



# INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL TIMBER NOTES

Winter ~ 2025



Robin Harkins

## SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2025 EARLE R. WILCOX AWARDS

I hope you all had a joyous holiday season creating memories with family and friends. As we all get back to work in the new year, the ITC Awards Committee is looking forward to reviewing the accomplishments of your peers in Indian Forestry as you prepare and submit your nominations for the Earle R. Wilcox Memorial Awards.

A tremendous amount of important and valuable work continues to be completed across Indian Country. Please consider recognizing our peers and others who have made significant contributions to Indian forestry, your Tribes, and natural resources through their work in our industry. Nominations will be con-



Photo of Joseph "Pugs" Holford's family receiving a posthumous 2024 President's Award during the annual symposium in Cherokee, NC.

sidered for both the regional and national award based on level of contribution and effort and are due in the ITC Office by **January 31, 2025, at 5:00 PM Pacific Time**. Nomination packets were mailed to members in November 2024 and can be found online at [www.itcnet.org/about\\_us/awards.html](http://www.itcnet.org/about_us/awards.html).

A posthumous 2024 Earle R. Wilcox Memorial Award was given in honor of Joseph "Pugs" Holford, Forest Manager, BIA-Colville Agency. His family was presented with an Eighth-Generation blanket as the President's Award. Pug's passed away on September 28, 2023, at the early age of 48 years old, far too soon and he will be missed by many. Pugs was a forester with knowledge, vision, and selfless commitment to his Tribe

and others.

If you have any questions about eligibility or the nomination packet itself, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at [robinharkin@coquilletribe.org](mailto:robinharkin@coquilletribe.org) or contact the ITC office. We are happy to help.

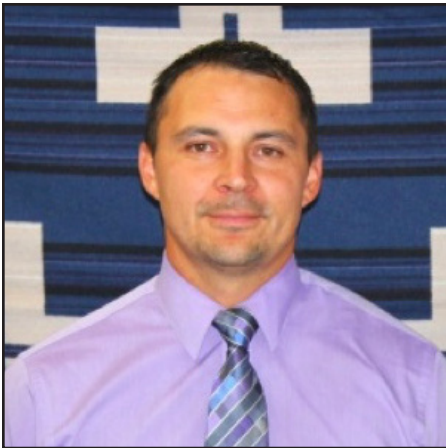
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## President's Message

by Cody Desautel



Cody Desautel

As we start 2025 we have many changes on the horizon. We will have a new administration in the White House, and some changes in Congress. This will come with a new set of political appointees in critical positions like the Secretary of Interior, Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, Secretary of Agriculture, and many more. We anxiously await those nominations and confirmations to begin engagement on tribal forest management and fire issues. We will also be operating under a continuing resolution for the federal budget through March 14, 2025. With appropriations from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act winding down, we are likely to see significantly reduced funding for programs compared to the last few years.

In my last report I shared the approval of the Executive Director for ITC. We plan to have the position advertised by the time this newsletter is published. We encourage you to visit the ITC website for the advertisement if you are interested or share with individuals that might be good candidates. This position will be a critical first step in growing the capacity of ITC over the coming year. We plan to advertise the other positions I mentioned in

the previous newsletter through the remainder of the year.

With the Farm Bill pushed into 2025 we will continue to work with the Congress on new authorities for Indian country. With Republicans released in both the House and Senate there may changes to the draft version that was release in 2024. We remain focused on the Good Neighbor fix, expanded co-stewardship authorities and funding, and additional funding to close the funding gap between BIA/Tribal managed forests and other forest under federal jurisdiction. We expect some pieces of legislation introduced in the last Congress to be reintroduced in the next Congress. Those bills include the National Prescribed Fire Act, Fix our Forests Act, and several other pending bills. ITC has had the opportunity to testify on a number of forestry related bills over the past two years, and hope to maintain that momentum in the next Congress.

There were two U.S. Forest Service initiatives that did not get to the finish line under the last administration. We are unsure of the future of the National Old Growth Amendment, and Northwest Forest Plan revision. ITC submitted comments on the draft EIS for both amendments and will continue to work with the U.S. Forest Service to share tribal perspectives and make connections with Tribal communities impacted by the amendments. ITC has entered into a Keystone agreement with the U.S. Forest Service to ensure tribal input and education is provided to for both tribes and Forest Service Officials.

With the addition of P.L. 93-638 contract authority to Tribal Forest Protection Act proposals in the

2018 Farm Bill we have seen more tribes take advantage of this authority, and those agreements have provided a source of funding for tribes to engage in the planning and NEPA analysis for these projects. In addition, tribes have more than 180 co-stewardship agreements with the U.S. Forest Service, and over 200 co-stewardship agreements with Department of Interior bureaus. To ensure we continue the momentum ITC has gained over the last several years we intend to make several trips to Washington DC in 2025 to engage with and brief the new leadership within DOI and USDA. Those communications have helped develop new relationships and projects within the federal government over the last decade.

We look forward to a productive 2025 and invite our member tribes and partner organizations to reach out if there are opportunities to work collaboratively on priorities. I want to close by thanking the Bureau of Indian Affairs and U.S. Forest Service for the additional funding to support additional capacity for ITC. This has been a strong relationship for many years, and the added capacity should continue to grow the collaboration between those federal agencies and tribes.





## Awards Committee

by Robin Harkins

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Award selections will be made during the virtual February ITC

Board meeting and presented during the 48th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium hosted

by ITC and the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes in Missoula, MT, June 2-5, 2025.



## BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin



Aaron Baldwin

### THE BIA DIVISION OF WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT WELCOMES NEW EMPLOYEES AND CONGRATULATES EXISTING EMPLOYEES IN NEW POSITIONS

**John Cervantes, Aviation Branch Chief:** John was recently welcomed to the national office from the Southwest Region where he served as the regional fire management officer. John's current duty station is in Albuquerque, NM. John plans to relocate to Boise to work at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in June 2025.

**Kenneth Jaramillo, Reserved Treaty Rights Lands (RTRL) and Prevention Program Manager:** Kenny previously served



Photo of Yakama Tribal firefighters responding to wildfire in June 2024.

for years as the Division's wildland urban interface prevention specialist for the BIA Southwest Region and will now supervise the

Division's prevention specialists and the BIA's support of the RTRL program. Kenny's duty station is

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## BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin

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in Albuquerque, NM.

**Juliette Jeanne, Wildland Fire-fighting Administrator Branch Chief:** Juliette most recently served as the Division's office administrator. Previously, she served for years within the Division's Post Wildfire Recovery program. Juliette's duty station is in Fort Apache, AZ.

**Elaina LaPaz, Public Affairs Specialist:** Elaina joined the Division after building her public affairs background with the Mescalero Apache Tribe for the past nine years. Elaina's duty station is in Mescalero, NM.

**Darryl Martinez, Post Wildfire Recovery Coordinator:** Darryl is welcomed back to the Division from the Southwest Region where he most recently served as regional forester. Darryl's duty station is in Albuquerque, NM.

**Whitney Malatare, Fuels Data Analyst:** Whitney joined the Division after her career working with Confederated Salish and Kootenai

Tribes, most recently as their Reserved Treaty Rights Lands program coordinator. Whitney's current duty station is Missoula, MT, but she plans to work at NIFC by the new year.

### TRIBAL FIREFIGHTERS RECEIVE EQUITABLE RETENTION BONUSES TO FEDERAL WILDLAND FIREFIGHTERS

P.L. 117-58 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) provided funding to increase pay for federal wildland firefighters in FY22 and FY23, a special pay supplement to boost firefighter retention. Due to Tribal fire programs being managed under P.L. 93-638, a law which allows Tribes to operate federal programs to meet Tribal and federal objectives, Tribal firefighters are not considered federal employees. The BIA, a federal agency that promotes self-determination and self-governance with federally recognized Tribes, advocated for the inclusion of Tribal wildland fire programs in the retention bonus pay supplements. This eventually led to a special pay supplement being approved by congress

to provide similar compensation to Tribal firefighters as federal firefighters through BIL fuels and preparedness funding.

In FY22, special pay supplements totaling \$11.1M were made to 901 Tribal firefighters. In FY23, payments totaling \$12.5M were made to 948 Tribal firefighters. This resulted in a total of \$23.6M in additional compensation to Tribal firefighters. Data for the full 2024 FY is still being collected, but it is anticipated that over \$6M will be distributed to more than 900 Tribal firefighters through regular firefighter compensation funding (P.L. 118-42).

When asked how the compensation made a difference, Yakama Nation Fire Management Wildland Firefighter Zeena Waheneka responded, "I felt appreciated for my hard work and dedication as a wildland firefighter."

Through the Tribal firefighter special pay supplement, the BIA provided an additional \$23.6M to Indian Country. This funding contributes a substantial amount to local Tribal economies which continue to be plagued with limited job opportunities, prevalent poverty rates and limited access to affordable goods and services.

### RETURNING FIRE TO THE LANDSCAPE

Written by Joshue Williams, BIA Eastern Oklahoma Region and Jessica Gardetto, DOI Office of Wildland Fire. The Bureau of Indian Affairs is partnering with the Chickasaw Nation to bring fire back to their ancestral home, reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfires and restoring the landscape.



Photo of a firefighter patrolling the perimeter of a prescribed fire within the Chickasaw Nation.

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## BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin

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Thousands of years ago, the Chickasaw Nation's ancestors settled among the towering forests, dense canebreaks, open prairies, rolling hills, and miles of meandering waterways that make up present-day northern Mississippi and Alabama and western Tennessee and Kentucky. These First Americans became intertwined with the ecologically diverse lands surrounding them, and they used fire as a tool to maintain the landscape.

Fire was a part of the early Chickasaw people's community and spiritual life. They set fires to remove underbrush and to replenish the forest's vital nutrients. Burning maintained open prairie, supporting native wildlife that needed both prairie and forest to survive and providing food for the community.

With the expansion of the United States, European settlers flooded into Indian lands. The Chickasaw people's home was reduced to only the northern part of Mississippi, along with many other negative and tragic impacts. The introduction of private land ownership and other new policies that sought to outlaw aspects of the Tribe's culture forced the Chickasaw to end their cultural burning practices. These changes enabled invasive species to gain a foothold, like the eastern red cedar, which is crowding out native plants and causing serious ecological issues throughout the area today, impacting residents of both the Chickasaw Nation and Oklahoma.

The absence of fire, combined with the impacts of climate change, also created a buildup of vegetation that, in recent years, has fueled intense, fast-moving wild-



*Photo of a wildland firefighter carefully applying fire while conducting a prescribed burn as part of the partnership between the BIA Eastern Oklahoma Region and the Chickasaw Nation.*

fires that are difficult to control and threaten local communities. In March 2022, a massive wildfire burned toward the nearby town of Sulphur, Oklahoma, threatening community infrastructure and Chickasaw Nation properties, causing home, campground, and trail evacuations, and closing numerous roadways.

In 2019, the Bureau of Indian Affairs established a Reserved Treaty Right Lands partnership with the Chickasaw Nation. The Reserved Treaty Right Lands program, administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, helps to protect natural and cultural resources important to Tribes on non-tribal lands that are at considerable risk from wildfire. To date, just over \$4 million in Reserved Treaty Rights Lands funding has been invested in the project, including in the creation of three Chickasaw Nation Tribal positions to work on it.

The partnership focuses on reducing excess vegetation that could produce catastrophic wildfires

across 20,200 acres of the Blue River and Arbuckle Lake watersheds, which are ecologically key areas. The project involves 4,200 acres of Tribally managed lands, as well as a checkerboard of private, state, and federal lands, with participation from the Chickasaw Nation, National Park Service, Oklahoma Nature Conservancy, Lake of the Arbuckles Watershed Association, Blue River Foundation of Oklahoma, and numerous private landowners.

Since 2019, the partnership has conducted prescribed burns on over 15,580 acres and completed 2,425 acres of mechanical treatments to remove hazardous vegetation. In partnership with the Tribe, skilled Bureau of Indian Affairs wildland fire personnel conducted the prescribed burns. Experienced contractors completed the mechanical treatments. The areas were completely overtaken by invasive eastern red cedar, which created serious wildfire threats,

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## BIA Division of Wildland Fire Management

by Aaron Baldwin

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endangered Chickasaw Nation infrastructure, caused significant wildlife habitat loss, and impacted a host of economic benefits for the Tribe.

The carefully administered fuels treatments have resulted in significant habitat restoration on Chickasaw Nation lands, including areas of cultural and ecological importance to the Tribe. Now, these areas are seeing healthy native plant growth and red cedar reduction.

The partnership has also educat-

ed private landowners about the benefits of conducting prescribed burns on their land. For example, in June 2022, the Oklahoma Conservation Commission and the Lake of the Arbuckles Watershed Association hosted a post prescribed fire plant identification workshop for landowners where they learned more about the value and application of prescribed fire.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs Eastern Oklahoma Region Reserved Treaty Right Lands partnership with the Chickasaw Nation created a foundation for multiple

partnerships and community engagements with the shared goals of reducing wildfire risk and increasing ecosystem health to make the landscape more resilient when wildfires occur. This multi-level collaboration will continue to improve the lands that are so culturally and economically precious to the Chickasaw Nation and Oklahoma residents, allowing them to live alongside wildfire and renew the landscape as the native Chickasaw Nation's ancestors did so long ago.



## Education Committee

by Shawn de France



Shawn de France

## 2024 NATIVE AMERICAN NATURAL RESOURCE RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The 2024 Native American Natural Resource Scholarship deadline was December 1, 2024. The Research Scholarship is designed to support tribally relevant, natural resource-based research being

conducted by Native American scholars enrolled in a graduate program. The amount of the award varies, up to \$5,000 and is funded by ITC and the USDA Forest Service Research & Development. On December 6, the Education Committee met to review applications and agreed to accept four research projects. The ITC Board met on December 12 and approved the funding. The recipients are as follows:

**Amber Archie (Navajo Nation):** Amber is pursuing a Master of Science degree in Biology at Northern Arizona University. Researching "Investigating Native and Invasive Species Under Varying Environmental Stress, a Riparian Outlook on the Future of Climate Change in the Southwest United States." Awarded \$4,367 for research project.

**Jared Begay (Navajo Nation):** Jared is pursuing a Master of Forestry degree at Northern Arizona University. Researching "Pinyon trees response to restorative tree

thinning treatments and the effects on cone production in Navajo Nation woodlands." Awarded \$2,065 for research project.

**Cody Goklish (White Mountain Apache):** Cody is pursuing a Master of Science in Natural Resource Management degree at Salish Kootenai College. Researching "Fluvial geomorphology resilience by incorporating beaver dams following irrigation dam removal." Awarded \$3,178 for research project.

**Cameron Marcias (Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe):** Cameron is a Ph.D. candidate in Natural Resources at University of Idaho. Researching "Bobcats (*Lynx rufus*) provide an ecosystem service to the timber industry." Awarded \$3,840 for publishing research project.

Congratulations to the award recipients and keep your eyes out for next year's 2025 Native American Natural Resource Scholarship.

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## Education Committee

by Shawn de France

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The Education Committee had a very productive meeting on December 12, 2024. Terry Baker, Chief Executive Officer for Society of American Foresters (SAF), joined us virtually and provided his support for ITC attending the 2025 SAF Annual Convention and the desire to continue to build relationships with ITC and SAF. Tia Beavert, Yakama Nation, discussed the project with the Sustainable Forestry Initiative and the Project Learning Tree: Green Spaces Program. They are working on developing a Voices of Indigenous Professionals product to inspire and help youth to pursue careers in the forest and conservation sector.

The Education Committee is dedicated to assisting students to reach their academic goals, thank you to everyone that assisted in the selection process and attending the quarterly meeting. The committee proposed some exciting ideas to better assist our students in the future. These ideas and recommendations will be further discussed during our February virtual meeting.

### **TRIBAL FORESTRY AND WILDLAND FIRE STUDENT SUMMIT: EMPOWERING TRIBAL YOUTH TO CHOOSE WILDLAND FIRE AND FOREST MANAGEMENT CAREERS**

Written by Nicole Stiffarm. The third Tribal Forestry and Wildland Fire Student Summit, held this October, wasn't just a regular conference — it was the third in a series of inspiring gatherings designed to empower tribal youth to embrace and advance forestry and wildland fire careers. This was the third summit I've attend-



*Photo of Summit participants, tribal leaders, and forestry experts end the Tribal Forestry and Wildland Fire Student Summit with Swartz Lake as a beautiful background.*

ed and participated in developing because helping students discover the power of their connection to forest ecosystems and the meaningful careers available within them fuels my passion for developing the tribal workforce.

The summit provided a vital space for tribal youth to learn from tribal leaders and forestry experts in a setting deeply connected to land stewardship — the University of Montana's [Lubrecht Experimental Forest](#). A non-tribal forestry student interested in tribal forestry also attended this summit. Given this country's aging forestry workforce, youth are well positioned to flourish in the forestry and wildland fire sector. Tribal youth, with their traditional knowledge and skills in areas like cultural burning, are increasingly critical to shaping the future of forestry and wildland fire management.

The [Intertribal Timber Council](#), the University of Montana W.A. Franke College of Forestry, and

Salish Kootenai College's Center for Tribal Research and Education in Ecosystem Sciences (SKC TREES) led the three-day summit. The [Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Division of Forestry](#) planned and hosted the tribal tour.

A standout aspect of the summit was its focus on connecting Tribal students with leaders in the field who have walked similar paths. These mentors provide essential guidance and support, drawing on their own experiences in navigating cultural and professional challenges. The summit's networking opportunities extended beyond the event, with ITC and tribal forestry and wildland fire programs working to create long-term mentorship and networking connections that support Tribal students throughout their careers. This emphasis on enduring support strengthens ITC's commitment to advancing careers in forestry and wildland fire, ensuring that students not

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## Education Committee

by Shawn de France

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only succeed but grow into lead-

ership roles that will shape the future of land management.

Read the full article on ITC's blog at [https://medium.com/@inter-](https://medium.com/@inter-tribaltimbercouncil)

[tribaltimbercouncil.](https://medium.com/@inter-tribaltimbercouncil)



## Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo



Jim Durglo

### **SCALING UP SIZE AND PACE – ENABLING CROSS-BOUND- ARY SUPPORT FOR UTILIZATION OF PRESCRIBED FIRE THROUGH IMPROVED AND INCREASED RE- SOURCE SHARING**

In this article I provide a couple of topics of interest from participation in the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). WFLC is an intergovernmental committee of Federal, State/territory, Tribal, county, and municipal government

officials convened by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture dedicated to promoting consistent wildland fire policies, goals, and management activities. One of their priority issues is- Scaling up size and pace – Enabling cross-boundary support for utilization of prescribed fire through improved and increased resource sharing.

Over the past decade we have seen an increase in prescribed fire but not on the scale necessary. Because managing wildfires to achieve resource benefits is considered a “suppression” action by the federal agencies, the resource sharing needs are covered by existing agreements for many agencies. These same processes are lacking for pre-suppression activities including prescribed fire. Numerous barriers have been identified limiting utilization and sharing resources other than suppression including regulatory processes, personnel training, planning, complex burn operations, shrinking weather windows, and public support for prescribed fire. Examination of these barriers found that lack of adequate capacity and funding are the most cited barriers to increasing application of prescribed fire.

Efficient sharing and utilization of resources across jurisdictional boundaries is limited by qualifications/standards, financial systems, and other structural differences between jurisdictions. These limita-

tions make the process of sharing resources and utilizing non-agency specific resources challenging, if not impossible. Prescribed fire and mitigation activities must be done at a greater scale to reduce hazards across all landscapes and to do so, additional resources and efficiencies in sharing of those resources must be identified and used.

WFLC principal agencies plan to facilitate the changes necessary to enable shared resource capacity to substantially increase the appropriate use of both prescribed and managed fire. To address workforce limitations related to resource sharing for pre-suppression project implementation, WFLC will develop an analysis and framework to allow principal agencies to create interagency support for prescribed fire. This analysis will map and identify interagency opportunities to address the barriers.

On a more local level, we are having a conversation about sharing resources between the CSKT fire staff and the Bitterroot National Forest to perform some thinning and Rx fire. Questions arise about the PL 638 contract language that may limit staff to tribal trust lands.

There is a plan to write a white paper highlighting several Cultural Burning case studies and present it back to the WFLC in the spring. The following are in the WFLC

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## Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo

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Cultural Fire discussion loop Jenna Knoblock, Senior Wildfire Resilience Fellow, USDA Office of the Under Secretary, Natural Resources and Environment; Johnna Blackhair, Deputy Bureau Director, USDOJ, BIA; Trina Locke, Director, Environmental and Cultural Resources, BIA, Office of Trust Services; and Bill Tripp, Director of Natural Resources & Environmental Policy, Karuk Tribe.

The NWCG Webpage has been updated to include a Who We Are and What We Do short video pre-

sentations. Please check it out at [www.nwcg.gov](http://www.nwcg.gov).

A major project that NWCG is working on is the Incident Performance and Training Modernization (IPTM). The outcome of this effort is to develop professional wildland firefighters, build a sustainable workforce, and create effective performance-based training that can be updated and maintained more efficiently. NWCG intends to analyze over 130 incident positions in the next five years.

IPTM is a systematic process in which NWCG is reviewing and

updating Incident Management Position and Qualification requirements. The NWCG staff led by Toni Suminski has been very deliberate and has greatly increased fiscal support for the efforts. Work is focusing on defining the training review process and clarifying roles, responsibilities, and circles of authorities within each phase of the position review cycle.

The Goals of IPTM are to (1) Develop a modern integrated performance-based training system to support a safe and effective wildland fire workforce. (2) Move as much training as appropriate to



Photo of CSKT Division of Fire, showing application of fire in dry ponderosa pine ecosystem, Flathead Indian Reservation, MT.

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## Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

by Jim Durglo

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on-the-job through the support of Incident Position Standards and Next Gen Position Task Books. (3) Ensure incident position specific training is necessary, relevant, and efficient to update and maintain. (4) Build Performance Support

Packages and qualifications from Incident Position Standards to better support trainees, evaluators, and qualified individuals.

IPTM is a complex multitiered process that starts with Subject Matter Experts that progressively passes through subcommittees, parent committees, agency coordi-

nation before being approved and made available. If your fire staff is interested in being listed as a SME for a particular wildland fire management position, please consider making them available.



## Legislative Update

by Matt Hill



Matt Hill

## POLITICAL LANDSCAPE & TRANSITION

The year 2025 ushers in a new political landscape and policy priorities that could have a significant effect on tribal and federal forest management. In the Executive Branch, the inauguration of Donald Trump for his second term as President means a complete turnover of political appointments at every federal agency. Cabinet-level department heads, most agency directors and many others will require formal confirmation by the United States Senate. The next several months will be dominated by confirmation hearings, extensive questioning and ultimately

votes by relevant committees and the full Senate will be required. We can also expect reversal of a sleigh of Executive and Secretarial Orders across the federal government.

At the Department of the Interior, Mr. Trump has announced the nomination of North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum to serve as Secretary of the Interior, as well as chair of the National Energy Council. While in office, Burgum advocated for tax-sharing agreements with Native nations, added a permanent display of all five tribal flags outside the governor's office and pushed for law enforcement partnerships to improve emergency response times on reservations. North Dakota tribes have generally had a positive reaction to Burgum's nomination. This past June, Burgum acknowledged at an event that relations between the state and tribes were at a low point when he took office in 2016. At the time, protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline in southern North Dakota were ongoing, involving thousands of demonstrators who flocked to the state to camp in solidarity with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in opposition to the pipeline. As governor, Burgum hosts an annual "Strengthening Government to

Government" conference to bring state and tribal leaders together.

We can assume that Burgum will guide the selection of other political nominations within DOI, including Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, which will also be subject to Senate confirmation. The director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bryan Mercier, is not a political position and will likely remain unchanged.

In Congress, the Republican Party will retain a slim majority of the U.S. House of Representatives. Key committee chairmanships will likely remain in place, such as Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-AR) chairing the House Natural Resources Committee and Rep. Tom Cole (R-OK) chairing the Appropriations Committee. Subcommittee chairs, such as the Indian Affairs Subcommittee might change as those committees organize for next year's session of Congress. Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA) will serve as the Democratic Ranking Member of the House Natural Resources Committee.

The Senate has flipped from Democratic to Republican control by a 53-47 margin. In the case of any tie votes, Vice-President Vance will cast as tie-breaking vote

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## Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

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in his capacity as President of the Senate.

### **FY25 Appropriations Update:**

As of the time of writing (late December), Congress is struggling to pass a Continuing Resolution to keep the federal government operating. We are hopeful that a total shutdown can be avoided, and that federal programs and service continue un-interrupted. After January 20, Republicans will be in total control of the federal government and can adjust spending priorities and levels.

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. I do not expect this funding range to change significantly even if a final appropriations bill is delayed until 2025. In January, both Congress and the new Trump Administration will begin working to prepare the FY2026 budget and appropriations bills.

**Farm Bill Update:** It appears that this Congress will not finalize its work on a new Farm Bill. Instead, the responsibility will be taken up by the next Congress in January. Democratic and Republican farm bill negotiators have reportedly started formal talks on an exten-

sion, so that critical programs do not lapse in the meantime.

A last-minute Farm Bill proposal was introduced in November by Senate Democrat Debbie Stabenow, who is currently chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee but will be in the minority party next year. Stabenow's bill contains over 40 tribal provisions. These include:

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.

In May 2024, the Republican-controlled House Agriculture Committee passed its version of a new Farm Bill, with a handful of Democratic votes in support. We can expect this to be the foundation of the 2025 House bill. Tribal provisions in the 2024 bill include:

A new "Forest Conservation Easement Program" 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."

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## Legislative Update

by Matt Hill

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Tribal prescribed burn demonstration project: Authorizes USDA to collaborate with tribes on prescribed burns on federal land through delegated authority from USDA to the tribe.

Again, Republicans will have total control of Congress in 2025, and the new Farm Bill will reflect their priorities.

**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 ITC filed formal comments on the DEIS.

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.

With the change in Administration and a full Republican majority in Congress, it is likely that the NOGA will never be finalized, and current forest plans will remain as they are.

**Northwest Forest Plan Update:** In November, the Forest Service released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (“DEIS”) for

the amendment to the Northwest Forest Plan, initially anticipated at the end of August.

There will be a 120-day public comment period (ending March 17, 2025) allowing all interested parties to provide input on the proposed amendment. Public webinars have also been scheduled.

According to the Forest Service, the action alternatives in the DEIS address the major needs identified by Tribes through consultation and engagement, incorporate FAC recommendations, meet trust and treaty obligations and are consistent with the 2023 Forest Service Tribal Action Plan that emphasizes incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge and protection of tribal information and knowledge.

All the action alternatives include provisions to (1) improve Forest Service-tribal relations to meet legal obligations, (2) improve forest management practices through collaborative and co-stewardship projects, and (3) incorporate Indigenous Knowledge while maintaining the need to protect tribal knowledge and sovereignty. While all the alternatives would have long-term beneficial impacts on Forest-tribal relations and improved forest management by emphasizing tribal engagement and incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge in decision-making, the action alternatives emphasize various aspects of forest stewardship and tribal inclusion, as described below.

Alternative B (the proposed action) provides additional specific outcomes to be achieved through adoption and implementation of plan objectives related to incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge relative to Alternatives C and

D. Alternative B would require a specified number of co-stewardship projects to be achieved; that the Forest Service engage with Tribes on an annual basis to develop and implement approaches to forest management in areas of tribal importance; and that population numbers and/or habitat for culturally significant species be protected.

Alternative C would reduce the number of acres of forest under active management. Taken together, the effect of the plan amendments under Alternative C, as an alternative emphasizing natural processes over reciprocal human-nature relationships, would result in obstacles to the Forest Service in meeting legal obligations to Tribes and encouraging increased tribal engagement and incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge into planning and project implementation.

Alternative D would provide more plan components related to tribal inclusion than Alternatives

B and C. This alternative would include two additional tribal Forest Stewardship goals and a potential management approach; as well as tribal exemptions for co-stewardship and cultural use in moist forest LSR, matrix.





## Operations Committee

by Jason Robison



Jason Robison

I hope everyone had a productive and fulfilling fall, and that your holiday season was both joyful and rejuvenating! On December 11, 2024, the ITC Operations Committee met in person at the Catamaran Resort and Spa in San Diego, California, for an engaging discussion. The meeting focused on key initiatives and ongoing projects. Discussions ranged from the Tribal Branding Marketing Study and the implementation of the Indian Forest Management Assessment Team IV (IFMAT) to legislative updates and planning for the 9th American Forestry Congress. Other highlights included the Keystone Agreement, updates on the SFI Green Spaces Program, and a review of the hiring process for ITC's new Executive Director. Below is a closer look at the major takeaways from each discussion.

**Tribal Branding and Marketing Study:** Steve Rigdon, Tribal Partner Resource Stewardship Manager at Sustainable Northwest, provided an update on the Tribal Branding and Marketing Study. Initially explored in 2010-2011 with limited interest, the project has now gained momentum due to the growing importance of storytelling around source wood.

Through a partnership with Sustainable Northwest, ITC has secured \$3 million in funding from sources including Meyer Memorial and USDA IRA, among others. These funds will support initiatives such as building standards, wood markets, and a Portland Airport funding project.

The study aims to expand wood markets, enhance sourcing strategies, and engage tribes and industries through surveys and strategic partnerships. Participants are being sought for the steering committee and workshops to refine approaches and revisit past reports. Collaboration, feedback, and implementation strategies are vital to advancing this initiative.

**IFMAT IV Updates:** Stephanie Lucero shared comprehensive updates on the implementation of IFMAT IV recommendations.

Goal 1: The team is preparing a detailed transition plan for the incoming administration. This plan includes briefing papers, story maps, and related documents to ensure continuity in tribal forestry management efforts. Tribal member participation is a key focus, and plans are in place to include interns and tribal representatives in lobbying trips to Washington, D.C. and other critical meetings.

Resolutions supporting IFMAT IV from the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) and the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) have passed. Further outreach is needed to gather additional tribal support through other member agencies. Members interested in participating are encouraged to get in touch with Matt Hill.

Goal 2: The implementation plan updates emphasize self-governance

objectives, such as identifying alternative funding sources and building partnerships to support tribal forestry initiatives. The self-governance workgroup is actively pursuing collaborations that align with broader self-governance and forestry resource management goals.

Goal 3: The Self-Governance Workgroup and the 25 CFR 163 Working Group are advancing key regulatory updates. On December 5, 2024, the Self-Governance Workgroup discussed aligning BIA regulations with self-governance needs, focusing on NIFRMA, USDA self-governance implications, and accessing 638 funding. The 25 CFR 163 Working Group met on December 10, 2024, to discuss regulatory updates for timber and non-timber forest products. The updates aim to ensure sustainable forest management and align federal regulations and policies with tribal resource management goals. Progress will be tracked through monthly TSOG meetings, with a draft regulatory update targeted for August 2025. If you wish to participate in these meetings, please contact Laura Alvidrez at [laura@itcnet.org](mailto:laura@itcnet.org).

Goal 4: Workforce development and forest management capacity continue to be a priority. Some of the efforts under goal 4 include addressing the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) incentive pay and prioritizing fire shed mapping. Discussions highlighted the integration of non-timber forest products into management strategies. Holistic forest management remains a top priority. There are also ongoing discussions with the American Bar Association.

Additionally, efforts to engage

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## Operations Committee

by Jason Robison

*(Continued from page 13)*

a cohort of legal professionals knowledgeable in tribal sovereignty, self-governance, and self-determination are underway as part of the planning process for a future law symposium. This will help address environmental justice, co-stewardship, and trust responsibilities in Tribal forestry policy.

**NAFO Updates:** The Operations Committee will be scheduling a follow-up meeting with Dave Tenny, Executive Director of NAFO, to discuss key priorities and explore collaboration opportunities. Laura Alvidrez will send out invitations for this discussion, which will focus on strengthening coordination with NAFO, particularly regarding fire-related issues, endangered species, and MOUs with agencies. Both the Executive Committee and other interested parties are encouraged to participate.

**9th American Forestry Congress Planning:** ITC President, Cody Desautel provided an update on the 9th American Forestry Congress. The agenda is still being developed, with a focus on themes that reflect the new administration's priorities, including the role of women in forestry, old growth, carbon management, and resilience. Further updates will be shared as they become available.

**Keystone Agreement Updates:** The ITC is moving forward with the Keystone Agreement in partnership with the Forest Service, aiming to secure up to \$5 million over five years through the Inflation Reduction Act. The funds will support tribal co-stewardship, Tribal Forest Protection Act implementation (TFPA), Good Neighbor

Authority, and facilitation, and capacity-building workshops for tribal youth. The agreement has been approved to proceed, and the ITC President will review all necessary documentation to receive the funding. A new financial plan and updated scope of work will be developed and moved to the ITC executive group for review and approval.

**IAC / NRCS Native Network Conservation Network Updates:** The Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC) has received a grant from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and ITC is a contracted partner in the National Native Conservation Network. A virtual kickoff meeting with all partner organizations took place in September and in person in Las Vegas in December.

Next Steps for ITC include: (1) Promote NRCS Programs: Present NRCS programs at the annual ITC symposium, share NRCS opportunities via the ITC newsletter, and develop an NRCS-specific newsletter. (2) Build Community Conservation Partnerships: Identify underserved areas and increase outreach. (3) Engage Small-Scale and Urban Agriculture Producers: Use email distribution, technical assistance, and workshops to improve program engagement. (4) Advance Climate-Smart Conservation Practices: Provide workshops on NRCS programs, offer training using successful tribal examples, and track conservation projects.

With a \$1.6 million grant over four years, there is a need to involve a contractor to help execute the strategy. The executive team will be working with ITC staff to develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) for this type of work.

**USDA Forest Service OTR Update:** Reed Robinson, Director of Tribal Relations, provided an update on the USDA Forest Service's Office of Tribal Relations (OTR) efforts in Indian Country. Significant investments are being made in forestry initiatives on tribal and adjacent lands, including new agreements with Tribal GIS for technical support and staff training on TFPA 638 and a new guide for tribal nations. Collaboration with ITC continues the demonstration authority for TFPA and the wildfire crisis strategy.

**Legislative and National Policy Updates:** Northwest Forest Plan Revision Amendment: The DEIS has been released, reflecting recommendations from FACA committees. Tribes can comment, with consultation taking place in February. A small workgroup may be formed to develop Tribal TEK-based recommendations.

Old Growth Initiative: This issue is on pause through the transition to a new administration.

Tribal Forest Protection Act Amendments Act of 2024: The Tribal Forest Protection Act Amendments Act of 2024 (S. 4370) enhances the original 2004 Act by broadening its scope and implementation. Key changes include expanding the definition of "Indian forest land or rangeland" to include land in Alaska held by Native Corporations and areas capable of vegetative restoration, allowing projects focused on both protection and restoration, and including federal lands with cultural significance to tribes in project eligibility. The bill also authorizes \$15 million annually for implementation from 2025 through 2030. While the amendments

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## Operations Committee

by Jason Robison

*(Continued from page 14)*

aim to address broader ecological and cultural needs, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) have requested Congress to block the bill, and the Intertribal Timber Council (ITC) remains neutral.

**Co-Management Updates:** Draft co-management legislation is being prepared to formalize shared decision-making under co-management principles, with the USDA draft framework incorporated into the Grijalva bill. Two Intertribal Timber Council (ITC) member tribes, the Karuk Tribe and the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, plan to introduce a co-management resolution at the January ATNI meeting in Portland, Oregon.

**SFI Green Spaces Program:** The Yakama Nation is piloting the SFI Green Spaces Program to highlight Indigenous professionals' career paths in forestry. A presentation on the program is scheduled for the February Operations and Education meetings.

**Fire Subcommittee Update:** The meeting, held on December 10, 2024, from 3-5 pm Pacific Time, began with opening remarks and introductions, highlighting the workplan priorities for the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC). These priorities include integrated planning, grants and agreements, smoke management, resource sharing, wildland fire resilience, and cultural burning co-management. The discussion also touched on ongoing legislative efforts in the co-management space, with bills from Murkowski and Grijalva, and the potential for further engagement across various stakeholders, such as the

USDA, NCAI, TIBC, SCIA, and ATNI. The WFLC is seeking to involve more subject matter experts (SMEs) in the dialogue to strengthen the overall approach.

The Department of the Interior (DOI) provided updates on the organizational transition, with a focus on understanding the new leadership's priorities. Joe Majewski, the Deputy Director of DOI OWF, was introduced as a key player behind the scenes in recent national-level initiatives. There is some uncertainty about the upcoming changes, with some staff expected to transition out, and the potential for new nominations to emerge. The political climate is expected to impact the budget process, with a full budget unlikely, and a likely extension of the continuing resolution (CR) for the time being. A strategic approach focusing on the Wildfire Commission's previous work was recommended for continued progress.

The BIA shared updates on the Tribal firefighter pay rollout, fire ecologists training, and staffing initiatives. The department is aiming to increase Tribal firefighter Full-Time Equivalents and enhance the workforce, with a focus on equity in retention bonuses and staffing increases. Despite a projected shortfall of \$2 million for FY2024, funding has been set aside for support. Discussions included the impact of increased wages on other programs, as well as the appropriations process, which is influenced by public and political factors. Additionally, Northwest Management presented an innovative approach using lidar data for single-tree inventories, which can improve fire preparedness, mitigation, and management by providing detailed data on tree

health, growth rates, and fire risk modeling.

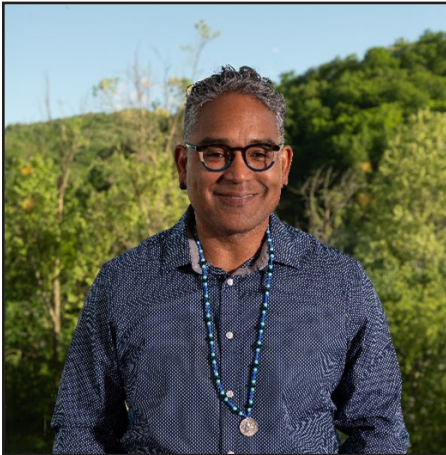
**Staffing Updates (Executive Director Hiring Process):** The Executive Director position for ITC has been approved to move forward with amendments to the job description and posting notice. The position includes a stipend for health insurance, a Simple IRA plan with a 7.5% match (to be confirmed), and a competitive salary range with annual COLA adjustments. The position requires a degree in Forestry or Natural Resources with 10+ years of experience. The advertisement will include all relevant languages, and the position will remain open until filled with scheduled review dates. Once posted, the announcement will be shared with interested parties via the ITC website and other outlets.

The ITC Operations Committee is making significant strides in advancing its strategic initiatives, strengthening partnerships, and securing crucial funding for ongoing tribal forestry efforts. The next meeting will be held virtually in February 2025. We look forward to continued collaboration and progress as we move forward into the new year.



## Symposium Committee

by Howard Teasley, Jr.



Howard Teasley, Jr.

# ITC ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM SAVE THE DATE – JUNE 2-5, 2025

Hautnin awas. Nimiipuu timpt.  
Happy New Year and Blessing to

you in our Nez Perce Language.

Our Symposium Committee and the ITC Executive Board are honored to introduce our hosts, **Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes** and would like to invite our Intertribal Timber Council family to the 48th Annual Nation Indian Timber Symposium, June 2-5, 2025, being held at the University of Montana in Missoula, MT.

The Confederated Salish, Qlippe & Ksanka (Kootenai) Tribes (CSKT) welcomes you to the Intertribal Timber Council's 2025 Symposium. Aligning with this year's theme "**Managing Tribal and Multi-Agency Interest & Empowering Tomorrow's Stewards**" we will be focusing on collaborating with other agencies, workforce development, and educating our youth to become our future leaders. The workshops and presentations will highlight

these opportunities and challenges faced by tribes across the nation. Please join us on Wednesday for the tribal tour day where we will showcase some of the outstanding and exciting work that our CSKT staff is involved in, and you will be able to admire our beautiful, exquisite lands.

**Registration:** ITC will be finalizing the agenda in spring 2025. Members will be notified once registration goes live. Check the ITC website periodically at [www.itcnet.org](http://www.itcnet.org) for updates on registration, agenda, accommodations, etc. Please note it will be the peak of tourism season in Missoula which means unfortunately we will have room blocks at several hotels. Please note that the popular workshops also fill up quickly. **Be sure to sign up for your selected workshop as soon as registration opens.** You will have the option to pay for your workshop later and this will ensure that



Photo of the Mission Mountains in Northwestern Montana.

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## Symposium Committee

by Howard Teasley, Jr.

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you reserve a spot in your desired workshop. ITC does not maintain a waiting list for filled workshops.

**Monday, June 2: Pre-Symposium Workshops** require additional registration fee and advance registration. Fees for the optional Pre-Symposium Workshops directly fund the Truman D. Picard Scholarship, dedicated to Native students pursuing an education in Natural Resources. Registration begins at 7:00 am for workshop attendees only. Workshop 1: Building Partnerships in Fire Management, Workshop 2: Understanding the Utility of Remote Sensing and LiDAR-Based Digital Landscapes: From LiDAR Data Densities to Data Sovereignty and Many

Landscape Tools In-Between, Workshop 3: Advancing Women's Leadership in Tribal Forestry and Fire Management, and Workshop 4: Forestry Field Day.

**Symposium Officially Begins.** Registration for all attendees at 4:00 pm, check in and pick up nametags. We will end the day with the Host Ice Breaker at 5:00 pm to mingle with attendees and enjoy appetizers.

**Tuesday, June 3: Opening Ceremony and General Session.** We will start the day with the Registration and Exhibit Booths, raffle items and tickets sales will begin as well. Opening Ceremony, Invocation, Posting of the Colors, Welcomes, Keynote, and Featured Guest Speaker will follow. Our

morning break will bring us to our two-panel discussions for the day. Following is the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes Host Presentation. We will end the day with the Host Welcome Dinner.

**Wednesday, June 4: Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes Tribal Tour.** Stop one will visit the Bison Range; lunch will be provided at the River Honoring Site and stop two will be at the Green House. The day will end with the General Membership Meeting.

**Thursday, June 5: General Session Updates and Workshops.** Registration and Exhibit Booths will be open, and the raffle will continue. We will first begin the day with reports from the ITC President, Department of the Interior,



Photo of the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribe's Bison Range.

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## Symposium Committee

by Howard Teasley, Jr.

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*Photo of the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribe's Green House.*

DOI Office of Wildland Fire, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Legislative, and USFS Office of Tribal Relations.

After the updates will be our three concurrent breakout workshop sessions. Workshop 1: Indigenous Workforce Development Partnership Success Stories, Workshop 2: Cultural Fire, and Workshop 3: Federal Funding Opportunities. Annual Business Meeting, and Annual Awards Banquet will end the Symposium.

**Future Symposium Dates:** 2026 ITC Symposium hosted by the

Menominee Indian Tribe, Keshena, WI. 2027 ITC Symposium hosted by the San Carlos Apache Tribe, San Carlos, AZ. Please reach out to ITC if your tribe is interested in hosting a future Symposium.

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

**Symposium Mailing List:** If you are not on the ITC mailing list and

would like to receive the annual symposium agenda, please contact the ITC online at [www.itcnet.org/get\\_involved/mailling\\_list.html](http://www.itcnet.org/get_involved/mailling_list.html).

I would like to give a shout out to Monica Rushworth, ITC Program Coordinator for her continued contributions to my newsletter article.

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

Good day, Friends! TÁC léheyn, Lávtiwaa.







Peter Wakeland

## PLANNING AND PRIORITIES

**Budget:** We are currently operating under a continuing resolution. Please contact your Regional Forester if you have an urgent need for Forestry Projects funding.

**Tribal Youth Camps Funding:** In FY 2024, BIA Forestry provided \$300,588 to support eight Tribal Forestry Summer Youth Camps. Several tribes reported successful camps with positive youth engagement in Forestry and Natural Resource Management activities. We are excited to announce that we received 16 proposals from seven Regions for FY 2025! BIA Forestry is funding all 16 camps at a total of \$511,835.42. These camps will engage almost 500 students in learning about Forestry and Natural Resource Management. We hope these camps will inspire future foresters!

**BIL-ER Ecosystem Restoration Program Restoration Outcomes Assessment Framework:** The Department of the Interior (DOI) established the Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) to implement section 40804 of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). The BIL ERP coordinates with eligible

DOI bureaus to select and fund ecosystem restoration projects and ensures efforts align with the DOI Restoration and Resilience Framework.

The BIL ERP has funded over 600 ecosystem restoration projects to date, as well as the America the Beautiful Challenge grant program, implemented by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. To understand the long-term benefits from this historic investment, a collaborative team is developing and assessing a framework to assess the outcomes of a subset of BIL-funded restoration actions.

The U.S. Geological Survey is leading the development of this framework in partnership with several DOI offices and bureaus, including the BIL ERP, the Office of Planning and Performance Management (PPP), the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The goal of this project is to develop a foundational, cross-bureau framework with shared goals and measures for assessing outcomes at the landscape level resulting from BIL-funded restoration projects. Broadly, the project team aims to develop an approach that can facilitate consistent and coordinated assessment of restoration outcomes. The project team will collaboratively develop the framework from December 2024–September 2028.

Project Website: <https://www.usgs.gov/programs/land-management-research-program/science/building-a-framework-assess-restoration-outcomes>

**Office of Trust Services Quarterly Newsletter:** The following link

will direct you to the BIA Trust Quarterly newsletter archive: [www.bia.gov/service/trust-newsletter](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 excellent 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](mailto: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 were ranked and submitted to the Forest Service in October. Fifteen BIA projects from four different regions were submitted into the Forhealth database. The Forest Service will rank and select proposals for funding and will notify BIA. The BIA will notify the tribes and transfer funding to regions or OSG. If you have any questions regarding forest health contact Orvie Danzuka at [orvie.danzuka@bia.gov](mailto:orvie.danzuka@bia.gov).

**TAAMS:** The FY 2025 TAAMS Forestry training schedule for formal classes with CGI has been approved and classes are available for registration in DOI Talent. The training schedule is as follows:

February 4-7, 2025: Introductory TAAMS Forestry, NWRO, Portland, OR

March 11-14, 2025: Introductory TAAMS Forestry, MWRO Great Lakes Agency, Ashland WI

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April 8-11, 2025: Advanced TAAMS Forestry, NWRO, Portland, OR

April 29 - May 2, 2025: Advanced TAAMS Forestry, MWRO Great Lakes Agency, Ashland WI

**Timber Team:** The Timber Team completed a trip in early December to assist the Eastern Oklahoma Region in conducting stand exam data collection on Thlopthlocco Tribal Town timberlands. The data collected will be processed using the Forest Vegetation Simulator (FVS) software to determine volumes and develop growth and yield models that can be used to calculate annual allowable cutting cycles. In total, the Timber Team completed 104 stand exam plots across 1,385 acres of commercial timberlands.

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 winter plans for 2025 include continuous forest inventory (CFI) training for the Navajo Nation and conducting stocking surveys for the Quinault Reservation in Washington.

Timber Team's tentative schedule and openings for FY 2025:

January 13 - January 24, 2025: Remote GIS and data analysis for **NWR, MWR, and WR**

February 3 - February 14, 2025: Navajo Nation CFI inspections, NM/AZ, **NR**

February 24 - March 7, 2025: Quinault Reservation TSI Exams,

WA; **NWR**

March 24 - April 4, 2025: Ute Mountain CFI, CO; **SWR**

April 14 - April 25, 2025: Nisqually & Lower Elwha Sale Prep, WA; **NWR**

May 5 - May 16, 2025: Hood Bay Allotment Sale Prep, AK; **AKR**

May 5 - May 16, 2025: *open dates for 2 foresters*

May 27 - June 6, 2025: CSKT Sale Prep and ITC Symposium Workshop, MT; **NWR**

June 16 - June 27, 2025: Uintah and Ouray Reservation Sale Prep, UT; **WR**

July 14 - July 25, 2025: Metlakatla Indian Community Sale Prep, AK; **NWR**

July 14 - July 25, 2025: Wind River Reservation White Bark Pine Surveys, WY; **RMR**

August 11 - August 22, 2025: Yakama Reservation Sale Prep, WA; **NWR**

September 8 - September 19, 2025: *Timber Team Availability*

We are seeking proposals starting in September 2025 and beyond and any federal/tribal staff that would like to work with the Timber Team on any upcoming assign-



Photo of a Timber Team forester using a prism to determine in and out trees on a stand exam plot on Thlopthlocco Tribal Town timberlands in Eastern Oklahoma Region.

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nment. To find the project request form and more information about the 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 challenging 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 FY 2024. Any questions regarding portable milling infrastructure can be directed to Orvie Danzuka at [orvie.danzuka@bia.gov](mailto:orvie.danzuka@bia.gov).

**BRANCH OF FOREST INVENTORY AND PLANNING (FIP)**

**Inventory Projects Update:** The team is diligently updating the CFI materials for the Navajo CFI. The tribe is scheduled to collect field data on the remaining plots in February 2025. Currently, 22% of the inventory projects are with the Branch of Forest Inventory and Planning (FIP), while 78% are managed by the region, agency, or tribe. The team is Cleaning and Processing 4 projects, 2 projects are in the analysis phase, and preparing materials for 4 new projects. The contractor is making ongoing updates to the analysis

program. The foresters continue to provide excellent support to the field units upon request.

Projects at FIP:

- Initiation - 2024 = 4
- Initiation - 2025-2026 = 0
- Cleaning/Processing = 4
- Analysis = 2
- Total = 10 (22%)

Projects at Region, Agency, Tribe:

- Pre-Planning = 3
- Data Collection = 10
- Cleaning = 1
- FIA = 18
- Total = 36 (78%)

**Volume Equation Changes to the Forest Vegetation Simulator:**

The Forest Service recently changed the FVS default equations for several species in the Region 3 footprint. This will affect reservations in the BIA Southwest and Western Regions. Sampling from felled trees determined the newly developed National-scale Volume and Biomass (NSVB) produce more accurate volumes than the previous direct volume equations. The affected species are white fir (*Abies concolor*), corkbark fir (*Abies lasiocarpa var. arizonica*), Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*), southwestern white pine (*Pinus strobiformis*), Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), and quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*).

These changes will become effective with the latest release of FVS expected in January. Users who prefer the direct volume equations for the listed species should refrain from updating to the latest

version of FVS and contact FIP for options. Foresters are encouraged to become familiar with the new NSVB equations. NSVB was a multi-year effort between the Forest Service and university partners to develop enhanced equations for carbon, biomass, and cubic-foot volumes. More information can be found here: <https://research.fs.usda.gov/programs/fia/nsvb>.

**53 IAM Chapter 8 Handbook Revision:**

The 53 IAM Chapter 8 Handbook continues to make progress with anticipated completion by the end of the year. Work on the Handbook has concentrated on the chapter concerning inventory mapping and is nearing draft completion. The team also had made considerable progress on the chapter concerning Planning Inventory - Stand-Based Inventory and anticipates a regional and tribal commenting period to begin by March 1st. The commenting period for the chapter on the Planning Inventory - CFI ended on November 25, 2024. We received comments from Regional Foresters and Agency Foresters in the Midwestern Region. No feedback was received from Tribal Foresters. FIP will begin reviewing and incorporating comments in the coming months.

Additionally, FIP will be sending out another batch of completed drafts in the coming weeks for review and commenting by the Regions, Agencies and Tribes and will begin incorporating feedback received soon after. If you are interested in reviewing the drafts when they come out, please reach out to your Regional Foresters, and let them know so they can

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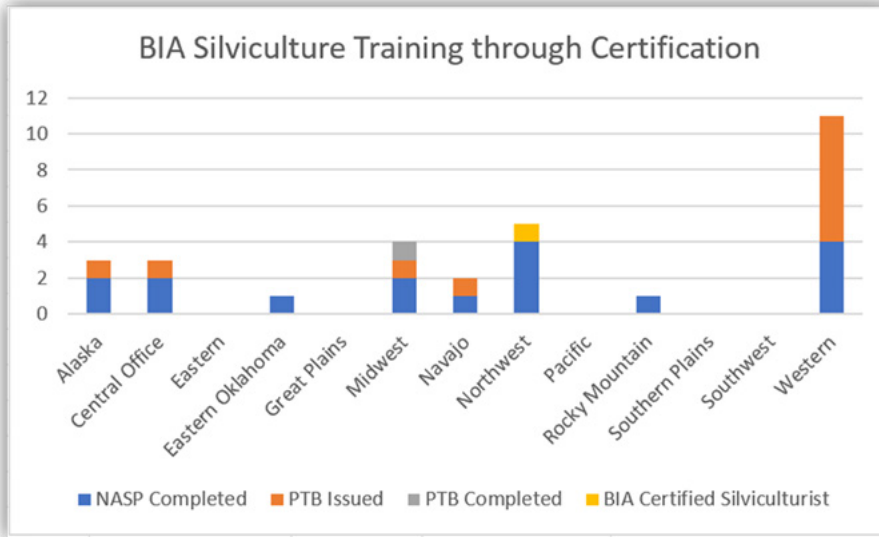


Figure 1: Provides the number of BIA and Tribal Foresters per Region or Office that have completed NASP, been issued a PTB, have completed a PTB, and have met the criteria established by their BIA Region or Office to be certified as a silviculturist.

send you the drafts as they come out.

**53 IAM Chapter 9 Handbook Revision:** Work has temporarily halted on the revision to 53 IAM Chapter 9-H Silviculture to focus on other branch priority projects. The branch plans to re-initiate work with work group members during January 2025 in order to complete the revision by June 2025. During this time, 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. If interested in joining the workgroup, please contact Stephen Singleton with the Branch of Forest Inventory and Planning.

**National Advanced Silviculture Program (NASP):** The BIA, re-

cognizing 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:** Four Tribal and one BIA candidate have been submitted to the USFS for final consideration. Announcements on selections should be finalized in February 2025. At that time, Tribal and BIA students will be officially notified of their acceptance into NASP Class 19.

**NASP 18:** The five selected BIA and Tribal students are scheduled to attend Module 3 - Landscape Ecology at Northern Arizona University in January 2025 and Module 4 - Advanced Topics in Silviculture at Virginia Tech in April 2025.

**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

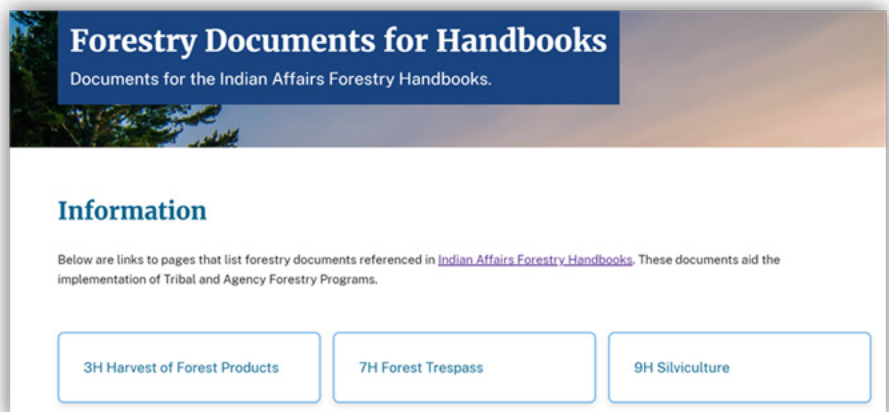


Figure 2: Snapshot of Forestry Documents for Handbooks webpage; highlighting 9H Silviculture.

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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 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.

**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>. Follow the link from *9H Silviculture* to the PTB as seen in Figure 2. The PTB is a portfolio describing

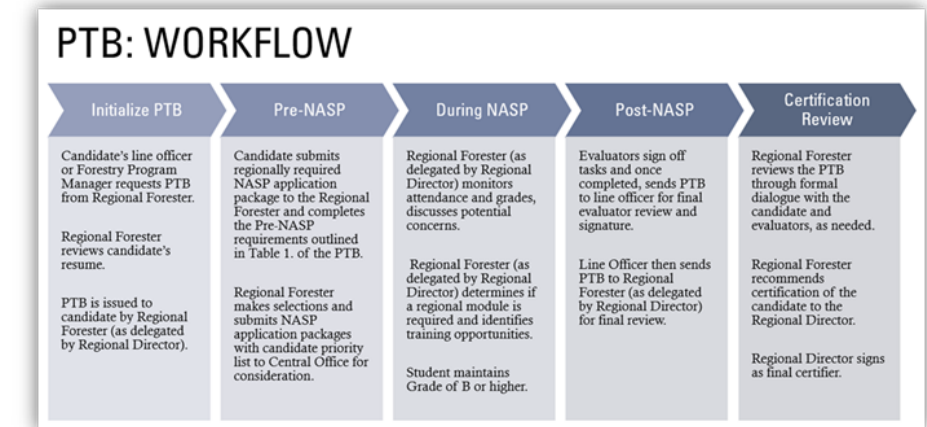


Figure 4. Summary of PTB workflow.

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;
- (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 described in Figure 3.

A brief summarization of the PTB workflow is described in Figure 4.



PTB: 5 CORE COMPETENCIES	
Landscape Characterization	Describe the historic and current landscape vegetation condition; understand abiotic features that influence vegetation conditions; and become familiar with landscape simulation models as they pertain to FMP assessments of vegetation pattern and process at the landscape level.
Stand Delineation and Condition	Complete stand exams and use data to describe stand attributes such as cover types, forest structure classes, potential vegetation, disturbance regimes, volume classes, seral stage, and stand condition.
Legal Requirements, Management Direction, Desired Stand Condition	Participate in project-level NEPA analysis, develop desired stand conditions, understand laws, policies, and regulations.
Analysis of Management Alternatives	Complete stand diagnosis, develop treatment alternatives, evaluate effects of alternatives, economic analysis, and use and understanding of growth and yield models in their capabilities and limitations.
Implementation	Develop detailed site-specific operation prescriptions that include implementation guidelines; monitoring and evaluation plans.

Figure 3: Core Competencies within the PTB



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