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Tribal Relations News

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Director's Welcome

The wave of support for working with Tribes has been building over the past several years, continues to grow and pick up momentum throughout the Administration. It is to the Forest Service's - and really, your - credit that we were able to partially craft the surf board ahead of time to catch and ride that wave. From the "early days" of developing the agency's approach in the field and in the Washington Office to where we are today, we've seen progress.

With John Waconda, Lydia Mills, and Serra Hoagland's success stories, we can see that there has been a steady increase in Native Americans represented and thriving in Forest Service ranks. Native participation in the 2012 Forest Service Planning Rule is also a welcome addition, ensuring tribal input in the Rule's implementation.

As the interview with recently retired Southern Regional Forester Liz Agpaoa also showcases, agency staff awareness and appreciation for working with Tribes has grown over time. Rob Harper's recounting of his memorable trip meeting Alaska Natives echoes this enthusiasm.

Forest Service Research & Development has been increasingly active in collaborating with Tribes too, especially in adapting to climate change and incorporating traditional ecological knowledge. For example, the Forest Service supported a video series on tribal climate change and a Native Youth science/traditional ecological knowledge program which brought in great Native interns. We are impressed with what Research Scientist Alan Watson discovered about Taiwanese indigenous peoples on his recent Fulbright-funded trip there as well.

In the spirit of the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act, the Forest Service, the Arizona Conservation Corps, and Southwest Tribes formed the first ever Native Corps for youth this summer. We encourage more of these innovative partnerships, and to help, our Office has just published a Guide for Tribes on Forest Service Grants & Agreements.

The future looks bright as the wave of support moves ahead, mostly because there are so many who have made a difference, continue to make a difference, and will make a difference in the future. The wave is still high. Let's keep our balance and keep building the board as we ride.

-Fred Clark, Director

Office of Tribal Relations

Wabanaki Youth Sciences (WAYS) Earth Camp 2014

Photo credit: tish carr, WAYS

Getting to Know John Waconda

"I have always had forestry and forestry management in my heart."

Hello, my name is John Waconda. I am from the Pueblos of Isleta and Laguna, New Mexico. Growing up on the Isleta Pueblo reservation in the Rio Grande valley south of Albuquerque, I was raised on the family farm and ranch with livestock that included cattle, horses, sheep, pigs, chickens, and rabbits. We grew feed for the livestock and had a garden for the extended family. I left the reservation to attend college, and have lived away ever since. As the new Chief of Staff for the Forest Service Southwestern region in Albuquerque, I am close and will continue to support my family.

As a child with my three siblings, we were taught to respect and learn individual values alongside those values within the larger tribal community social structure. We participated in both Pueblos' tribal traditional ceremonies, all of which are still practiced today. Discipline, teaching, and love came from my parents and grandparents, and they were greatly influential. My grandparents were educators and prominent in their tribal communities. My grandfather, Miguel Trujillo, was a civil rights leader in New Mexico too, as he fought to gain the Native American right to vote by winning a seminal case in the 1940s. This is an example of quiet leadership that is strong in my family.

Federal service and service to the Indian community runs deep in my family- my mother and uncle were both leaders at the Indian Health Service. My father worked there, as well as at the Bureau of Indian Affairs, but his true love was being a farmer and rancher. I am surrounded by many successful family members, and I hope to carry forward their positive influence within my family and tribal community. I have one daughter, Lenora Waconda, who recently transferred to Arizona State University from the University of Norte Dame--she was not used to that Midwest freeze!

I received a Bachelor of Science degree from New Mexico State University in Natural Resource Economics and a Master of Forestry degree from Colorado State University. I began studying agricultural economics wanting to work in the water resource field, as irrigation is vital to the livelihood of our native people and communities. I earned my undergraduate degree in this area; however, during a college summer, I had a career-changing experience working in a wildland fire position for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. It was a busy season where I battled several Western fires- I experienced the true "wildland fire challenge," inspiring me to return for more fire seasons, gain broad experience in different jobs, and obtain higher level fire qualifications. I experienced fire excitement and earned a good salary while traveling and seeing many parts of the West many people don't ever get to experience. In the off season, I took advantage of detail assignments, and assisted on several forest inventory projects on many Indian reservations. I most enjoyed working with the tribal fire crews and staff from across the country-- seeing the passion and courageous efforts to protect resources and communities nationwide. Working and living with these people taught me the value of conquering a worthwhile challenge.

During my firefighting experience, I was fortunate to work with many influential tribal forest management professionals who supported my newfound interest in forestry. Deciding that my heart was focused in a forestry career and not having a forestry degree, I was introduced to Bureau of Indian Affairs training program that enabled me to enroll in college and earn a Masters in Forestry degree before returning to the Bureau as a forester.

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Getting to Know Lydia Mills

"With every [Forest Service internship] task, I not only learned new skills, but also had the pleasure of working with amazing people."

This summer I was a Student Conservation Association intern with the Forest Service Heritage program on the Juneau Ranger District in Alaska. Working at the Forest Service was the perfect opportunity to apply my education and life skills in combination with my interests and hobbies.

I am an Alaska Native Tlingit, and grew up living in Juneau, Hoonah, Excursion Inlet, and Falls Creek, Alaska. When not at school, I lived a Tlingit subsistence lifestyle, fishing and hunting while living in remote locations. In high school, I worked at a sockeye weir site in Neva Lake, Excursion Inlet. While there, I became familiar with the Forest Service, and was encouraged to continue onto higher education. I went to Grinnell College in Grinnell, Iowa, where I completed a double major in biology and anthropology while continuing to work at Neva and Kanalku weirs.

Thanks to my Neva weir supervisor's recommendation, during college, I went to Washington D.C. and participated in the Forest Service proposed Planning Rule process. Two years later, I attended a Alaska Tribal Leadership Committee meeting where I presented my anthropology senior thesis about the relationship between Alaskan Natives and the government regarding resource management.

This summer's internship enabled me to divide my time between various Forest Service programs such as Tribal Relations, Heritage, fisheries, biology, and paleoshore-line. My first task was to find interested Tlingit carvers to work on restoring the Yak Te totem pole. Next, I helped in identifying paleomarine deposits in Juneau's mountains and streams in hopes of identifying paleoshore line, which is unknown in Northern Southeast Alaska. I continued my internship with salmon stream restoration, invasive plant removal, culvert and woody debris surveys, and the removal of old Forest Service structures. I enjoyed doing a sockeye survey in Steep Creek, minnow trapping in Davidson Creek, and bird surveys in Prince of Wales. I participated in Tribal consultation meetings, and invited Tribal Entities with ties to the Chugach and Tongass National Forests to the Alaska Tribal Leader Committee. I researched seagull egg island restoration, and compiled materials about Tlingit culture for Forest Service cabins on Admiralty Island. I also participated in a salvage excavation archaeological site, monitored archaeological sites, and helped locate and inventory a reported site. With every task- from Prince of Wales to Yakutat- I not only learned new skills, but also had the pleasure of working with amazing people.

With my varied background and interests, the internship was designed so that I would be able to work for the agency in many capacities. I learned that I would be equally happy working in cultural and applied anthropology, archaeology, or biology. I was lucky to conduct research, both in archives and in labs. My internship was also filled with both field work and quiet days in the office. I hope to continue working for the Forest Service, as I appreciate the versatility of the job and tasks, and enjoyed the agency's conservation mission.

Lydia travels from Yakutat to Juneau, Alaska in a coastal helicopter after surveying the Akew river.

Photo credit: Myra Gilliam

"Just Follow the Laughter"-
Retired Southern Regional Forester Liz Agpaoa Reflects on her Tribal Work

Zuni Pueblo

Photo credit: http://zunitourism.com/downloads/ZuniBrochure.pdf

"Abandon what you know," Liz Agpaoa, outgoing Regional Forester for the Forest Service Southern region, advises staff beginning their work with Tribes. During her long Forest Service career- in New Mexico, Oregon, Oklahoma, Texas, and Georgia- she developed deep ties to many Tribes. She ultimately realized that the best way to build trust is to listen and learn.

As a Forest Supervisor on the Cibola National Forest in New Mexico for six years, Liz found working with the 30 tribes associated with the Forest both thrilling and challenging. Taking in the many cultural nuances, languages, and the landscape, she got to know many tribal members who left deep impressions. She noted that tribal trust with the agency is built on individual relationships, not with the agency itself- important work is done face to face.

During her first meeting with the Hopi and Zuni tribes, she realized that their time was precious, so she focused on what was most of interest to them. This strategy proved fruitful during times when she had to consult with the Tribes on short timelines or on controversial issues. She continued working with tribes in the Southern Region, meeting with tribal leaders annually at the To Bridge A Gap Conference.

Liz actively sought out opportunities to collaborate with Southwestern tribes. For example, the Cibola National Forest partnered with the Zuni on a landscape management project, employing Zuni fire crews for thinning, and incorporated their ideas for design. She also worked with Rio Grande pueblos in watershed restoration initiatives. The combined knowledge was invaluable—"I really enjoyed seeing resource projects through their eyes."

During her last meeting with the Zuni, a confidential tribal origin story was shared with her to show they trusted her. Many of the tribes in the region are matrilineal, so when the Zuni women invited her on a night walk to say goodbye, she knew it was a high honor.

Overall, she greatly appreciated the different tribal perspectives, especially the Elders' perspectives. She explained that the Western world doesn't often appreciate the intangible world- that which can't be measured- but it is so essential to most societies. Elders in many tribal societies are the keepers of this cultural and spiritual knowledge, and are often the decisionmakers. Liz thought that if she could wave a magic wand, she would make it so that Western people, such as Forest Service staff, could better understand and appreciate this viewpoint. She urged the Forest Service to "meet Tribes where they are."

One of her fondest memories working with Tribes was hiking with Zuni firefighters during that landscape restoration project. She remembered the tribal members constantly laughing and joking around. They told her that if she was looking for them, she should "just follow the laughter." Now that Liz is retiring in New Mexico, maybe she will.

"I really enjoyed seeing resource projects through [tribal] eyes."

-Former Southern Regional Forester Liz Agpaoa

The WAYS Program: Teaching Tribal Youth the Wabanaki Way

"Our ancestors would be proud of us learning this today."

- Haley Francis, Tribal WAYS/ Forest Service intern

As some of the first peoples to settle along Maine and Eastern Canada's beautiful rivers, the Wabanaki tribes (Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Maliseet, and Micmac) are very connected to the water. John Neptune, a tribal member and teacher at the Wabanaki Youth Sciences (WAYS) program based at the University of Maine Wabanaki Center, explains that "water is our lifeblood, waterways are our highways." Through internships, a traditional ecological program taught at the Penobscot Nation middle school, and summer Earth Camps, the WAYS program engages tribal youth in the natural sciences alongside traditional ecological knowledge.

In 2013, through funding from the University of Maine, the Forest Service Northern Research Station, along with the National Science Foundation's EPSCoR Program, the WAYS program held its first Earth Camp near the Penobscot Nation reservation. 15 tribal high school students representing all of Maine's tribes worked closely with cultural practitioners, tribal leaders, and University of Maine scientists. Barry Dana, a Penobscot tribal member and former Penobscot chief, oversaw the cultural element, leading activities including using spruce gum to stitch canoes, canoeing down a river, moose calling, and making arrow holders Scientists taught students water ecology and forestry skills such as water sampling and using prisms to measure trees. This year, the Earth Camp (which grew to 30 students and had students from Maine tribes as well as New York tribes) was held on the coast, and with a plant specialist's help, they focused more on seaside medicinal and cultural plants. They also gathered traditional plants along the shore to complement their daily meals.

Some students harnessed skills gained at the Earth Camp for use in another part of the WAYS multipronged program-- internships. With EPSCoR support in 2014, students became paid summer interns at the University of Maine/Forest Service. Laura Kenefic, Forest Service Research Scientist on the agency's Northern Research Station's Penobscot Experimental Forest, hired two Native students. Haley Francis attended the Earth Camp last year and interned this spring with John S. Banks at the Penobscot Nation's Department of Natural Resources. She leveraged her skills identifying non tree species and soils working for the Forest Service and Bethany Munoz, a University of Maine forestry graduate student. Intern Noah Tomah worked with Rick Dionne, a Forest Service forester. As Laura noted about the successful collaboration, "it is extremely important to us at the Forest Service to be part of the community and support the community." Haley is now a University of Maine freshman studying wildlife ecology and forestry. Haley hopes to become a big game wildlife biologist helping to issue moose and deer permits on native lands under Penobscot laws.

The WAYS program also provides a traditional ecological knowledge afterschool program for Penobscot reservation middle school students. tish carr, coordinator of the WaYS program at the University of Maine Wabanaki Center, Barry Dana, John Neptune and the American Indian Science and Engineering Society all help teach students science alongside cultural knowledge. As John Neptune sees it, "modern science was invented to explain what we've always done traditionally," and the challenge is to get students to see the connection and bring them back to their roots.

Darren Ranco, Chair of Native American Programs at the University of Maine, summarized the WAYS program well when he said that it "gives tribal youth the vision to use science for community ends." With a minority of tribal youth going into natural resource careers, the WAYS program serves a key role, and the Forest Service is proud to support its many initiatives. As Haley also reflected, "our ancestors would be proud of us learning this today."

Tribal student Noah Tomah measuring trees as part of his Forest Service summer internship, arranged through the WAYS program.

Photo credit: tish carr, WAYS coordinator

Planning Rule FACA Committee Welcomes Two Native Members

By Jennifer Helwig, Forest Service Planning Specialist

The Forest Service is pleased to introduce two tribal members of the agency Planning Rule Federal Advisory Committee, which provides guidance and recommendations on implementing the 2012 Forest Service Planning Rule. The Committee is comprised of 21 members of geographically and culturally diverse backgrounds, representing a range of public interest in managing our National Forest System lands.

At the Committee meeting this month, we welcome back Mr. William Barquin, Attorney General for the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho. Mr. Barquin says that trying to reach consensus with such a diverse group is definitely a career highlight.

Mr. Barquin became interested in forest planning because many off-reservation treaty resources and religious and sacred sites are located on national forests, making them critical to Native cultures and religions. One way for Tribes and American Indian/Alaska Natives to protect and enhance those resources and sites is through participating in the forest planning process. The new Planning Rule recognizes the tribal importance of the forests and grasslands, and fosters tribal participation in the process.

Mr. Barquin is a proud member of the Kootenai Tribe's Kootenai River Habitat Restoration Program Team. The Team is restoring sections of the Kootenai River to improve the ecosystem and promote the recovery of its resources. In his spare time, Mr. Barquin is often out watching the Portland Timbers Football Club.

We also welcome new Committee member Ms. Angela Sondenaa, Interim Wildlife Director of the Nez Perce Tribe. Ms. Sondenaa actually began her career with the Forest Service on the Nez Perce National Forest, where she worked as a wildlife biologist for a few years before attending graduate school. She is fascinated seeing the challenges of the Forest Service's multiple-use mandate manifested in the forest planning effort, and believes it to be very important to get the balance right.

Over the next two years, Ms. Sondenaa hopes that the Committee can make substantial progress on defining and clarifying the role of monitoring under the current Planning Rule. Gathering appropriate monitoring data is an important feedback loop in an adaptive management approach, and provides a measure of the success of the current management actions in achieving the goals set out in the Forest Plan.

Ms. Sondenaa has a Doctorate in Botany, which she considers one of her highest achievements. She is also an avid horseman, reader, and antique glass collector.

One of the Committee's notable accomplishments thus far is their effort to provide the Forest Service with recommendations on the draft directives for implementation of the 2012 Planning Rule. The Committee also engaged with forests adopting the Rule early to better understand early implementation challenges. Their work has aided the Forest Service in charting a clear path that broadly reflects public input.

With Mr. Barquin's and Ms. Sondenaa's help, the Committee continues to strengthen the agency's commitment to collaboration and public involvement originating in the 2012 Planning Rule.

William Barquin & Angela Sondenaa at the October 2014 Planning Rule FACA Committee Meeting

Photo credit: Jennifer Helwig

All Native Wilderness Youth Corps Launched on Tonto National Forest

By Gregory Hansen- Arizona Conservation Corps, Tribal Programs Coordinator

The Native Corps Crew celebrates with a friend after participating in "Native Corps" Arizona State University Career Development Training.

Photo credit: Gregory Hansen

In February 2014, the Arizona Conservation Corps (AZCC) and the Tonto National Forest launched the first session of the newly developed USDA "Native Corps" Program. Four Native Corps members from five different Southwest Tribes and two professional AZCC Crewleaders inventoried, maintained, and reconstructed trails, conducted Wilderness Character monitoring, completed sign removal and repair, as well as campsite monitoring and restoration in the popular Superstition Wilderness outside Phoenix, Arizona.

In the spirit of the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act , Forest Service Wilderness Program Leader Elwood York brought together agency land stewardship leaders, the Arizona Conservation Corps, and Southwestern Tribes to plan, coordinate, implement, and evaluate this first-ever Native Corps initiative. This program was possible thanks to the generous financial support of the agency's Volunteer Program (Merlene Mazyck) and Tonto National Forest staff Mark Suban, Amy Racki, Gary Hanna, Noni Nez, Scot Rogers, and Sherry Smith.

The Arizona Conservation Corps successfully partnered with the Tonto National Forest and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community to provide pre-program and field trainings. For example, AmeriCorps and the Forest Service taught students about wilderness stewardship and understanding Native connections to wilderness; wilderness character monitoring and campsite restoration; and wilderness trail inventorying.

The Native Corps Crew also enjoyed participating in the Salt River Indian Community's Earth Day Clean-Up Project, serving as positive youth conservation ambassadors for the Forest and Arizona Conservation Corps. Crewmembers also participated in a half-day Career Development Training Day hosted by Arizona State University Career Counselors, where they learned about Federal, State, Tribal, and local agency conservation missions and job opportunities, interviewing skills, resume and cover letter writing skills, and how to effectively search for conservation jobs.

This first Native Corps session lasted seven weeks, and the students worked very well together. As Crewmember Brandon Armendaz noted, "I had a great time on the trails, the crew couldn't have been cooler, and we all got along well and worked very hard together." Tonto National Forest Mesa Ranger District Wilderness Ranger Mark Suban conducted the trails and wilderness character monitoring training and on-site supervision, and was impressed that Native Corps work often exceeded agency wilderness management/trails standards.

Traditional elements were infused into Native Corps trainings and field-work sessions. At the orientation hosted at the Salt River Tribal Offices, local spiritual leader Wayne Marcus of the Akimel O'Odham/Ponca Nations launched the first day with a traditional blessing. Salt River Councilman Ricardo Leonard closed the first day's formal training with an inspiring presentation on "Indian People's Connections to the Land," ending with a traditional O'Odham Blessing Song. The Crewmembers appreciated these reminders of their respective traditional cultures.

With the agency's emphasis on enhancing relations with Native communities and engaging tribal youth, the Native Corps concept hits home-not only does it involve Native youth, it also addresses the agency's most urgent wilderness and conservation stewardship issues such as trail/resource inventory backlog, trail maintenance/reconstruction backlog, getting youth into the woods, and youth-conservation career mentoring. Yet the true value of the Native Corps is the cutting-edge impact the program has had, and hopefully will continue to have, on the future of Native youth.

My First Taste of Alaska

By Rob Harper, Forest Service Director of Watershed, Fish, Wildlife, Air, & Rare Plants

This August, local Forest Service employees gave me a remarkable orientation to Alaska. I developed relationships in communities regionwide, including with leaders from the Tongass and Chugach National Forests and the Pacific Northwest Research Station. I met with federal agencies like the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of the Interior. I also enjoyed meeting a tribal leader, a tribal government official, Alaska Department of Fish and Game staff, southeast Alaska economic development leaders, and non-profit salmon hatchery managers. Here were the primary topics of discussion:

Subsistence: This topic seasoned most conversations. I interacted with rural native subsistence users, learning about how federal programs affect native communities. There is great promise of native community monitoring to inform Federal Subsistence Board decisions. I gained a deeper appreciation for the complexities of subsistence use; including its foundation in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act and its relation to sport and commercial use of fish and wildlife.

Native Communities: I visited the rural tribal village of Hydaburg and met with the Mayor who also serves on the Federal Subsistence Board. I learned firsthand about the socio-economic challenges facing rural Native communities, and we discussed how the Forest Service can leverage our natural resource authorities to address the challenges. Beth Pendleton (Regional Forester), Wayne Owen (Director of Wildlife, Fisheries, Ecology, Watershed, & Subsistence), and Lillian Petershoare (Tribal Relations Program Manager) introduced me to the Central Council for the Tlingit and Haida Tribes of Alaska, and I learned about the Council's relationship with the agency, Alaska Native Corporations, and tribal communities.

Salmon: The presence of salmon and the role of National Forests define the Alaska Region like nothing else, driving almost every natural resource and economic discussion. On both forests, I visited three innovative and skillfully implemented stream restoration projects designed to improve salmon habitat. The demands for subsistence, commercial, and recreational use of salmon are intense, and the role of National Forests in sustaining this most remarkable resource is vital. I left with the sense that climate change will be a significant challenge for salmon and other ocean resources.

Wildlife: On Prince of Wales Island, I learned about wolf conservation and deer habitat. Talking with agency staff from the Tongass National Forest and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, I gained a better sense of perspectives on the petition to list the wolf under the Endangered Species Act. Visiting Pack Creek on Admiralty Island and viewing brown bears fishing for salmon was a treat too, and the site administration is an excellent example of a Forest Service-state partnership.

Tongass Transition: I learned the level of road/timber harvest development on the Tongass National Forest is very small – around 2-3%- and that the Chugach National Forest is about 99% roadless. The purpose and need for projects requiring timber harvest on the Tongass are generally driven by community sustainability, which differs from my experience in the lower 48 states, where most projects are driven by restoration.

Rob and FS colleagues look at pink salmon in the Harris River on the Tongass National Forest, part of a FS/tribal/local restoration. Photo credit: Wayne Owens, Forest Service

Economic Development: I met with the Executive Director of the Juneau Economic Development Council, and heard about their partnership with the agency. It seems that opportunities for Southeast Alaska are likely to come from minerals and hydropower proposals. Visiting the Tongass' Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center, I was impressed with the staff's exceptional hospitality in welcoming thousands of tourists.

My first visit to the Alaska Region was very productive – and safe. I received a safety briefing at most field stops and the aviation safety briefings were consistent. I also appreciated the logistical costs that come from just getting around. Everyone I encountered was friendly, knowledgeable, and patient. I am grateful to those who gave me context to complex issues, and I enjoyed the people, issues, and opportunities of Alaska.

Taiwan Indigenous Peoples: A Forest Service-Fulbright Story

By Alan Watson, Forest Service Research Scientist

After spending the summer in Taiwan as a Fulbright scholar, I am honored to share about the place and its indigenous peoples. My purpose was to work with local, tribal, government, and academic people to understand and raise awareness of the history of territorial disputes and the impacts of resettlement on Taiwan's original peoples. I also sought to learn about their current efforts to achieve self-determination, actions to control non-invited research, and intellectual property protection.

Taiwan is a large island off the coast of China. The Portuguese explorers originally called it "Ilha Formosa," or "Beautiful Island." The island was colonized by the Dutch, Spanish, Chinese, and Japanese. After 18 tribal community meetings, a sustainable development workshop with an island community, meetings with the Taiwanese Forestry Bureau, the Forest Research Institute, and the Council of Indigenous Peoples, with interaction with tourism development interests, I shared my findings at a forum of indigenous groups, academics, and politicians, and am pleased to share them now with you too.

Unfortunately, through colonization and repeated government changes, the 14 recognized indigenous tribes of Taiwan have progressively lost their language, culture, territory, and power. Although in 2005 a national law was passed -The Indigenous Peoples Basic Law, with 35 Articles- to protect "the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples, promoting their subsistence and development and building inter-ethnic relations based on co-existence and prosperity," little implementation has occurred. This inaction is primarily due to the indigenous groups' lack of political power--the tribal groups are spread out and political boundaries discourage local, regional, or national influence. They are working to change that, as well as bring national and international attention to their current inability to influence development and tourism policies.

Through my visits to ancient high mountain villages, I discovered that reconnecting people to traditional territories is a current trend. Community members are returning to re-build houses and communities in areas they gave up many years ago due to government relocation or increasingly severe weather patterns causing landslides and road flooding.

Over half of Taiwan is managed by the Forestry Bureau, so most land disputes involve seeking solutions between this public land management agency and native people. Tourism is increasing to remote parts of Taiwan, with new opportunities and threats to traditional residents. With over half a million people with indigenous connections, these issues are receiving growing local, regional and international attention.

In addition to learning about the local indigenous people and their political situation, I had the opportunity to share my research on American indigenous/tribal issues. I gave three university lectures on Forest Service research with native communities in Alaska, Wyoming, and Montana, as well as explaining about preserving confidentiality in tribal-federal land management agency partnerships.

If you are interested in hearing more about these indigenous people with unique ceremonies, a unique history and a thriving movement to reclaim their identities, please contact me-awatson@fs.fed.us.

Lillies symbolize one Taiwanese indigenous community. Photo credit: Alan Watson

Research and Development Review

Forest Service-Tribal Climate Change Update

- National

This summer, Forest Service Research and Development experts (Chris Farley, Marla Emery, Linda Kruger, Chalonda Jasper, and Chris Swanston) participated in a number of high profile conferences focused on the issue of American Indians and Alaskan and Hawaiian Natives and Climate Change. At the Rising Voices of Indigenous People in Weather and Climate Science II workshop in Boulder, Colorado, the agency helped craft potential options regarding Tribes and native communities for consideration by the White House Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience. At the second First Stewards Symposium in Washington DC, they shared about Forest Service efforts in climate adaptation planning, conservation of culturally important plants and foods, and efforts to learn about our natural resources and environment through traditional knowledge, as well as information on the forthcoming R&D Tribal Engagement Roadmap. These meetings were very useful in creating new partnership opportunities between the agency and Tribes, as well as increasing the visibility of available Forest Service expertise and technical assistance opportunities.

- Regional

The Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station (PNWRS) and the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) have partnered to build Pacific Northwest tribal capacity in developing climate change adaptation plans. The Pacific Northwest Tribal Climate Change Network (the Network) is a collaboration between the University of Oregon, the Forest Service, other federal agencies, and Tribes fostering dialogue about climate change policies and programs. This summer and fall, ITEP, PNWRS and the Network planned and offered a four-part Climate Change webinar series and a two-day Climate Change Adaptation Planning training tailored to the needs and concerns of Pacific Northwest tribes.

Photo credit: www.earthtechling.com

The first webinar, on April 24, 2014, outlined the current science about climate change impacts on fisheries in the Pacific Northwest. The second webinar, on May 21, 2014, covered current climate change science, including sea level rise, ocean acidification, and the effects of rising water temperature on disease processes. The third webinar, on May 27, 2014, focused on invasive species and pests in forest ecosystems. The final webinar, on June 4, 2014, focused on climate change impacts on forests. All of the webinar recordings and presentations also discussed tribal implications, and are available for viewing on the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals' Tribal Climate Change Program webinars webpage.

The Institute of Tribal Environmental Professionals, in collaboration with the Pacific Northwest Research Station, the Network, the interagency North Pacific Landscape Conservation Cooperative, the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, and the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute, also offered a two-day climate change adaptation training on September 2-3, 2014 at the Columbia Commission's office in Portland, Oregon. Tribes learned about Pacific Northwest climate change trends and about a number of sources for climate data for use in their adaptation planning. ITEP's Tribes & Climate Change website includes information on climate change, impacts on tribes, audio files of Elders, and more.

A second webinar series is planned for early 2015. They will focus on next steps in adaptation planning and implementation. The Forest Service and the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals are committed to the ecological, economic, and cultural heritage of indigenous peoples. Increasing tribal capacity to plan and prepare for climate change impacts is a step towards increasing the long-term sustainability of tribal communities.

Getting to Know John Waconda article continued...

Until now, my entire federal career has been with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, with 25 years as a resource manager and administrator. My forester experience includes working as a field forester on timber sales, timber stand improvement, forest development, forest inventory and planning, and fire management. In 1996, I was promoted to the Bureau's Southwest Region's Regional Forester position, and served until 2008. As a Regional Forester, I worked closely with many federal, state, and local community interest organizations, including the Forest Service, to improve and strengthen tribal forest management. I worked closely with the Intertribal Timber Council, and valued the many relationships in this important position. Most recently, I was the Bureau's Superintendent at the Southern Ute Agency in Ignacio, Colorado. This line officer position allowed me to expand my knowledge and experience in other federal trust responsibility areas including energy development (both conventional and renewable); irrigation management; transportation (including road maintenance); and other Bureau non-trust areas such as administration, self-determination, transportation, and tribal government.

I look forward to a new career challenge at the Forest Service. I work directly with the Regional Forester, the Deputy Regional Foresters, and the Regional Leadership Team, which have presented many opportunities. I have always had forestry and forest management in my heart, and this new position allows me to expand my experience, explore new opportunities, and utilize my background- both personal and professional- to contribute a new perspective. It also brings me close to home. I have been pleased to see many of the same collaborative projects and efforts still ongoing from my time at the Bureau of Indian Affairs. I look forward to working closely with regional partners, including Tribes, local governments, and public interest groups, bringing my perspective to this exciting agency.

Safety Corner

Being aware of your surroundings is being

100% SAFE

Regional Round Robin

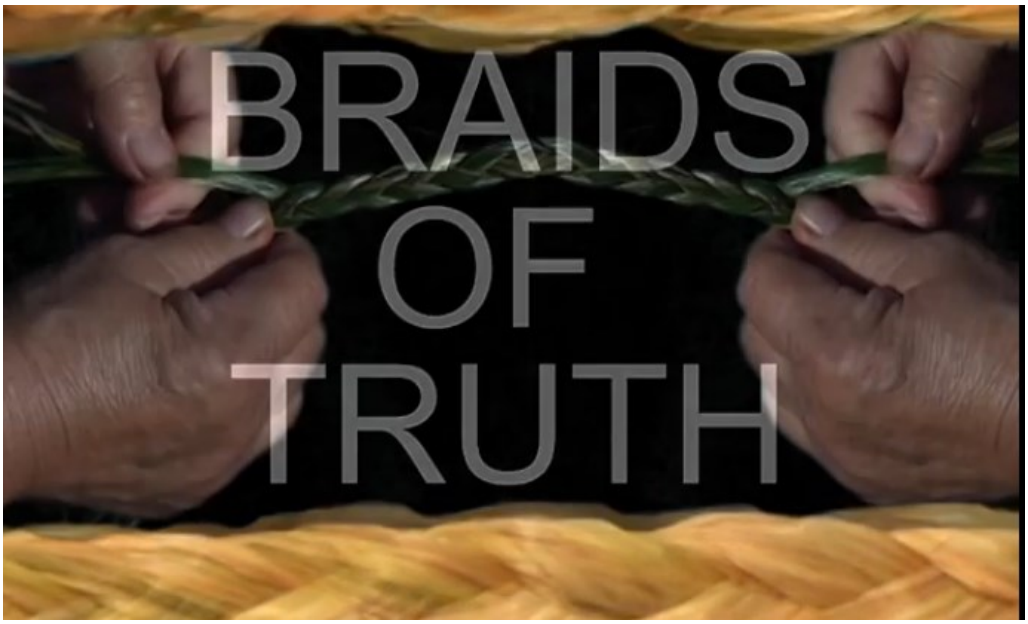
National: Office of Tribal Relations Publishes Tribal Partnership Guide

After two years of Focus Groups and research across the agency, the Forest Service Office of Tribal Relations published a Tribal Guide to Forest Service Grants & Agreements. We hope this will enable Forest Service staff and Tribes to work more effectively and efficiently together. To promote and explain the Guide, the Office hosted three webinars in the Summer of 2014, and you can see the powerpoints used on the Office of Tribal Relations' website.

Northern Region: Forest Service Funds Traditional Ecological Knowledge Program

In 2010, the Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station, the Joint Fire Science Council, the Northern Rockies Fire Science Network, Salish Kootenai College, University of Idaho, University of Washington, and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes sponsored a workshop called "Returning Fire to The Land - Celebrating Traditional Knowledge and Fire." Attendees discussed how fire maintains important landscapes supporting natural and cultural resources.

The Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station then sponsored development of a three part video series by Salish Kootenai College entitled "Braids of Truth." This video series incorporated footage from the 2010 meeting as well as other workshops and interviews with tribal members to cover traditional and scientific aspects of fire and forest management, climate change, and collaboration challenges. These videos have just been published online.



Eastern Region: Forest Service Scientist/Tribal Member Serra Hoagland Honored

How good is research if we can't communicate it?" says Forest Service biological scientist and Laguna Pueblo member Serra Hoagland after taking top honors at Northern Arizona University's (NAU) 3 Minute Research Presentation Project contest. The inaugural event at NAU, where Hoagland is pursuing a PhD in forest science, challenges graduate students to explain their research in plain language in just three minutes. This honing of communication skills results in a better public understanding of research. Hoagland is partnering with the Mescalero Apache Tribe to study the effects of forest treatments on Mexican spotted owls, a threatened species, to develop active management practices that sustain healthy forests as well as owl habitats. –Forest Service's Eastern Forest Environmental Threat Assessment Center

Consultation Corner

USDA Forest Service
Tribal Relations Consultation Schedule
Updated October 15, 2014

Table 1- Schedule of Current and Upcoming Tribal Consultation

Topic	Type	Start Date	End Date
Tribal Relations Directives	Manual and Handbook	June 6, 2013	Open until further notice
Community Forest Program-Proposed Rule	Manual	December 2014	To Be Determined
Bighorn Sheep Management Directives	Manual	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
Invasive Species Management Directives	Handbook	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
Rangeland Management Directives	Manual and Handbook	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
Recreation Site - FSH 2309.13	Handbook	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
Ski Water Rights – FSH 2709.11	Handbook	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
Threatened and Endangered Species (TES) Animal and Plant Habitat Biodiversity Guidance Directives	Manual	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
Wilderness Management Directives	Manual	Delayed	To Be Determined

Table 2 - Completed Tribal Consultation

Topic	Start Date	End Date
Farm Bill Section 8105 (Forest Products for Traditional and Cultural Uses) – Regulation and Directive Revision	April 20, 2010	September 1, 2010
Administrative Appeal Rule – 36 CFR 214	August 11, 2010	January 10, 2011
Wind Energy - Directive	August 25, 2010	February 1, 2011
Planning Rule – Pre-publication of Draft Proposed Rule	September 23, 2010	December 13, 2010
Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program	September 30, 2010	February 20, 2011
Farm Bill Section 8103 (Reburial) - Manual Revision	October 5, 2010	May 31, 2011
Planning Rule – Post-publication of Proposed Rule	December 13, 2010	March 22, 2011
Paleontological Resources Preservation	March 7, 2011	July 13, 2011
Management of National Forest System Surface Resources with Non-Federal Mineral Estates	March 7, 2011	July 13, 2011
National Aerial Application of Fire Retardant Environmental Impact Statement	April 25, 2011	August 25, 2011
National Environmental Policy Act Categorical Exclusions Supporting Landscape Restoration	May 6, 2011	August 31, 2011
Burned Area Emergency Response - Manual Revision	May 24, 2011	October 7, 2011
Planning Rule (120 days prior to estimated date of Final Rule)	July 14, 2011	November 14, 2011
Sacred Sites (Draft Report to the Secretary of Agriculture)	July 2011	November 2011
Small Business Timber Sale Set-Aside Program - Policy Directive	February 1, 2012	May 31, 2012
Objection Process Consultation, Revision of Regulations at 36 CFR 218	April 2, 2012	September 7, 2012
Planning Rule Directives	February 27, 2013	June 28, 2013
Paleontological Resources Preservation	May 23, 2013	July 22, 2013
Fire and Aviation Management Directives	June 6, 2013	October 6, 2013
Special Forest Products	June 6, 2013	October 6, 2013
Solar Energy Directives	December 4, 2013	April 4, 2014
Heritage Program Directive	December 4, 2013	April 4, 2014
Commercial Filming Interim Directive	December 4, 2013	April 4, 2014
National Forest System (NFS) Bundled Tribal Consultation	December 4, 2013	April 4, 2014
Research and Development's Tribal Engagement Roadmap	January 10, 2014	May 11, 2014
Groundwater Resource Management – FSM 2560	May 6, 2014	October 3, 2014

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Editor's Note

I would like to thank everyone for their valuable contributions to this newsletter, including those in the OTR.

Please feel free to contact me with any comments or story suggestions at 202 306 5121 or marieljmurray@fs.fed.us.