



INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL TIMBER NOTES

Fall ~ 2024



Shawn de France

ITC AT THE 2024 SAF CONVENTION

2024 Society of American Foresters (SAF) National Convention: ITC attended and presented at the SAF Convention on September 17-20, 2024, in Loveland, Colorado. We hosted a booth Tuesday-Thursday handing out advertisements to students for the Picard and the Research Scholarships and we also met with some colleges/universities who may be interested in developing future memorandums of understanding to further support our students. Our first presentation was on Wednesday “Full Circle Indigenous Fire: Past Present and Future, with moderator Michael Dockry and speakers Jim Durglo and Shawn de France, this discussion explored how the resilience of our future forests is being shaped by current on-the-ground Indigenous fire knowledge and practic-



Photo of the ITC Booth at the 2024 SAF Convention, pictured from left to right Tamara Birdsbill, Frankie Wright, Jim Durglo, and Shawn de France.

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es. On Thursday Laura Alvidrez introduced and played the Indian Forest Management Assessment Team (IFMAT-IV) video “Breaking Point: Tribal Forestry Today” in the innovation zone and answered policy related questions afterwards. The final presentation was on Friday “Sharing Key Messages from the IFMAT-IV Report Through Tribally-Led, Data-Driv-

President's Message

by Cody Desautel



Cody Desautel

I have some exciting news to start this update. The ITC is finally growing after almost five decades. I've mentioned adding staffing capacity in past newsletters, and during the September board meeting the board approved the advertisement of the Executive Director. This will be the first of many positions we plan to fill as part of our expansion to ensure ITC has the capacity to continue and expand engagement with Tribes, federal agencies, NGO's, and other partners as we increase Tribal influence on land management around the country. The Executive Director will develop position descriptions and start recruitment for the remaining positions on the team, which will include additional admin support staff, IFMAT implementation, workforce, climate change, and communications positions.

With a federal election coming in November, and a certain transition in the Executive branch there is uncertainty around the future of many legislative priorities ITC continues work on. Our priorities include the Farm Bill, National Prescribed Fire Act, Fix our Forests Act, and several other pending bills. Next steps will likely be determined by the election, but ITC stands ready

to continue work on legislation and appropriations that benefit Indian country regardless of the election outcome.

ITC submitted comments on the draft EIS for the "Amendments to Land Management Plans to Address Old-Growth Forests Across the National Forest System" on September 19, 2024. The comment letter expressed our support for proactive stewardship as the primary means of managing and retaining old growth but cautioned the Forest Service about the potential for unintended impacts of new land designations that restrict management flexibility or create additional processes that slow the pace of management. The timing of the final EIS and Record of Decision are unknown with a change in the administration coming within the next 4 months. We will continue to track this process and share information with our member tribes.

I want to take the remainder of my report to share a rare wildfire success story from Colville. In my last report I shared some accomplishments and pictures of Colville's fire crew burning this spring. Some of that work, and prescribed fire, fuels, and forest management work

was tested in the Swawilla 1 Fire this summer. The fire was started by lightning at approximately 9:30 pm on July 17, 2024. The Energy Release Components were at or near record highs across the reservation. Over the next two weeks the fire burned across 53,723 acres. Approximately 8,700 of those had previous fuels treatments or forest health treatments. Due to the work our staff had done prior to the wildfire the Burned Area Reflectance Classification map only identified 2.8% of the total burn area as high severity. Approximately 65% of the area was either low severity or unburned islands. The resulting post fire assessment only identified 250 acres of timber salvage. A remarkably low number considering the total fire area exceeding 50,000 acres. Included are pictures of our pre and post treatment monitoring, and subsequent post wildfire pictures. As they say, a picture is worth a thousand words. To learn more about this fire view the GIS StoryMap at <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/0e735f721de04398a484a37a67833e55>



Photo of Swawilla 1 Fire before.

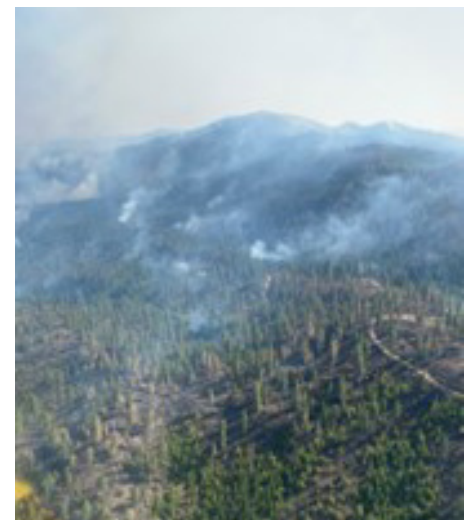


Photo of Swawilla 1 Fire after.

Education Committee

by Shawn de France

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en Storytelling, with speakers Sarah Cline and Jessica Douglas our partners from Ecotrust, discussed how we collaborated to create an emotive, data-driven storytelling campaign that centers tribal voices and perspectives to share the important messages in the fourth IFMAT across social media channels and beyond. It was a great week, and we are happy to have been a part of it.

2024-2025 ITC Scholarship Announcements: The Education Committee met and approved the Truman Picard Scholarship deadline for 2025, and the advertisement is now available. We are pleased to announce that the amount of the award for college and graduate college students studying Natural Resources increased to \$3,000. The amount for college and graduate students studying Forestry or Fire increased to \$4,000. Decedents from a federally recognized tribe are still eligible to apply for the Picard Scholarship. We believe that this will provide for more opportunities for our students and increase the number of applicants significantly. The advertisement for the 2024 Native American Natural Research Scholarship is also now available. The scholarship provides up to \$5,000 for tribally relevant, natural resource-based research being conducted by Native American scholars enrolled in a graduate program.

2024 Native American Natural Resource Research Scholarship: The Research Scholarship is open to graduate students who are conducting tribally relevant research projects. **The deadline is Monday, December 2, 2024, 5:00 p.m. PT.** Amounts awarded will vary based



Photo of the IFMAT-IV Presentation at the 2024 SAF Convention, pictured from left to right Jessica Douglas and Sarah Cline.

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. The number of awards varies per year. **The deadline is Friday, March 21, 2025, 5:00 p.m. PT.** The award amounts

are as follows - \$3,000 for college and graduate students studying Natural Resources, \$4,000 for college and graduate students studying Forestry or Fire; and \$2,000 for graduating high school seniors who plan to study Natural Resources, Forestry or Fire.

Both scholarship announcements are available for download on ITC's website at www.itcnet.org/about_us/scholarships.html. Also visit the "how- to" guide on our

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Education Committee

by Shawn de France

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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.



BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin



Aaron Baldwin

AVIATION PROVIDES INTERAGENCY SUPPORT AND BOLSTERS UAS PROGRAM

As the 2024 fire season draws to a close, DWFM staff are pleased to report no accidents with injuries, a testament to the aviation staff's commitment to safety. Despite moderate flight activity, the emphasis on safety awareness remained paramount throughout the season.

The multi-mission Pilatus PC-12 aircraft, equipped with WESCAM MX15i sensors, continued to provide critical intelligence to dispatch offices, fire managers, and incident personnel. One aircraft commenced its Mandatory Availability Period (MAP) in the Eastern Oklahoma Region in mid-February, with the second starting in mid-April in the Midwest Region. The crews and data specialists



Photo of Jeremy Harlan (left), Uncrewed Aircraft System (UAS) trainee from BIA Fort Apache Agency assembles an aircraft with a UAS team member while on assignment for the 2024 South Fork and Salt Fires outside Mescalero, NM.

have collaborated closely with interagency partners and dispatch centers, ensuring accurate and timely data delivery to optimize operational decisions.

The BIA contracts two of the six federal aircraft equipped with aerial remote sensors (Pilatus PC-12 aircraft). These aircraft play a crucial role in early fire detection and rapid response, allowing on-the-ground fire response and other air response to effectively contain fires before they escalate. In April, one of the aircraft and crew assisted the Western Region Reality office along with the So-

licitors office with a special aerial survey mission for a court case needed for land condemnation for the Hopi and Navajo reservations, saving BIA's Western Region over \$150K in aerial survey cost. In August, one of the aircraft and crew also successfully assisted the National Park Service with another search and rescue mission for a person in Glacier National Park. This response provided a timely and effective search for a missing person at a critical time.

The Uncrewed Aerial Systems

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BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin

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(UAS) section of the aviation program continues to expand its capabilities. BIA has now trained a total of 18 BIA and tribal pilots and integrated 24 state-of-the-art aircraft into the fleet, with additional aircraft on order. These efforts enhance the program's ability to support multiple bureau and tribal needs.

Wildland Fire Apprenticeship Program: In fiscal year 2024, the Division of Wildland Fire Management officially started the Wildland Fire Apprenticeship Program (WFAP). The goal of WFAP is to hire-entry level firefighters and provide them with opportunities to work in various fire functional areas such as aviation, engines and hand crews. This is while also mentoring and coaching them throughout their tenure as a wildland fire apprentice. Selected apprentices attend two academies, a basic and advanced fire academy, where they are immersed in fire training, leadership skill building, and professional attributes associated with wild-

land firefighters. Upon graduation from WFAP, the apprentices can be non-competitively converted from the WFAP position and into a federal GS-5 senior firefighter full-time employee.

Currently this program is funded by the bipartisan infrastructure law (BIL) and the DWFM. Our goal is to maintain 15 – 20 students as apprentices, who, through a partnership with the Department of Labor, are considered full-time employees (permanent seasonal) that begin accruing federal benefits on day one.

We currently employ three WFAP apprentices in three BIA regions: the Southwest region, the Great Plains region and the Eastern Oklahoma region. We expect the Western region to also hire two apprentices by the year's end.

The WFAP is providing our BIA and Tribal staff with an excellent beginning to what we hope to be a fun, rewarding and dedicated career in wildland fire. The program itself is a great accomplishment to garner youth interest in wildland

fire careers while supporting program recruitment and retention efforts and wildland firefighter training.

Mental Health Program Managers Support First Responders: September is Suicide Awareness and Prevention Month. Mental health program managers worked with public affairs to create public messaging to spread awareness through the month of September.

In January of 2024, two mental health program managers were hired to initiate the development of a comprehensive mental health and wellbeing program for BIA and tribal fire personnel. The initial focus for the program is to build awareness and support for mental health programming at all levels within fire management, assess the mental health needs unique to fire in Indian country, and to identify existing community supports in addition to gaps in care. With these goals in mind, the program has achieved several notable accomplishments for fiscal year 2024.



Pictured from left to right: Southwest Region Apprentice Jayden Headdress, Eastern Oklahoma Region Apprentice Brayden Smith and Great Plains Region Apprentice Joshua Whirlwind Soldier.

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BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin

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To engage the broader BIA and tribal fire communities, a mental health ad hoc committee was approved in May 2024. Participation is open to all BIA and tribal fire personnel and serves as an opportunity for collaboration with program managers on program development. Current projects include the development of program mission and vision statements, a BIA Loss of Human Life handbook, and a wallet card for carrying on assignment that contains pertinent self-care and mental health support information.

A virtual BIA Mental Health Teams page was also established as a central hub for important announcements, communications, and resources for mental health needs. This Teams page is accessible by both GS and tribal employees.

April to August, program manag-

ers visited eight fire bases to meet with fire personnel, establish rapport, provide education and awareness, and encourage collaboration in program development. Bases were in the Eastern Oklahoma, Southwest, Eastern, and Rocky Mountain Regions. Additionally, directories of tribal and BIA fire programs have been compiled, and direct efforts to connect with all BIA and tribal fire programs through email and phone are underway.

To strengthen the connection between fire bases and their local communities, healthcare resource guides are an ongoing project to provide short summaries of and contact information for local primary care, mental health care, substance use treatment, crisis intervention and emergency services. As guides are completed, they are provided to each fire program to reduce the burden and stigma on the individual for navigating healthcare and to edu-

cate personnel on local, culturally sensitive resources available. 20 guides have been completed as of September 2024 and can be found on the BIA Mental Health Teams page.

Longer term goals for fiscal year 2025 will include establishing a central phone line and email for personnel to request support with seeking care for self and others, request critical incident peer response, and to address general mental health questions or concerns in a timely manner. This shared line will be the first of its kind among DOI fire programs. Education, skills training, timely and appropriate critical incident response with follow up, and connection to care are essential elements that will continue to be developed under this program.



BIA Forestry

by Caleb Cain



Caleb Cain

PLANNING AND PRIORITIES

Budget: We anticipate we will be

operating on a Continuing Resolution at the beginning of fiscal year 2025. Please contact your Regional Forester if you have an urgent need for Forestry Projects funding.

Regional Foresters Meeting: The Division of Forestry hosted the Regional Foresters Meeting at the Rocky Mountain Regional Office in September. BIA Forestry staff from the regions and central office attended the weeklong meeting. Topics included budget planning, building capacity through hiring, regional/national training, and employee led work groups, just to name a few.

Ecosystem Restoration: One tribal greenhouse project was submitted for the Phase 4 fiscal year 2025-2026 funding cycle. Phase 4 funding is limited and focused on the DOI Keystone Initiatives.

Tribal Youth Camps Funding: Proposals for 2025 Tribal Forestry Summer Youth Camp funding are now being accepted. This funding is for camps that advance the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Tribal Forestry objectives, and support education and participation in Forestry and Natural Resources activities for Tribal Youth. The content of the proposed event is

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at the discretion of the Tribe but should include Forestry and Natural Resources focused activities. Submit proposals to the Regional Office. Contact your Regional Forester for more information.

Office of Trust Services Quarterly Newsletter: The following link will direct you to the BIA Trust Quarterly newsletter archive <http://www.bia.gov/service/trust-newsletter>. Here you can find stories regarding portable milling projects and other great projects in Indian Country.

We know that a lot of good work is accomplished on tribal lands, and we want to help showcase what you do. So please send us your success stories! The Quarterly Newsletter is read by many people, including BIA and Department Leadership. Your work deserves recognition. For more information, contact Orvie Danzuka at orvie.danzuka@bia.gov.

Forest Health: The United States Forest Service collaborates with BIA Forestry to treat forest health issues that are a cross-boundary problem. Proposals are ranked and submitted to the Forest Ser-

vice in October. Six BIA projects from three different regions were funded in the amount of \$271,350 for fiscal year 2024. The deadline to submit fiscal year 2025 project proposals is October 4, 2024. If you have any questions regarding forest health contact Orvie Danzuka at orvie.danzuka@bia.gov.

TAAMS: The TAAMS Forestry module now includes an improved document upload function to allow easy upload of images from the document toolbar. Informal training was provided at Yakama Agency, Western Region and Midwest Region to update TAAMS



Photo of the Timber Team measuring a pinyon pine as part of a woodlands stocking study at the Pueblo of Acoma in New Mexico.

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forestry users about the new functionality that was introduced this fiscal year and last. The intent of the training was to ensure that users are utilizing the improved functionality. Please work with your Regional Forester on scheduling informal training if the need exists.

Timber Team: The Timber Team has been very busy in 2024. The Timber Team recently traveled to the Pueblo of Jemez in New Mexico to assist Tribal Forestry with preparing a timber sale. The team worked alongside foresters from the Southwest Regional Office and trained seven Jemez Forestry technicians in timber sale lay-

out, marking, and cruising. Afterwards, the Timber Team traveled to the Pueblo of Acoma, west of Albuquerque, NM, to assist regional staff with collecting woodland stocking survey data in piñon pine and juniper stands.

In July, the Timber Team spent several weeks assisting Warm Springs Tribal Forestry with preparing over 400 acres for timber sale harvests. Additionally, the team helped prepare an additional 500 acres designated for hazardous fuels reduction.

Over the course of 17 trips in fiscal year 2024, nine were dedicated to various forms of forest inventory and data collection, tailored to each tribe's specific needs. The team assisted in stand exam data

collection, timber cruising, woodland stocking surveys, and continuous forestry inventory. The data gathered not only offered updated insights into the health and condition of tribal forests but also played a crucial role in updating Forest Management Plans. The remaining 8 trips focused on timber sale preparation, involving the layout of sale boundaries and the implementation of diverse silvicultural prescriptions.

Key Accomplishments:

- Remeasured 137 CFI plots following windstorm damage.
- Completed 744 stand exam plots.
- Conducted 543 timber cruise plots.

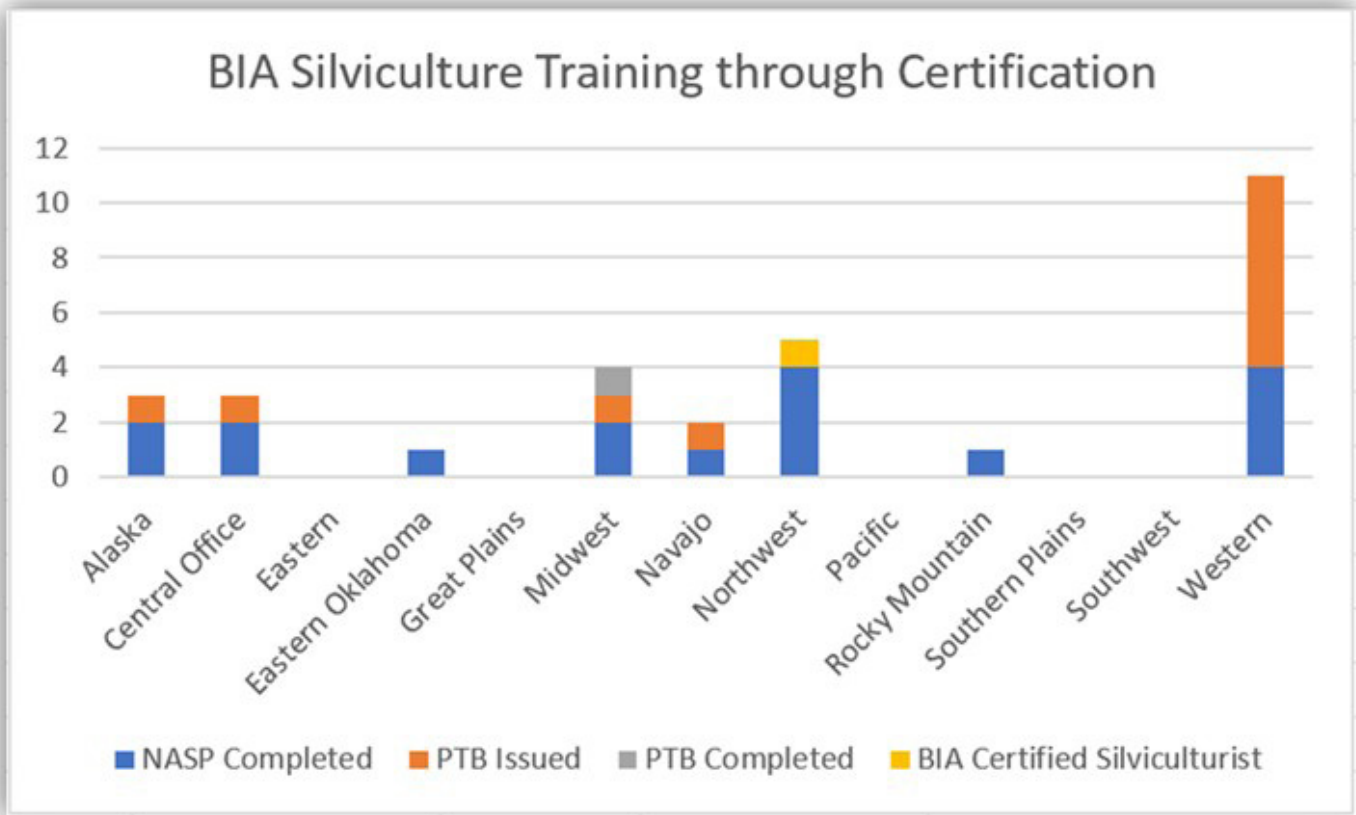


Figure 1: BIA Silviculture Training through Certification chart. Provides the number of BIA and Tribal Foresters per Region or Office that have completed NASP, been issued a PTB, have completed a PTB, and have met the criteria established by their BIA Region or Office to be certified as a silviculturist.

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- Prepared 3,449 acres for commercial harvests and hazardous fuels reduction.
- Engaged with 16 tribes across 8 states and spent 28 weeks in the field.

Looking ahead to fiscal year 2025, the Timber Team is preparing for a new series of projects. The Division of Forestry is currently soliciting proposals for Timber Team initiatives, and the team invites federal and tribal staff to participate, either to gain experience or to serve as mentors. Early plans for 2025 include CFI data collection for the Hualapai Reservation in Arizona, timber sale preparation for several tribes within the Eastern Oklahoma Region and conducting stocking surveys for the Quinault Reservation in Washington.

Timber Team's tentative schedule and openings for fiscal year 2025:

- September 29 – October 11, 2024: Hualapai Reservation, Western Region (CFI)
- December 2 – December 14, 2024: Eastern Oklahoma Region (Sale Prep)
- January 13 – 22, 2025: Open Dates for a Request
- February 3 – 14, 2025: Open Dates for a Request
- February 24 – March 7, 2025: Quinault Reservation, Northwest Region (Stocking Surveys)
- March 24 – April 4, 2025: Ute Mountain Reservation, Southwest Region (CFI)
- April 14 – 25, 2025: Open Dates for a Request



Photo of the Career Fair booth hosted by the BIA Pathways program

- May 5 – 16, 2025: Open Dates for a Request
- May 27 – June 6, 2025: Flathead Reservation, Northwest Region (Sale Prep/ITCS)
- June 16 – 27, 2025: Uintah and Ouray Reservation, Western Region (Sale Prep)
- July 14 – 25, 2025: Open Dates for a Request
- August 11 – 22, 2025: Open

Dates for a Request

- September 8 – 19, 2025: Open Dates for a Request

We are seeking proposals starting in January 2025 and any federal/tribal staff that would like to work with the Timber Team on any upcoming assignment.

To find the project request form and more information about the

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Photo of FIP Forester Chris LaCroix posing with Woody Owl and Smokey Bear on their birthdays.

Timber Team please go to <https://www.bia.gov/service/timber-team>.

Portable Milling Infrastructure: Reporting is needed on projects that have been funded since 2018. The BIA has been funding portable milling infrastructure projects since 2018 and only five reports have been received. The projects are funded through Timber Harvest

Initiative budget and should be used to help tribes achieve a portion of their annual allowable cut. The reporting is needed to justify the budget and to demonstrate the hard work that is completed each year in Indian Country. The end of year reporting memo has been sent out and included is a spreadsheet that can be filled out. The spreadsheet can include any of the years and is for fiscal year 24.

Any questions regarding portable milling infrastructure can be directed to Orvie Danzuka at orvie.danzuka@bia.gov.

BRANCH OF FOREST INVENTORY AND PLANNING (FIP)

Inventory Projects Update: The team is actively working on eight forest inventory projects. Currently, 18% of the inventory projects are at FIP, and 82% are with the region, agency, or tribe. The Nez Perce project is in the final stages of data cleaning and will move into processing. The San Carlos and Acoma CFI are in the processing phase and will move into analysis. Staff is reviewing the Colville PD analysis output and will return the project when completed. The Hualapai CFI is nearing completion, with the lead forester ensuring the database and CFI Collector are ready for fieldwork. The forest analysts are preparing CFI materials and cross-walking future projects. The foresters continue to provide excellent support to the field units when requested.

Projects at FIP:

- Initiation - 2024 = 2
- Initiation - 2025-2026 = 2
- Cleaning/Processing = 3
- Analysis = 1
- Total = 8 (18%)

Projects at Region, Agency, Tribe:

- Pre-Planning = 4
- Data Collection = 12
- Cleaning = 2
- FIA = 18
- Total = 36 (82%)

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Launch of New CFI Collector Provides a Quick Inventory at Colville by Casey Sigg: In August 2024, the FIP foresters traveled to Washington to remeasure the Colville PD CFI Plots. The second measurement of the Colville PD Continuous Forest Inventory consists of twenty fixed plots spread over a wide geographic area in Eastern Washington. This small inventory provided an excellent opportunity for FIP staff to field test the branch's new data collection application, CFI Collector, in the field.

Two teams based in Omak and Colville, WA, measured the plots over the week. FIP performed field measurements, and each team member could use the CFI Collector and provide feedback on its functionality.

The CFI Collector was functional in collecting and storing inventory data in the field despite several issues that were documented for correction. Two significant issues include creating a new validation rule and adding up to two regeneration field names. The workflow for bringing field data into a master database worked quickly. FIP staff also deployed an ArcGIS Field Maps tool showing plot completion status. These developments simplify the CFI process and will enhance efficiency with fieldwork. All said and done, the field data was clean since the tablet's display rules only show field items pertinent for collection based on the required tree measurements. The project forester cleaned a couple data for measured heights and reconstructed past data for a missed tree to complete the processing. The lead forester continues to verify the analysis outputs before

the project is returned to the tribe for the FIA. The trip was a test of the CFI Collector application and a valuable experience for honing measurement techniques and building project management skills, underscoring the importance of such field trips for skill-building.

National Advanced Silviculture Program (NASP): The BIA, recognizing the value of the NASP, generously sponsors up to five candidates for each NASP Class based on the number of spaces allotted by the US Forest Service. This sponsorship, which covers tuition, Travel, Salary, and Per Diem for BIA employees, is a testament to the BIA's commitment to the professional development of its staff. In addition, the BIA extends this opportunity to selected tribal candidates, covering their tuition (which usually covers most of the housing and meals). The candidate's home unit covers travel, salary, and additional per diem, further demonstrating the BIA's investment in their growth.

NASP 19: Toward the beginning of fiscal year 2025, the BIA will be sending out Call for Nominations to submit an application package to be considered for NASP Class 19 beginning in 2025. Interested candidates, with the support of their supervisor, should begin preparing an application package containing 1) A Letter of Intent to Attend, 2) A Current Resume, and 3) A Letter of Support from their Supervisor. More information will be forthcoming in the Call for Nominations letter.

NASP 18: Three of the five selected BIA and Tribal students attended and successfully completed Module 1 which took place from July 22 – August 2, 2024, at the University of Minnesota located

in Cloquet, MN. Four of the five selected BIA and Tribal students are currently completing Module 2 at Oregon State University located in Corvallis, OR.

NASP Training and Certification: The Branch of Forest Inventory and Planning maintains a Teams Channel form that tracks each Region's input regarding forestry staff's attendance to and completion of NASP, whether the forestry staff member has had a Silviculture Certification Position Task Book (PTB) initiated and whether or not the PTB has been completed and considered "certified" by their Region. Regional Foresters are provided with access to the Teams Channel form and encouraged to keep the form up to date.

The "BIA Silviculture Training through Certification" chart in Figure 1, provides a current snapshot of what each Region and Central Office has currently entered for BIA and Tribal Foresters within their Region or Office that have attended NASP, have initiated a PTB, have completed a PTB, and have been "certified" as a silviculturist.

53 IAM Chapter 9 Handbook Revision: Work continues on the revision to 53 IAM Chapter 9-H Silviculture. A Chapter 9-H workgroup continues updates to the handbook on a biweekly basis. For the upcoming fiscal year 2025, the workgroup will focus on completing final drafts of subchapters on Silviculture Examinations, Diagnosis of Treatment Needs, Silviculture Prescriptions, and Monitoring and Evaluation. The workgroup needs new or renewing members that can assist with the completion of the handbook revision by June 2025.

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If interested in joining the workgroup, please contact Stephen Singleton with the Branch of Forest Inventory and Planning.

Certified Silviculturist Position Task Book (PTB): The PTB is available for download and use on the BIA Forestry Documents webpage located at <https://www.bia.gov/guide/forestry-documents>.

The PTB is a portfolio describing the candidate's qualifications for the role of certified silviculturist withing their BIA Region or Office. Key components of this task book include the following:

1. Signatures page;
2. Task Table (includes 29 tasks and additional subtasks);
3. NASP Documentation and Completion Record;
4. Appendix 1. Roles in Certification Process;
5. Appendix 2. The Certification Process; and
6. Appendix 3. Task Evaluation Record.

The use of the PTB provides a way for evaluators to monitor and track the candidate's understanding of the five core competencies.

BIA Shines at Society of American Forester National Convention in Loveland Colorado by Violet Holley and Christopher LaCroix: "Working for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Branch of Forest Inventory & Planning (FIP) sounds like my dream job!" This excitement was commonly heard from Society of American Foresters (SAF) conference attendees talking

with the BIA foresters staffing the booth at the 2024 SAF Conference in Loveland, Colorado. BIA foresters from FIP, representing the BIA Division of Forestry, were flooded with conference attendees eager to learn about the BIA Division of Forestry and what a career with the division entails. Conversations with students and attendees covered topics such as the Pathways Program, the Timber Team, a day in the life of a forester at FIP, working at a BIA regional or agency office, and opportunities for details and fire assignments. BIA Forester Casey Sigg exclaimed, "The booth was packed!" when asked about the soft opening of the Expo floor booth on the first night of the conference.

Most people don't realize that the BIA has a Forestry program. This came as a pleasant surprise to students and professionals throughout the conference. With over 1,600 attendees, the Pathways Program and the Branch of Forest Inventory and Planning were able to reach out to hundreds of participants, spreading the word about the various current and upcoming opportunities available nationwide.

For the second year, the BIA was a Platinum-level sponsor and hosted two booths at the conference, along with an additional booth at the career fair. The information booth experienced a flux of visitors after the Intertribal Timber Council (ITC) gave a presentation that spurred a jump in interest in BIA Forestry. Additionally, the BIA booth hosts sent interested visitors to the ITC booth to gather more information on the Intertribal Timber Council and what they offer and how they can better partner with tribes.

The career fair booth was hosted by the Pathways Program, including a current Pathways intern. The Pathways representatives were able to engage with students from across the nation who were interested in career-building opportunities. Attendees were most excited about pursuing a career in forestry by providing a service to Native American tribes. While everyone has the opportunity to visit various federal lands, few have the chance to visit tribal lands across the nation. It's a real honor to work with tribes as they manage their land, which created quite a bit of excitement among all booth visitors.

Between waves of visitors, the BIA foresters hosting the booth were able to visit other booths and gather information on various technologies and programs. This outreach is an excellent way to explore tools that might be of interest to the tribes the BIA serves. As a bureau that provides services to landowners, keeping abreast of the current technological environment is important. The foresters specifically engaged with staff from Purdue University about the University's brand-new Digital Forestry Certificate Program, which is "digitally transforming forest management with the use of the Internet of Things (IoT), Big Data, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and cloud computing."

FIP foresters wrapped up the conference by attending a workshop titled "Data Science for Forestry Applications with Forest Inventory and Analysis." This 3-hour workshop focused on using R and R Studio and as described in the workshop description, had a special focus on Forest Inventory and Analysis. It provided attendees

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BIA Forestry

by Caleb Cain

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with data science problems and solutions to empower them to use and analyze the data successfully to make strategic resource deci-

sions.

The BIA central office foresters look forward to another successful SAF convention in 2025 and to talking to students and attendees

about what a career working in Indian Country looks like.



Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo



Jim Durglo

GEOGRAPHIC AREA COORDINATION CENTERS

There is a tremendous amount of information about wildfire activities available to the public and natural resource managers online. This is useful information for those interested in tracking wildland fire response, resource availability, acres burned by ownership, etc.. throughout the fire year. My favorite sites are the daily national Incident Management Situation Report (IMSR) and the daily weather briefing that is provided on the Northern Rockies site.

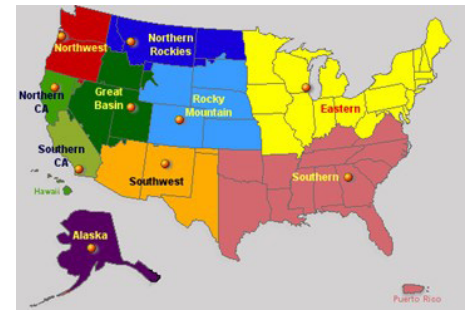
The IMSR lists fires by geographic area, current fire size and activity, general location, and includes the mobilization of all incident management teams including those under Complex Incident Management (CIMT), Type 1 IMTs, and

NIMOs.

The National Geographic Area Coordination Centers (GACC's) website at <https://gacc.nifc.gov> provides a great overview and background. The United States is divided into 11 Geographic Areas for the purpose of incident management and mobilization of resources (people, aircraft, ground equipment).

All agencies and geographic areas work together under the auspices and direction of the National Intertagency Fire Center view at www.nifc.gov. Although the primary mission of the GACC's is logistical coordination, the Center also has support programs in Predictive Services, Intelligence, and in several center's Fire Information. Predictive Services consists primarily of professional meteorologists who monitor weather and fuel conditions, conduct briefings, produce fire weather related products, liaison with the National Weather Service, and oversee all aspects of the Remote Automated Weather System.

The Intelligence Section is primarily responsible for collecting and disseminating wildland fire activity information, monitoring the status of national firefighting resources, maintaining year-to-date and historical fire occurrence data, and managing the Situation Report and ICS-209 programs.



Map of the Geographic Area Coordination Center.

In some GACCs, the Predictive Services and Intelligence sections work as one unit called the Predictive Services Group. The Predictive Services and Intelligence Sections, whether separated or combined, work collaboratively producing Weekly, Monthly, and Seasonal Fire Weather/Fire Danger Outlooks.

I visit the intelligence section for a daily update on fire activity. The situation report includes national planning level, fires and acres burned year-to-date by protection agency. Another key piece of information is the listing of active wildfires by geographic area, acres burned, and the number of resources assigned and current cost expenditures for each wildfire.

For instance, the National Situation Report for September 20, 2024, reported that 37,525 fires across the nation burned over 7.3 million acres year-to-date. The ten-year average fires (2014-2023) as of September 20, 2024,

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Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo

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is 44,983 fires burning over 5.84 million acres. The phenomenon that we see today is the more frequent occurrence of mega fires—those over 100,000 acres.

Information about fire suppression resource allocation and priority setting can be found at National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC) www.nifc.gov/nicc/nmac. The NMAC is comprised of members who have been delegated authority to provide an essential management mechanism for national level strategic coordination to ensure that firefighting resources are efficiently and appropriately managed in a cost-effective manner. Their mission is to provide national wildland fire operations management, priority setting, and resource allocation

through multi-agency coordination. The group is represented by leadership from the following agencies:

- United States Forest Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Park Service
- United States Fire Administration
- National Association of State Foresters

An area of interest to many tribes includes the-NMAC **National Priority Setting**: The single, overriding priority in all actions is protecting human life - both that

of firefighters and the public. In setting national priorities and suppression resource drawdown levels, the following criteria will be considered:

- Protecting communities and community infrastructure, other property and improvements, and natural and cultural resources.
- Maintaining initial attack capability.
- Limiting costs without compromising safety.
- Meeting agency suppression objectives.
- Support to National Response Framework (NRF) taskings.



Awards Committee

by Robin Harkins



Robin Harkins

2025 EARLE R. WILCOX AWARDS 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. **The deadline is Friday, January 31, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. PT.** A checklist will be included with the nomination packet this year to be sure all items are included with the submission. If you have thought about nominating a peer in the past, please give it some more thought and get those nominations started.

The 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 Indi-

an 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

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Awards Committee

by Robin Harkins

(Continued from page 14)

for the award. Details on how to nominate and the application packet requirements for the Earle R. Wilcox Award will be mailed to Tribes on November 1, 2024, and can be found on the ITC website www.itcnet.org/about_us/awards.html or can be obtained by contacting the ITC office by phone

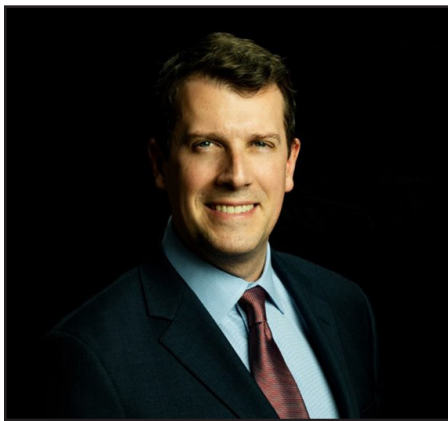
503-282-4296. Nominations will be considered for both the regional and national award based on level of contribution and effort. If you have questions or need guidance on completing a nomination, please contact myself at robinharkins@coquilletribe.org or the ITC office.

The next meeting of the Awards

Committee will be held during the ITC Board meeting scheduled December 10-12, 2024, in San Diego, California. Award selections will be made during the virtual February Board meeting.

Legislative Update

by Matt Hill



Matt Hill

POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

As Congress reconvenes after the August recess, the pre-election rush begins. At the time of writing this article, both the House and Senate are struggling to navigate government funding beyond September 30th while making strategic moves before resuming their campaigns. For the most part, legislation will generally not be moving until after the election. This includes “lands” bills that will likely be cobbled together into a large, consensus package that moves sometime in December.

In the presidential race, Kamala Harris leads in national polls – but the election will be determined by

Electoral College votes. That margin will likely be decided in three battleground states: Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Georgia. As of September 9, all three states are a statistical tie between the two candidates.

In Congress, the Republicans are likely to gain a one-seat majority. Of course, if the Senate ends up being a 50-50 split between parties, the Vice-President (whoever he may be) would cast tie-breaking votes. Elections are too close to call in the House and either party could emerge with a slim majority.

All this uncertainty plays into legislative and appropriations negotiations as both parties try to maximize their impact on the substance and timing of bills.

FY25 Interior Appropriations Update: Congress is expected to eventually implement a continuing resolution (CR) to defer most government funding decisions until after the election. While bipartisan agreements on funding levels for specific departments might be reached, an inclusive omnibus is less likely. The House Freedom Caucus is pushing for policy riders on the CR, which is unlikely to be accepted by the Senate.

Depending on election results, a second CR might be necessary to extend funding into the first or second week of January. Presidential politics will play a significant role in these discussions.

Specifically for ITC’s interests, we have numbers from both the House and Senate versions of the Interior Appropriations bill. The Senate version of the bill provides \$64 million for BIA Tribal Forestry, an increase of \$1,195,000 more than the FY24 enacted level and a program increase of \$500,000. Of these funds, \$28,414,000 is provided for Forestry Projects and \$35,668,000 for base funding.

The House version of the bill would provide BIA \$64.9 million for Tribal Forestry – slightly more than the Senate version.

The Senate Committee report contains several policy directions to federal agencies, including:

- Wildfire risks to Indian trust assets: “The Department of the Interior is expected 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

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Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

(Continued from page 15)

adjacent Federal lands, as authorized by law. The Committee reminds the Bureau of the directive 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. The Committee notes that many Tribal communities are at a heightened risk of wildfire due to funding constraints and a fire detection deficit. In order to address the heightened fire risks, the Committee directs the Bureau to take special consideration of pre-fire detection technologies to protect the public, property, vital infrastructure, cultural resources, and natural resources, and adopt strategies for their implementation across Tribal lands. The Committee also reminds the Bureau of the directive in the explanatory statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (Public Law 117–103) to provide a report within 1 year summarizing the fire detection deficits across Tribal lands and their efforts to prioritize early detection strategies and fire mitigation as part of the Natural Resources Management Program...”

- Good Neighbor Authority: the report expands GNA to USFWS lands.
- TEK: the report directs USFWS to better incorporate traditional Tribal knowledge in its planning processes and its implementation of the Endangered Species Act. The Committee directs USFWS to engage in additional outreach to Tribal governments in circumstances where traditional knowledge may provide valuable information for species like the

northern sea otter.

- Northwest Forest Plan: “The Committee recognizes the significance of the Northwest Forest Plan revisions and directs the [Forest] Service to prioritize resources to ensure the timely completion of this planning process. The Service is directed to report to the Committee on implementation needs and costs of Plan revisions, including funding requirements in fiscal year 2026, within 90 days of enactment of this Act.”
- Old Growth Forests: “The Committee recognizes that the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the National Old Growth Amendment was released on June 21, 2024, for a 90-day comment period. The Committee expects the Service to consider developing adaptive strategies for the conservation of old-growth forests and create a national old-growth monitoring network. The Committee encourages the Service to use its relationships with non-Federal partners to leverage resources to assist with this effort and expects the Service to collaborate with Tribal Nations, State governments, and nongovernmental stakeholders to develop the adaptive strategy. The Committee recognizes that the Wildfire Crisis Strategy, which emphasizes wildfire risk reduction and proactive stewardship to create resilient forests, is consistent with the conservation of old-growth forests that are resilient to disturbances such as uncharacteristic wildfire and expects the Service to implement both management strategies.”

House Committee (GOP-controlled) report language includes its own policy direction to federal agencies:

- Prescribed fire (direction to

EPA): “The Committee is aware that there are various local, State, and Federal standards, and cross-jurisdictional activities, including prescribed burns on Federal forestland, that impact a local air district’s compliance with air quality standards and encourages the Agency to identify and appropriately consider these various inputs when evaluating compliance...Additionally, the Committee directs the Agency to identify ways to reduce the administrative burden on States and Tribes that use the exceptional events rule for prescribed burns. The Committee directs the Agency to provide a briefing on all of these efforts not later than 60 days following the enactment of this Act.”

- Firefighters pay issue: Both the House and Senate versions of the bill attempt to resolve the pay issue for “federal” firefighters – albeit without addressing the tribal equity question.

o The Senate version of the bill states that “the Committee provides the funds for a permanent pay fix and job series for Federal wildland firefighters and incorporates legislative text to effectuate the necessary changes in statute.”

o The House version of the bill states that “this bill includes over \$330,000,000 to support a permanent pay fix and a job series that accurately reflects the valued work wildland firefighters do to protect communities across the country. The Committee provides additional funding direction in the Department of the Interior, Wildland Fire Management and Forest Service, Wildland Fire Management sections of the bill regarding the permanent pay fix.”

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Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

(Continued from page 16)

- **Old growth:** a Newhouse (R-WA) amendment blocks the U.S. Forest Service's proposed Land Management Plan for Old-Growth Forest Conditions and EPA's Particulate Matter 2.5 rule.
- **GNA:** Authority extended through calendar year 2025 and adds USFWS to authority.
- **Aerial retardant:** the House report prohibits any ban on its use.

Farm Bill Update: The current farm bill extension expires September 30th, which is also the deadline for Congress to pass budget bills. It is highly likely that Congress will pass another extension to give itself more time to negotiate a 5-year authorization bill.

In May, the Republican-controlled House Agriculture Committee passed its version of a new Farm Bill, with a handful of Democratic votes in support. Tribal provisions in the bill include:

- **A new "Forest Conservation Easement Program" ("FCEP")** which would be eligible to tribal trust, fee, and restricted lands (as well as land held by Section 17 corporations and Alaska Native Corporations).
- **Good Neighbor Authority:** the bill fixes a problem in the 2018 Farm Bill that excludes tribes (and counties) from the revenue retention authority originally given to states who conduct GNA projects on federal land.
- **Tribal Forest Protection Act 638:** the bill turns the "demonstration" project into a permanent "program."
- **Tribal prescribed burn demonstration project:** Authorizes

USDA to work with tribes on prescribed burns on federal land through delegated authority from USDA to the tribe.

In the Senate, Republicans and Democrats have unveiled competing versions of a Farm Bill. The majority/Democratic bill has a number of unique provisions for Indian forest management, including:

- **Tribal Consultation in Land Use Plans:** Requires the Secretary (of Ag) to consult with Tribes and affected ANC's when developing land use plans.
- **Cost-Share Waiver for Rehabilitation from Wildland Fires:** Permits the Secretary to waive any requirement for States, Tribes, localities, or individuals to provide matching funds for a project in response to a wildland fire resulting from management activities conducted by the Secretary on National Forest System land.
- **Tribal Forest Management:** Changes the name of the Tribal Forest Management Demonstration Project to the Tribal Forest Management Program to reflect that this is a permanent program within Forest Service and requires the agency to make available on its website a list of all forest management activities for which contracting is available under Section 8703 of the 2018 Farm Bill.
- **Incorporation of Tribal Management Plans:** Requires Forest Service to incorporate Tribal land management plans, Tribal laws, and integrated resource management plans into contracts or agreements with Tribes.
- **Expansion/Correction of Good Neighbor Authority:** Expands the program to allow counties and Tri-

bes to retain funds received from the sale of timber harvested from authorized restoration projects on federal land. Extends the authorization of appropriations through fiscal year 2029.

- **Tribal Advisory Committee; Tribal Self-Determination Pilots:** Requires that USDA mission areas that have programs with self-determination contracts designate an office or senior official within that mission area that shall be responsible for self-determination contracts and requires the Secretary to designate a senior official on self-determination within the Office of the Secretary to coordinate with the applicable mission area senior officials or offices on Tribal self-determination contracts.

National Old Growth Amendment Update: In June, the Forest Service published a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the conservation of "old growth" forests – aka the "National Old Growth Amendment" ("NOGA"). The DEIS is open for public comment for 90 days, and comments are due September 20.

The stated purpose of the NOGA is to provide consistent guidance for the stewardship, conservation, and recruitment of old growth across national forests. The proposed amendment highlights the importance of proactive stewardship actions in managing threats to old growth forests, and to reduce wildfire risk, considering current and emerging climate-driven threats. It also calls for adaptive management strategies to be developed using local, geographically relevant information and the best available science, including Indigenous Knowledge.

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Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

(Continued from page 17)

On September 19, the ITC filed formal comments regarding the NOGA DEIS. The overarching themes of ITC's comments were:

- Tribes need additional capacity assistance not only to provide input on the NOGA but to implement its management direction at the local level with individual National Forests;
- ITC supports proactive stewardship to manage old growth across the landscape, but we are concerned about management restrictions placed on areas identified for future old growth;
- The best strategy for maintain old growth across the landscape is not a complex regulatory framework, but to better return ALL federal lands to their historic densities and fire regime – letting the land determine when, where and how old growth will emerge and sustain itself.

The ITC's comments are addressed in the following:

- FLPMA requirements: the Forest Service must therefore have direct, government-to-government consultation with each Indian tribe potentially affected by the DEIS as it applies to individual forest plans. This requires more than seeking comments from tribes – it means the Forest Service must fully understand specific tribal resource management plans and be responsive to them in this process. The DEIS lacks adequate information indicating compliance with these requirements.
- Tribal consultation: while the ITC strongly supports the integration of tribal input and knowledge into management decisions and

co-stewardship activities, it must be coupled with tribal capacity enhancement.

- Tribal rights and interests: DEIS must be revised to evaluate the potential impacts of reduced or no forest management on treaty and tribally important resources, including the increased risk of catastrophic wildfire. Only consideration of these impacts will allow the Forest Service to fully evaluate the potential alternatives.
- Effects of disturbance on old growth: the ITC strongly agrees with the DEIS in acknowledging that fire and other natural disturbances can and should de-classify an old-growth stand from regulation under this amendment.
- Forest product access for tribes: 25 U.S.C. § 3055 authorizes the Forest Service to provide to Indian tribes “any trees, portions of trees, or forest products from National Forest System lands for traditional and cultural purposes.” We provide additional comments below but believe that Standard 2.b should explicitly state that the standards and restrictions of this amendment do not apply to or interfere with tribal exercise of that law.
- Desired future conditions: the ITC believes that restoring historic stocking conditions and fire regimes is the primary action needed to protect and foster mature and old growth forest conditions. As reiterated in the DEIS, wildfire is the greatest threat to old growth forests. A major reason for this is the cessation of Indigenous burning and fire exclusion/suppression policies. Therefore, restoration of fire regimes based on Indigenous Knowledge and restoration of conditions conducive to

the Tribal revitalization of cultural burning should be included within the desired conditions – if not made the primary condition itself.

- Cultural burning: the EIS should explicitly acknowledge cultural burning to be part of baseline conditions, given cultural burning's role in shaping ecosystem (and socio-ecosystem) resilience, and also explicitly acknowledge that cultural burning falls within the sovereign authority of Tribes and Tribal law.

Northwest Forest Plan Update: In August, the Forest Service hosted a virtual tribal meeting on the NW Forest Plan Amendment DEIS. This was a follow-up to the Forest Service's tribal “roundtable” event in July (held at Cow Creek). During this meeting, tribes were told that the DEIS was basically already written and that tribal comments as the July session could not be incorporated into the draft.

In late August, the Forest Service announced that the release of the DEIS for the amendment to the Northwest Forest Plan, initially anticipated at the end of August, is now expected in October. When released, the draft EIS will be published in the Federal Register which will start a 90-day public comment period allowing all interested parties to provide input on the proposed amendment.



Operations Committee

by Jason Robison



Jason Robison

It is hard to believe its fall already. I hope everyone had a safe and healthy summer. On September 11, 2024, the ITC Operations Committee convened virtually to discuss several critical initiatives. Below is an in-depth summary of the key discussions and outcomes from that meeting and other subcommittees and workgroup discussions.

IFMAT-IV Implementation:

Stephanie Lucero led the review of the Indian Forest Management Assessment Team (IFMAT-IV) implementation plan, providing updates on the progress toward key goals. Major milestones included the approval of funding resolutions by the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) and the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) in support of IFMAT-IV recommendations. ITC President Cody Desautel, along with a BIA representative, will present these recommendations at the upcoming NCAI meeting in late October. Matt Hill is preparing materials for the ATNI meeting, which will focus on financial needs and co-stewardship agreements. Discussions also highlighted the importance of the Farm Bill and its connection to IFMAT-IV,

particularly regarding tribal land management and the "Land Back" movement.

Self-Governance Work Group:

George Smith provided an update on the Self-Governance Workgroup, focused on implementing IFMAT-IV's recommendations concerning self-determination, self-governance, and the Indian Trust Asset Reform Act. The workgroup will continue reviewing case studies and developing resources to help Tribes navigate complex regulatory landscapes, empowering tribal management of natural resources. Plans are underway for another meeting before the December ITC board meeting. If you are interested in joining this discussion, please reach out to Laura Alvidrez for an invitation.

25 CFR 163 Workgroup: The 25 CFR 163 workgroup met on August 8, 2024, to discuss revisions to the outdated BIA regulations that hinder tribal self-governance. The group, led by members from the BIA Tribal Self-Governance Timber Sales Operations Group, focused on identifying barriers within 25 CFR 163, proposing updates to regulatory language to streamline tribal operations and incorporate evolving technologies. The team highlighted contentious areas like paid permit language and advertised sales, with the goal of offering tribes more flexibility while maintaining BIA trust responsibilities. The group will meet quarterly, with the next meeting to be scheduled in October.

Tribal Branding & Marketing Study:

Micah Stanovsky from Sustainable Northwest provided an update on the Tribal Branding and Marketing Study. Although the initial USFS IRA Landowner Support opportunity was not fun-

ded, the project has been refined to focus on supporting tribal wood producers in accessing climate-resilient markets. This initiative, running from June 2024 to September 2025, will involve pilot branding projects, green building certifications, and developing marketing strategies for sustainable tribal wood products. ITC's role will include steering committee participation and oversight of certification development.

NAFO Overview: Dave Tenny, President, and CEO of the National Alliance of Forest Owners (NAFO), delivered a presentation on NAFO's initiatives and potential collaborations with ITC. NAFO, which represents over 44 million acres of private forests, focuses on climate change, wildfire management, and wildlife conservation. The discussion explored opportunities for integrating cultural burning into wildfire risk reduction and co-stewardship agreements. Further collaboration between NAFO and ITC will be explored, particularly regarding National Air Quality Standards and fire management. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled to discuss potential coordination.

Executive Director and NRCS Native Conservation Network Staffing Updates:

Cody Desautel provided an update on the Executive Director hiring process, which has made considerable progress. Final edits have been made to the job description, and the process is ready to move forward. A smaller group will meet before the next board meeting to finalize internal policies and benefits. This marks a crucial step forward for ITC and will enhance its capacity to respond to the growing needs

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Operations Committee

by Jason Robison

(Continued from page 19)

of its member Tribes. In addition, ITC has partnered with the National Native Conservation Network under a grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). This partnership will see ITC collaborating with various tribal organizations to support conservation efforts. A kickoff meeting is scheduled for later this month, with ITC leadership overseeing key deliverables until an Executive Director is hired.

Legislative & Policy Discussions: The Northwest Forest Plan, first implemented over 30 years ago, is being revised to address modern challenges such as climate change, fire resiliency, and tribal inclusion. Initially designed to balance timber industry needs with environmental protection, the plan is being updated to reflect current concerns and increase tribal engagement. A draft Environmental Impact Statement is expected soon, and ITC has participated in ongoing discussions and submitted comments. To ensure tribal voices are adequately reflected, ITC encourages member Tribes within the planning area to submit their own written comments on this issue.

The National Old-Growth Forest Amendment is a proposed change to U.S. Forest land management plans aimed at providing con-

sistent direction for conserving and managing old-growth forest conditions in response to climate change. The amendment focuses on wildfire resistance, climate adaptation, tribal inclusion, sustainable communities, and overall forest health. It formalizes protections and management strategies for old-growth forests, ensuring consistent practices nationwide while allowing local flexibility.

ITC is actively involved in shaping the amendment, particularly in integrating tribal co-stewardship practices such as cultural burning. A Tribal Forum discussing the amendment was scheduled for September 18th, with public comments due by September 20th. ITC has submitted its input, emphasizing the importance of tribal rights and traditional knowledge in managing old-growth forests.

Workforce Development Strategic Plan: Adrian Leighton shared updates on the ITC Workforce Development Strategic Plan, which is nearly finalized. ITC's efforts to engage tribal colleges and support natural resource programs continue to expand. The SKC TREES program has nearly reached its target for applicants in forestry and fire-related fields. Additionally, the National Association of University Forest Resource Programs is voting on creating a tribal college representative position on its

executive board, a significant step for tribal engagement in resource management Education. ITC staff have begun assembling a list of students that are interested in attending lobbying trips to DC with ITC leadership.

Fire Subcommittee Update: Led by Bill Tripp, the Fire Subcommittee discussed critical wildfire management issues. Topics included the Wildfire Risk Reduction Infrastructure Team Tribal Roundtable, which emphasized the need for coordinated funding and sustainable fire management practices. The FY 2025 budget request includes \$1.3 billion for wildfire management, a 26% increase from FY 2024. The subcommittee also reviewed UAV training and prescribed fire operations as part of ongoing efforts to enhance fire management capabilities.

The next ITC Operations Committee meeting is scheduled for December, and we remain committed to advancing our goals in tribal forestry, implementing the IFMAT IV recommendations, advancing workforce development, engaging on national forest management policy issues, and sustainable Tribal Forest management and co-stewardship.

Symposium Committee

by Howard Teasley, Jr.

CO-STEWARDSHIP HELPS FORESTS

I would like to take this time to emphasize the amazing working being done across Indian Count-

ry on the federal, state, and local areas. This work is creating activities, agreements, boots on the ground projects. We are finally witnessing the changing of the guard with management on ceded territories, usual and accustom

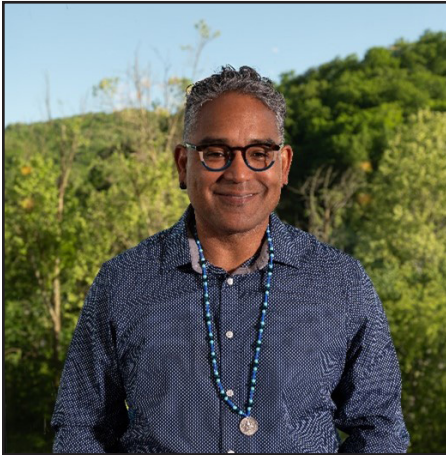
areas held in reserve by Tribes' treaty rights and common areas of use. The United States Forest Service is giving back authorities to allow Tribal management discus-

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Symposium Committee

by Howard Teasley, Jr.

(Continued from page 20)



Howard Teasley, Jr.

sions with Forest Service personnel to now be a part of the decision making. Broad stroke activities over many encompassing watersheds or as intimate of one acre dealing with traditional & cultural uses/knowledge. We can now use our past as the key to the future on these lands. Tying our history to the activities!

ITC has a new blog with articles on important issues and topics in forestry and fire. View online at <https://medium.com/@intertribal-timbercouncil>. I am taking a couple of snippets from Tommy Cabe, Eastern Band of Cherokee, titled “ITC Symposium Builds Momentum for Expanding Tribal Co-stewardship Beyond Adjacent Lands”.

Today, tribes must propose projects that are on Forest Service lands bordering or adjacent to Indian forest land or range land under their jurisdiction. But what about tribes that have been removed from their ancestral homelands and now face challenges meeting adjacency requirements? Consider that in Alaska alone, 229 federally recognized tribes, in addition to Alaska Native Corporations, do not qualify for Tribal Forest Protection Act agreements and contracts under the cur-



Photo of Tommy Cabe, an author from ITC's new blog.

rent definition of Indian forest land or rangeland. This unjust situation is replicated across many states.

Restricting co-stewardship in this way not only limits the potential environmental and economic gains tribes can enjoy — it shortchanges the forests all American depend on for clean air and water, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable economic growth. Tribal forest management has a proven track record of benefiting our nation's forests. The Forest Service statement highlighted how co-stewardship helps forests:

“These co-stewardship agreements align with tribal priorities, like improving watersheds and wildlife habitat, managing invasive species, and addressing the conditions that fuel destructive wildfires. They also incorporate Indigenous knowledge like traditional plant management and ethnobotany, cultural interpretation, and traditional land stewardship methodologies and techniques.”

It's gratifying to see the work of tribes being recognized, but all this

only makes the case more forcefully that these tribal priorities should be encouraged with co-stewardship agreements that extend beyond adjacent lands. Fortunately, the symposium provided plenty of information and learning opportunities to help us make the collective case for extending co-stewardship.

Please visit our new blogs. Also find out more about the Forest Service expanding co-stewardship investments with tribal nations at <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2023/12/06/white-house-tribal-nations-summit-usda-fulfills-long-standing>.

There will be a full update on the 2025 Symposium in our next newsletter. Save the date for the 48th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium hosted by Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, June 2-5, 2025, in Missoula, MT. Qe'ci'yew'yew! (Thank you in our Nez Perce Language)





Truman D. Picard Scholarship Announcement For Native American/Alaskan Natural Resource Students

Deadline: Friday, March 21, 2025, 5:00 p.m. PT

Award: **\$3,000** for college students studying Natural Resources (number of awards varies per year)
\$4,000 for college students studying Forestry or Fire
\$3,000 for grad students & graduating college seniors applying/accepted for grad school studying Natural Resources
\$4,000 for grad students & graduating college seniors applying/accepted for grad school studying Forestry or Fire
\$2,000 for graduating senior high school students studying Natural Resources, Forestry or Fire

Purpose: The **Truman D. Picard Scholarship Program** is dedicated to the support of Native American students pursuing a higher education in Natural Resources. Preference will be given to students whose degree or area of study directly involves management of Forest Resources. The \$4,000 award is contingent upon college and graduate students being accepted in a school for a Forestry or Fire degree.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS - APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- 1. Letter of application (2 pages maximum), discussing the following:
 - Your name, permanent mailing address, email address, and phone number.
 - School currently enrolled in or accepted to, declared major, and expected graduation date.
 - Academic interest in Forestry and/or Wildland Fire Management.
 - Commitment to education, community, and your culture.
 - Financial need.
- 2. Resume
- 3. Reference letter #1 (on letterhead, signed and dated)
- 4. Reference letter #2 (on letterhead, signed and dated)
- 5. Reference letter #3 (on letterhead, signed and dated)
- 6. Evidence of validated enrollment in a federally recognized tribe or Alaska Native Corporation
 - A copy of your member or descendant enrollment card in a federally recognized tribe or Alaska Native Corporation
 - Or completed BIA Form 4432 Verification of Indian Preference for Employment
- 7. Transcripts
- 8. College acceptance letter (high school) or declared major & current class schedule (college)
- 9. FAFSA student aid report

DELIVERY OF APPLICATION

Applications are accepted by Email (preferred method) or Mail, please choose ONE option for Delivery.

Option #1 Email: Create one email attaching all required documents from the application checklist and submit to intertribaltimbercouncil@gmail.com up until the close of business (5:00 p.m. PT) **March 21, 2025**. PDF attachment(s) preferred, download free Adobe Acrobat reader at <https://get.adobe.com/reader/> Files must be PDF or MS Word. Google docs and screenshots (PNG or JPEG files) are not accepted.

Option #2 Mail: Mail all required documents from the application checklist to arrive at the ITC office on or before **March 21, 2025**. Be sure to check local post office hours and transit time if mailing your application. FedEx and UPS require a physical address for delivery, please contact ITC before using these services.

Questions and mailed applications should be directed to the Intertribal Timber Council (ITC) office:

Attn: Education Committee
Intertribal Timber Council
PO Box 11790, Portland, OR 97211
intertribaltimbercouncil@gmail.com
(503) 282-4296 phone



Native American Natural Resource Research Scholarship



The Intertribal Timber Council (ITC), in partnership with the USDA Forest Service Research and Development is pleased to announce scholarship opportunities for Native American graduate students who are planning or currently conducting tribally relevant research in a natural resource issue.

Deadline: December 2, 2024, 5:00 p.m. PST

Award: Varies, not to exceed \$5,000

Purpose: 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.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS: The ITC Education Selection Committee will review and rank only those applications that completely address the following criteria:

1. **Letter of Application:** The letter must include your name, permanent mailing address, email address and phone number. Discuss your current educational program and how the tribally relevant proposed research fits into both your degree in natural resources and your future.
2. **Resume**
3. **Evidence of validated enrollment in a federally recognized tribe or Alaska Native Corporation**, as established by the U.S. Government. Accepted documents include a copy of your member or descendent enrollment card, front and back, or completed BIA Form 4432 Verification of Indian Preference for Employment, download at <https://bit.ly/BIAForm4432>.
4. **Mini Research Proposal:** Please keep this concise, 4 page maximum not counting budget and justification. Required elements include:
 - a. Abstract stating research merit and explaining how this research is relevant to tribal natural resource interests.
 - b. Timeline and methodology.
 - c. Dissemination plan, including a tribal component.
 - d. Budget and budget justification.
5. **Letters of Reference / Support.** Letters of reference are not accepted directly from referrals, submit with your completed application.
 - a. A letter of reference / support from an academic advisor or committee member is required.
 - b. A second letter of support from a tribal resource manager or a tribal representative with tribal approval of the project or the relevancy of the project to the tribe is required.

DELIVERY OF APPLICATION: Create one email attaching all required documents and submit to intertribaltimbercouncil@gmail.com up until the close of business (5:00 p.m. PT) on **December 2, 2024**. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered. PDF attachment(s) preferred, download free Adobe Acrobat Reader <https://get.adobe.com/reader> to view & print PDFs. Google docs are not accepted.

Questions can be submitted to ITC by email intertribaltimbercouncil@gmail.com or phone 503-282-4296.



INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL

PO BOX 11790

Portland, Oregon 97211

First Class
