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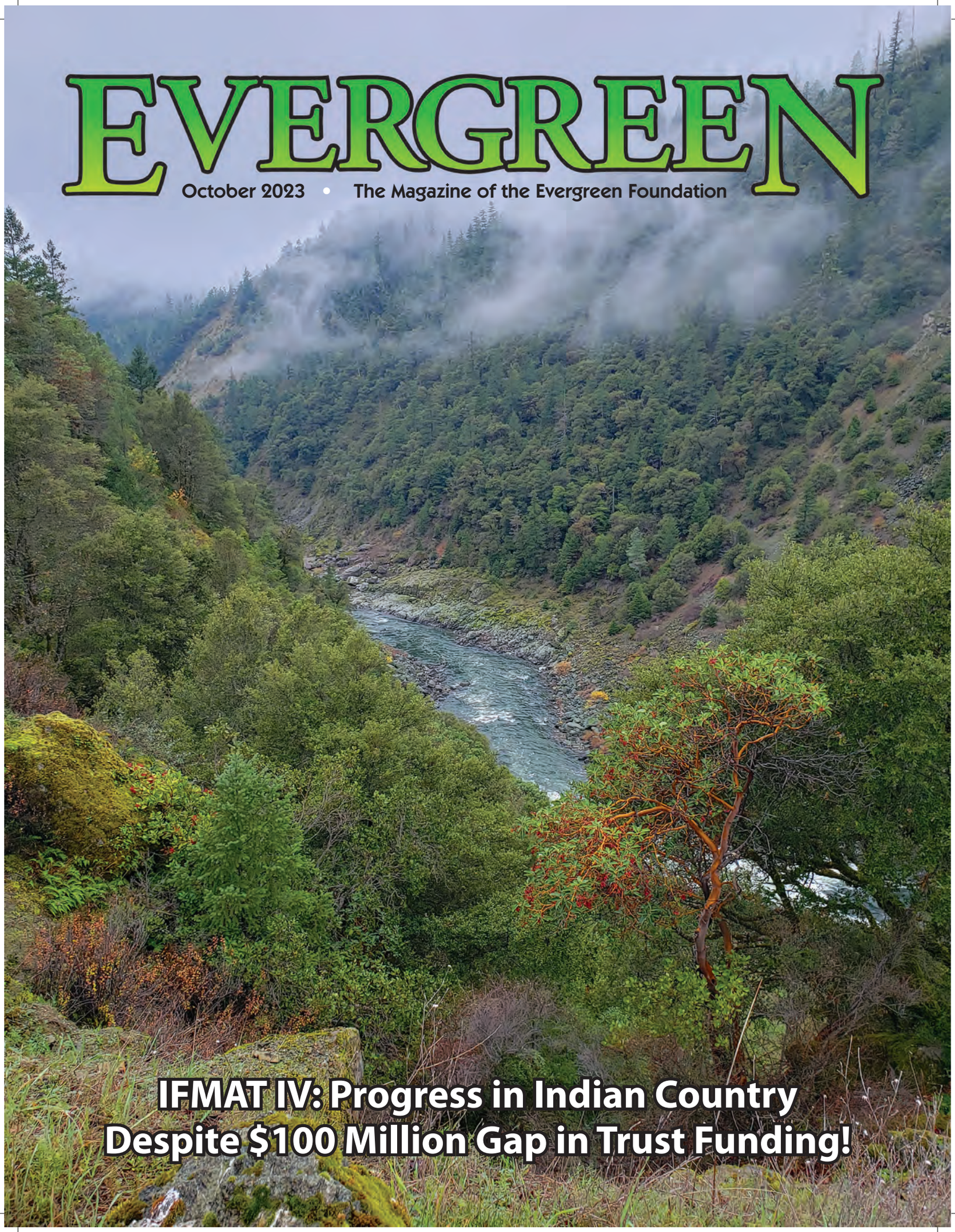


IFMAT IV: Progress in Indian Country Despite $100 Million Gap in Trust Funding!

On the cover: Klamath River canyon, Yurok Tribe, northern California.

Cypress swamp, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

Streamside protection, Passamaquoddy Tribe of Indian Township, Maine.

Landscape forest management, Makah Tribe, western Washington.

In This Issue

In this issue, we explore the Fourth Assessment of Indian Forests and Forest Management in the United States prepared for the Intertribal Timber Council by a group of nationally recognized forest scientists, economists, and educators who come together every ten years as members of the Indian Forest Management Assessment Team: IFMAT

Tribes own and manage more than 19.3 million acres of forest, much of it in the western United States. The Intertribal Timber Council [ITC], based in Portland, Oregon, that strives to bring awareness to the resource management interests of more than 300 Indian Tribes in the United States. Forty-one of these tribes are stewards of more than 10,000 acres. The remaining tribes own fewer acres.

It has been Evergreen's privilege to work with ITC members on these reports since 1993, the year IFMAT I was published. IFMAT II followed in 2003, IFMAT III in 2013 and now IFMAT IV is rolling out.

This report has undergone a more professional review and analysis than the earlier reports. It is more thoughtfully written and more innovative in its approach. It also reveals an impatience and urgency that is driving an ever-increasing number of tribes to assume partial or complete control of their own lands, actions that Congress has blessed in new laws and regulatory reforms.

There have been many changes since IFMAT I was completed - 30 years ago. Tribes are now insisting on their rightful autonomy. They know they are the strongest advocates for their lands, communities, and future generations.

The federal Bureau of Indian Affairs [BIA] does what it can to help, but the agency is a very small fish in the halls of Congress, even though it operates under the aegis of the massive Department of the Interior.

If there is an unwritten take home message in IFMAT IV - it is that the Intertribal Timber Council and its member tribes have implemented an extensive campaign that will identify the need for fundamental changes in the relationships between tribes and the BIA and federal government.

The message: To recognize the federal government's trust responsibility, and increased engagement between tribes and other federal agencies.

The campaign began in August and will be highlighted at the Society of American Foresters [SAF] annual convention in Sacramento, California. The IFMAT IV Core Team will be centerstage along with several of its Technical Specialists, ITC Board members, and members of individual tribes' staff. Given the fact that SAF has been working hard to reinvent itself, we expect its members will be very impressed with the knowledge and commitment tribes bring to the table.

Lake Superior shoreline, Grand Portage Band of Minnesota Chippewa Tribe

There is no way to know exactly what changes are coming, but we see the agency having the opportunity to become more like NASA, the Department of Defense or the Corps of Engineers. It will focus on the obvious – adequate funding for tribes – and contract with other providers, including tribes and non-tribal consultants, for the services it needs to fulfill its congressionally mandated Trust responsibilities.

It is not an exaggeration to say that tribes and their forests are unique entities bonded spiritually and culturally by Ancient Knowledge passed from generation to generation by tribal elders and driven far forward by remote sensing technologies including Light Detection and Ranging [LIDAR] that allow tribes to inventory their resources at a level that includes trees, wildlife habitat, stream corridors, and soils as well as the impacts of wildfires.

Although tribal natural resource management is gaining the respect of its federal partners, it would help solidify the tribal role at the nexus of co-management and joint resource stewardship if the USDA Forest Service and the Department of the Interior would issue a joint statement in support of the enormous tribal contribution to natural resource stewardship in the United States.

This: "We jointly acknowledge our support for tribal use of the authorities Congress has granted including – among others – Good Neighbor Authority, the Tribal Forest Protection Act and the Reserved Treaty Rights Lands funding program administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs."

What better way to symbolically return lands to tribes that once owned them?

What most Americans do not understand is that tribes live with the consequences of their actions and inactions ways that no other landowner does. Those who work for federal, state, and private landowners go home at night. Tribes are at home 24/7, day after day, year after year, generation after generation. This is why they place great value on connecting tribal elders with tribal youth. If knowledge isn't passed down, it is lost forever.

To understand the disastrous implications of knowledge forever lost look no further than the enormous disconnect between the American public and its national forest legacy. This disconnect impacts all forest ownerships in America but it falls hardest on tribes from whom the amorphous public – and members of Congress – could learn a great deal if they listened more closely.

Decadal IFMAT reports are federally mandated and funded by Congress. They are essentially progress reports detailing BIA and tribal relationships and programs, most of them underfunded for decades despite the fact they are integral parts of the federal government's legally binding government-to-government relationship with every congressionally recognized tribe in the nation.

These legally binding relationships are spelled out in great detail in several federal laws including the 1990 National Indian Forest Resources Management Act. The BIA holds Indian lands in trust relationships rooted in treaties, executive orders, and other agreements signed more than 150 years ago. These relationships are changing and more change is coming.

Larger tribes that own more forestland have led the way via self-governance, a transition made possible under one or more federal laws: The 1954 Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act [ISDEAA], the 1994 Tribal

Self-Governance Act, the amendment to ISDEAA, which created an office of self-governance, or the 2016 Indian Trust Asset Reform Act [ITARA]. With these come varying degrees of BIA involvement.

IFMAT IV includes an Executive Summary that raises most of the same concerns that were raised in IFMAT I in 1993. The nearby bar graph tells us that Congress has underfunded tribal forestry and fire management programs by close to $100 million dollars annually. The shortfall most heavily impacts staffing, planning, forest roads condition, and upgrades and equipment and technology.

Underfunding comes at a time when billions of additional federal dollars are flowing to the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land management but not tribes. They are receiving about one-third as much on a per acre basis. This same gap appears in IFMAT I, II, and III. Why?

Our sense is that Congress does not fully understand the increasingly significant role tribes are playing as models for all federal, state, and private forestland owners in the nation. Look no further than climate change and carbon storage markets to understand the implications.

To its credit, Congress did ratify the 2004 Tribal Forest Protection Act, which gave tribes the authority to thin diseased, high-wildfire-risk federal forests adjacent to their land. Recognizing that there is no one law that fits all tribes, Congress also expanded the range of possibilities in the 2018 Farm Bill, granting the U.S. Forest Service the authority to execute "638" agreements with tribes. These agreements pave the way for tribes that seek greater control over their own lands.

So, again, our question: Why hasn't the funding gap between tribes and federal forest and rangeland management agencies been closed in 30 years? Tribes aren't asking for special treatment. They are asking to be treated as equals in their government-to-government relationships with the U.S. Government - meaning parity with investments on other federal land ownerships.

The IFMAT IV team included five Core Team members – four with PhD's, and 12 technical specialists – seven with PhD's. They completed 41 tribal site visits from coast to coast over a grueling two-year period filled with COVID-related challenges that necessitated many ZOOM meetings.

Most Indian tribes do not own wood processing facilities and prefer to sell their logs on the open market, the notable exceptions being the Yakama in Washington State, the Menominee in Wisconsin, the White Mountain Apache in Arizona, and the Mescalero Apache in New Mexico.

Other tribes have attempted to maintain viable, year-round wood processing facilities, but it is very challenging given staffing and funding shortages, the impact of the nation's recession on the housing and commercial building industries and brutally competitive log and lumber markets.

This situation is very unfortunate given the enormous opportunities new wood processing technologies have opened up in recent years. Cross laminated timbers [CLT] and mass panel plywood [MPP]have taken the architectural and construction markets by storm. In sum, tribal forests grow all of the wood species and tree sizes these technologies require.

Since IFMAT I was completed in 1993, tribes have increasingly opted for emphasizing non-timber revenue generating products of their forests: foods, clothing, medicines, fuel, shelter, musical instruments and other artistic endeavors, world-class resorts, golf courses, casinos, and ecotourism.

But most tribes still practice traditional forestry and several are LEED certified [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design], but in all tribal forests there are body, mind and spirit components – and a sense of place and time – that simply does not exist on federal, state and private forestlands in our nation.

This is the model that IFMAT IV4's Core Team and Technical Specialists believe all forest landowners should follow because it yields major environmental benefits, including more biologically diverse forests that are able to naturally fend off insect and disease infestations that lead inevitably to killing wildfires.

More than 20 years ago we said publicly that the time had come for the U.S. Government to officially return Indian lands (aboriginal and ancestral) to tribes because tribes do a much better job of managing their lands than the federal government does of managing that public's forestlands.

This continues to be our belief.

Jim Petersen
Founder and President
The non-profit Evergreen Foundation

Woodland restoration, San Carlos Apache Tribe, southeast Arizona.

Not Much has Changed

An essay by Jim Petersen

"The continuing failure of the United States to meet its fiduciary trust responsibilities for stewardship of these renewable resources is placing Tribal forests in jeopardy with the risk of catastrophic loss from insects, disease and wildfire."

Cody Desautel, President, Intertribal Timber Council, Portland, Oregon

Vincent Corrao's assessment of progress and promise in what the nation's Indian tribes call "forestry in Indian Country" is direct and brutal.

"Not much has changed since the first IFMAT report was completed 30 years ago," Corrao told me in a July 27 interview in his Northwest Management offices, just east of the University of Idaho campus in Moscow.

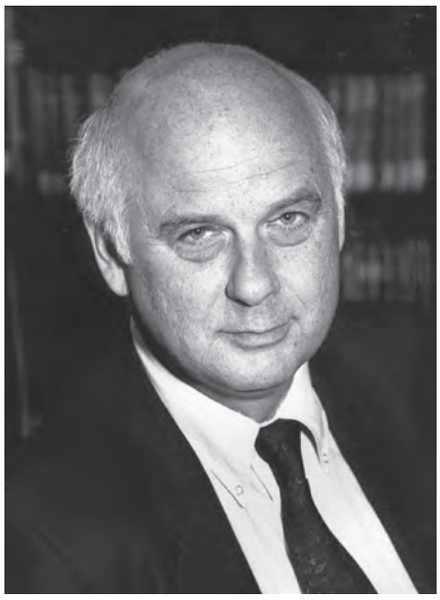
"Congress and the Bureau of Indian Affairs – an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior – are responsible for ensuring adequate funding for the nation's three hundred tribal forestry programs. The current annual funding gap is about $100 million," he added.

Corrao was Program Manager for the Fourth Indian Forest Management Assessment Team [IFMAT] report. He has an encyclopedic knowledge of all four decadal IFMAT reports, beginning with IFMAT I, completed in 1993.

He is one of the nation's most respected, forward-thinking foresters. Several tribes use his leading-edge Light Detection and Ranging [LIDAR] system to inventory their resources at a level that includes trees, wildlife habitat, stream corridors, and soils as well as the impacts of wildfires.

Lots of promises from Congress and little progress over the years since IFMAT I was completed," Corrao said. "Underfunding remains a major problem for tribes. The federal government was not holding up its end of treaties that it made with tribes beginning in 1832.

Corrao's assessment is highlighted in an August 3 press release from the Intertribal Timber Council [ITC], a based in Portland, Oregon non-profit consortium of Indian tribes and Alaska Native Corporations formed in 1976 that represents the resource management interests of more than three hundred Indian tribes in the United States. Collectively, they own and manage more than 19.3 million acres of forest, much of it in the western United States. Forty-one tribes are stewards of more than 10,000 acres. The remaining tribes own fewer acres.



IFMAT IV again highlights the potential for well-managed Indian forest to serve as models for sustainability for all American forests.

John Gordon, Co-chair
IFMAT I, II, III and IV

The press release comes with its own Tweet:

> *Healthy forests are critical to the cultural and economic well-being of not only Tribal communities across the country - but forests are also central to all Americans' quality of life. Tribal forests are part of the national network of forests that provide clean air and water, wildlife habitat, climate change solutions and rural jobs.*

In his masterful summation of the IMFAT IV Executive Summary, John Gordon expanded on ITC's Tweet.

"IFMAT IV again highlights the potential for well-managed Indian forests to serve as models for sustainability for all American forests," Gordon wrote. "Traditional Ecological Knowledge when applied with modern science can result in integrated forest management of the best kind since it blends ancient, proved concepts and practices with current technology."

John Gordon is one of the most widely respected foresters in the world. He is Pinchot Professor Emeritus of Forestry and Environmental Studies and former Dean, Yale University School for the Environment. He has been the guiding light behind all four IFMAT reports. Likewise, John Sessions, his co-chair for IFMAT II, III and IV. Sessions is a Distinguished Professor of Forestry and Strachan Chair of Forest Operations at Oregon State University.

As IFMAT IV co-chairs, Gordon and Sessions were two of the four PhDs selected to be members of a Core Team that guided the work of 12 Technical Specialists, seven with PhDs. Corrao was tasked with shepherding the entire program through two years of COVID shutdowns, numerous ZOOM calls, forty-one site visits and focus groups involving thirty-five tribes.

ITC's August 3 press release highlights the underfunded programs and needs IFMAT IV identified. Here verbatim:

- An annual increase of $96 million is needed to reach per-acre parity with National Forest and Bureau of Land Management funding.
- Despite funding declining by almost 36% on Tribal lands, compared with other federal agencies over the last decade, Tribal Foresters continue to innovate using Indigenous Knowledge and enhancing forest stewardship.
- Annual timber harvests are only 50% of allowable levels, resulting in up to a $40 million lost opportunity in annual Tribal income.
- Tribal economies are adversely affected by declining wood-processing infrastructure and market competition.
- Significant investments are needed for transportation systems, facilities and enforcement.
- Major forest stand improvement treatments are needed to improve climate change resiliency.
- Need to reduce barriers to using prescribed fire to reduce catastrophic wildfire.

John Session's verbatim conclusion: "A lack of sustainable management is the most pressing forest health issue facing many Indian forests. Lack of funding is seriously jeopardizing responsible Tribal forest stewardship."

IFMAT IV's take home messages appear on the back side of Gordon's

two-page summary in the form of Major Findings, Major Recommendations and Action Steps that should leave no doubt as to what Congress and the BIA need to do to reach funding parity with the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management.

Underfunding and untapped potential are major themes in all four IFMAT reports. The reports are formal in style, scope, and content because they are funded by Congress and include specific tasks [A through H] that must be addressed and quantified. But Corrao summed up the 300-plus page report in a single sentence that is not included in IFMAT IV. "The Forest Service spends more on its wild horse control program than the entire BIA budget," he said with some frustration in his voice.

Corrao went on to explain that the Bureau of Indian Affairs is a small fish the halls of Congress, even though it operates under the aegis of the Department of the Interior. For comparison, know this: The annual BIA budget for tribal forestry and wildfire stands at $176 million, about 6.29 percent of the total BIA budget, which is about 3.1 percent of the entire Interior Department budget.

Through various standing committees, ITC member tribes work cooperatively with the BIA, universities, and members of Congress; the goal being to identify practical strategies for advancing social, economic, and ecological values that benefit all forest landowners, not just tribes. The forest management vision is unique among the nation's forest landowners. There is a stronger emphasis on holistic forestry and an increasing interest in the care and use of non-timber resources found in forests.

Small wonder that Tribes function on vastly different wave lengths rooted in profoundly different land and community ethics than anything most Americans embrace. Here is a sampling from IFMAT IV's focus groups:

"We are genetically Native American, but to be a tribe, we have to regain harmony with the land."

"The most important thing about the forest is the forest."

"You can't put a price tag on the forest."

"There is nothing I don't value in the Forest. I can't go down a list."

"I have worked for several tribal forestry programs. None of them have been adequately funded or staffed."

"I only got a $2 raise from 1996 to 2022, but I am here to serve my tribe."

"We may not get the assistance we need from the federal government, but we will find a way to stay here because this is our home."

> ***Not much has changed since IFMAT I was completed 30 years ago.***
>
> Vincent Corrao
> IFMAT IV Program Manger

"Our forest is a working forest even with obstacles in the way it's still working. It provides the community with traditional and cultural benefits."

"Management of timber is based off benefiting other resources."

"The plan took longer for it to get approved than when it actually lasted. Fourteen years to write, ten years operational."

"The BIA manual is always thrown in our face, but we are underfunded and cannot do everything that is listed in the BIA manuals."

"Our forest is well managed given what we have available for funding."

"I'm encouraged for us being able to manage our forests in our own way, by talking to our own people."

"The forest is part of who we are, and it is sacred. It is an extension of our body. It gives us prayers."

"No matter what we do we should be the managers."

"The land and people have experienced great change over the last 150 years versus the last 10,000 years."

"I don't want to be the witness to see the last fish."

"When working in the forest an offering needs to be given and we need to talk to it as a relative. Drought is nature's way of reminding us to honor these things."

"The forest is on a different timescale than us."

"Elk are a cultural keystone species and we are poorer for not having them."

"Restoration brings us back to our connectedness and our responsibility to the Earth."

"We know what we need to do. Now we need partnerships with the federal government."

"How did our ancestors create the ecosystems that they lived in? The big yellow pine is a testament to our ancestors."

Tribal visions are driving an ardent desire for tribal self-governance and a less paternalistic relationship with the federal government. But limited federal funding for staffing, technology, and training needs cloud this vision.

Tribal forest-related salaries are nowhere near par with the salaries paid to their counterparts in federal forest management agencies. The problem is most keenly felt in recruiting young professionals needed to advance tribal forestry visions.

Because tribes are unable to offer competitive salaries, there are fewer people on staff to share an expanding workload. Underfunding is forcing tribes to make Hobson's choices they should not have to make.

The same 500,000-acre backlog in precommercial thinning cited in IFMAT III still exists. Forest density is increasing, and, with it, tribes are seeing an increase in insect and disease infestations and inevitable wildfire.

Forest road conditions, grazing policies, limited law enforcement, leaky office roofs, computers that cannot run state-of-art software programs, trespass and poaching and destructive wild horses and burros remain major problems.

Congress has most of the enabling legislation in place, but there is no startup funding and recurring funding allocations do not match inflation, adding to the frequently mentioned need to protect tribal forests and woodlands from insects and diseases that invade from adjacent federal forests.

Given underfunding and increasing tribal interest in self-governance, the IFMAT IV report recommends that Interior Secretary, Deb Haaland, extend ITARA – the 2016 Indian Trust and Reform Act – indefinitely. It permits tribes to write their own forest management plans, further distancing themselves from BIA control.

A Shared Forest Vision

Tribes have a fervent desire to collaborate with other landowners on a shared

forest management vision that benefits all the partners.

The map on Page 12–13 illustrates the importance of this idea by pinpointing the location of every tribal forest ownership in the nation. All of them are within two hours of every state, private or federal ownership. There are reciprocal environmental benefits and cost cutting efficiencies to be gained in developing management plans that complement one another. Many landowners now use software programs that compute harvesting and log hauling costs based on tree species, market prices and miles to mills that transform logs into a stunning variety of products. Everything ranging from wood pulp to dimension lumber, veneer, plywood, oriented strand board, laminated veneer lumber, cross-laminated timbers, and mass panel plywood.

Still, many tribes are choosing to emphasize more traditional non-timber forest products made from various parts of trees: bark, sap, leaves, needles, seeds, moss, nuts, and roots; also berries, fruits and fungi, products gathered by community members in much the same way as they were eons ago.

From these traditional products, tribes make everything from food and clothing to herbal medicines and jewelry. Among the goals is a shared desire to restore tribal lifeways and cultural pathways that were being pushed aside by modern day social and economic pressures.

Given tribal preferences for a more holistic approach to resource management, it is not surprising that the BIA's long-used timber-based rule book is less relevant to tribes or that many living in Indian Country do not see the agency's preference for reporting annual timber harvest volumes as a measure of success. Board feet cannot account for the value of non-timber products that are the essence of cultures that connect Indians to Mother Earth.

Technical specialists

David Wilson, Tim Vredenburg and Michael Dockry are among the twelve technical specialists that worked with the four-member IFMAT IV Core Team to complete eleven congressionally mandated assignments. Among them: funding, staffing, salary with federal resource management agencies, trust responsibility, tribal forest health and climate risk. The reports cover 148 pages in IFMAT IV.

Because their career tracks differ, Wilson, Vredenburg and Dockry each bring a distinct perspective to their assessments of the report.

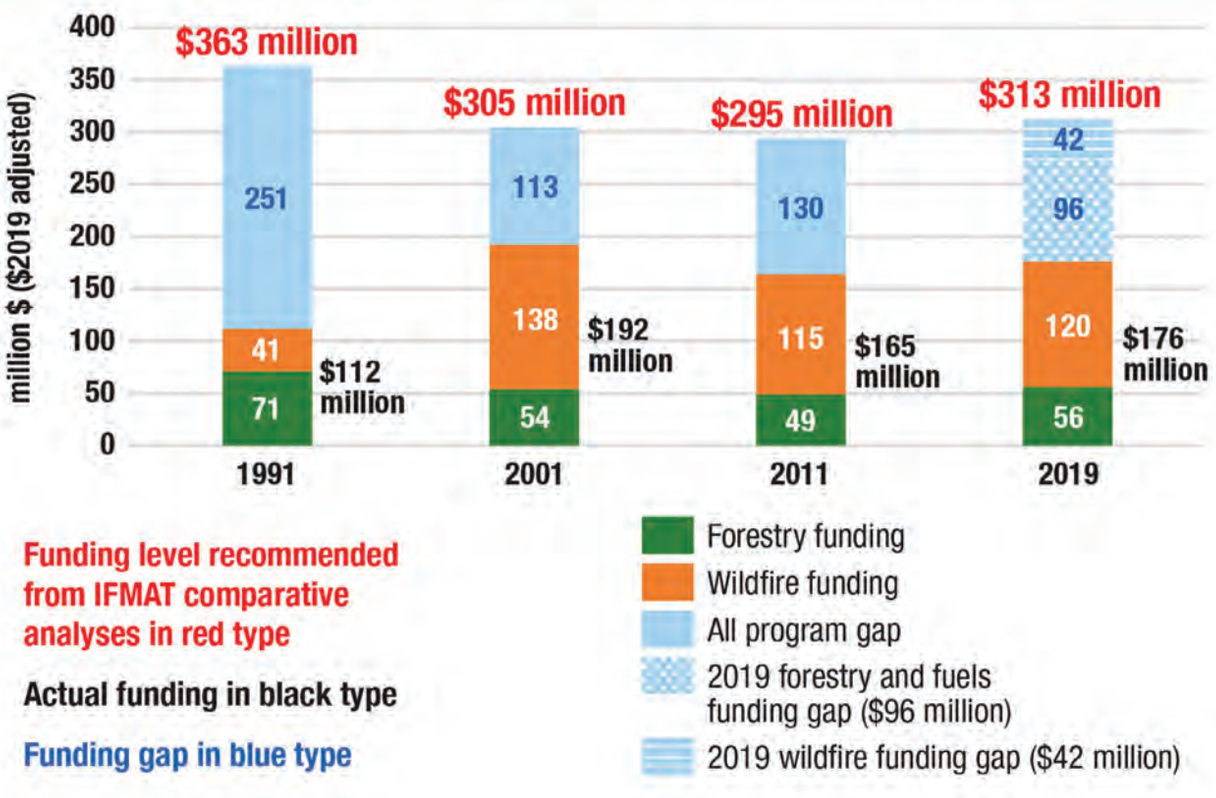
David Wilson held several positions in the Forest Service's Washington Office before retiring in 2022. He also worked in Indian forestry for 29 years, 12 years with the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin and 17 years as a senior inventory specialist with the BIA. He also worked on the IFMAT III report.

"There has been some progress over the years, and I know the passion felt in Indian Country is understood by many in the BIA, but I wonder if we aren't doing the same things over and over again, hoping for a different outcome that hasn't materialized. The trend data from IFMAT I through IV suggests this is true."

Wilson is correct. Not much has changed in 30 years. Tribes have made great strides on their own, but they continue to do more with less, which is the main reason so many tribal members voiced frustration with the federal government in IFMAT IV's 35 focus group sessions.

"I think IFMAT IV did a deeper dive into Indian Country than earlier assess-

Annual Federal Funding to Tribes for Forestry and Fire



ments, but the big question is what can tribes and the Intertribal Timber Council do to raise awareness and support in Congress and relevant federal agencies?"

Wilson believes IFMAT IV does a respectable job of peeling back "the timber part" of the tribal story but he thinks tribes may want to focus more on the BIA's Office of Trust Responsibility, a necessity expressed throughout the IFMAT IV report.

Tim Vredenburg is Director of Forest Management for the Cow Creek Band based at Roseburg, Oregon, a position he has held for 12 years. He is the only IFMAT IV Technical Specialist who works directly for a tribe.

Vredenburg is an expert in tribal Self-governance and Self-determination, which goes a long way toward explaining how the Cow Creek Band secured one of the first two ITARA demonstration projects and sold the first ITARA timber sale in the country using tribally developed rules, not the BIA's rule book.

"I can't overemphasize its significance or impact," Vredenburg said. "It's an enormous accomplishment for a tribe that Congress did not formally recognize until December 1982 and we did not gain permanent status until 2018."

The story is too long to tell here but after the Cow Creek Band signed a treaty with the federal government in 1854, ceding 512,000 acres of land for 2.3 cents per acre, the government sold the land to settlers for $1.25 per acre, then ignored their government-to-government trust with the tribe for nearly 100 years.

Despite his considerable expertise, Vredenburg found himself in awe of what he saw in Indian Country during IFMAT IV site visits that took him from coast to coast.

"It was a fascinating and amazing experience," he said. "The depth and breadth of forestry tribes are practicing is a world apart from what we do in Douglas-fir here in Southwest Oregon. For me, the lasting lesson is that after tribal leadership sets its vision, the responsibility for implementing the vision is shared by everyone. The timber guy is responsible for clean, cold water for fish and the fisheries guy is responsible for the timber growth and health."

Vredenburg confirmed the shift from a singular timber focus to a broader and more holistic approach that includes traditional, non-timber resources that grow in the same forest.

"It's the outcome most tribes want now," he explained. "It's a great model and certainly one that Congress should seriously consider for national forests. The fact that tribes do everything they do in their forests for one-third the per acre money that the Forest Service gets tells you something isn't right."

The Cow Creek Band does not own a mill – unless you count the two portable sawmills, they purchased to do some salvage logging following the 2019 Milepost 97 Fire, a 13,000-acre lightning-caused fire on Forest Service land that had not been salvage logged following a 1987 fire.

"We were able to sell some of our burnt timber following the Milepost fire to local sawmills, but the BIA's sale prep process took too long. Insects invaded before we could sell all of it," Vredenburg said. "So, we bought a two-man portable mill to see if we could cut some lumber from the burnt logs no one could process."

Portable sawing is slow going – so slow that Vredenburg calculated that it would take 45 years to finish every acre, so the tribe bought a larger portable to see what more they could salvage.

"Over the last four years, we have worked our way through all of it and we have planted 1.5 million seedlings," he reported. "Someday, it will be beautiful again. It's all about vision, shared responsibility and follow through."

Mike Dockry shares the frustrations voiced by his fellow IFMAT IV colleagues,

Collapsed stringer bridge, Chugach Alaska Native Corporation, southcentral Alaska.

specifically the urgent need for Congress to erase the increasingly serious lack of adequate funding.

"Every funding deficiency identified in IFMAT IV exposes a problem that has persisted since IFMAT I was completed 30 years ago.," Dockry said. "Tribes are doing more with less. Congress needs to erase the underfunded budgets that IV identifies. These are trust responsibilities."

Although Dockry was new to IFMAT, he was one of twelve technical specialists selected to work with the four-member core team. He brought two significant assets to his assignments: He is a member of Citizen Potawatomi Nation and he holds a PhD in forestry from the University of Wisconsin.

Dockry is an Assistant Professor of Tribal Natural Resource Management in the University of Minnesota in St. Paul. His interdisciplinary research and teaching focus on blending Indigenous knowledge and tribal perspectives into forestry and natural resource management. He incorporates previous IFMAT reports into his classroom lectures.

Federal natural resource managers responsible for the nation's forests and grasslands could learn a great deal from Dockry about the cultural and holistic underpinnings of the tribal resource management model.

"The model is not as useful for private owners that are exclusively in the timber growing business, but the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management are not in the timber business either, certainly not as they were for forty-some years following World War II. "

But the transition would not be without controversy since the tribal forestry model would require thinning in overstocked forests, actions widely opposed by special interest groups that favor preservation, no matter the environmental cost.

"It is my opinion that if the public could see tribal forestry in action, they would become huge supporters," Dockry said. "The holistic nature of the model means that it does a beautiful job of accounting for all the tangible and intangible parts of tribally owned forests and grasslands. Everything."

Thinned forest, Spokane Tribe of Indians, eastern Washington.

Public concern – and impatience – with the wildfire calamity that has engulfed federal lands across much of the West has grown significantly in recent years, so Dockry and those who share his point of view are correct in predicting widespread public support for tribal forestry's many assets.

"There are two take home messages in IFMAT IV," Dockry said. "One is the increasing tribal emphasis on managing for non-timber values. That's huge. The other is that the values tribes ascribe to need to be fully funded. What is not well understood is that equitable funding is not just a tribal issue. It's an issue for every landowner that lives adjacent to federal land that is not being protected."

"When insects, diseases and wildfire jump from federal land to state or private and it becomes everyone's problem," Dockry continued. "In the reverse, when federal land is as professionally managed as tribal lands, everyone benefits."

Although their assessments vary with their expertise, everyone we interviewed for this report said much the same thing. Everyone also said that the federal focus on project funding – as opposed to programmatic funding – is the reason tribes lack the staffing needed to do more of the cross-boundary work Congress envisions.

"Fund tribes the same per-acre basis as the Forest Service and the wildfire crisis we see on federal land will begin to subside," Dockry said. "Wildfire will give way to prescribed burns that are safely set to reduce the on-the-ground fuel loads that feed big fires. I know it is counterintuitive, but it works. Tribes have been doing it for hundreds if not thousands of years."

1832

Federal Trust Responsibility and Indian Forest Management

Editor's note: *George Smith is President, Pacific Management Associates, a natural resources consulting business in North Bend, Oregon. He is a Society of American Foresters Certified Forester with more than 55 years of Native American forestry experience. He held several high-ranking positions in the Bureau of Indian Affairs before retiring. After retiring, he served 10 years as Executive Director of the Coquille Indian Tribe. Smith worked with IFMAT IV co-chair, John Sessions, on a cross-referenced summary of findings from all four IFMAT reports.*

By George Smith

Two important concepts guided the Nation's early Indian policy. The first was the use of the treaty, which demonstrated that Western nations viewed Tribes as distinct, separate, but not always equal, entities. When an Indian Tribe entered into a treaty with the United States, a trust relation was created. The Tribe ceded land to the Federal Government and, in return, the United States made promises to protect Tribal lands from non-Indian encroachment and to provide services to Tribes.

Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall confirmed the legal rights of Indians to their land in his ruling in the case of Cherokee Nation v. Georgia in 1831, when he described the status of Indian Tribes as "domestic dependent nations." This separate nation status provided Tribes with their own right of ownership of natural resources. This case also announced and confirmed the United States' trust relationship to Tribes, that was based on the concept of guardian to ward.

The second important concept was the development of the Federal trust responsibility to provide support to emerging Indian communities. Obviously, there is no one definition of trust responsibility that can be applied to all Indian Tribes unilaterally. The Government's obligations to federally recognized Indian Tribes depends upon treaties, statutes, court decisions, and executive orders affecting those Tribes. A part of this trust responsibility involves the protection and management of Tribal forests.[1]

The context of the federal trust responsibility and the trust obligations of the United States relating to Indian forest management are set forth in the National Indian Forest Resources Management Act (NIFRMA P.L. 101-630) and its implementing regulations (25 CFR § 163). While the

Part of this trust responsibility involves pretection and management of tribal forests.

George Smith

trust responsibility is a government-wide mandate applicable to all federal agencies, the Secretary of the Interior is designated in NIFRMA as the principal trustee for fulfilling trust obligations in the management of Indian forests.

In 1910, a forestry division was created within the Department of the Interior (DOI) Office of Indian Affairs. From that time until the mid-1970's, Indian forest management activities were carried out as direct operations of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Standards and guidance for performance of the trust responsibility were largely described in BIA manuals and handbooks developed as the agency's interpretation of compliance with requirements of the federal forestry regulations.

Although not specifically identified as such, trust standards were also contained in Forest Management Plans developed and approved by Tribes and the BIA. As Indian forest management advanced, Tribal leadership expressed an increasing interest in how their forests were being managed. In some instances, there was concern as to whether the federal government was fully meeting its trust obligations and carrying out forest management activities in the best interest of the Tribes (beneficiaries of the trust). Key issues were the lack of funding to fully implement forest practices and achieve management goals agreed to by the Secretary and Tribes in approved FMPs and a misalignment concerning the BIA's strong focus on timber production rather than a broader forest stewardship approach in managing Indian forests.[2]

While expressing increasing interest and concerns relating to management of their forests, Tribes were also building internal capacity to manage their forest lands under Tribal control and administration. This was in response to growing desire of Tribal leadership to end federal domination and paternalism in carrying out federal programs for delivery of services and allow the Tribes themselves to design and directly administer programs in manner which best serve the needs of their Tribal members.

The authority for Tribes to transition from BIA control and administration to direct Tribal operations in management of trust forest lands is provided in the 1975 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act and its amendments,[3] and more recently in the 2016 Indian Trust Asset Reform Act.[4] In the 2023 IFMAT IV review, forestry program information was collected from 41 Tribes nationwide including Alaska. In examining Tribal governance structure, it was found that 77% of the forestry programs were being performed directly by Tribes under P.L. 93-638 program contracts or compacts. In addition, two Tribes carry out forest management activities under Tribal law and regulations as provided for in Indian Trust Asset Management Plans (ITAMPs) authorized by ITARA.[5]

This increasing trend of a reduction in BIA control and administration of reservation forestry programs to direct management by Tribes under the Indian Self-determination Act and ITARA authorities changes the long-standing, conventional process of carrying out the federal trust responsibility. Numerous functions performed in the management of Indian forest lands have historically been identified as residual, non-contractable activities to be performed by a BIA designated official. Commonly referred to as the inherent federal function.

The BIA uses compliance with federal forestry regulations interpreted and implemented through manuals and hand-

books as the standard for fulfilling trust responsibility, and the approval of documents and actions as a validation that trust responsibility is being met. Self-determination contract and self-governance compact Tribes are not required to follow BIA policies, manuals and handbooks. ITARA Tribes replace federal regulations with Tribal forestry regulations. With the exception of Forest Management Plans (FMPs) and Forest Management Deduction (FMD) Expenditure Plans, ITARA Tribes operating under Tribal law and regulations approve all forest management documents and actions previously viewed as inherent federal functions of the BIA (trust responsibility).

The impacts of Tribal self-determination and self-governance indicate the need for a different approach to evaluate the performance of the Federal government in meeting its trust obligations. A consistent recommendation of prior IFMAT reports has been to create an independent trust oversight body, such as a permanent commission independent of both the BIA and Secretary, to evaluate the overall federal government's fulfilment of its trust duties to Indian Tribes. However, this recommendation has never been implemented. Possible alternatives would be to modify the existing trust evaluation processes for self-governance compacts and ITAMPs.

To improve the effectiveness of these evaluations for forestry programs, there is a need to have professional forestry personnel as part of the evaluation team and include a determination of the extent to which the trust functions performed achieve the Tribes' vision for their forests. Also, the evaluations need to recognize and be consistent with the principles of self-governance. The validity and potential value provided by the evaluations could be enhanced by including independent third-party representation with expertise and experience in Indian forest management.

A significant finding of the four IFMAT reports over three decades is the underfunding of Indian forestry programs. This, without question, is a major failure of the federal government to fulfill is trust responsibility to forest owning Tribes. Lack of funding precludes full implementation of Forest Management Plans approved by Tribes and the Secretary.

The Forest Management Plans are the principal documents identifying forestry functions and services to be accomplished in fulfillment of the trust responsibility and achievement of the Tribe's vision for their forests. The most recent IFMAT report affirmed past findings that Indian forests continue to receive only a fraction of the funding provided to public and private forests. An annual increase of $96 million is needed to reach per-acre parity with National Forest and Bureau of Land Management funding.

At the core of the federal trust responsibility is the protection of the trust forest asset from loss and the carrying out of responsible forest stewardship. Lack of funding is seriously jeopardizing responsible Tribal forest stewardship.[6] The continuing failure of the United States to meet its fiduciary trust responsibilities for stewardship of these renewable resources is placing Tribal forests in jeopardy with the risk of catastrophic loss from insects, disease, and wildfire.[7]

The Federal government's trust relationship with Tribes has proven to be dynamic and ongoing, evolving over time.[8] Congressional actions providing authority for Tribes to take control of federal programs and end federal domination over delivery of services have consistently included language confirming the trust responsibility. The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act states: that *"Nothing in this Act shall be construed as authorizing or requiring the termination of any existing trust responsibility of the United States with respect to Indian people"* and the Indian Trust Asset Reform Act states: "*Nothing in this title enhances, diminishes, or otherwise affects the trust responsibility of the United States to Indian Tribes or individual Indians".*

While reform and modernization may occur, there is strong indication that Congress intends that the federal trust responsibility remain a permanent doctrine defining the relationship between Indian Tribes and the United States.

1. A Forest in Trust: Three-Quarters of a Century of Indian Forestry – USDOI, BIA, July 30, 1986.
2. IFMAT Reports – I-1993, II-2003, III-2013 and IV-2023.
3. Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (P.L. 93-638 – 1975 and amendments)
4. Indian Trust Asset Reform Act (P.L. 114-178 – 2016).
5. IFMAT IV Report, 2023.
6. John Sessions, IFMAT co-chair and Distinguished Professor of Forestry at Oregon State University. PRNewswire, Aug. 3, 2023.
7. Cody Desautel, President of the Intertribal Timber Council. PRNewswire, Aug. 3, 2023.
8. Indian Tribes as Sovereign Governments. AILTP, 1991.

Wildfire, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, central Washington

The Land is Their Home

Cody Desautel is President of the Intertribal Timber Council Executive Board. He is a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

To understand the Tribal approach to resource management it is important to have some context about tribal cultures and values. It is also important to understand that each of the 574 federally recognized tribal governments are sovereign and set their own management goals and objectives based on their unique culture, history, and beliefs. For this reason you will find a variety of management approaches across Indian country. This variety of management approaches and ingenuity are partly what make tribal approaches to management unique.

The other unique aspect is the connection tribal people have to the land. Their management approach is driven by a cultural obligation and dedication not typically seen outside tribal management. The land is their home. It provides all the places and resources that define their tribal identity and culture as Indian people. For that reason tribal employees approach natural resource management with the dedication and passion someone outside Indian country would apply to their home, church, or places they hold dearest to their hearts.

In addition to the unique approach Tribes take to resource management, they also have a number of challenges that are unique to Indian country. First, the 19.3 million acres of forests and woodlands noted in the IFMAT report are technically owned by the United States government and held in trust for the benefit of the tribal landowners. Those owners include Tribal governments, and individual Tribal landowners commonly referred to as "allotees."

Because of this federal ownership, the Tribes are subject to handbooks, manuals, and processes imposed by the federal government, which they deem necessary to meet their "trust" responsibility to the Tribes. Those handbooks, manuals, and processes are largely based on a western approach to resource management, and do not account for the diversity of priorities and ecosystems that Tribes exist in across the country. While progress has been made to reduce the federal influence on management of

> ***More work is needed as we evolve the definition of Tribal souveignty amd self-determination.***
>
> Cody Desautel

Tribal lands, more work is needed as we evolve the definitions of trust responsibility, Tribal sovereignty, and Indian self-determination.

Second, as the trustee the federal government has a trust responsibility to fund the management of Tribal forests. However, as noted in the current and previous IFMAT reports, Congress and subsequently the federal agencies determine what appropriations are available to accomplish this. A relationship that was characterized as the federal government "being both the pitcher and the umpire" in previous reports. To address shortfalls Tribes look to alternative funding sources and Tribal appropriations to accomplish their management goals.

Third, for all Tribes their present-day reservations are a fraction of their historic territories. In some cases they were completely removed from their traditional homelands. As such, many of the culturally important places and subsistence resources that are important to Tribal people now exist on land owned and managed by someone other than the Tribe. While the right to access and utilize those resources may be protected through treaty, executive order, or other legislation, Tribes are still dependent on the present-day landowners to ensure resources are accessible and protected on the landscape.

So how does the approach of Tribal resource managers differ from what you commonly see on federal, state, and private forest land? To answer that question we will look at several aspects and examples that demonstrate the differences, and in some cases, the similarities.

As noted as a major finding in the IFMAT report "there is a unique Tribal vision of forest management including a focus on stewardship and non-timber forest products." The Tribal view of stewardship and non-timber forest products is different than most non-tribal communities. For Tribes stewardship is an obligation and responsibility to do our part in maintaining a healthy, resilient landscape for all things. Almost all, if not all, Tribal cultures understand and prioritize the protection of sacred resources, such as water, air, foods, medicines, and other resources that Tribes use for subsistence.

Because of this, Tribes and tribal members working for their tribe exhibit a commitment that goes far beyond their job duties. That duty is expected of them from their family, their ancestors, and the generations yet to come after them. Tribal people understand that responsibility more so than any land management agency, and because of that, tribal programs across the country accomplish amazing things with very limited funding and staffing. In addition to the commitment tribal members and tribal employees have, they also regularly hear from tribal leaders and elders what is important and why. This gives them a sense of direction and priority guided by traditional knowledge and tribal perspectives not seen outside Indian country.

However, this is a model that likely is not sustainable into the future. Due to the extra demands, tribal staff are forced to choose between a healthy work life balance, and the unwavering commitment to tribal resources. This is particularly difficult in rural tribal communities, where expectations for resource protection are high and many of the critics are the same family tribal employees are sacrificing time with. These expectations make it challenging to retain and recruit the next cohort of resource managers for Indian country.

Huckleberries, a non-timber product, Coquille Indian Tribe, southwest Oregon.

Old growth forest, Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe, southwest Oregon

Mouth of the Klamath River, where spawning salmon begin their long inland journey, Yurok Tribe, northern California.

This is much different than the approach typically used outside Tribal land, which tends to be focused on singular objectives and resource extraction opportunities. For example, the Northwest Forest Plan was developed largely in response to declines in endangered spotted owl populations. That plan covered approximately 24.5 million acres of federally managed land in Washington, Oregon, and California, and had a substantial impact on the management of all other resources. That plan was approved in 1994, and almost 30 years later that same management approach remains despite marginal success in increasing populations of spotted owl, a significant change in the size and severity of disturbance regimes in the forest ecosystems, and climate change accelerating toward an unclear future.

However, federal land managers for the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and National Park Service (NPS) continue to be directed by the goals and objectives outlined in that outdated plan. By comparison Tribes have recognized these changes and taken strategic measures to plan and implement management actions that adapt to the changing conditions and climate. The rate of this response is limited by available funding and staffing, but Tribes are diligently trying to take appropriate action to make these landscapes resilient to change for current and future generations. This does include commercial operations in some situations, which is important to provide revenue to fund additional restoration work and fund essential tribal governmental functions.

As noted in the IFMAT report Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) is still the metric the BIA uses to measure success for forestry programs. With approximately 80 percent of tribes operating their programs under either 638 contracts or compacts, the deliverables in those contracted functions include harvesting the AAC. However, many tribes see traditional forest products, primarily in log form, as a byproduct of actions intended to accomplish their resource management goals.

For many tribes their resource management goals include a long-term vision for the landscape, which includes an understanding that forests are not static. They understand that change should occur through time, and they have a responsibility to ensure that those changes happen in an environmentally and socially responsible way. The desired management outcomes are focused on the protection and perpetuation of those sacred resources mentioned above, particularly clean water and the foods and medicines tribal people depend on.

Another challenge that is unique to tribal forestry is the location of the work. This entire country was occupied and managed by tribes prior to European contact and colonization. In just over 500 years since Christopher Columbus's arrival in 1492, tribes are left with a small fraction of their original territory, population, and resources, which they had managed and subsisted on for thousands of years. With many tribally important resources located outside the boundaries of their present-day reservations, it is important for tribes to work with their adjacent federal, state, and private partners to ensure a collaborative approach is taken to landscape management to ensure tribal priorities are accounted for and protected.

There is a unique Tribal vision of forest management including a focus on stewardship and non-timber forest products.

Over the past few decades Congress and some administrations have noticed the value of tribal approaches to resource management. With this recognition have come authorities from Congress that expand tribal authorities for co-management, and executive orders from past administrations focused on the consultation and coordination between federal land managers and tribes. Typically you don't see federal agencies looking to their neighbor's property to provide management recommendations. This is a reality that tribal land managers are faced with every day. Not only do they have to consider the impacts of management decisions on their reservations but must also constantly monitor activities being done on adjacent land. Because of tribal beliefs and management approaches they understand that the landscape functions as an interconnected system.

While there seems to be some recognition of this on federal, state, and private land, rarely do you see examples of cross boundary collaborative planning and implementation of resource management projects. The tribal commitment to sustainable resource management seems to drive tribal governments and staff to do the extra work, communication, and outreach needed to ensure that a landscape approach is considered and practiced on adjacent land. This has been demonstrated through the increased use of Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA), Reserved Treaty Rights Lands (RTRL), and co-stewardship agreements. It has also been demonstrated with the ever-taxing demand on tribes to become actively involved to participate, and in some cases lead, local collaborative groups. Those collaboratives in local collaboratives. Those local collaboratives recognize the value tribal involvement has with their participation.

The Chief of the Forest Service shared a November 2022 press release where 11 co-stewardship agreements had been signed with thirteen tribes, with over 60 additional agreements at various stages of review. Although there are differences in tribal and federal approaches to resource management, we also share many similarities in the goals we are collectively trying to achieve.

The last difference in the tribal resource management approach is creativity and ingenuity. Because tribes operate on budget and staffing levels that are fractions of their other federal counterparts, and because of their dedication to accomplish the work needed to maintain those cultural and management objectives, tribes are forced to do more with less. They do not feel obligated to blindly follow the traditional framework of forest management, or outdated management plans.

Tribal staff consider the tribe's priorities, the resource challenges they are facing, an uncertain future with climate change, and develop management solutions that address those challenges. This freedom comes from Indian self-determination and the autonomy that sovereign tribal governments have. They are empowered to come up with unique solutions to meet their needs, as their ancestors did. This is both a privilege, and an obligation to ensure your decisions today are beneficial to those future generations dependent on our decision making.

Because of this you see proactive, responsive management plans and actions in Indian country that you don't see in other parts of the country. Particularly not on federally administered land. There are countless examples from across Indian country where tribes have recognized the need for action, and quickly developed plans for implemen-

tation. An example from my home on the Colville Reservation includes development of Emergency Stabilization (ES) and Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR) plans for post fire restoration. With these plans we have implemented hundreds of soil stabilization, watershed protection, and noxious weed control projects. In addition we have planted approximately 15 million trees over the last 6 years in response to timber losses that exceed one billion board feet since 2015. Colville was neither staffed nor funded to take on a monumental task like that, but with an immense amount of work and some help from our BIA partners we have accomplished most of those restoration goals. Restoration goals that will hopefully see a forest return to provide those sacred resources to our future generations.

This combination of things makes tribal resource management unique. In addition to the forestry and fire staff, tribes see that type of dedication in wildlife, fisheries, cultural plant, water management, and other resource professionals. They use an integrated approach that recognizes the tradeoffs of management actions but utilizes their long-term vision and guidance they receive from tribal elders and traditional knowledge to make informed decisions.

That flexibility is rare in government agencies. However, Indian country can serve as a model, or at a minimum an example, of how proactive resource management can be accomplished with limited resources. With a growing recognition of the value of this approach, and interest from Congress, the administration, and state and federal agencies about the benefits of co-stewardship, the future provides great potential to increase the influence and approaches to tribal management across the entire country for the benefit of all U.S. citizens.

574 Tribes

Diversity 1

Diversity 2

1994NWFP

Nov2022

The human-caused Northstar Fire burned 217,000 acres, mostly on the Colville reservation in northeast Washington in 2015.

The Gift of Fire:

An interview with wildfire guru Jim Durglo

Salvage burn overlooking Flathead Lake, Confederated Salish-Kootenai Tribes, Flathead Reservation, Montana.

Editor's note: *Jim Durglo is the Intertribal Timber Council's Wildland Fire Technical Specialist. Although not employed by western Montana's Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes [CKST] he provides National Environmental Policy Act [EPA] compliance facilitation services for the tribe and other local and regional wildland fire programs. His is also a member of the advisory council to the widely praised Montana Forest Action Plan.*

Evergreen: Tribes see Indigenous fire – essentially prescribed burning – as a tool for restoring fire-starved forests and grasslands and a way to visually showcase ancient cultures for whom fire was the only land management tool. Can you cite some examples for us?

Durglo: Many tribal teachings acknowledge the significance of the gift of fire from our creator and through millennia of use and interaction had developed knowledges that were detailed, and place based. Tribes, through self-determination, are again using this tool to manipulate their cultural environment. It's more than a tool for fuel reduction, in many cases through song and ceremony reestablishes or is restoring a cultural relationship with our ancient landscapes.

Evergreen: How's that?

Durglo: A couple of examples come to mind. The Nature Conservancy is actively managing some forest lands near the southeast corner of the Flathead Indian Reservation, Montana. They are also performing fuels reduction work including thinning, piling, pile burning and under burning treatments. The CSKT Division of Fire is participating, along with tribal elders, telling the story of CSKT occupation and historical use of those lands.

A very similar story is occurring in many places across the US, namely with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe in Minnesota on lands managed by the Forest Service, Chippewa National Forest, and the San Carlos and White Mountain Apache tribes on lands managed by the Coronado National Forest. Arizona to name a few.

Because of the great depopulation of indigenous peoples over the past 600 years, oppression, and criminalization of cultural burning

during the 1800's, and the more recent federal fire suppression policy since 1930, much of our fire culture has been lost. It has been from our languages and stories that remind us of our relationship with fire.

Evergreen: In one of your recent essays, you described a video produced by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes [CSKT] that explains the role prescribed fire plays in incorporating Traditional Ecological Knowledge in CSKT's fire adapted forestry program. What's the message in your video and where can people find it?

Durglo: The main message of the short video is articulating what we say in the Forest Management Plan, approved in the year 2000. The CSKT Forest Management Plan acknowledges that fire, both human, lit and natural occurring, played a primary role in shaping our forest landscape here in the Northern Rocky Mountains. The video also conveys the message that we still live in a cultural landscape- one that was shaped by our ancestor's stewardship for their use and benefit and one that we can continue to learn from.

The 2000 Forest Management Plan was very divergent from previous plans that were written by BIA leadership. This new plan outlined Goals to strengthen tribal sovereignty and self-sufficiency through good forest stewardship, manage our forest to include natural processes and to balance cultural, spiritual, economic, social, and environmental values. Fortunately, in 2000, we still had several tribal elders that helped guide the Forestry and Fire programs through implementation.

Evergreen: Where might people find your video and what's its title?

Durglo: Returning Fire to the Land is available on YouTube.

Evergreen: The Nature Conservancy has become a champion of Indigenous burning. How did this happen and can you cite some examples of your cooperative efforts?

Durglo: By providing a supportive framework called the Indian Peoples Burning Network. IPBN is elevating tribal contributions in this shared journey. It has grown from a single landscape in 2015—in the combined ancestral territories of the Yurok, Hoopa and Karuk Tribes of Northern California—to include people from Pueblos in New Mexico, the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe in Minnesota, the Klamath Tribes in Oregon and the

Much of our Fire culture has been lost. It has been from our language and stories that remind us of our relationship with fire.

Jim Durglo, Intertribal Timber Council Wildland Fire Technical Specialist

Alabama-Coushatta Tribe in Texas. Activities include strategic planning for revitalization of fire culture, fire training including both federal qualifications and culturally based controlled burning and promoting intergenerational learning.

Evergreen: What exactly is IPBN?

Durglo: IPBN is part of the PERFACT cooperative agreement. PERFACT stands for Promoting Ecosystem Resiliency and Fire Adapted Communities Together. It is led by staff from The Nature Conservancy's North America Fire Initiative. They work closely with staff from the Watershed Research and Training Center (who facilitate the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network and other strategies) and from University of California Cooperative Extension, the Conservancy's Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team, and the USDA Forest Service.

Partners in PERFACT landscape and community efforts span a full range of affiliations, from federal, state, local and tribal agencies; businesses; non-profit organizations and universities to private landowners and engaged residents. Interests are equally varied, and this diversity helps build strong, resilient networks.

Evergreen: Where does the rubber meet the road with CKST?

Durglo: Mary Huffman, the IPBN Program Director has been very engaged in coordinating ITC Symposium Workshop participants. It is my experience that she prefers that their respective work be initiated by tribal partners.

The shared work that CSKT Division of Fire and members of the Montana TNC staff has been a result of the successful working relationship built over the last 15+ years.

Steve Kloetzel, the Western Montana Land Steward, who now leads much of the forest restoration work for Montana TNC worked with the CSKT Elders Advisory Committee when TNC first acquired a large parcel of property adjacent to the reservation.

Evergreen: CSKT – and I presume you - played a prominent role in development of the collaboratively developed Montana Forest Action Plan – again emphasizing the role of Indigenous fire in minimized the risks associated with the killing wildfires we are seeing on federal lands in the West. From reading another of your essays, it seems to me that Indigenous fire is part of a larger holistic light-on-the-land approach tribes have embraced for eons. Is this correct and how does it play out in the Montana Forest Action Plan?

Durglo: I think that the development of the Montana Forest Action Plan (MFAP) is unique, in the sense that Tribes in Montana were initially invited to the planning table very early in the process. Sonya Germann, the State Forester at the time was very intentional and deliberate in the invite and made it a point to include the tribal voice throughout the planning process.

I was the one fortunate enough to be invited and have been a part of the plan writing process and now part of a group responsible for implementation. The Tribes were also given room in the Assessment of Forest Conditions of the MFAP to describe the indigenous relationships with the Montana forest landscapes. CSKT has employed a tremendous ethnohistorian by the by the name of Thompson Smith that really did the heavy lift with writing that section. Evergreen: Let's go back to your Fire on the Land video for a moment. What's the take home message and is there anyone people could call to learn more?

Tribes strive for thinnings like this one in eastern Washington. Tree density has been reduced and there is little woody debris on the ground to sustain a wildfire.

Durglo: The Fire on the Land Project was a direct response of approval of our Forest Management Planning efforts, the infusion of fuels funding coming out of the National Fire Plan through the Department of the Interior in 2000. It was done to capture the CSKT history and worldview about our relationship with fire.

As noted in the collection, and in the story of Beaver Steals Fire, the CSKT cultural relationship with fire is very important. It was mainly done for us as indigenous people to capture our stories, also recognizing that we are losing our elders and knowledge keepers.

The material is available on the CSKT.org website under the Natural Resources tab and/or by contacting the CSKT Division of Fire at 406-676-2550. Ask for Ron Swaney, our Division of Fire Manager.

Evergreen: Am I correct in assuming that your use of Indigenous fire in CSKT forests is often accompanied by removing some trees and holding others to grow larger in the years to come?

Durglo: You are correct. Fire is not applied on the lands until the sites are prepared to a condition that would accept fire to meet tribal objectives.

Evergreen: How much thinning and/or burning do you do annually on CSKT land?

Durglo: CSKT Division of Fire staff tell me that on average, they treat between 1,500 and 2,000 acres of thinning, piling and about 3,000 acres per year in burning. Burning includes pile burning and under burning. These acres do not include silvicultural treatments done by the Division of Forestry implementing timber sales.

Evergreen: Recently enacted federal legislation, beginning with the 2004 Tribal Forest Protection Act, gives tribes the authority to do cross-boundary forestry work to protect tribal forests and grasslands from insects, diseases and wildfires that often begin on adjacent federal land. How does this work, what additional authorities has Congress granted more recently and what successes can you report?

Durglo: The TFPA has been available since 2004. Not until the last few years used with limited success. The act allows tribes to propose projects on adjacent federal lands that would protect their rights, lands, and resources, by reducing threats from wildfire, insects, and disease from nearby lands that would then reduce the potential of wildfire crossing onto tribal trust lands.

The ITC was very instrumental in drafting the legislation after some fires in 2002 completely devastated tribal communities in Southern California. So basically, the legislation provides the authorization to propose projects. It did not, until recently, come with funding. Over the last couple of years, we have seen more proposals being negotiated between tribes and their Forest Service neighbors that cover thousands of acres. Approval of the 2018 Farm Bill provides two amendments to the TFPA, one provides a more efficient response timeline and the other allows the TFPA proposal to be administered using the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act (PL-93-638) authority.

Just to mention, in late 2018, the ITC prepared a report titled, 'Cross Boundary Collaboration Between Tribes and the United States Forest Service- Success Stories from Forest Systems Using the Tribal Forest Protection Act. You can find it on the ITC website under the Issues and Projects tab. Under Issues with the Tribal Forest Protection Act link. The ITC website houses a lot of resources for tribes and federal partners to use when developing TFPA projects.

EVERGREEN: What have we missed here as it concerns Indigenous fire?

Durglo: Nothing comes to mind but, more broadly, I think it's important for those who will read your report and IFMAT IV to understand that, while smaller tribes are more dependent on BIA services and funding, every tribe in looking for new partners who can help them reach their cultural and natural resourced based goals – the Forest Service, NGO's and organizations that do the kind of forestry educational you are doing.

Returning Fire

FireAdapted Communities

Camas bloom, Confederated Salish-Kootenai Tribes, Flathead Reservation, Montana.

Recruitment of Urban Youth into Forestry: Cultivating Cultural E

Don Motanic is an enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservations. He holds an engineering degree from the University of Washington and worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs for 34 years before becoming a technical specialist with the Intertribal Timber Council.

Seventy percent (70%) of the 644,000 K-12 Tribal youth, as identified by the National Indian Education Association, reside in urban areas across the nation. While IFMAT-IV outlined workforce needs within the forestry program, it neglected to address the shifting tribal demographics and outreach challenges that have evolved over the past three decades.

The recruitment of urban Tribal youth into forestry presents both distinct challenges and opportunities. To effectively engage these young individuals in a field that bridges their heritage and modern environmental stewardship, a comprehensive and culturally sensitive approach is imperative. This essay delineates a multifaceted strategy, incorporating existing program exemplars for recruiting urban Tribal youth into forestry careers, with a focal point on the integration of emotional intelligence.

This strategy recognizes the emotional significance of their heritage, experiences, and aspirations, aiming to create an environment that nurtures skills development while forging a profound connection to the land and their cultural roots. However, the present framework seems to concentrate on constructing individual ladders for agencies and institutions, overlooking the need to weave a cohesive web team connecting these entities with the untapped urban tribal youth population.

Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity: At the heart of this recruitment strategy lies cultural awareness and sensitivity. Effective engagement with urban Tribal communities hinges on team members' deep understanding of their history, traditions, and challenges.

Emotional intelligence serves as a pivotal factor in these interactions, enabling team members to approach conversations with empathy and comprehension. By acknowledging the emotional weight of historical injustices, team members can foster connections founded on shared humanity and respect.

Valuable tools developed by the Indian Boarding School Healing Coalition (boardingschoolhealing.org) can aid recruiters, mentors, and educators working with tribal youth. Collaborating with local Indigenous organizations and leaders further fortifies these relationships, creating space for the reciprocal exchange of knowledge and experiences. An extensive list of urban Indian organizations across the nation can be found at the National Urban Indian Family Coalition. See QR code.

Needs Assessment: Customizing the recruitment strategy to align with the needs and aspirations of urban Tribal youth mandates a thorough needs assessment. Here, emotional intelligence plays a pivotal role in interviews and focus groups, as the capacity to actively listen and empathize with participants' emotions is indispensable. Participants should feel that their voices are not only heard but also deeply understood. The insights gleaned from these conversations lay the groundwork for the creation of compelling forestry programs that resonate with their emotional ties to the land and community. Federal agencies and schools could collaboratively engage with various urban Indian centers to foster this process.

Education and Outreach: Education and outreach initiatives must be culturally relevant and emotionally resonant. The integration of traditional ecological knowledge and contemporary forestry science can be seamlessly achieved through emotionally immersive workshops and seminars. Emotional intelligence guides facilitators in navigating these sessions, fostering an environment where participants feel at ease sharing their emotions and experiences.

By addressing the emotional significance of the land and its connection to Tribal identity, these programs forge a profound bond between participants and the subject matter. Over the past decade, a prominent resource for understanding tribal language and the tribal gift economy has been Dr. Robin Kimmerer's book, "Braiding Sweetgrass," which has gained traction in university circles. Notably, she has recently published a young adult edition.

Mentorship Programs: Mentorship programs are pivotal in steering urban Tribal youth towards forestry careers. Emotional intelligence plays a significant role in mentor-mentee relationships, with mentors needing to offer both professional guidance and emotional support. Emotionally attuned mentors can discern and respond to their mentees' emotional requirements, creating a safe space for discussing challenges and aspirations. Through this emotional connection, these relationships become wellsprings of inspiration and encouragement, fortifying participants' confidence in pursuing forestry careers. The American Indian Science and Engineering Society boasts several mentoring programs, such as the Advancing Agricultural Science Opportunities for Native Americans, which provides funding for travel and conference participation.

Don Motanic and Northwest Youth Corps friends, NYC, Eugene, Oregon.

l Emotional Intelligence

Practical Skill Building: Forestry skill-building workshops offer a hands-on avenue for learning. Emotional intelligence empowers facilitators to recognize and address the emotional impact of these activities. Acknowledging participants' emotions linked to skill development nurtures a supportive learning atmosphere where emotional well-being is as paramount as technical competence. By supplying constructive feedback and positive reinforcement, facilitators contribute to participants' emotional resilience and motivation to excel in forestry. The Northwest Youth Corps Tribal Stewardship serves as a notable example that warrants expansion and connection with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and other federal agencies. See QR code.

Scholarships and Internships: Scholarships and internships pave the way for urban Tribal youth to embark on forestry education and gather practical experience. Emotional intelligence proves invaluable by acknowledging potential stressors and challenges these individuals might encounter throughout their educational and career journeys. Scholarship and internship programs can seamlessly weave emotional support alongside professional guidance, ensuring participants possess the tools to navigate challenges while safeguarding their emotional well-being.

Community Projects: Collaborative community projects provide a platform for urban Tribal youth to actively engage in forestry initiatives. Emotional intelligence plays a pivotal role in fostering emotional investment in these undertakings. Participants' emotions are intricately interwoven with their ties to the land and community, and acknowledging these emotions fosters a sense of pride and accomplishment. By involving youth in the planning and execution of these projects, emotional connections are further solidified, leading to a lasting impact. The Wisdom of the Elders, Inc. Workforce Development LLC offers internships and community projects in collaboration with Portland Parks and local county contracts. While the ladders are in place, the time has come to establish the interconnecting webs.

Celebrating Traditions and Culture: Infusing cultural traditions and practices into forestry activities acknowledges the emotional significance of these elements in the lives of urban Tribal youth. Emotional intelligence guides facilitators in navigating these intersections, ensuring traditions are treated with respect and celebrated. By highlighting the intergenerational knowledge transfer intrinsic to forestry practices aligned with Indigenous values, participants foster an emotional connection to their heritage and the environment.

Networking and Peer Support: Establishing a support network is pivotal for preserving participants' emotional well-being throughout their forestry journey. Emotional intelligence forms the bedrock of forging connections among peers. Networking events provide avenues for candid sharing of experiences, challenges, and triumphs. Facilitators adept in emotional intelligence guarantee these interactions are inclusive and respectful, nurturing a safe space where participants can discuss emotional subjects without fear of judgment. Portland State University's Institute for Tribal Government Certificate of Tribal Relation Program has effectively trained over 300 allies from outside the tribal community to contribute to a peer support program.

Continuous Engagement: Sustaining participants' engagement necessitates the active application of emotional intelligence. Regular check-ins, encompassing assessments of emotional well-being alongside progress, offer vital insights into participants' experiences. Emotional intelligence equips facilitators to promptly address challenges, proffer resources for stress management, and ensure participants feel cherished and supported in their forestry pursuits.

Conclusion: Efforts to recruit untapped urban Tribal youth into forestry careers demand a comprehensive strategy that pays homage to their cultural heritage while nurturing emotional bonds to the environment. By embedding emotional intelligence within every phase of the strategy – from fostering cultural awareness and sensitivity to sustaining continuous engagement – a holistic and resonant approach emerges. This approach not only equips participants with the requisite skills for forestry careers but also fosters a profound sense of identity, pride, and belonging, safeguarding the sustainable stewardship of Indian forest land for generations to come.

Don Motanic and Northwest Youth Corps friends, NYC, Eugene, Oregon.

NUIFC

NW Youth Corp

Fish and Wildlife habitat conservation

by Jim Petersen

Conserving and increasing fish and wildlife habitat have been integral parts of Forestry in Indian Country for eons.

Indians believe their land and its natural resources – fish, wildlife, herbal medicines, timber, bark, clothing, stone, seeds, ash – the list is long – are Gifts of Mother Earth.

Managing – the hands-on caring for these resources – rests on Traditional Ecological Knowledge – passed from one generation to the next by tribal elders. The only tools Indians had were fire and water. Fire to clear land for crops grown from native seeds and water to irrigate what they were growing.

You may be surprised to learn that tribes living in the Southeast and along the Atlantic Seaboard were accomplished farmers. Early pen-and-ink sketches drawn in the 1600s and 1700s show row crops meticulously planted in designated garden plots: mainly corn, beans and squash.

From coast to coast, Indians mastered the art of cultivating what Nature provided: roots, berries or herbs. Again, the list is long but the tools – fire and water – were always present.

Among today's tribes, there is a resurgence of interest in the cultural and spiritual roots of Traditional Ecological Knowledge [TEK]. It is woven into the very fabric of the IFMAT IV report and is seen in tribal efforts to blend TEK with science and technology. Several tribes are using sophisticated Light Detection and Ranging [LiDAR] sensors to map their forests and habitats by single tree count, species, height and diameter.

Garrett Jones, Technical Services Manager for Northwest Management, Moscow, Idaho explains. "It's kind of like taking a picture of your lawn on your cell phone and zooming in on each blade of grass to better understand how it's doing. Using the data, wildlife managers can talk with hydrologists and foresters about their specific need for elk habitat and calving grounds."

Kenneth Brink, vice chairman of the Karuk Tribal Council, Happy Camp, California, spoke to the TEK aspect of tribal resource management at a September 13, 2023 Forest Service wildfire briefing concerning the Happy Camp Complex, one of dozens of wildfires that burned in northern California in the summer of 2023.

"Fire is part of our culture," Brink said. "Smokey Bear stripped us of our way of life. We managed for everything from the top of the mountain to the ocean using Traditional Ecological Knowledge." His remarks are available on YouTube. See QR code for more information.

Public fears drove the nation's determination to "exclude" fire from forests. Thousands died in nineteenth century wildfires in the Great Lakes Region and millions of acres of federal forestland were leveled in the West in the early 1900s.

The tipping point was the 1910 Fire, a wind-driven colossus that leveled three million acres in Northern Idaho and Western Montana, most of it in a 48-hour firestorm. Seventy-eight brave firefighters were killed.

But the Forest Service's debate with itself about how to handle wildfires in the West began in Northern California in the 1890s. "Piute fire" was blamed for the fact that the region was not as heavily forested as western Oregon.

What was not understood was that the fires the Karuk's and other tribes were setting every spring were the reason why the burns were "light," nothing like the infernos that raged through the Great Lakes Region. They stayed on the ground, clearing away woody debris and invasive plant species while enriching the soil, preventing the killing fires that exclusion would bring decades later.

A good case can be made for the fact that the negative environmental impacts of excluding fire have fallen disproportionally on tribal lands. On Karuk land, Douglas fir forests have encroached on grasslands and oak woodlands.

The Karuk's do not believe their holistic approach to land management can be measured in board feet so they use TEK data on species impacted by fire exclusion and conifer encroachment to develop site specific treatments that leave shade for shade tolerant plants and provide sun for shade intolerant species – thus preparing the Karuk land to again accept fire.

Nearly 700 miles to the Northeast, at Nespelem, Washington, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation fight the same battle against the wrong kind of fire. Richard Whitney, Senior Manager of the tribe's Wildlife Division reports that recent wildfires have had negative impacts on nearly every corner of the 1.4 million acre reservation.

"Our ecosystems have evolved as fire-based ecosystems that require relatively frequent and historically low intensity fires to rejuvenate herbaceous species and reduce the encroachment of conifers and shrubs on grass dominated areas," he explained. "Our elders describe forests that looked like parks. That's typically due to the regular natural or human-caused burns that shaped our region."

Whitney, who holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in Natural Resource Sciences/wildlife ecology from Washington State University, says wildlife habitats should be viewed as "constantly dynamic, always resetting themselves in a shifting mosaic while stagnant habitats are not always desired and may prove detrimental to many species in the long term."

He cites the sharp-tailed grouse as one of many species that benefit from low intensity burns that help maintain the Colville tribe's early successional grassland ecotype. However, grouse are adversely impacted by the loss of older deciduous stands in high intensity burns.

Again, the shifting forest and grassland mosaic created and maintained by Indian fires that were deliberately ignited annually for eons – an ecotype that has lost ground to conifer forests that are frequently too dense for the natural carrying capacity of the land. The result is the insect/disease/wildfire cycle that has overtaken much of the West.

Unlike the Karuk tribe, the Colville tribe maintains a widely regarded commercial timber program, selling about 77 million board feet annually to three nearby mills: Boise Cascade, Vaagen Brothers and Columbia Cedar.

Western tribes are also working hard to restore salmon runs in rivers that have not seen spawning salmon for more than 100 years. Why? Hydroelectric dams now irrigate millions of acres that were once too dry for farming.

Four dams along Northern California's Klamath River are scheduled for removal over the next year. The first – Copco 1 – by the time this report is printed. Copco 2, J.C. Boyle, and Iron Gate by this time next year.

Their removal follows years of work by northern California tribes for whom salmon are more than a source of food. They are cultural and spiritual icons whose annual return is celebrated in song, dance and feasting.

Key to the salmon's return is the 2010 Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement signed in 2010 by the states of California and Oregon, many local governments, PacificCorp, irrigators, conservation and fishing groups and tribes. See QR codes at the end of the story.

Five tribes in Eastern Washington – the Colville, Kalispel, Kootenai, Spokane and Coeur d'Alene – launched a similar effort in 1982. UCUT [the Upper Columbia United Tribes] has taken what it calls a "proactive, collaborative, science-based approach to promoting fish, water, wildlife, diverse habitats and Indian culture" that has been significantly altered by nearly a century of hydroelectric developments along the Columbia River.

The project's reach spans some 14 million acres of aboriginal territory that holds 500 miles of waterways, 40 interior lakes and 30 dams and reservoirs that have blocked the upriver migration of spawning salmon. Together, the sponsoring tribes manage about two million acres.

UCUT's initial focus is on moving Chinook and Sockeye salmon over or around Grand Coulee and Chief Joseph dams. You can learn more on their website but initial study results are very positive. See QR code.

Tribal outreach and entrepreneurship in action. There is much more work to be done on the fish and wildlife front, but first Congress needs to address its Trust Responsibility to tribes. The annual $100 million shortfall in funding needs to be honored when the 118th Congress convenes in January, 2024.

Traditional Knowledge

Salmon 1

Salmon 2

Salmon 3

Salmon 4

Methow River, logs providing hiding cover for fish, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, northeast Washington.

California bighorn sheep reintroduction, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, northeast Washington.

Start with the rising sun…and the trees will last forever

***Jim Petersen**, Founder and President of the non-profit Evergreen Foundation, has been a strong advocate for Indian forestry for more than 30 years. The Foundation has published in-depth reports concerning all four IFMAT reports.*

One of the most significant findings in the IFMAT IV report concerns the long simmering tribal transition from focusing solely on harvesting and manufacturing timber to a more holistic approach that yields a wide variety of non-timber products that grow in tribal forests.

The product mix varies from berries to herbaceous plants, roots, moss, firewood, minerals, fungi, tree bark, sap, leaves, needles, seeds and nuts. They are variously used in foods and medicines – and to maintain cultural traditions and ceremonies and the timeless tribal connection to land and place.

Most tribes that own and manage timberland sell their logs on open markets maintained by non-tribal owners. Only two tribes – the Yakama in Washington and the Menominee in Wisconsin – continue to operate large and diverse wood product manufacturing facilities.

The Menominee mill at Neopit, Wisconsin employs about 160 tribal members and manufactures lumber, veneer, several wood byproducts, including pulpwood, and a long list of value-added products that it sells on both domestic and international markets. It markets to flooring manufacturers, wood brokers, exporters, lumber yards and window, door, cabinet, furniture and pallet makers.

The tribe's 217,000-acre commercial forest features 13 forest types and includes ten hardwood and softwood tree species. Among them: sugar maple, yellow birch, red oak, basswood, beech, and aspen, hemlock, red pine, swamp pine, and an abundance of eastern white pine.

Although the Menominee tribe's milling operations are very impressive, its beautiful forests are the tribe's cultural and economic anchors. We toured them several years ago as guests of the Menominee's and the Intertribal Council. You will find no visible evidence that these forests serve any commercial purpose. Such are the subtleties of forestry in Indian Country.

The tribe's website www.mtewood.com goes to great lengths to explain its approach to forestry – including its prized Forest Stewardship Council certificate affirming the sustainability of its forest practices. But nothing describes the tribe's forestry brand more aptly than a Wisdom expressed by Menominee Chief Oshkosh sometime between 1827 and 1858.

> *"Start with the rising sun, and work toward the setting sun, but take only the mature trees, the sick trees, and the trees that have fallen. When you reach the end of the reservation, turn and cut from the setting sun to the rising sun and the trees will last forever."*

Menominee's honor this wisdom today by integrating advanced science, technology and business practices with the tribe's cultural, spiritual and historic roots. The tribe's land ethic is so different from that of other forest landowners in Wisconsin that their forest boundaries can easily be seen from space in satellite imagery.

Tribal logger felling hardwood, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin.

Some 1,800 miles west in central Washington lies the 1.2-million-acre Yakama Nation. It includes 650,000 acres of forest and woodlands that tribal members believe were given to them by their Creator for their perpetual use.

The Yakama tribe's website – see QR code – itemizes 15 interlocking goals that form the spiritual, cultural, and economic cornerstones of the tribe's way of life:

- Provide and protect critical habitat for salmon
- Create habitat and opportunities for big game
- Enhance medicines and provide healing stories
- Build cultural resilience, strong leaders, identity though stewardship, active management, and the shared lessons of multiple generations
- Reconnect with Mother Earth and traditions
- Offer a foundational knowledge of natural foods
- Exemplify giving between the earth and people
- Improve Yakama spiritual health and tranquility

Yakama tribal leaders believe their forest planning process, which began in 1942, must be rooted in solid forest science and that its economic investments in land, timber and wood processing must also recognize the cultural, spiritual and medicinal needs of tribal generations unborn.

The tribe completed its first commercial harvest in 1948, four years after the planning process began. Harvesting rose steadily until the 1970s, then gradually fell back to its present day level.

Today, standing timber volume in Yakama forests totals eight billion board feet, nearly three times what it was in the 1890s, a tribute to tribal tenacity in the face of numerous setbacks including the disastrous 1994 wildfire season.

So much timber was burnt that the tribe decided to build its small log mill to salvage its losses. It opened at White Salmon in 1998. Three years later, they bought 30,000 acres of timberland from International Paper Company, paid off their small log mill debt, began construction of a large log mill and bought another 8,000 acres of timberland.

Thanks to the presence of its two mills, the tribe was able to process about 112 million board feet of burnt logs from between 2013 and 2016 – timber that likely would have burned again if it had not been removed and the ground replanted.

The Yakama currently harvests about 88 million board feet per year from its forests – an amount sufficient to employ 240 mill workers in its White Swan mills, near the tribe's southern boundary on the Columbia River. The product mix of the two mills includes common boards, dimension and framing lumber, export lumber, lam stock, moulding, shop grade lumber and lumber third-party certified by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

To help secure its future in a topsy turvy forestry world increasingly dominated by killing wildfires, the Yakama tribe assumed a leadership role in the formation of the Tapash Sustainable Forest Collaborative, a partnership that includes The Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Forest Service, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Washington Department of Natural Resources.

Riparian habitat, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin.

The collaborative draws its name from Táp'ash, a noun.

According to the Sahaptin dictionary, Táp'ash means "pine tree" in Sahaptin. Sahpatin is a Plateau Penutian language spoken in south-central Washington and northern Oregon. Imítichnik táp'ashyaw ánichatak, which means, "Go bury it under the pine tree."

The collaborative works across ownership boundaries on a landscape scale in the mountainous Central Cascades to improve forest ecosystem health, minimize the after effects of catastrophic fire, protect fish and wildlife habitat for a remarkable variety of species, retain cultural values for present and future generations and support development of a sustainable restoration economy.

Tapash's boots-on-the-ground work involves restoring forests and watersheds via adaptive management – a term that gained prominence in the late 1980s, during the late Booth Gardner's first term as Washington State Governor. Adaptive management draws on the same holistic principles that the Yakama have observed for thousands of years. See QR code. The Yakama are fortunate to have their own sawmills. It makes the Tapash Collaborative's job much easier. Tribes that lack ready access to wood processing infrastructure have a more difficult time because there are no easily reached markets for their trees.

"The BIA has been providing some grant money to get small operations going but most tribes are managing on a stewardship basis and not for volume," explained Vincent Corraro, Program Manager for IFMAT IV and president of Northwest Management in Moscow, Idaho.

"Much of that is because in many areas there is no infrastructure to manufacture the volume. The real story is that without these manufacturing facilities the tribes are not able to do the treatments that are needed to improve or in some cases bring back the traditional and cultural ways and it's all burning up in some cases or dying and the foods are disappearing."

Increasing Central Washington's wood processing capacity is challenging. The Nature Conservancy has been looking for several years for someone it can partner with in the development of a new high speed, small log mill it would like to site somewhere near Wenatchee.

The goal – which is universally shared by the Tapash partners – is to provide wood processing markets for the massive die-off of trees in the Okanagan-Wenatchee and Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forests. But the only companies currently operating east of the Cascades are Boise Cascade at Kettle Falls and Yakima and Vaagen Brothers Lumber Company at Colville.

Neither company has shown interest in the idea because such a mill would cost north of $100 million to construct, with no assurance that the Forest Service – by far the largest landowner Washington – could provide the log volume needed to keep the mill running on a year-round basis for the 25 years required to amortize the investment.

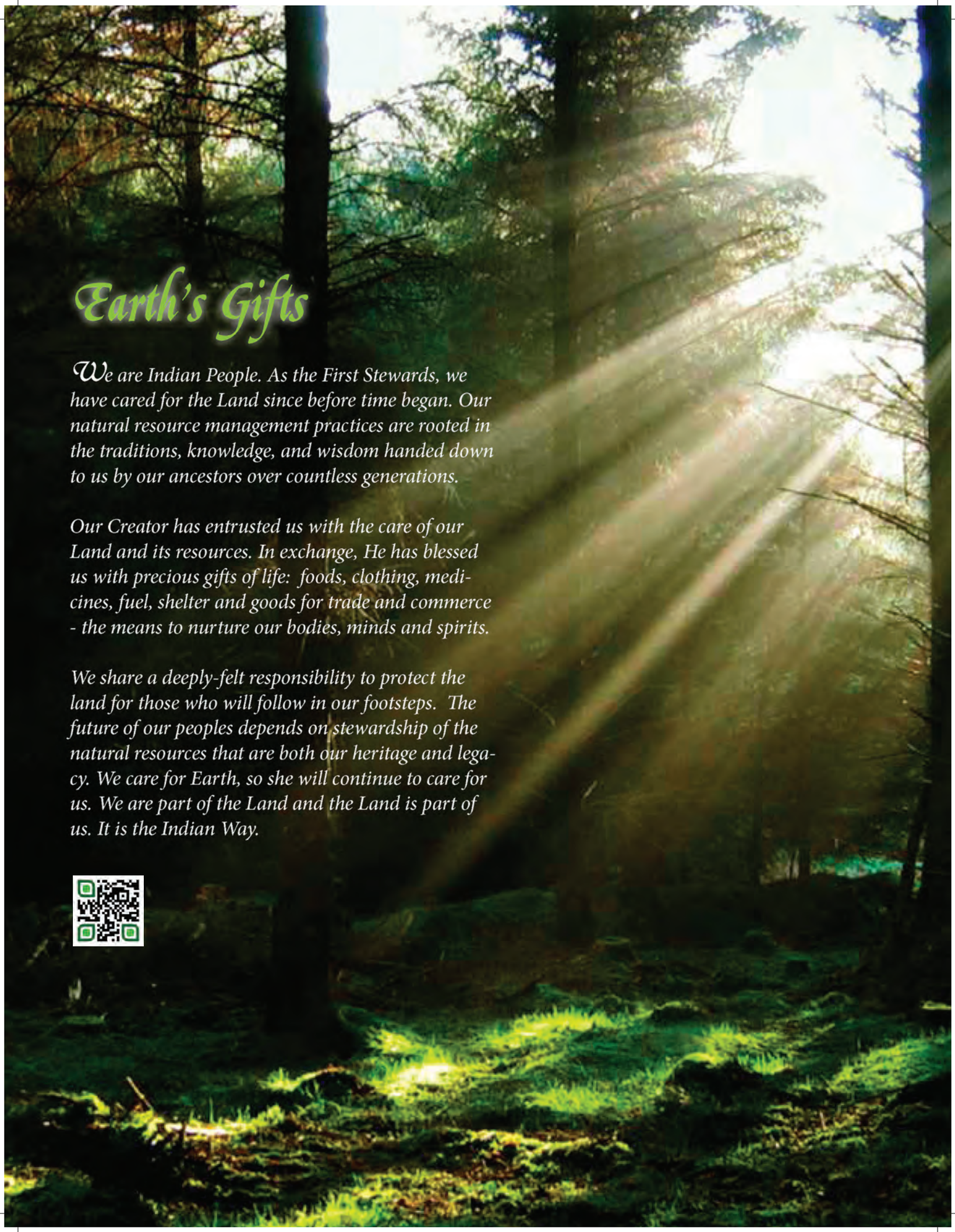
The four tribes in eastern Washington and northern Idaho – the Spokane's at Wellpinit, northwest of Spokane, the Coeur d' Alenes at Plummer, Idaho, the Nez Perce at Lapwai, Idaho and the Colville's at Nespelem, Washington – all have easy access to a wide variety of wood processing facilities in northeast Washington and northern Idaho.

Montana's Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes are within easy log hauling distance to mills north – in the Flathead Valley and south in Missoula – so they have many options for managing their forests.

The same is true of tribes based in western Washington. All of them, including the Quinault Nation, which manages impressive stands of Douglas-fir and alder, have easy access to dozens of sawmills and panel plants that produce lumber, plywood, laminated veneer lumber, oriented strand board and cross laminated timbers.

Tribes in Oregon, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada and the central and eastern states have a tougher time because there are fewer mills. The lesson here is straight-forward: No matter the brand of forestry – holistic or high yield – the presence of nearby wood processing infrastructure makes all the difference in the world.

Menominee **Yakama** **Tapash**



Earth's Gifts

We are Indian People. As the First Stewards, we have cared for the Land since before time began. Our natural resource management practices are rooted in the traditions, knowledge, and wisdom handed down to us by our ancestors over countless generations.

Our Creator has entrusted us with the care of our Land and its resources. In exchange, He has blessed us with precious gifts of life: foods, clothing, medicines, fuel, shelter and goods for trade and commerce - the means to nurture our bodies, minds and spirits.

We share a deeply-felt responsibility to protect the land for those who will follow in our footsteps. The future of our peoples depends on stewardship of the natural resources that are both our heritage and legacy. We care for Earth, so she will continue to care for us. We are part of the Land and the Land is part of us. It is the Indian Way.