people to places.

In California, SB332 focuses on lowering what some call an onerously high liability standard for fire managers or private “burn bosses,” including cultural burning operations done by tribes. With these legislative changes, managers who

(Continued on page 9)

Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo

(Continued from page 8)

follow a list of requirements when doing prescribed burns won't be held personally liable for fire suppression costs if a burn gets out of control. Another bill in California the much broader AB642, would increase prescribed fire and cultural burning in communities at high fire risk. It also defines "cultural fire practitioners" for the first time, putting traditional knowledge on the same level as state-certified burn bosses.

The Nature Conservancy, Indigenous Peoples Burning Network held their respective annual workshop in Santa Fe, New Mexico on November 2-4, 2023. Rene Romero, along with his brother Dalen, along with Darryl Martinez, John Martin, John Galvin, Bill Tripp and a host of others had a great couple of days of discussion and presenta-

tion on the use of fire for cultural resource benefit. Rene said that 'fire is the greatest gift from the creator given to the humans.

Also at the workshop, Victor Stefensen, Firesticks Alliance, Tagalaka people of Queensland, Australia spoke of his life experience living, learning, and practicing cultural burning in Australia and other parts of the world. He was fortunate to practice with elders that had clear windows to the past, that still live on the country. He says that indigenous knowledge is natural intelligence built over millennia. That we need to revive the knowledge from the country in which we live. "Let the country speak". These words seem inherent when we think of fire regimes, plant associations, and plant fire response. He speaks specifically about fire applications that are tied directly to native plant communities that have commonality across the globe.

The land, native trees, shrubs, and grasses have retained knowledge about fire relationships. We need to be more deliberate, careful, and intentional as we revive the knowledge from the landscapes as our ancestors have for thousands of years. Our contemporary fire and fuels programs focus on fuels reduction, thinning, piling, pile burning, underburning and acres of accomplishments. This work is critical to prepare the land for the low intensity fire that provides the benefits of nutrient cycling and species rejuvenation. Stay tuned for more great stories of Tribal programs using fire to re-establish fire adapted ecosystems, restore foods and medicines, and reconnect with historic and accustom use areas.



Awards Committee

by Robin Harkins



Robin Harkins

2024 EARLE R. WILCOX AWARDS DEADLINE

I hope you all had a joyous holiday season creating memories with family and friends. As we all get back to work in the new year, the

ITC Awards Committee is looking forward to reviewing the accomplishments of your peers in Indian Forestry as you prepare and submit your nominations for the Earle R. Wilcox Memorial Awards.

Please consider recognizing our peers and others who have made significant contributions to Indian forestry and natural resources through their work in our industry. Nominations are due in the ITC Office by February 2, 2024, at 5:00 PM Pacific Time. Details on how to nominate and the application packet requirements for the Earle R. Wilcox Award were mailed to Tribes in early November and can be found on the ITC website at <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.

Award selections will be made during the virtual February Board meeting and presented during the 47th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium being held in Cherokee, NC, on May 13-16, 2024.





Matt Hill

ITC AND MEMBER TRIBES TESTIFY AT CONGRESSIONAL HEARING

On December 5, the House Subcommittee on Federal Lands held an oversight hearing entitled “Examining Opportunities to Promote and Enhance Tribal Forest Management.” Witnesses included:

- John Crockett (Forest Service)
- Bodie Shaw (BIA)
- Robert Rice (Mescalero Apache Tribe)
- Michael Skenadore (Menominee Tribal Enterprise)
- Cody Desautel (Intertribal Timber Council)
- Phil Rigdon (Yakama Nation)
- Dawn Blake (Yurok Tribal Forestry Department)

Both sides of the political aisle talked about the positive contributions of Indian forest management as well as the challenges to meeting the government’s trust responsibility.

The full committee chairman, Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-AR) stated



Photo of Phil Rigdon, ITC Vice President testifying.

that “tribes have a rich history in forest management and have managed forests for a variety of uses. In the Q&A section, Westerman asked the Forest Service how authorities such as TFPA and GNA could be improved and mentioned the receipt retention legislation to fix GNA.

Westerman asked the BIA about the IFMAT report finding about the overall health of tribal forests. Bodie Shaw (BIA) responded that without change, we will likely see continual decline in forest health, increase in damage and costs of wildfire suppression.

Subcommittee Rep. Tom Tiffany (R-WI) asked the Forest Service why tribal lands are managed better than federal lands, to which the

Forest Service replied with examples of successes on NFS lands.

Tiffany also asked Phil Rigdon about the effectiveness of managing the Northern Spotted Owl in the Pacific Northwest. Rigdon stated that federal agencies put every acre into models that are not sustainable in fire-prone areas and have enhanced catastrophic wildfire.

Cody Desautel noted that “The result of [the BIA Forestry funding] inequity is catastrophic on Indian communities. The IFMAT report found reduced funding to BIA for forest management resulted in \$400 million in foregone timber revenue to tribes between 2010-2019. That means \$400 mil-

(Continued on page 11)

Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

(Continued from page 10)

lion was not generated to provide essential social, educational, and public safety services to some of the most vulnerable Americans.”

In his testimony, Phil Rigdon covered the IFMAT report, infrastructure needs, workforce challenges, and cross-boundary stewardship successes and challenges.

In her testimony, Dawn Blake (Yurok) said that “Our culture is inextricably tied to the forest, and the ability to weigh into decision making action within our ancestral footprint can provide opportunities for human resilience.”

Michael Skenadore (Menominee) noted that “Despite our highly successful forestry practices, we still face challenges that the United States, as our trustee and partner in managing our reservation forest, must help us overcome.”

Finally, Robert Rice (Mescalero Apache) called on Congress to amend TFPA. “Tribal work should extend beyond adjacent lands, and instead be authorized throughout certain federal Forest Service and BLM lands with which Tribes have proven connections,” Rice told the subcommittee.

Forest Service Launches Policy Changes, Seeks Tribal Input: There are two major policy changes coming that could affect management of National Forests — the national old growth amendments and the Northwest Forest Plan amendment. Comments on both are due February 2.

National Old Growth Policy Announced: The Forest Service has provided a [Notice of Intent](#) to amend all Forest Plans to incorporate management direction to

conserve, protect, and recruit old growth. The announcement is the beginning of a public process that will ultimately lead to amending 128 national forest plans over the next few years. The Northwest Forest Plan will be prioritized and will likely be the first to be amended. In addition, Deputy Chief Chris French issued a memo to Regional Foresters reserving the “decision making authority over management of old growth forest conditions on National Forest System lands during the amendment process” to his office.

This is not a national rulemaking, which would severely limit regional and local flexibility. It does not include a specific age class restriction, is not a national ban on active management near/within old growth forests, nor does it direct management for “mature” forests.

Northwest Forest Plan Amendment, Notice of Intent: The Forest Service also provided Notice of Intent to amend the Northwest Forest Plan. This is a separate, concurrent process. The amendment will focus on wildfire resiliency, climate change, old growth, the incorporation of indigenous knowledge and co-stewardship, and supporting forested communities.

The NWFP amendment process will also be informed by consensus recommendations from the Federal Advisory Committee, upon which there are multiple tribal representatives. The Committee’s work has already started and is expected to continue through 2024. The current timeline for providing consensus recommendations to the Forest Service is April 2024. The Committee’s next in-person meeting will be held at the University

of Oregon in Eugene from January 30 – February 1 and is open to the public.

Like the National Old Growth announcement, the Notice of Intent for the Northwest Forest Plan Amendment is the beginning of the public process. The Notice of Intent notes that “*tribal involvement in the development of the 1994 NWFP was overlooked and that engaging tribes in addressing the challenges faced in the NWFP area is critical to success.*” This means that tribal input will be central to the final plan amendment.

Government Funding: Congress avoided a government shutdown in late October and passed a Continuing Resolution to keep the federal government funded into January. The stopgap bill uses a two-tiered deadline structure pioneered by Speaker Mike Johnson, which will keep part of the government open until January 19, 2024, while funding for the military and some of the government’s biggest domestic programs will last through February 2, 2024. The idea is to stagger funding deadlines, which Congress notoriously struggles to meet, so lawmakers aren’t stuck with a massive 12-bill government funding bundle.

The CR also allows federal agencies to use Wildland Fire funding to maintain the wildland firefighter pay increases that were included in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Specifically, the CR ensures that temporary raises of 50% of their base pay or \$20,000, whichever is less, authorized in 2021 as part of the bipartisan infrastructure law and implemented last year, will continue to be paid until

(Continued on page 12)

Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

(Continued from page 11)

Nov. 17.

ITC has been told that tribal firefighters will get equal treatment under the CR. Absent congressional action, officials estimated that the Agriculture Department would run out of funding to maintain firefighters' pay on Nov. 4, while the Interior Department would have been forced to rescind last year's pay raises in mid-October.

Farm Bill Extension: The Continuing Resolution signed into law includes funding through next September for farm programs and food assistance, but only a few months of funds for a key nutrition program for low-income mothers and their young children. Without the extension, some farm programs would have expired at the end of the year. Neither the House nor Senate agriculture committees has yet released their drafts of a 2023 farm bill.

New Regional Forester For Pacific Northwest: Jacqueline "Jacque" Buchanan was appointed as the regional forester for the U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Region, effective Jan. 14, 2024.

Buchanan will oversee management of 16 national forests, two national scenic areas, a national grassland and two national volcanic monuments in Oregon and Washington. She worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture for more than 33 years and served as the deputy regional forester for the Rocky Mountain Region for the past eight years. Buchanan will succeed Acting Regional Forester Liz Berger, who will return to her permanent position as deputy regional forester for the Southwest region. Berger has been the acting regional forester since the retirement of Glenn Casamassa in April 2023.

Biden Administration Increases Co-Stewardship, Protection Opportunities: The Interior Department has released its [second annual report](#) on Tribal co-stewardship, which highlights the agreements that the Interior Department entered into in the past year.

The Department has also published departmental guidance on the inclusion and protection of Indigenous Knowledge in decision making and scientific research. A [new chapter](#) in the agency's De-

partmental Manual formalizes Indigenous Knowledge as a foundational piece of the Department's mission and formally recognizes Indigenous Knowledge as one of the many important knowledge systems that contribute to the well-being of the United States and to the collective understanding of the natural world.

The Department also announced that the White House Council on Native American Affairs has published a [Best Practices Guide for Federal Agencies Regarding Tribal and Native Hawaiian Sacred Sites](#), which provides best practices, procedures and guidance for the management, treatment and protection of sacred sites. The guide also identifies impediments to federal-level protection of sacred sites and identifies ways to address and remedy the impediments. The initial draft was informed by feedback gathered at two listening sessions, and the final version has been expanded and improved upon based on comments received through Tribal and Native Hawaiian consultation.



Operations Committee

by Jason Robison

Well, it's hard to believe it's a new year. I hope everyone had a happy holiday season. The ITC Operations Committee met on December 13, 2023, in Rancho Mirage, CA. The committee covered several operational updates during its meeting, including the following:

Draft ITC Staffing Framework: The committee reviewed a draft framework for increasing future staffing capacity for ITC. The

framework includes key positions such as an Executive Director, Grants and Contract Administrator, and other administrative capacities. Additionally, the framework recognizes the need for additional technical support and potential future positions. It also included a draft budget to support the positions and associated strategic costs. The committee passed a motion to proceed with develop-

ing a final framework and using it to evaluate sustainable funding opportunities and future agreements to support the structural changes to ITC. The motion also requested a subcommittee be formed to review the framework in preparation for submittal to agencies. The framework will be reviewed at the ITC board meeting in February.

IFMAT IV Implementation:

(Continued on page 13)

Operations Committee

by Jason Robison

(Continued from page 12)



Jason Robison

Stephanie Lucero provided a general update on the IFMAT IV implementation plan. The committee reviewed the four goals in the plan and the associated actions, providing recommendations for changes to Stephanie. Stephanie will be updating the plan, working with the team to conduct further refinements, and assigning lead roles for the action items. The committee emphasized the importance of funding for tribes to carry out forest management activities on Tribal Forest lands. The committee also approved amending the Ecotrust agreement, the master services agreement for Wood and Company, and adding additional funding for the UDAL foundation agreement to support additional efforts for IFMAT IV implementation. Resolutions were made available for the Board to review and approve at the 12/14/2023 Board Meeting.

CFR Revisions: The committee requested volunteers to participate in the CFR review subcommittee to support the BIA in the review and updating of the CFRs. The BIA has already identified some potential changes and is eager for support from ITC and its mem-

ber tribes. Committee members stressed the importance of bringing a tribal-specific focus to the revisions. To participate, please send a message to Laura Alvidrez at laura@itcnet.org.

Northwest Forest Plan Revisions Letter: Gary Morishima received a request from associates of the Sierra Club for an ITC perspective on the impacts of the Northwest Forest Plan on Tribes within the planning area. The committee decided to host a virtual meeting with interested tribes to craft a messaging document that could be shared with the Sierra Club or other entities. There was discussion about incorporating ITC's comments into the existing Northwest Forest Plan Review process. The virtual meeting date is TBD, and a notice will be sent out to Board members. Please email Laura Alvidrez at laura@itcnet.org if you'd like to participate in this discussion.

Workforce Development Update: Adrian Leighton provided a brief update. They are almost done with the strategic planning document. They changed the pillars to three fundamental concepts with action items associated with each concept. They are still looking for steering committee members. Cody mentioned the need to ensure this committee was diverse. Adrian also noted the work they have done on the website clearinghouse, which provides messaging for job training and opportunities. They selected Tribalforests.org as the domain; it includes youth funding opportunities, training and education, and jobs/careers. There is ongoing work with SAF to increase awareness around tribal communities and forestry. Adrian noted the SAF Seminars. Adrian noted the upcoming Yale/SKC

Tribal Forestry Webinar series that will be available for public viewing. There are a total of 12 speakers and 24 students. Several ITC member tribes are participating in the series. Adrian also noted that a rural workforce development panel is working on a forest operations summit in January.

Legislative Update. Matt Hill provided the committee with updates on several key policy items, including the following Farm Bill Updates Matt mentioned that ITC continues to engage with the Native Farm Bill Coalition. There are multiple committees weighing in on the farm bill, and ITC priorities still appear to be in good shape, including the ITARA recommendation and Good Neighbor fix, along with others. Matt also provided an update on the firefighter fix, stating that ITC should send another letter outlining the importance of this issue to tribes. He also mentioned that a draft letter has already been prepared. Forest Service Monitoring and Grasslands: Matt mentioned that regular monitoring has not been occurring and that this is inconsistent across forests and landscapes. He noted that tribes should be involved in the process and that follow-up with the Office of Tribal Relations may be an important next step. There may still be an opportunity for tribes to comment on this issue. Canadian Softwood: The Operations committee decided not to get involved in the softwood issues due to jurisdictional issues and political challenges between the United States and Canada. ITC will be sending a response to close this issue out.

Research Subcommittee: Serra Hoagland provided an update

(Continued on page 14)

Operations Committee

by Jason Robison

(Continued from page 13)

from the research subcommittee. The subcommittee met on December 1, 2023, with 21 people attending out of 50 total committee participants. They discussed ITC announcements, new research, and publications, conducted a short IFMAT IV group exercise, discussed fire-related topics and research needs, journal of forestry publication and associated whitepaper, data sharing, and Google Drive setup. The next call will be Thursday, February 1st, from 12-2 pm mountain time. Topics will include whitepaper and research needs, new research, FIA Discussion, Forest Resource Advisory Council Letter, and the workforce development plan. Serra asked the committee for support to finalize the white paper. The committee was supportive and requested that

it come back to the committee and ultimately the ITC board for approval to post on webpages and other venues.

Fire Subcommittee: Bill Trip provided an update. The subcommittee met on 12/12/2023. He discussed the need for volunteers for the Wildfire Risk Reduction Panel to help allocate 100 million by April 2021. Two members of ITC expressed interest. He emphasized the need for ITC to stay engaged in the firefighter pay issue. He discussed the upcoming WIFLC panel for the spring meeting with a focus on Cultural Burning. He expressed the importance of combining the recommendations of the National Wildfire Commission into ongoing ITC/tribal operations, including discussions that may overlap with IFMAT IV. He also noted that Karuk was work-

ing on a Good Fire Report No. 2.

Other Items: The National Academy of Sciences is looking for numerous volunteers to support their efforts, Jim Durglo sent out additional information to Board members. Gary Morishima asked ITC to look at other items beyond trees, including how wood fiber may help with the global plastics crisis, noting that there may be opportunities for wood fiber to play a role in plastic reductions and the development of new biodegradable products. Gary also mentioned the need for ITC to investigate new wood products, markets, and infrastructure development. The committee decided to add wood products as a standing agenda item.



BIA Forestry

by Peter Wakeland



Peter Wakeland

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 Silviculture

Indian Affairs Manual (53 IAM 9) policy and a Certified Silviculturist Position Task Book Requirement 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 at www.bia.gov/policy-forms/manual The Carbon Sequestration NPM was also extended one year to 10/31/24. These NPM documents are published online at www.bia.gov/policy-forms/memoranda/npm.

Indian Trust Asset Reform Act (ITARA): Congratulations to the Quinault Indian Nation (QIN). On November 17, 2023, QIN was approved to participate in the ITARA Demonstration Project. QIN will

now develop and submit an Indian Trust Asset Management Plan (ITAMP) for review. If the ITAMP is approved, along with Tribal Forestry Regulations, the Tribe may attain certain forest land management approval authorities currently held by the Secretary.

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

(Continued on page 15)

(Continued from page 14)

Camps: In October 2023, we received proposals which were reviewed and ranked by the Regions, and we were able to fund eight proposals totaling \$300,587.89 including - Chugachmiut Nanwalek for \$21,026.00, Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation for \$25,000.00, Cherokee Nation for \$71,010.00, Bad River Band of Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians for \$85,720.00, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians for \$20,750.00, Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians for \$58,600.00, and Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas for \$18,481.89. We are incredibly 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: We are currently operating under a Continuing Resolution that expires February 2, 2024. We plan to distribute FY2024 Forestry Projects funding once Congress passes the 2024 Budget. If you have an immediate need for funding, please contact your Regional Forester. If you have questions about any of your projects or how to develop them, please contact your Regional Forester; or Caleb Cain, Projects Forester at caleb.cain@bia.gov; or Peter Wakeland, Chief Forester at peter.wakeland@bia.gov.

Funding for Portable Infrastructure Projects: The BIA Forestry will continue to support portable infrastructure project proposals as funding becomes available. Project proposals from 19 tribes in eight regions have been funded since 2018. A total of \$4.674 mil-

lion has been distributed to tribes from BIA Central Office. In FY 24 BIA Central Office staff will be requesting reports that may be utilized on the Department of Forestry webpage and site visits will be scheduled. For more information, please contact Peter Wakeland, or Orvie Danzuka, Timber Sales Forester at orvie.danzuka@bia.gov.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law - Ecosystem Restoration: 12 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 are now in final evaluation and if approved, funding should be available in the first quarter of CY2024, or as soon as a budget is passed.

Timber Sales Operation Group (TSOG): The TSOG continues to work on policy updates. A reminder that the official repository and current policy location is bia.gov. The Division page at bia.gov also contains many helpful timber and trespass documents at www.bia.gov/guide/forestry-documents.

The group is continually working on TAAMS forestry enhancements. Given the number of enhancements that have been implemented in the last 1-3 years, two Informal TAAMS Forestry trainings were held, one by the Northwest Regional Office at Yakama in October 2023, and another at the Western Regional Office in December 2023. Encoders that have not received training in the last several years may consider signing up for a formal training session.

The TAAMS forestry training schedule for FY 24 has been approved as follows:

Introduction to TAAM Forestry, February 6-9, 2024, BIA NWRO, Portland, OR.

Forestry Management Overview, March 13-14, 2024, Microsoft TEAMS, online.

Advanced TAAMS Forestry, March 12-15, 2024, NWRO, Portland, OR.

Course sign-up is available in DOI Talent. Based on need additional courses may be added later in the year.

Forest Health: BIA Forestry submitted eight projects into the United States Forest Service (USFS) ForHealth database in October 2023. The Forest Service will review proposals and make final determinations in second quarter of FY 24. Upon USFS selection, BIA Central Office will notify selected tribes/agencies and transfer funds. Work will be completed during the field season, and we will be seeking accomplishment reports in October 2024. 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 at orvie.danzuka@bia.gov.

BRANCH OF FOREST INVENTORY AND PLANNING (FIP)

Staffing: The branch is working with OTS Admin to fill the vacant GS-13 FMIP Forester that was vacated by Tom Lowell.

Please help me welcome Jenni-

(Continued on page 16)

(Continued from page 15)

fer Kennedy, who rejoined the FIP team in October 2023. Jennifer was born and raised on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. She received her AAS at Salish Kootenai College and Blackfeet Community College. Jennifer received a scholarship from the National Center for Cooperative Education (NCCE), now known as the BIA Tribal Research and Education in Ecosystems Sciences (TREES), to attend the University of Montana – School of Forestry. She interned part-time at the Region 1 - Forest Service and, two years later, received her Bachelor of Science in Resources Conservation with an emphasis in Forestry. The TREES program also awarded her seasonal employment at the Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribal Forestry Department as a Forestry Technician, where she gained a lot of knowledge and experience on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Before graduating from the University of Montana, she was offered a position with the Branch of Forest Resources Planning (BOFRP), now FIP, in Lakewood, Colorado. She worked for five years as a GIS Forester and was transitioning more into the forest inventory before accepting a position with the State of Montana Department of Revenue as a GIS Analyst. She decided to return to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and pursue the career she loved, forestry. Jennifer looks forward to the forester position with BIA – FIP.

Inventory Projects Update: The team is actively working on sixteen forest inventory projects. Currently, 30% of the inventory projects are at FIP, and 70% are with the region, agency, or tribe. The CSKT analysis verification

continues and will be returned to the tribe to start on the FIA. The Spokane and Tule Rive CFI are in processing; the forester is working with Spokane to complete the processing and hopes to begin the analysis verification soon, then start on Tule River processing. Passamaquoddy, Alabama Coushatta, Acoma, and Fort Hall are being cleaned. The Hualapai, Colville PD, Seminole, Miccosukee, and Mi'kmaq CFI materials are being developed, or the projects are near completion and will be ready before data collection. The foresters continue to provide excellent support to the field units when requested.

National Analysis Program: The FIP team members completed the baseline verification of the national analysis program. The baseline showed several reports are missing the new ingrowth code, and the programmer is fixing these. The request to include the tree value report from the Western Analysis report will be another fix the programmers make to the national program. During the verification it became evident that each report needs a tree list to show which tree records were used in the calculation for the report and the programmer added a JIRA ticket for the request. The foresters are finalizing their presentation slides, which will be presented to the IPOG to explain how the reports are calculated, issues, and concerns. In addition, the verification document will be used to create a user manual for the analysis. The branch will present to IPOG on 13 December 2023.

FIP Application Suite Status: As the FIP application suite progresses through its development cycles, there are several components

complete or nearing completion. The rework of the CFI project database schema is complete. The initial phase of the analysis and reporting component code base update is nearing completion and has entered acceptance testing. Adjustments to analysis report design and content will follow to address requirements as they are identified. As part of normal development and support, the tablet and desktop components continue to receive operational corrections and improvements as needs are identified.

National Advanced Silviculture Program (NASP) NASP: NASP is a valuable training for any journey-level forester tasked with the preparation of silvicultural prescriptions at the Bureau, Agency, or Tribal level. NASP Modules are designed to be rigorous, graduate-level instruction led by University Professors. The four NASP Modules cover ecological systems, inventory and decision support, landscape ecology, and advanced silvics.

The BIA sponsors up to five candidates for each NASP Class based on the number of spaces allotted by the US Forest Service. 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 housing and meals). The candidate's home unit covers travel, salary, and additional per diem.

Of the five candidates the BIA sponsored for NASP 16, four have successfully completed all four modules. Congratulations to them. All four candidates received a grade of "A" for their efforts in module 4. Job Well Done! The

(Continued on page 17)

(Continued from page 16)

fifth candidate withdrew from the final module for personal reasons but plans to attend the final module in the future.

Four NASP 17 candidates have all completed module 1 (Ecological Systems) and module 2 (Inventory and Decision Support). Module 2 was held September 17 - 28, 2023 at Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon.

A call for applications letter for NASP 18 is making its way to Regional Directors as of November 14, 2023. The BIA once again has slots for up to five candidates as per our informal agreement with the US Forest Service. Specific information about the application process, module timing and cost to be borne by both Central Office and the home unit is provided in the letter. The deadline for applications to be sent to the Branch of Forest Inventory and Planning is November 27, 2023.

Silvicultural Certification using Position Task Book: Per 53 IAM Chapter 9, the BIA does not require certification as a silviculturist. However, BIA Regional Directors have the discretion whether to require silvicultural certification within their Region for the preparation and certification of silvicultural prescriptions. When this is the case, Regions may require journey-level foresters to complete a Silvicultural Certification Position Task Book (PTB) in addition to the completion of all four NASP modules.

Through collaboration with the US Forest Service, the BIA has adopted and revised a Silviculture Certification Position Task Book that allows for flexibility in the completion of differing agency

specific tasks between US Forest Service and BIA and Tribal foresters. The requirement for the completion of the PTB is based on Regional discretion and should be completed at the Regional level using local evaluators to assess past work experience and local mentors familiar with the forest conditions that are present within the specific Region. In addition, Regions may choose to have candidates work with Regional Silviculturists from the US Forest Service to initiate and certify PTBs, when available. This option may be chosen when there is a desire for both Agencies to accept each other's employees' silvicultural certifications.

Analysis of current certified silviculturists in the BIA: Currently, there are two certified silviculturists in the entire BIA, both at the Fort Apache Agency. It is

expected that by the beginning of calendar year 2024, due to retirement, there will only be one certified silviculturist at the Fort Apache Agency. The Certified Silviculturist at Central Office has vacated the position.

Policy Revision: The 53 IAM Chapter 8 Handbook team has continued to meet regularly and has completed the revised draft of the Chapter 8 Manual. The team sent this draft to all the BIA Regional Foresters for regional input from all BIA foresters. The team received no comments other than minor formatting changes which were implemented. The team also submitted the draft to RACA and has received comments back. The team is currently preparing responses to RACA and hopes to have a smooth revision and sunaming process for final publication. In addition to working on



Photo of Jennifer Kennedy new FIP Team Member.

(Continued on page 18)

(Continued from page 17)

the manual updates individually and in person, they are also meeting every other week over Teams meetings. They plan to do so throughout the calendar year.

The 53 IAM Chapter 9 Silviculture, the Indian Affairs Manual (IAM) policy and National Policy Memorandum (NPM) have both been signed and issued as of August 10, 2023. 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.

53 IAM 9 Silviculture, this policy documents the Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) policies, standards, and responsibilities relevant to the application of silviculture on Indian forest lands. This chapter has been significantly updated since the previous 2006 version.

NPM-TRUS-45 A1 Certified Silviculturist Position Task Book Requirement for Bureau of Indian Affairs Foresters Amendment 1, this policy extends NPM-TRUS-45 Certified Silviculturist Position Task Book for BIA Foresters, issued on August 16, 2022, for one additional year. This policy memorandum documents the requirement to complete a Silviculturist Certification Position Task Book

(PTB) in lieu of a Formal Prescription Defense as currently described in 53 IAM 9-H: Silviculture Handbook.

Handbook Revision: The Branch of Forest Inventory and Planning will be leading the effort to update 53 IAM 9-H beginning December 2023. A combination of two in-person meetings and virtual meetings will be used for work group members to make recommendations and revisions to the Silviculture Handbook.

Branch Highlights - CFI for Native Allotments in the Chugach Region of Alaska by Casey Sigg: The Branch of Forest Inventory and Planning FIP was request-



Picture of kids in the woods at Coquille Indian Tribe.

(Continued on page 19)

(Continued from page 18)

ed to assist foresters from the Chugachmiut Native Corporation in performing a continuous forest inventory (CFI) on Native allotments. These allotments are held in trust for residents of Port Graham, Alaska. A CFI was completed in 2011 though new permanent plots were installed for this trip with measurements that better aligned with the allotment owner’s goals. Key management goals include timber production, increasing subsistence resources, and carbon credits. Allotment owners have diverse interests, and a forest inventory provides a starting point for how to manage their forests.

The crew consisted of myself, Nathan Lojewski and Clay Hoyt, who are both foresters with Chugachmiut. 1/20th fixed-acre plots were set on a predetermined grid to characterize the forest, meaning all trees falling within a 26.3-foot radius of plot center were recorded. Each tree was measured in diameter, height, species, and crown ratio which is the number of live needles on it. The forests surrounding Port Graham are pure Sitka Spruce that thrive on the ocean moisture from nearby Kachemak Bay. Some trees in this temperate rainforest environment have lived to be over 400 years old. On average, we completed five to seven plots a day. Navigating to plots was slow at times due to steep slopes and a shrub widespread throughout the forest floor called Devil’s Club. The plant has a notorious reputation. Its leaves and stalk are covered in thorns that easily prick your skin. Occasionally, well-worn black bear trails were found providing a welcome relief for all of us.

Other fieldwork included observations on the health of subsistence resources in the forest. Blueberries are of particular concern as the number of berries appears to be declining in recent years. Blueberry leaves had a noticeable fungus which may be contributing to the decline. With fair skies one morning, Clay was able to fly a drone mission to collect remote sensing data on the Sitka Spruce stands. The aim is to create an equation for calculating timber volumes. Using drones for forest inventory is an emerging technology and we all speculated how much “boots on the ground” timber cruising foresters will be doing in the future.

The data collected in this inventory will provide important trends on forest growth and health among other key metrics. Forests here are pristine ecosystems as evidenced by the lack of roads and salmon seen running up the clear water in numerous creeks. Using inventory data, allotment owners and foresters will be able to choose management goals ensuring these trust resources maintain a highly functioning ecosystem for future generations.

Mi’kmaq Site Visit by Violet Holley, Ben Bagdon and Steve Singleton: The Branch of Forest Inventory and Planning FIP and Eastern Region Foresters visited Mi’kmaq Nation in August 2023 to assist with developing a new Continuous Forest Inventory for the tribe. Historically, Mi’kmaq inventoried their property using temporary variable radius plots and had questions about converting to a permanent plot system. FIP and Eastern Region foresters were able to provide on-the-ground support to the tribe through a four-day site visit. We are collaborating closely with the tribal forester to identify the tribal objectives, the FIP staff provided a through a technical review of their previous inventory data and discussed the policy requirements of a Category 2 tribe. A field test was conducted to evaluate three plot designs and a data analysis of the test designs was provided to the tribal forester. From this collaborative effort between the tribe and the BIA foresters, the tribal forester and the FIP staff determined that a CFI system would best suit the tribal forest inventory objectives.



Projects at FIP	
Initiation - 2024	5
Initiation - 2025-2026	3
Cleaning/Processing	7
Analysis	1
Total	16
30%	
Projects at Region, Agency, Tribe	
Data Collection	15
Cleaning	0
Processing	0
FIA	22
Total	37
70%	



INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL

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