



# Office of Tribal Relations

Helping to build  
long term  
collaborative partnerships  
with Tribes



April, 2008

This periodic report provides the Department of Agriculture and its Agencies an update of Tribal Relations issues and proceedings within the USDA Forest Service. The information contained within this report is public information and may be shared with members of the public and other interested parties. For further questions and inquiries, please contact Fred Clark at [fclark@fs.fed.us](mailto:fclark@fs.fed.us), and at (202) 205-1514.

## OTR STAFFING

Faline Haven, currently with the National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL) has accepted the position of GS-0343-13 Program and Management Analyst on the OTR staff. Faline brings a wealth of experience in Forestry, woody biomass utilization, and with Tribes from all across the country.

This position fills behind David Scholes, who now works for the Job Corps in Virginia. David E. Clark, from Region 2, The Rocky Mountain Region, is completing his detail in that Analyst position through April.

We have welcomed Monique Fordham, currently with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), to the OTR staff for the next four months. She is on interagency loan to us to help develop training related to management that may affect sacred sites.

We are also working on getting a detailer into the Assistant Director position (GS-14), to follow behind Sonia Tamez, who helped us out into February.

## STAFFING IN THE REGIONS

The Region 4 position is now vacant. The Region is developing a strategy along with Region 1 to cover that geographical area.

## RECENT MEETINGS ATTENDED BY OTR STAFF

- ITC Winter Board, Pechanga, CA (February, '08)
- NCAI Executive Council, Washington, DC (March, '08)
- FS New Employees Orientation, Columbus, OH (March, '08)
- National Tribal Environmental Council, Santa Fe, NM (April, '08)

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

- TC Spring Board, Warm Springs, OR (April, '08)
- USET Board Meeting, Cherokee, NC (May, '08)
- NAFWS, Worley, ID (May, '08)
- National Tribal Timber Symposium, Hon-Dah, AZ (June, 08)

## UPCOMING PRODUCTS

- Tribal Relations Resource Guide (update and revision)
- Forest Service Tribal Consultation Database (new, internal)
- Interagency Tribal Relations Training (contributing agency)
- Indigenous Perspectives area of HD.gov interagency web portal site (contributing agency)
- Additions to Forest Service "Hall of Tribes" in the Yates Building
- Interpretive and educational materials relating to Tribal Relations (brochures, posters, etc.)
- Update of Guide to USDA Programs for American Indians and Alaska Natives (contributing agency)
- OTR brochure and banner
- Draft Forest Service Tribal Relations Program Strategic Plan

## CURRENT PROJECTS

- Preparing for national Tribal Consultation on proposed FS Sacred Sites Policy
- Facilitating Tribal involvement in FS State and Private Forestry Redesign
- Forest Service Transformation
- Tribal Forest Protection Act Implementation
- Tribal Forest Protection Act Report to Congress
- Special Forest Products Policy Development
- National Consultation on Energy Corridors
- National Tribal Relations Program Strategic Planning
- Indian Fire Crew Business Development Train-the-Trainer

## Additional Information on Selected Topics

### Transformation

With the Forest Service's fixed costs rising as budgets remain flat or decline, the WO and RO programs are looking at the potential impacts from a proposed 25% cut in the operating budgets for the Washington Office and the Regional Offices. Adapting to this operational reality is at the core of what is being called the Forest Service Transformation. WO Director areas, including OTR, are very much involved in this analysis.

# NEWS FROM OTR

A Report on Tribal Relations Topics from the Forest Service Tribal Relations Program

## Special Forest Products Policy

A draft national policy that provides guidance on the collection of non-timber forest products was recently published in the Federal Register. This policy has major implications for traditional gatherers, and comments received are being compiled.

Ken Kessler, OTR Analyst, is helping with the content analysis of comments received on the draft policy.

## Tribal Relations Resource Book

*The Forest Service National Resource Book on American Indian and Alaska Native Relations* has been a fixture on the desks of Forest Service line officers since its publication in 1997. Times change and an update of what has come to be commonly known as the "yellow book" (the color of its cover) has been much needed. With some new staffing and a new year coming up, OTR anticipates publication of a new version later in this fiscal year.

## TFPA

The Tribal Forest Protection Act TFPA was passed in 2004 following the horrendous wildfire season of 2003. Its purpose was to provide Tribes a tool with which to propose work and enter into contracts and agreements with the Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management, in order to reduce threats to Indian trust land and Indian communities. Tribes can propose conservation and protection work on public forest and grazing lands that are adjacent or near to their reservations and potentially pose a risk to their own lands and resources. Tribes can enter into this work under current contracting and agreements authorities. The Forest Service Interim Directive was recently renewed until November of 2008.

Marsha Butterfield, OTR Assistant Director, is developing the FS Report to Congress on Implementation of the TFPA

## Sacred Sites Policy

The work of a task group chartered in 2002 to develop a draft policy for the Forest Service to use in managing sacred sites was completed in April of 2007. The results of their work is undergoing a broad internal review in preparation for nationwide Tribal consultation, after which it may become an agency directive

## Building Community Capacity for implementation of the Tribal Forest Protection Act

Indian Dispute Resolution Services, Inc., in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service, has initiated a Pilot Demonstration Project that will work with up to five western tribes to take advantage of new opportunities made available through the TFPA.

## State and Private Forestry Redesign

The new Redesign approach, which is the first phase of implementation, will focus on three consensus-based S&PF National Themes:

Conserve working forest landscapes,

Protect forests from harm, and

Enhance public benefits from trees and forests.

Tribes are invited to work with the State Foresters in their areas to get involved in the State Assessments, which are key in the competitive funding process.

## Forest Service Focal Themes

Gail Kimbell, the Forest Service Chief, has identified three broad areas of interest that tie together much of the work the Forest Service is doing. These are not new initiatives, but rather a way of organizing the way we think about the work the Agency does:

-Climate Change

-Water

-Connecting Kids with Nature

OTR Focal Themes:

-Policy Development and Analysis

-Assistance

-Training

-Oversight

-Leveraging Partnerships

News from OTR

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