

Introduction

In January 2022, the USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) released the [Wildfire Crisis Strategy](#). To inform future implementation of the strategy, the Forest Service partnered with [Intertribal Timber Council \(ITC\)](#) to host a national intertribal roundtable discussion on April 26, 2022. An overarching consideration from this discussion addressed workforce capacity and development to support the implementation of the Wildfire Crisis Strategy. The Forest Service Wildfire Risk Reduction Infrastructure Team (WRRIT) and Office of Tribal Relations (OTR), in partnership with ITC, convened a series of virtual dialogues to refine workforce capacity and development challenges further and identify potential solutions in the Spring of 2023.

2023 Intertribal Workforce Capacity and Development Dialogue Series

The 2023 Dialogue Series consisted of four virtual sessions focused on Funding, Workforce Capacity Assessment, Recruitment and Retention, and Policy and Implementation. These dialogues occurred between February 21, 2023, and April 6, 2023, as follows:

- Session 1 - February 23, 2023, [Funding Opportunities for Developing Workforces to Address Tribal Priorities](#)
- Session 2 – March 3, 2023, [Workforce Assessment and Regional Considerations](#)
- Session 3 – March 23, 2023, [Recruitment and Retention](#)
- Session 4 – April 6, 2023, [Policy and Implementation](#)

(See Appendix B Dialogue Series Materials and Resources for details). Participants in these sessions included representatives from Tribes, intertribal organizations, federal agencies, and non-profit organizations. (See Appendix A.) Sessions were iterative, with materials and discussions building on previous dialogues. The series' objectives were to:

- Respond to recommendations outlined in the [2022 WRRIT Intertribal Roundtable](#).
- Create awareness and dialogue around agency focus, direction, funding opportunities, and limitations to address Tribal priorities.
- Create a shared understanding of Tribal needs and priorities for workforce development in implementing the Wildfire Crisis Strategy.
- Discuss and identify opportunities and barriers to addressing Tribal priorities related to workforce capacity, development, recruitment, and retention in implementing the Wildfire Crisis Strategy.
- Create a forum and networking opportunities to foster interagency coordination with Tribes on workforce capacity issues.

Overview of Sessions

Each dialogue session focused on key themes and recommendations to address Tribal priorities for implementing the Wildfire Crisis Strategy. Sessions provided an overview of available information, identification of Tribal challenges and priorities, programmatic opportunities, ongoing projects, and

potential efforts that addressed each session theme. (See Appendix B, Dialogue Sessions Materials and Resources.) Participants, presenters, and experts discussed additional considerations, needs, challenges, opportunities, and recommendations to support implementing the Wildfire Crisis Strategy, specifically considering Tribal concerns and priorities. Major themes and discussion points are summarized for each session topic.

Funding Opportunities for Developing Workforces to Address Tribal Priorities

Speakers and specialists: Andrew Johnson, Acting Deputy Team Lead, Forest Service Wildfire Risk Reduction Infrastructure Team; Cody Desautel, President, Intertribal Timber Council; Alissa Tanner, Branch Chief, Forest Service Hazardous Fuels Management; Melissa Aulisio, Branch Chief, Forest Service Office of Grants and Agreements.

Recent legislation has provided an influx of funding to implement the Wildfire Crisis Strategy. Both the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law or BIL) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) provide targeted funding for forest management, hazardous fuels, flammable vegetation, and restoration work on federally-managed lands in collaboration with Tribes. Extensive opportunities exist under new funding supporting many Tribal priorities and authorities, such as the Tribal Forest Protection Act or Good Neighbor Authority agreements with Tribes. Applicable and example programs include [Community Wildfire Defense Grants](#) to support work on Tribal lands, pilot training to expand fuels and fire modules that address capacity and workforce development within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), and supporting work within the National Forest System. However, not all Tribal priorities are addressed through these funding streams.

Tribal workforce capacity and development priorities are as diverse and unique as Tribal Nations and their members and citizens. Common workforce capacity and development priorities for Tribes included:

- Broadening skills to achieve more active management of Tribal lands (e.g., mechanical thinning, cultural burning, etc.),
- Increasing Tribal capacity to address ecosystem, cultural resources, administrative, and other capacity needs (See also Workforce Assessment and Regional Considerations),
- Supporting sustained workforce development to address decades of underfunded Tribal forest management
- Increasing staff and access to equipment to support necessary work.

Participants encouraged identifying and recognizing Tribal priorities when allocating funding and identifying future projects under the Wildfire Crisis Strategy and related wildfire risk reduction efforts. Discussions stressed that Tribal priorities require flexible funding mechanisms, administrative efficiency, and sustained funding beyond the span of BIL/IRA allocations. This flexibility should incorporate Tribe's varying priorities and capacity regarding Tribal land base size (big and small timber Tribes) and Tribes' interest in working on Tribal lands, National Forest adjacent lands, and non-adjacent landscapes. Recommendations included expanding awareness of administrative, contracting, and grants and agreement support to Tribes by Forest Service. Likewise, participants recommended expanding [Forest Service 638 authority](#) to include programmatic funding from the Forest Service that covers work on and off the National Forest System.

Workforce Assessment and Regional Considerations

Speakers and specialists: Andrea Bedell Loucks, Forest Service Wildfire Risk Reduction Infrastructure Team; Jen Croft, Forest Service, Office of Tribal Relations; Adrian Leighton, Co-Chair, Indian Forest Management Assessment Team (IFMAT); Jim Durglo, ITC Fire Technical Specialist.

Workforce assessment discussions explored both expressed needs of Tribal forestry and fire management programs and employment opportunities for individual Tribal members and citizens. In addition, speakers shared trends, themes, and recommendations outlined in the congressionally directed 10-year Assessments of Indian Forest Management, which focuses on trends in Tribal forests (See [IFMAT I-IV](#)). These decennial reports are conducted and supported by an IFMAT team from ITC, academia, and federal agencies. Discussions also touched on recruitment and retention considerations within the forestry field.

Assessing Workforce Capacity and Development

Assessing Tribal workforce capacity requires exploring the skills to support wildfire risk reduction and forest health treatments. Along with traditional wildland and prescribed fire roles, it is important to consider staffing positions and roles such as project or program administrators, environmental analysts, cultural resource specialists, indigenous knowledge holders, watershed specialists, and others. These needs were identified early within the [2022 Intertribal Roundtable](#) and those [discussions hosted with Forest Service employees and partners in 2022](#).

ITC also shared an overview of 30 years of data from 10-year Assessments of Indian Forest Management under the National Indian Forest Resources Management Act (NIFRMA). This overview outlined trends in reduced Tribal staffing despite increased needs to treat acres on Tribal and adjacent lands. The most recent of these reports, [IFMAT IV, is due Summer of 2023](#).

Participants discussed the need for national, uniform standards for staff credentials and standardized training for this work. At the same time, participants stressed the need to assess workforce needs locally, as workforce needs can vary across Tribes and National Forests. All four sessions included a discussion of matching expertise with needed work. For example, participants stressed the importance of hiring Tribal cultural resource specialists to address capacity needs for cultural surveys and Forest Service contracting and administrative staff to support partnerships.

Participants shared the complexities of assessing workforce needs and the various workforce assessment tools available to the Forest Service and Tribal representatives. Discussions emphasized the value of Tribal liaisons in creating collaborative relationships and understanding Tribal priorities and explored options and opportunities for these skill sets and knowledge to support forest planning budget staff in identifying and assessing workforce needs to meet those Tribal priorities. Discussions focused on the significance of collaboration skills to identify opportunities for partnership and sharing of resources. While there are many challenges to building workforce capacity, participants stressed that these may be overcome locally with collaboration between Tribes, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and State agencies. Strengthening and prioritizing support of relationships between these entities was identified as key to finding cross-jurisdictional workforce solutions. One recommendation related to this was incorporating incentives in master agreements with non-tribal NGOs to support subcontracting with or grants to Tribes.

The Forest Service also identified its ongoing activities aimed toward supporting its staff and Tribal workforce capacity. For example, the Forest Service has a Tribal Program Manager in each region and is working to expand the number of Tribal liaisons at the individual forest level.

Availability of Human Resources to Meet Workforce Needs

Even with partnerships, Tribes and federal agencies [e.g., Forest Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in the Department of Interior] shared their ongoing challenges of staffing limitations and finding applicants with the applicable qualifications (education, experience, health clearance, certifications, etc.) to meet workforce needs in the short term. Participants outlined difficulties matching position-based skill sets with training, development, and higher education credentials. (See also Recruitment and Retention.) For example, degrees in higher learning do not always provide the critical thinking or on-the-ground skills needed to be successful in the forestry field. Similarly, those with the appropriate field experience may not have the required academic credentials to fill available and needed positions based on credentials and education requirements for those positions. There is also a need for increased opportunities for younger and new professionals to gain hands-on fire-line experience.

Similarly, participants also stressed the need for more staff with fire-line and technical expertise, including biological and ecological sciences, GIS, digital forestry, LIDAR, inventory techniques and data analysis, and vegetation modeling. (See also discussions on Indigenous Knowledge holders.)

Participants outlined obstacles relating to the availability of training, certifications, and health clearances for certain positions (e.g., pack tests). Accessibility and ability to obtain and maintain certifications was a particular issue for Tribes and communities in more remote areas of the country where required courses, clearances, certification processes, and health facilities are not readily available. Some participants discussed the difficulties of maintaining insurance and the cost and liability for fire suppression and management programs. Tribal participants outlined difficulties with addressing these liability issues across jurisdictions. Similarly, Tribal participants discussed the administrative burdens of requiring BIA sponsorship for “[Red Card](#)” (or [Incident Qualification Card](#)) certifications for fire positions. They recommended discussions with the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) to support Tribal responsibility for administration and oversight of their Red Card programs.

Workforce Opportunities

The Forest Service outlined various pilot programs that are helping to train fuel crews and Tribal youth and help meet certification and credentialing needs. The Forest Service also encouraged partner organizations to help address these workforce training needs. Participant discussions emphasized the challenge of ensuring access to new funding by Tribal communities, given administrative requirements and existing funding structures. Participants emphasized that limited capacity can get in the way of building capacity, highlighting the importance of federal Tribal liaisons and community navigators to ensure proper engagement and relationship building to support necessary cross-jurisdictional partnerships.

Workforce Development and Training

The Nature Conservancy’s [Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges \(TREX\)](#) program is working to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge (IK)¹ into training, and the agency is currently establishing master agreements

¹ OSTP has defined Indigenous Knowledge “as a body of observations, oral and written knowledge, practices, and beliefs that promote environmental sustainability and the responsible stewardship of natural resources through

with Tribal organizations to develop needed skill sets such as those to complete environmental assessments and surveys for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance. However, participants also discussed the need for training within federal agencies, including the Forest Service, on treaty rights, cultural and governance protocols in Indian Country and within specific Tribes, the Tribal Forest Protection Act, Forest Service 638 authority, and incorporating IK into the Wildfire Crisis Strategy implementation.

Indigenous Knowledge

All four dialogue sessions outlined the need to incorporate IK in Wildfire Crisis Strategy implementation. This was most prevalent in discussions of ensuring adequate workforce capacity, including:

- Removing barriers to Indigenous Knowledge holders to hold and maintain relevant wildfire crisis implementation positions or conduct work on the ground (see below),
- Ensuring workforce assessments include IK holder positions (cultural resource analysis, cultural burning supervisors, non-timber resource identification, and other restoration work tasks), and
- Incorporating indigenous knowledge in forest and work plans associated with Wildfire Crisis Strategy implementation.

In addition, discussions highlighted the need for training Forest Service and other federal agency staff on IK. Discussions focused on ensuring IK knowledge holders are central figures in the Wildfire Crisis Strategy implementation workforce while acknowledging existing barriers to those roles. For example, based on credentialing, many elders and other knowledge holders are not considered qualified by federal agency standards to be included in prescribed burns and other restoration efforts. Finally, participants encouraged discussions among federal agencies and Tribes to identify opportunities and pathways for inclusion and involvement of knowledge holders in implementation work. Some recommendations included:

- Including elders and other knowledge holders in the training process,
- Identifying opportunities for plant identification (medicinal, first foods, and subsistence plants) for forest health restoration for fire resilience efforts,
- Creating resource advisory groups, and
- Establishing mentoring opportunities to foster the growth of IK in younger generations and staff.

Recruitment and Retention

Speakers and specialists: Tina J. Terrell, Forest Service, Associate Deputy Chief & Senior Executive for National Recruitment, National Forest System; Merlene Mazyck, Forest Service, Workforce Development Partnerships, Team Lead; Stephanie Gutierrez, EcoTrust, Forest and Community Program Director; and Patricia O' Brien, National Wildfire Coordinating Group, Mental Health Subcommittee.

Speakers and specialists shared strategies and existing programs focused on recruiting wildland fire, forestry, and support staff for Forest Service and Tribal employment. Building on discussions outlined in the Workforce Assessment Session, participants and specialists addressed persistent challenges to

relationships between humans and environmental systems.” Indigenous Knowledge was also referenced and discussed during these dialogues as Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/ostp/ostps-teams/climate-and-environment/indigenous-knowledge/>

recruitment and retention. Likewise, participants explored different dynamics to consider in recruiting and maintaining diverse workforces to implement the Wildfire Crisis Strategy.

Forest Service Recruitment

The Forest Service outlined its current efforts to create unified recruitment messaging and tools associated with Forest Service job opportunities. These strategies include working with Forest Service Human Resources to identify skill sets and coursework for applicants and younger professionals interested in pursuing forestry positions (See Workforce Development Service Partnerships Hub). The Forest Service also outlined webinar opportunities that describe the types of supporting positions needed to address capacity needs associated with Wildfire Crisis Strategy implementation (e.g., forestry, botany, and ecology positions). The Forest Service is also actively partnering with Tribal colleges and Tribal organizations to expand access and opportunities to Tribal members and citizens interested in working with the Forest Service. Participants shared how these efforts are important, but increased recruitment and retention in tribal workforces is essential to meet Wildfire Crisis Strategy implementation goals. Discussions highlighted the importance of looking holistically at workforce capacity and development to support efforts on and off National Forest lands.

Development, Training, and Mentoring

Speakers highlighted the importance of ensuring diversity within the Wildfire Crisis Strategy workforce, citing the importance of improving workplace conditions through improved interpersonal dynamics and increasing mentorship programs for those with similar lived experiences to increase retention. Participants also shared how strong mentorship throughout the stages of career development helps identify and overcome challenges that could otherwise impact staff retention.

The Forest Service discussed currently available training and mentoring opportunities. For example, the Workforce Development Partnerships Service Hub (which includes Indian Youth Service Corps) focuses on building capacity for better outcomes, experiences, and customer service. These programs offer youth, young adults, veterans, and emerging professionals job training and work experience, as well as career pathways for jobs in conservation. The Hub also helps students and veterans stay connected with internships and individual placements with a direct hire pathway from summer events. Additionally, the Forest Service is piloting participatory and cooperative cost-share agreements with Tribes, wherein Tribal staff will work for one year with the Forest Service to meet joint Tribal and National Forest System priorities. After the agreement term, the participant returns to Tribal staff with the skills and experience to better navigate both systems. These are similar to partnership agreements without cost-sharing requirements from the Tribes. Participants recommended conducting webinars and sharing additional details on these agreements with a broader audience to expand the use of this model.

Similarly, Tribes and non-governmental organizations working with Tribes are developing various programs to support youth mentoring, including the [Teen Research and Education in Environmental Science \(TREES\) program](#), [Washington Agricultural Forestry Leadership](#), the [American Indian Science and Engineering Society program](#) for Indigenous Womxn in Stem Leadership, and [Women's Forest Congress](#). Speakers shared these programs' desire to address observed gender gaps in forestry and the desire to prioritize recruiting Native Women and addressing gender-specific challenges in wildland fire work.

Case studies, best practices, and stories highlighting Tribal-led forestry, fire suppression, and restoration efforts were recommended as effective tools for recruitment. Likewise, these tools were identified for securing funding and supporting programmatic work.

Retention issues: Mental Health, Pay Equity, and Quality of Life

A limited workforce with an increased workload can strain employees' physical and mental health, leading to burnout. Likewise, following up on discussions during the workforce capacity around mental health and trauma within the workforce, specialists shared that the barriers around mental health within the wildland fire community impact overall retention rates and recruitment potential. The [National Wildfire Coordinating Group \(NWCG\)](#) has a mental health subcommittee that addresses barriers specifically experienced by American Indian and Alaska Native wildland firefighters (see also discussions about medical facility accessibility). The NWCG's priority is finding ways to communicate and educate about mental health needs and sharing available skills and resources. The Department of Interior (DOI) and the Forest Service run a [joint program](#) that supports mental and physical health wellness concerns.

Tribal participants discussed difficulties maintaining Tribal staff due to limited housing and resources (e.g., health care, infrastructure, etc.) available in remote locations. Similarly, participants highlighted a recent change to fire suppression and wildland fire staff pay scales, increasing federal agency staff pay but not increasing pay in equivalent Tribal fire staff positions. This has resulted in issues and concerns over equity and retention issues for Tribal fire crews and departments.

Policy and Implementation

Speakers and specialists: Brian Ferebee, Forest Service, Senior Executive Wildfire Risk Reduction Infrastructure Team; Jaelith Hall-Rivera, Forest Service, Deputy Chief, State, Private, and Tribal Forestry; Cody Desautel, President, Intertribal Timber Council; Rachel Neuenfeldt, Forest Service Engagement Specialist, Wildfire Risk Reduction Team.

Speakers highlighted issues, opportunities, persistent barriers, and recommendations identified through the Tribal Workforce Capacity Dialogue series. (See Appendix C. Webinar Series Overview.) Discussions highlighted persistent barriers to implementing the Wildfire Crisis Strategy based on workforce capacity issues. Participants and speakers identified important issues and developed additional recommendations and considerations for overarching themes. The following discusses recommendations shared during the dialogue series to address issues potentially within Forest Service and Tribal authorities and those outside those authorities.

Sustained Funding

The Tribal forestry workforce needed to support the Wildfire Crisis Strategy implementation has been underfunded for decades. While the current influx of funding from BIL and IRA has supported increased hiring and capacity development, sustained funding over the long term is necessary to meet short-term and long-term goals inclusive of Tribal priorities. Direct local funding is essential but not always available under the current funding opportunities outlined in the series. Not all funding sources and opportunities (e.g., BIA Division of Wildland Fire, State Fire, Non-profit grants) are within Forest Service authority. Regardless of the source, speakers stressed that it makes a difference when funding goes directly to the Tribes, allowing autonomy in its use. Identifying opportunities to facilitate preferred funding to support Tribal self-determination is key to Tribal partnerships. Similarly, participants recommended identifying additional means to reduce administrative burdens to Tribes and expanding awareness and availability of the [Forest Service Office of Grants and Agreements Access Branch](#).

A key funding recommendation related to upfront inclusion of Tribal priorities in national-level implementation and priority work of the Forest Service. However, Tribal partnerships and implementation of Tribal priorities look different at different Forest Service levels. Therefore, the Forest

Service should explore how to work as an agency to incorporate national standards of inclusion and Tribal priorities in all levels of planning and work.

Coordinated Workforce Capacity Building and Retention

The Forest Service should look at building up internal capacity to support Tribal workforce development. Likewise, the Forest Service, other Federal agencies, and partners can work with Tribes to support building and maintaining robust Tribal capacity toward Wildfire Crisis Strategy implementation. These efforts may also include examining and coordinating localized resource issues that impact workforce retention (e.g., housing availability, workload balance, and burnout). Likewise, wildfire and other pay equity issues should be considered in recruitment efforts. ITC is working with Congress and DOI agencies to address the pay equity issue.

Federal agencies and Tribes should recognize that they are competing for the same talent pool and that by working together, Federal agencies and Tribes can better address workforce needs. Relationship building is essential in workforce assessment and collaborative planning. Some partners might have the capacity that fills gaps for others. For example, some Tribes can be additive in those places where Federal agencies need help and vice versa (e.g., cultural resource departments within Tribes can help fill gaps within federal ranks).

Assessing workforce capacity should occur through consultation or local dialogue. For example, when focusing on natural resource considerations, more Tribal land surveyors can be used to ensure the inclusion of IK in these analyses. Having conversations and using those to make local assessments of workforce needs and capacity is necessary. These discussions help identify the skillsets needed to steward landscapes from year to year.

Likewise, Tribes and Federal agencies must address short-term and long-term capacity issues by addressing administrative capacity needs and barriers to filling positions because of certifications and other qualifications (e.g., education, training, experience, health, etc.). Likewise, working with industry and other partners, federal agencies and Tribes may identify additional resources to meet current needs.

Messaging and Recruitment

Effective recruitment and retention require messaging that highlights and equitably represents Tribal contributions. Ensuring that Tribal IK and innovation in forestry needs to be better acknowledged, shared, and equitably funded. The Forest Service can develop protocols and communication strategies in collaboration with Tribes and other partners to ensure that case studies and other communications incorporate Tribal voices.

Workforce capacity and development is a tool to bring together the Forest Service and Tribes in co-stewardship and management of the National Forest System. When this co-stewardship incorporates IK and is consistent with Tribal and Forest Service priorities, effective messaging builds partnerships by capitalizing on successes through a Tribal-centered narrative. Sharing stories on the importance of this work, acknowledging those relationships and shared accomplishments ensures that these stories are told from every perspective and that people's voices are heard. These stories can support outreach and explain how this work affects daily lives, particularly with more sustained funding and broadened cross-boundary accomplishments.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This Tribal Workforce Capacity Dialogue Series offered a variety of resources, opportunities, and next steps to address workforce capacity issues in implementing the Wildfire Crisis Strategy. Speakers and participants offered several useful recommendations for consideration. However, across the four sessions, the following recommendations were consistent:

- Identify opportunities to create sustained funding for Tribal workforces, including funding full-time staff for suppression, restoration, fuels reduction, and related tasks (e.g., watershed health, ecosystem health, conservation, IK, and cultural resources.)
- Maintain national standards for including Tribal priorities in forest management decisions and project planning, and ensure these standards are implemented consistently at local forest levels.
- Expand programmatic funding options to Tribes. For example, support the expansion of Forest Service 638 authority beyond the Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA) and create options for expanding the authority to programmatic funding. Likewise, explore funding mechanisms that limit administrative burdens bore by Tribes from partnering with Forest Service.
- Expand successful pilot programs and resources to increase access to jobs, training modules, training programs (e.g., TREX), Indian Youth Service Corps, and others identified in the series.
- Invest in more agency Tribal liaisons, collaborative partnership staff, and collaborative training staff to increase support and build relationships on a local level between Tribes and Forest Service staff.
- Support indigenous mentoring and internship programs focused on skills development, science education, and other Forestry and related skills and training.
- Identify pathways for knowledge holders to engage in Wildfire Crisis Strategy implementation.
- Allocate resources and design protocols to ensure Tribal voices are equitably represented in case studies and reports on co-stewardship efforts and accomplishments.

APPENDIX A: Dialogue Series Materials and Resources

<p>Session 1 – February 23, 2023 Funding Opportunities for Developing Workforces to Address Tribal Priorities</p>	<p>YouTube: Session 1- Funding Opportunities for Developing Workforces to Address Tribal Priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tribal Workforce Funding Opportunities with BIL.ppt ▪ Webinar Agenda February 23, 2023
<p>Session 2 – March 3, 2023 Workforce Assessment and Regional Considerations</p>	<p>YouTube: Session 2- Wildfire Risk Workforce Capacity – Dialogue Series</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Webinar Agenda March 9, 2023 ▪ Discussion guide Wildfire Crisis Implementation Plan ▪ Wildland Fire Management: Building the Workforce for the Next 100 Years ▪ BIA Training Standards ▪ Adrian Leighton, IFMAT IV.ppt ▪ Indian Forestry Assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IFMAT III-Executive Summary
<p>Session 3 – March 23, 2023 Recruitment and Retention</p>	<p>YouTube: Session 3 Recruitment and Retention -Dialogue Series</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agenda ▪ Stephanie Gutierrez, Ecotrust.ppt ▪ Tina J. Terrel, USFS National Recruitment.ppt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://www.fs.usda.gov/working-with-us/jobs ▪ Youth Conservation Corp.ppt ▪ GAO Report on Barriers to Wildfire Recruitment and Retention ▪ Indigenous Forestry ▪ Exploring Climate-Smart Forestry
<p>Session 4 – April 6, 2023 Policy and implementation</p>	<p>YouTube: Session 4 Policy and Implementation - Dialogue Series</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agenda ▪ Webinar Series Overview PPT ▪ Strengthening Tribal Consultations and Nation-to-Nation Relationships: A USDA Forest Service Action Plan

Wildfire Crisis Strategy Intertribal Workforce Capacity and Development Dialogue
Series
Highlight Report

APPENDIX B

Tribes, Non-Governmental Organizations, and Federal Partners Registered (in alphabetical order)

Tribes
Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw
Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
Coeur d'Alene Tribe
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
Karuk Tribe
Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Natural Resources Department
Klamath Tribes
Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians
Lummi Nation
Osage Nation
Salish Kootenai
San Carlos Apache
Seneca Nation
United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma
White Mountain Apache Tribe, AHEC
Wiyot Tribe
Yakama Nation

USDA Forest Service
Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Indian Affairs

Intertribal and Non-Governmental Organizations
BBW & Associates
Ecological Restoration Institute
EcoTrust
Intertribal Timber Council
Salamatof Native Association, Inc.
Salish Kootenai College
The Nature Conservancy
United South and Eastern Tribes Inc.
US Endowment for Forestry and Communities
Federal Partners

APPENDIX C: Crosswalk of Series Outcomes

Crosswalk of Outcomes

Issue/Topic	Current Efforts	Recommended Next Steps
<p>The current funding influx available to build workforce capacity and development is focused on treating acres.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Wildfire Defense Grants under the BIL (allows for work on Tribal lands) • TFWPA agreements • Forest Service Pilot Training Modules • Intergovernmental Agreements for Tribal Workforce • Inflation Reduction Act for WUI (limited to National Forest System Lands) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increase awareness and access for Tribes to utilize available funding. (e.g., more locally disseminated information on funding, identification of tribal priorities in local planning to utilize funding, and increase awareness of Forest Service Access Store Front resources) ➤ Fund full fire programs, which includes funding for suppression, restoration, fuels reduction, and related tasks (watershed health, cultural resources.)
<p>Administrative burdens of accessing funding opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access Store Front in Forest Service Office of Grants and Agreements. See also accessga@usda.gov 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conduct webinars and other tools to increase awareness and use of access ➤ Increase the use of no-cost-share agreements ➤ Expanding programmatic funding options to Tribes through Forest Service (e.g., Forest Service 638) ➤ Support legislation that allows for Forest Service 638 authority not only tied to TFWPA) ➤ Increase collaboration support (Tribal liaisons, facilitators, contract and administrative support to Tribes).
<p>Funding for project Implementation and workforce development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TFWPA Projects and Agreements WUI Grants • Wildfire Crisis Strategy Implementation Priority Landscapes • Pilot training modules and programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Maintain national standards for including tribal priorities in forest management and consistently implement these standards at local forest levels. ➤ Funding to Tribal priority projects and provide funding for work on Tribal lands.

Issue/Topic	Current Efforts	Recommended Next Steps
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access Store Front in Forest Service Office of Grants and Agreements. See also accessga@usda.gov 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Expand the availability of successful Pilot programs, training, and modules. ➤ Increase funding options and tools to build people capacity and equipment capacity. ➤ Increase availability of administrative support and accessibility to grants, agreements, contracts, and other administrative funding to support Tribes in utilizing current sources and funding.
<p>Analysis of workforce gaps, training for the existing workforce, and addressing existing workforce development, promotion, and retirement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See ten-year Assessments of Indian Forest Management, IFMAT IV due June 2023 • National and Regional efforts to identify workforce needs and partnership opportunities. For example, ensuring having Tribal relations managers in each region and Tribal Liaisons at necessary levels of Forest management. • Forest-by-forest analysis of workforce needs (templates, surveys, case-by-case discussions based on capacity and Tribes within each Region/Forest). For example, Region 5 Tribal Capacity portfolio. • Developing training for Forest Service Staff to support Tribal priorities in Wildfire Crisis Strategy implementation • Pacific Northwest Tribes are expanding access to training and sharing resources. Tribes are offering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments must look at localized priorities and needs (e.g., some Tribes may require additional capacity to build programs, while others may prioritize jobs for local community members) • Increase access and availability of Wildfire Crisis Strategy implementation courses and certifications. • Create uniform standards and coursework for jobs. • Identify opportunities to share workforce resources based on expertise (e.g., contracts and agreements for Tribal cultural resource specialists, heavy equipment operators, and GIS specialists) • Develop Tribal capacity to collaborate with partners to implement workforce development strategies and create cross-jurisdictional solutions (staffing for collaboration coordinators, removing barriers/streamlining agreements and contracting with Tribes and Tribal organizations, etc.)

Issue/Topic	Current Efforts	Recommended Next Steps
	<p>training in common and sharing resources to conduct prescribed fires.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize relationships between Tribes, NGOs, and State and Federal agencies to find cross-jurisdictional workforce capacity solutions.
<p>Needed Forest Service staff capacity to support cross-jurisdictional partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges (TREX) Program is working to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge (IK) into training. • The Forest Service is currently establishing master agreements with tribal organizations to develop needed skill sets and master stewardship agreements to assist with developing needed skill sets (e.g., environmental assessments and surveys for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance. • Ensure implementation of Three-Tier training in development per FSH 1509.13. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create training to address the legacy of trauma for Tribes working with the Federal government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of Training for Federal Agencies on Treaty Rights and protocols in Indian Country, incorporating ITEK in Wildfire Crisis Strategy implementation, TFPA, and Forest Service 638 authority. • Increased certification opportunities and universal standards across federal, tribal, and state agencies
<p>Overall recruitment and connecting young professionals with forestry positions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indian Youth Service Corps • Focused recruitment to Forest Service and BIA positions • Creation of mentorship opportunities in forestry • Forest Service website tools to connect possible recruits to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create year-round employment options. • Identify existing Tribal wildfire, forestry, and related field mentoring programs (Tribal, Federal, and other partners) • Establish a database of education programs to support retention, workforce development, and capacity building.

Issue/Topic	Current Efforts	Recommended Next Steps
	<p>positions and identify required coursework. https://www.fs.usda.gov/working-with-us/jobs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop coordinated Tribal natural resources mentoring plan with partners (USFS, ITC, BIA, NGOs, and other partners) • Coordinate Youth engagement programs and opportunities to limit competition in the workforce.
<p>Training and early career opportunities</p> <p>Increasing opportunities for fire-line and/or hands-on experience in technical fields (geospatial modeling and GIS, digital forestry, LIDAR, inventory data, modeling, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indian Youth Service Corps and Public lands corps. • Workforce Development Partnership Service Hub pathway programs to support eligibility for positions in the National Park Service, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Fish and Wildlife Service • Forest Service Pilot Cooperative Cost Share Agreements, the Forest Service funds Tribal Staff to work in Forest Services offices for 1-2 year terms supporting joint Tribal and Forest Service needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Native employee recruitment and mentorship programs • Coordinate with NWCG to support Tribal options to administer and oversee their own Red Card programs
<p>Mentorship and support to address demographic diversity differences in Forestry Academia and Fieldwork.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TREES program • Washington Agricultural Forestry Leadership • AISES Indigenous Women in Stem Leadership Program • Women’s Forest Congress • Indian Youth Court 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create demographic mentorship groups. • Offer leadership and mentoring training to staff • Create success stories highlighting work and share them with staff • Collect demographic data on hiring recruitment efforts to determine what works most effectively to change program paradigms
<p>Retention, Mental Health, and Equity</p> <p>Various discussions around mental health and retention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ITC is working with BIA and Congress on pay equity for Tribal wildland fire crews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address workplace conditions to support retention and support, including -- mental health

Issue/Topic	Current Efforts	Recommended Next Steps
issues given the difficult labor for some. Likewise, discussions on pay equity for Tribal wildland fire staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NWCG Subcommittee on Mental Health to bring attention to issues. • Joint DOI and Forest Service Support Network for Mental Health and Wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -- diversity differences (gender, age, lived experiences) • Improve services to wildland fire staff • Support wellness activities for the Tribal forestry workforce • Increase awareness of these issues • Continued dialogue on how to increase certification opportunities, address mental health, and implement that information into an implementation strategy to combat burnout or short-staffing issues.
Expanding Indigenous Knowledge Holders (IK) in wildfire risk reduction workforces and Wildfire Crisis Strategy Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous Knowledge Guidance for Federal Agencies, and • Implementation memorandum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the types of positions and requirements for education or life experience that support IK knowledge holders. • Identify pathways for knowledge holders to engage in the Wildfire Crisis Strategy implementation process.
Sharing Tribal forestry management and Accomplishments – Telling the Tribal forestry story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EcoTrust Story Boards • IFMAT IV Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated support and staff to develop Tribal case studies • Protocols to ensure Tribal voices are equitably represented in case studies and reports outs on efforts and accomplishments • Create Communication strategies and implementation that share Tribal stories from the field
Addressing long-term and short-term workforce needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased recruitment and retention • Increased project-based hiring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained funding for workforce capacity, development, and recruitment • Expanding programmatic funding options to Tribes through Forest Service (e.g., Forest Service 638) • Support legislation that allows for Forest Service 638 authority not only tied to TFPA)

Issue/Topic	Current Efforts	Recommended Next Steps
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentives for subcontracting with Tribes from Forest Service NGO partners and grant recipients • Clear expectations on what can be accomplished with the current workforce based on historic funding for projects and workforce capacity • Shared resources based on available needs • Streamlined contracting and agreements to fund Tribal available workforces (cultural resources, GIS, ITEK, etc.) • Decrease the administrative burden of multiple contracting and agreement mechanisms between Tribes and federal agencies. • Invest in collaboration and administration workforces to support Tribal partnerships. • Branching out to other industries for a workforce to meet current needs (e.g., transportation, GIS, cultural resources, etc.).