



Tribal Relations News

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Director's Welcome

The USDA and the Forest Service (FS) are in an ongoing quest to work better with Tribes and traditional practitioners to protect Indian sacred sites. At Secretary Vilsack's request, we gathered information through over 100 meetings and consultations with Tribal members. We also took public comments and conducted agency employee surveys. That information resulted in a [Sacred Sites Report](#). The Secretary accepted the Report and its recommendations. Now implementation begins. Read more in our first story.

The FS has made significant strides in recognizing sacred sites. For example, at the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood centennial convention, Regional Forester Beth Pendleton continued the healing journey following FS acknowledgement of removal of subsistence smokehouses last century.

The FS also recognizes the community benefits of helping Tribes protect their forests. We happily report about two [Community Forestry Grants](#) awarded to Tribes. Read about how one- the [Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians](#)- will be able to protect their treasured Hall Mountain in North Carolina.

The story on the sacred black

ash tree shows how the FS partners with Tribes to protect many culturally important species. Here, the FS collaborated with local stakeholders, including the [Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance](#) and the northeastern Wabanaki Tribes, to mitigate the invasion of the Emerald Ash Borer.

In the R&D section, read about how the FS' [Forest Inventory and Analysis \(FIA\)](#) team has been working with the [Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission \(GLIFWC\)](#) to document traditional ecological knowledge and inventory birch trees.

As part of OTR's effort to better connect with FS and tribal partners, Ericka Luna

met with Tribes and FS staff in Region 4.

We acknowledge many successes: a [new agreement](#) with 11 Ojibwe Tribes, a Chief's Award to a Tribal partnership in the Southwest, and a Southern Regional Award to a [Caddo Nation](#) partnership. We also highlight the awards I made at the OTR's Native American Heritage Month reception, including leadership awards to the Sacred Sites Executive Team and a Lifetime Achievement Award to former Deputy Chief Joel Holtrop.

We look forward to continuing our journey with Tribes.

-Fred Clark



The OTR Director Fred Clark giving the OTR Tribal Awards in November 2012.

Photo credit: Mariel Murray

Getting to Know Jim Hubbard

During Native American Heritage Month every year, the OTR honors people for their accomplishments in building, maintaining, or enhancing relationships with Tribes. Fred Clark, the Director of the OTR, presented the “Leadership in Tribal Relations Award” to the Executive Team that oversaw the development of the [Sacred Sites Report](#). Jim Hubbard, Forest Service Deputy Chief of State & Private Forestry, was a member of that team, and his award was well-deserved.

Working as a state forester in Colorado, and then as director of the Office of Wildland Fire Coordination with the Department of the Interior, Jim has spent years working with Tribes in various capacities. He also took a Federal Indian Law course at Fred Clark’s suggestion. It was not until he served on the Executive Team and helped craft the Sacred Sites Report, however, that he truly appreciated tribal culture. Through participation in listening sessions nationwide, he began to understand the magnitude of the topic of sacred sites. “It’s much more than just a sacred site,” he explained, “It’s more than just the land—the meaning is fundamental to Tribes.”

These tribal values are what Jim hopes Forest Service (FS) line officers will begin to become aware of through reading and implementing the Report. He envisions that line officers “will take time to understand the tribal, spiritual values of a place when making decisions; that they will capture the truth in that decision-space that they have.” He added that with the appropriate legal training coupled with cultural awareness, line officers will be able to help the FS balance national and local interests: “the Report’s success lies with how the line officers implement the recommendations.”

While Jim is confident in line officers, he acknowledged that the FS still has a long way to go in improving its protection of sacred sites. “The Report is the beginning, not the answer,” he said. Jim was impressed with how respectful Tribes were during listening sessions, and looks forward to continuing to work closely with them during the implementation of the Report.



“It’s much more than just a sacred site, it’s more than just the land—the meaning is fundamental to Tribes.”

Update on Protecting Sacred Sites

At the 2012 [White House Tribal Nations Conference](#) held on December 5, 2012, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the release of the USDA [Sacred Sites Report](#). “American Indian and Alaska Native values and culture have made our nation rich in spirit and deserve to be honored and respected,” he said.

In July 2010, Secretary Vilsack directed the [USDA Office of Tribal Relations](#) and the Forest Service (FS) to work together and consult with tribes to provide recommendations for improving sacred site protection. A team compiled comments from listening sessions with tribes, conducted a legal review, and developed recommendations to include in a *Draft Report*. After tribal consultation and public review of the *Draft Report*, the current version of the *Sacred Sites Report* was prepared for final clearance and submittal to the Secretary.

The final report reflects infor-

mation received through more than 100 meetings with Tribal members, public comments, and agency employee surveys. It includes recommendations about relationships, direction/policy, and on-the-ground protection to help USDA better address sacred sites issues.

The commitment to improve the protection of Indian sacred sites is not unique to USDA or the FS. Also on December 6, 2012, Secretary Vilsack joined cabinet Secretaries from the Departments of Defense, Energy and Interior, and the Chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in signing a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) to improve the protection of Indian sacred sites through enhanced and improved interdepartmental coordination and collaboration. Along with USDA, the FS Office of Tribal Relations serves as a key partner in an interdepartmental working group developing an action plan to implement the MOU.

The FS has been successfully working with Tribes to protect sacred sites in various ways. For example, in August 2012, the [Six Rivers](#) and [Klamath National Forest](#) in California signed an MOU with the [Karuk Tribe](#) to manage

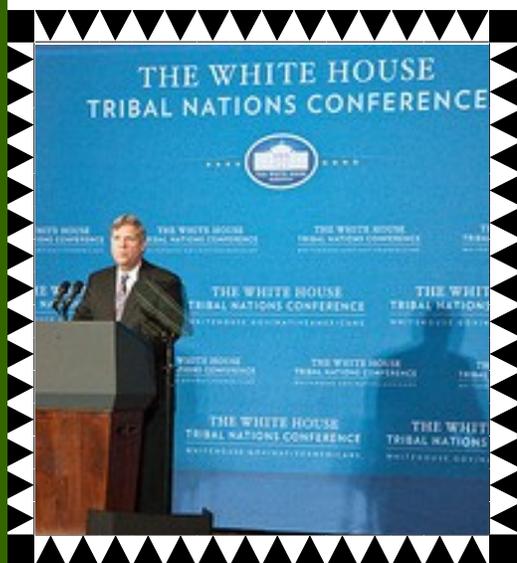
Katimiin Thivthaam, a Karuk sacred site where the Tribe holds annual ceremonies. The MOU created the Katimiin Cultural Management Area, allowing the Tribe to use traditional land management techniques.

Many people worked to create the successful MOU. The Six Rivers National Forest District Ranger Nolan Colegrove and Forest Supervisor Tyrone Kelley led the development of the agreement for the FS. Merv George, the Region 5 Tribal Relations Program Manager at the time and current Deputy Forest Supervisor for the same forest, was also involved. A member of the Hoopa Tribe himself, he claimed that the MOU is “paying huge dividends” in bringing the Tribe and the FS together. Similarly, Robert Goodwin, Self-Governance Coordinator for the Karuk Tribe at the time and current Region 5 Tribal Relations Program Manager, spearheaded the MOU effort. He says that the draft Sacred Sites Report was instrumental in garnering support for the MOU, and believes the final Report offers promise for more FS-tribal collaboration.

Overall, the FS and USDA will use the Sacred Sites Report to continue to resolve, clarify, and strengthen the protection of Indian sacred sites.

“American Indian and Alaska Native values and culture have made our nation rich in spirit and deserve to be honored and respected”

-Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack

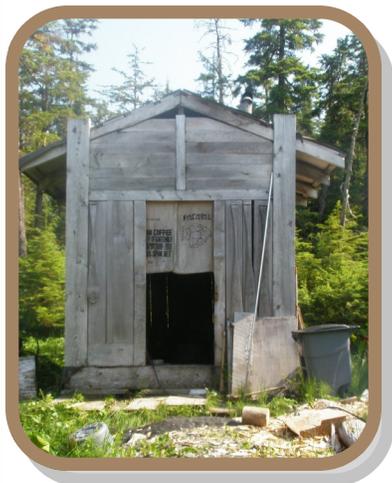


Secretary Vilsack announcing the Sacred Sites Report at the 2012 White House Tribal Nations Conference.

Photo credit: Bob Nichols

Engaging Tribal Partners at the Alaska Native Brotherhood Centennial Convention

By Lillian Petershoare & Kevin McIver



Michael Beasley's smokehouse

Photo credit: unknown

The Alaska Native Brotherhood (ANB) and the Alaska Native Sisterhood held their gala centennial convention on Oct. 4, 2012, in Sitka, Alaska. Among its accomplishments, the ANB successfully championed the aboriginal land claims of Southeast Alaska Natives and an anti-discrimination law that passed the Alaska Legislature; improved working conditions; and promoted Alaska Natives' right to vote as citizens and participate in the government of Alaska.

Convention highlights included remarks by Forest Service (FS) Regional Forester Beth Pendleton and Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Tribes of Alaska President Edward K. Thomas, who discussed the continued healing journey following the FS' removal of smokehouses in the mid-20th century. The OTR Director Fred Clark was pleased to attend and commemorate the occasion by donating \$2000 to rebuild the smokehouses.

During the convention, Elder and Kaagwaantaan clan leader Nels Lawson, a retired FS

employee, and Kiksadi youth leader Vanessa Morales proudly carried the raven and eagle acknowledgement staffs presented by the FS to the Central Council in 2010. The Kiksadi clan escorted them into the hall with traditional drumming and singing.

Pendleton's remarks stressed the importance of partnerships with the Southeast Alaska Tribes, exploring more shared stewardship opportunities, and called the Tongass National Forest

a "A Native Place." Also speaking was Alaska Tribal Leaders Committee Tribal Delegate Richard Peterson who discussed the importance of the committee and government-to-government relationships.

As part of the week's activities, Kathy Kolkhorst Ruddy and Ishmael Hope also presented ANB history to FS Sitka Ranger District employees.

It is through continued engagement with our Tribal partners that we pave the way for continued success as an agency.



Vanessa Morales, Edward K. Thomas, Beth Pendleton, Fred Clark, and Nels Lawson.

Photo credit: Clint Scott

Eastern Band of Cherokee Get CFP Grant for Special Place

Many Forest Service (FS) programs can be used to protect traditional and sacred places while also serving the FS mission of maintaining our nation's forests. The Farm Bill, or Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-234), authorizes the [Community Forestry and Open Space Conservation Program \(CFP\)](#). The CFP allows the FS to award federal financial assistance (grants) to Indian Tribes, local governments, and qualified nonprofit entities to "acquire and establish community forests that provide continuing and accessible community benefits." The Community Forest Program is a priority of the President's America's Great Outdoors initiative, which promotes community green spaces.

On August 28, 2012, the FS announced the ten grant winners, including two Indian Tribes. Their projects truly encapsulated the environmental and economic

benefits of community forestry. One grant went to the [Kalispel Tribe of Indians](#) to protect critical habitat. The other was awarded to the [Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians \(EBCI\)](#), and will empower them to protect their natural and cultural heritage. The \$300,000 grant enables the Tribe to purchase forestland on Hall Mountain, a site of great cultural significance to the Tribe. The grant matched an equal amount allocated by the tribal council for the purchase.

Hall Mountain overlooks Cowee Mound, an important diplomatic and commercial center for the Eastern Band of Cherokee before they were removed to Oklahoma. EBCI will purchase the forestland from the [Land Trust for the Little Tennessee \(LTLT\)](#), which works to protect the natural and cultural heritage of the Upper Little Tennessee and Hiwassee River Basins. LTLT has been trying to get both Hall Mountain and the Cowee Mound protected, and has

already given the Mound back to the Tribe.

The Community Forest on Hall Mountain will be used as a demonstration forest for education, enhancing artisan woodland resources traditionally used by Cherokee people (such as white oak for baskets), and restoring holly trees. Wood from the holly tree was one of seven sacred woods used in a sacred fire atop the mountain. Additionally, the Tribe will ensure public access to the forest (a CFP requirement) by building scenic trails.

Hopefully this type of project is one of many more to come that simultaneously helps to protect America's natural and cultural heritage.

For more information, please refer to the FS [Community Forest Program](#) website.



Principal Chief Michell Hicks (center) and the Warriors of Anikituha in front of Hall Mountain at the 2007 celebration of Cowee Mound being returned to Cherokee ownership .

*Photo credit:
Ralph Preston*

“The tree goes to the heart of our culture.”

Theresa Secord, Executive Director of the Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance

The Wabanaki Tribes, or “people of the dawn,” from the Northeastern US, comprise five Tribes: the Micmac, Maliseet, Passamaquoddy, Abenaki, and Penobscot. One of their creation stories reveals that when the culture hero Gluskabe shot an arrow into the black ash tree, the first people – the Wabanaki – emerged from the tree singing and dancing.

Black ash is not only sacred because of its role in creation, it is also important culturally because of its use in traditional basketmaking. As Theresa Secord, Executive Director of the Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance (MIBA) says, “the tree goes to the heart of our culture.” It is also called *wikepi*, or basket tree. MIBA strives to preserve their ancient art of ash basketry.

Unfortunately, the Wabanaki connection to black ash is threatened by the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), an invasive beetle which has devastated the mid-Atlantic and Great Lakes regions. Anticipating the impact EAB will have when established in Maine, Darren Ranco, a Penobscot Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Maine (UMaine), and a member of the University’s Sustainability Solutions Initiative (SSI), began working with MIBA to address the tribal basketmakers’ concerns. SSI is partly funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation’s Experimental Program to Stimulate

Protecting Maine’s Sacred Black Ash Trees

Competitive Research (EPSCoR). UMaine, with support from SSI Project Director David Hart, granted the investigative team money to get started in 2009. In 2011, the team got help when state partner Dave Struble of the Maine Forest Service was awarded Forest Service (FS) Northeastern Area S&PF funds as part of a multi-state effort to improve EAB monitoring, outreach and preparedness activities. That grant complements the Team’s ongoing work and, in part, fosters collaboration between the FS – through liaison Nathan Siegert –and the MIBA and Tribes in mapping and sharing traditional ecological knowledge.

This partnership also revived a 20-year-old multi-agency Ash Task Force, which today includes the FS, Maine FS, APHIS, MIBA, UMaine and Tribes. The reactivated Task Force is working to develop an EAB preparedness and response plan, and drafting an

MOU to improve communication among partners, and facilitate survey and management of EAB when it is eventually detected in Maine.

The FS also aided MIBA in its ash basketry marketing and entrepreneurship training efforts by partially funding a Wood Education and Resource Center (WERC) authorized project in 2011. The grant helps MIBA in its efforts to provide more sustainable economic opportunity for ash basketmakers.

In the face of adversity, MIBA and other tribal, local, and federal stakeholders have created what Darren terms “a cross-cultural forestry assessment tool to enable native people to protect this cultural keystone species.” The combination of FS and NSF funding is also a great example of inter-agency cooperation at the federal level. The FS is proud to be part of this groundbreaking initiative.



Richard Silliboy (Micmac) looks for Emerald Ash Borer in a black ash log during a visit to the APHIS lab in Michigan in 2010

Photo credit: Darren Ranco

“I’m working from beginning to end with people that are members of the tribal community, who understand what traditional ecological knowledge is and value it.”

*Marla Emery,
Forest Service
Northern Re-
search Station*

Research & Development Corner

GLIFWC & Forest Service Preserve the Birch Tree

Paper Birch is an extremely important species to the Great Lake Ojibwe Tribe. Traditionally, the Tribe uses many parts of the tree; for example, the bark known as “wiigwaas” is used to craft canoes, baskets, and paper on which stories and images are etched. The fungus that grows on birch is also used in lighting fires. Knowledge about the Paper Birch tree and its uses are part of oral tradition passed through the generations. When Tribal gatherers in the Great Lakes region started noticing declines in ideal Paper Birch trees, they began to express concern.

In 1998, a Memorandum of understanding (MOU) ratified by nine [Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission \(GLIFWC\)](#) member Tribes and the Forest Service (FS) recognized the Tribal reserved harvesting rights on the National Forests within the Ceded Territories. These pertain to hunting, trapping, fishing, and the gathering of wild plants. The FS and the GLIFWC member tribes meet annually to discuss any questions or concerns regarding the MOU, as well as general concerns on forest conditions. It was in this forum that the Tribes and the FS discussed investigating the status of Paper Birch within the Ceded Territories.

GLIFWC worked closely with Tribal gatherers and with the FS Northern Research Station staff to combine Tribal Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) with modern scientific inventory techniques to design a Paper Birch-specific field inventory guide. This guide was supplied to the [Forest Inventory and Analysis \(FIA\)](#) team, and was incorporated into the existing FIA protocol to assess the supply and quality of Paper Birch within the Ceded Territories. As GLIFWC Forest Ecologist Alexandra Wrobel noted, “this research was important in learning about the Paper Birch we already have, and how we can work to preserve the species for future harvests.”

Projects like this can serve as a model for forest restoration and inventory efforts incorporating both TEK and Western Science, and will hopefully inspire future cooperative efforts. As Marla Emery, researcher at the Northern Research Station, noted, “I’m working from beginning to end with people that are members of the tribal community, who understand what TEK is and value it.”

This collaboration is just one example of successful intergovernmental cooperation between the federal government and Tribes. The FS and many Tribes have the goal of routinely incorporating TEK when making management decisions that help the FS achieve its mission of caring for the land and serving people.



Jeff Savage, Chippewa artist, harvesting birch bark.

Photo credit: GLIFWC

Regional Round Robin

Southwestern Region: Tribal Partners get Chief's Award

For the 2012 Chief's Awards, Chief Tom Tidwell gave the Cultural Transformation award to Ian Fox, the Timber Management Officer for the Cibola National Forest in Region 3, and Bill Ferranti from the Alamo Navajo School Board. They successfully

partnered to establish Alamo Navajo thinning crews to help restore grasslands from invaded woody species. It has set a model for the area's crew work, and is helping alleviate the 70% unemployment rate.

Northeastern Region: New FS-Tribal agreement

In November 2012, the [Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa \(LdF\)](#) began operation under a [new agreement](#) with the Parks Falls Ranger District, [Chequamegon-Nicolet NF](#). The agreement implements the [2012 amendments to the Forest Service 1998 MOU](#) with 11 Ojibwe

Tribes. Through this agreement, District Ranger Bob Hennes was able to provide the LdF Indian community with a firewood cutting area on the District, adjacent to the Reservation. A small ceremony was held on-site, which included both LdF members and the Forest Service.

WO: OTR Awards Reception

During Native American Heritage Month every year, the OTR honors people for their accomplishments in building, maintaining, or enhancing relationships with Tribes. Fred Clark, the Director of the OTR, presented awards at a reception on November 1st. Joel Holtrop, former Deputy Chief, received the Lifetime Achievement in Tribal Relations

Award. The Executive Team that oversaw the [Sacred Sites Report](#) received Leadership in Tribal Relations Awards. The Executive Team includes Jim Hubbard, Janie Hipp, Joel Holthrop, Faye Kruger, Corbin Newman, and Leslie Weldon. Native American food and drinks were enjoyed by all following the presentations.

Southeastern Region: R8 awards Caddo Nation

This November, the Forest Service (FS) Southern Region presented the Regional Forester's "Partners/Community Engagement" Award to the [Caddo Nation](#) Heritage Paraprofessional Crew and several FS Heritage personnel. The FS and the Caddo Nation joined forces to conduct investigations to identify heritage sites on Texas national

forests, which is tribal ancestral land. Daniel Cain, archaeologist on the [Kisatchie National Forest](#), then hired the same crew. The Caddo shared their culture with the Forest Service, and in turn were able to hone their skills as archeological assistants.

Read more at the [USDA blog](#).



Scott Smith, a Lac du Flambeau tribal member, cuts a tree marked for firewood on the Chequamegon-Nicolet NF as a result of the new agreement.



Daniel Cain (USFS), Gary Parker (Crew Boss), William Quoetone, Michael Williams, Lance Ware, Brent Cozad, Randy Cozad

Photo credit: Daniel Cain



Consultation Corner

USDA Forest Service
Tribal Relations Consultation Schedules
Updated October 2, 2012

Table 1- Schedule of Current and Upcoming Tribal Consultation

Consultation Topic	Start Date	End Date
Wilderness Management – Manual Revision	Delayed	To Be Determined
Bighorn Sheep Management Directive	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
Objection Process Consultation, Revision of Regulations at 36 CFR 218	Postponed	Postponed
Threatened and Endangered Species (TES) Animal and Plant Habitat Biodiversity Guidance	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
Invasive Species Management - Handbook Revision	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
FSM 2309.13 Recreation Site Handbook	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
Groundwater Resource Management (Draft of new manual – FSM 2560)	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
Paleontological Resources Preservation	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
Planning Rule Directives	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
Rangeland Management – FSM / FSH Revision	To Be Determined	To Be Determined

Table 2 - Completed Tribal Consultation

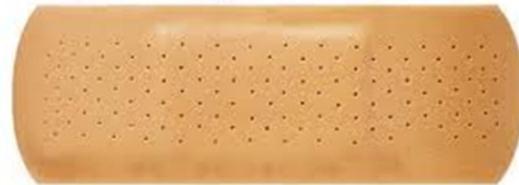
Consultation Topic	Start Date	End Date
Farm Bill Section 8105 (Forest Products for Traditional and Cultural Uses) – Regulation and Directive Revision	April 20, 2010	September 1, 2010
Administrative Appeal Rule – 36 CFR 214	August 11, 2010	January 10, 2011
Wind Energy - Directive	August 25, 2010	February 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 – Proposed Policy Directive	February 1, 2012	May 31, 2012

NOTE: There are no updates since October.

Safety First



I got my FLU Shot.



Have you?

Region 1&4 Mini-Detail

For two weeks in September 2012, the OTR Policy Analyst Erika Luna completed a mini-detail in the Northern and Intermountain Regions (R1 and R4), shadowing regional Tribal Relations Program Manager Cheryl Vanderburg. The complexity of the two regions, with the interests of over 80 tribes, provided Ericka a glimpse of local FS work, and the connection between the regional, forest and district staffs.

Ericka spent time with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes' Natural Resources and Forestry Departments. Ericka and Cheryl also met with FS Tribal Liaison Christine Bradbury in R1 to experience the Nez Perce Trail, and attended a Nez Perce Tribal General Council meeting. During this special meeting, Ericka met with Chairman Silas Whitman and Vice-Chairman Brooklyn Baptiste. Ericka also met Tribal department managers and staff from Finance, Fisheries, Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, Environmental Restoration, Forest Management and the Office of Legal Counsel.

On the FS side, Ericka enjoyed the Regional Foresters and Directors Staff Meeting. Cheryl also gave Ericka a taste of daily work with visits to the Lolo and Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, and the Aerial Fire Depot, which included the Smokejumper Training Center, Visitor Center and Fire Cache. Ericka also had time to visit the Interagency Fire Science Laboratory and the National Weather Service.

Previously, Ericka had only worked in the field once- on a Forest Inventory Analysis Crew- so this experience was invaluable. Despite visiting during the height of fire season, everyone took the time to teach her about their jobs and show her projects. Ericka added, "I got some great advice on both the field and Tribes' perspective on working with the Washington Office." Ericka is thankful for this opportunity, and appreciates Cheryl's guidance.



Salish Kootenai College fire compound hosts a partnership between the Tribe, FS, and BIA.

Photo credit: Ericka Luna

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Editor's Note



I feel truly honored to have learned so much about sacred sites, ceremonies, and objects in the process of writing this newsletter. We hope to help protect these traditions forever.

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