



**OFFICE OF TRIBAL
RELATIONS**
U.S. FOREST SERVICE
TRIBAL RELATIONS PROGRAM

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Tribal Relations News

Director’s Welcome

It is an honor for the Forest Service to provide goods and services to tribes and their constituent communities. We are providing these things in many new and unique ways, all over the country. In the Pacific Southwest Region, Tribal elders and community members constructed the Wahhoga Ceremonial Roundhouse in Yosemite National Park using logs from the Groveland District in the Stanislaus National Forest. Forest Service logs, National Park Service lands, tribal purposes. What a great trio. In the Southern Region, a Caddo elder and his apprentice framed a Caddo Grass House at the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site using pine poles harvested from the Davy Crockett National Forest.

We continue to support activities that include Native youth. In the Southwest Region, the White Mountain Apache Tribe partnered with the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest and the Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission to engage six Apache Tribal youth in an eight-week experiential program. The youth took part in many different activities, including conservation education, wildlife management, fishery surveys and population monitoring, and forest and range management. Also in the Southwest Region, the Tonto National Forest is once again hosting a Native American crew associated with the Arizona Conservation Corps in partnership with the Salt River Pima/Maricopa, Gila River Pima, Navajo, Hopi, White Mountain, and San Carlos Apache Nations to accomplish priority projects on National Forest lands, such as working on wilderness trails.

It is always a pleasure to introduce people to recent additions, or in this case a change in jobs, to the Forest Service Tribal Relations Program. Wade McMaster is the new Tribal Relations Program Manager for the Pacific Southwest Region. We congratulate Wade and appreciate his extensive and valuable background, as well as his wonderful and collaborative attitude.

We also appreciate the important contributions and dedication to tribal relations of the remarkable individuals who retired in 2016, including Grace Newell-Jones (Intermountain Region); Maria T. Garcia and Robin Poe (Southwest Region); Dirk Charley and Mike Turek (Pacific Southwest Region); Teresa Williamson (Southern Region); and Mike Conner and Larry Heady (Eastern Region). Thank you.

We are always searching for new ways to further enhance and strengthen the valuable working relationships between the Forest Service and tribes. That is what, in one of her last official acts, former Santa Fe National Forest Supervisor Maria T. Garcia accomplished with former Jemez Pueblo Governor David Yepa when they signed a renewed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) designed to foster the relationship the Forest has built with the Pueblo of Jemez.

The Forest Service's work with Tribes is enhanced by our interagency partnerships. As part of the supporting staff to the interagency Sacred Sites MOU, the Forest Service helped create a comprehensive online video training module for federal employees and contractors. Finalized in fall 2016, the training video is available through the Department of Justice web site.

Thanks for reading the Forest Service Tribal Relations Newsletter. These newsletters are small samples of the great work going on all around the country, a glimpse into our always-improving relationships and always-expanding range of activities of mutual benefit. At the heart of our work, we continue to ***Support Sovereignty Through Shared Stewardship.***

--Fred--

Stanislaus National Forest Provides Incense Cedar and Black Oak Trees for Construction of Wahhoga Ceremonial Roundhouse at Yosemite National Park

Angela Aleiss, U.S. Forest Service Volunteer

On a sunny December morning, six members of California's Native communities gathered around the ceremonial fire beneath the massive granite backdrop of Eagle Rock in Yosemite National Park.

As the group passed around tobacco and white sage, they celebrated the "rebuilding" of a traditional ceremonial roundhouse, a large semi-subterranean assembly at the center of Miwok ceremonial and social life. Construction actually began in 2009, but various delays prevented the structure's completion until this year.

Now, eight years later, the Forest Service will offer its resources to local tribal communities for the construction of the Wahhoga Ceremonial Roundhouse, as the project is known.

The plan for a traditional roundhouse dates back to the 1980 Yosemite National Park General Management Plan, which provided for a roundhouse to be situated at the prehistoric and historic Wahhoga Village site in Yosemite Valley.



Members of California's Native communities share stories and prayers over the ceremonial fire in Yosemite Valley. From left: Tony Brochini, Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation; Rollie and Sena Fillmore, Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians; Les James (partially visible), Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation; and Dirk Charley, Dunlap Band of Mono Indians. Photo credit to Forest Service volunteer Angela Aleiss.

The Wahhoga Ceremonial Roundhouse is one of many traditional structures within the National Park System. But Tribal elder Les James, a member of the nonprofit Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation in Central California (also known as the American Indian Council of Mariposa County, Inc.), says the roundhouse project at Yosemite is unique. "No Tribe in the National Park System is building a roundhouse in the Park [System]. The Forest Service is gracious enough to allow us to use their logs," James added.

Those logs will come from the Groveland District in the nearby Stanislaus National Forest, which borders the north rim of Yosemite National Park. The National Park Service has strict policies for removal of trees, so the Forest Service is providing a variety of their own standing trees. The Tribe has secured a Forest Products Free-Use Permit to take the trees. Eventually, the Tribe will cut down the incense cedar and black oak trees and haul them out.



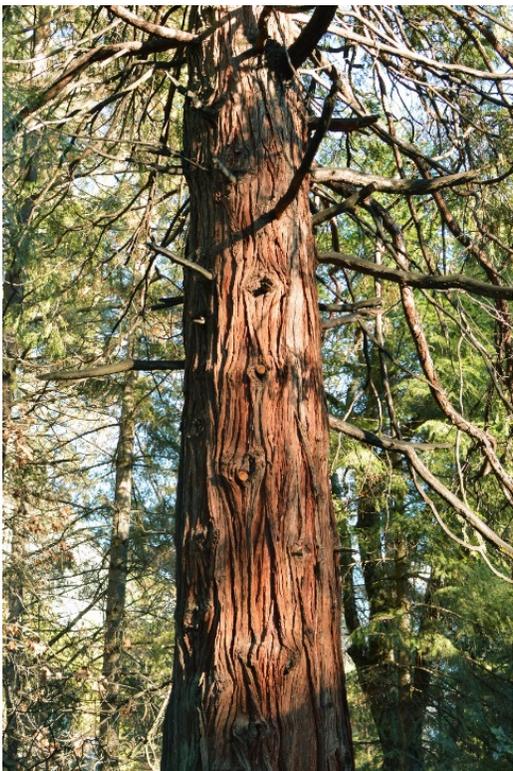
Six members of California's Native communities pose for a group photo in Yosemite Valley. From left: Les James, Rollie Fillmore, Sena Fillmore, Bill Tucker, Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation; Dirk Charley, and Tony Brochini (Tribal affiliations are in above caption with Bill Tucker added). Photo credit to Forest Service volunteer Angela Aleiss.

"We have a great respect and working relationship with all of the local Tribes," said Groveland District Ranger Jim Junette. "To me, it is an honor for them to come to our forest to gather materials for an important part of their heritage."

The Wahhoga Ceremonial Roundhouse will be approximately 30 feet in diameter with a base six to seven feet deep. Cedar poles from Stanislaus National Forest will be used to support a roof in the form of a low cone covered with cedar bark. The roundhouse will include four medicine poles made from black oak trees from Stanislaus. The sacred medicine poles will surround an interior fire pit.

"The roundhouse will have a smoke hole in the center so smoke from the fire will go out," explained Rollie Fillmore, a Tribal elder from the Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians. Fillmore is constructing the roundhouse according to traditional ways passed down by his ancestors.

Below: Incense cedar poles are secured with grapevines and topped with cedar bark to construct the roundhouse. The cedar wood contains a substance that retards decay and repels moths, and the trees are drought tolerant. Photo from the Indian Village of the Ahwahnee in Yosemite National Park. Photo credit to Forest Service volunteer Angela Aleiss.



Incense cedar poles, mostly obtained from Yosemite National Park tree removal operations, were to be used for the Wahhoga Ceremonial Roundhouse before construction stopped. The poles will need to be replaced. Photo credit to Forest Service volunteer Angela Aleiss.

Park safety codes require that the roundhouse have two entrances, one front and one back (traditionally, a roundhouse had only one entrance). The structure must face east to catch the rising sun.

Dirk Charley, former Tribal Relations Specialist for the Sequoia and Sierra National Forests, says that the roundhouse is crucial for passing along the traditions and culture to future generations.

"You've gotta educate the young ones so they can tell the stories. We're missing that as a people," he said.

The Wahhoga Ceremonial Roundhouse is scheduled for completion by late summer of 2017.

Right: Reconstructed Roundhouse and California Historical Landmark at Indian Grinding Rock State Historic Park, Chaw'se Regional Indian Museum. Photograph provided by Lee M. Eal, Curator, courtesy of California State Historic Parks.



Pine Poles Harvested from Davy Crockett National Forest Frame Caddo Grass House

Over 19 days during the summer of 2016 (June 22 – July 17), and with the labor of 72 volunteers (for a total of approximately 2000 volunteer hours), Caddo Elder Phil Cross and his apprentice Chad Earles raised a traditional Caddo grass house at the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site (SHS). Planning for the construction of the grass house began more than four years prior. Within three months of the beginning of his tenure at the Caddo Mounds SHS, current Site Manager Anthony C. Souther, first met with Caddo Elder Phil Cross in April 2012 to gauge his interest in supervising/advising the building of a Caddo grass house at Caddo Mounds. Caddo Mounds has now partnered with the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma to host a house celebration ceremony scheduled for April 8, 2017.

In addition to the Caddo Mounds SHS administered by the Texas Historical Commission, partners included Caddo Mounds staff; Caddo Elder Phil Cross, his apprentice Chad Earles, and the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma; the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site Friends Association, Inc.; Friends of the Texas Historical Commission; The Summerlee Foundation; TIDES Foundation – MICA Group; the Texas Historical Foundation; Humanities Texas, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities; the Cherokee County Historical Commission; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; USDA Forest Service (Davy Crockett National Forest); and numerous volunteers and donors from the local community, including youth from the Davy Crockett Youth Conservation Corps and American YouthWorks.

The grass house measures 25 feet in diameter and 21 feet in height. From archaeological investigations at the site we know that the average structure diameter was between 30 and 40 feet, with some as large as 60 feet. Magnetometer surveys have identified the archaeological remains of more than 100 structure locations at the Caddo Mounds site. The larger structures have been interpreted to have functioned as council or ceremonial structures, with the smaller ones serving as dwellings. According to Souther, a grass house the size of the newly constructed one most likely would have housed one family.

The interior would have been furnished with five or six raised beds that could have accommodated 10 to 12

individuals. Food and other items would have been stored on wooden racks. Souther points out that Spanish and French accounts indicate that the larger structures with partitions of hides or cane mats could have housed



Caddo Grass House at Caddo Mounds State Historic Site. Image provided by Anthony Souther, Site Manager, courtesy of the Texas Historical Commission.

multiple families. The Caddo traced descent through the maternal line, so the families sharing a larger house may have included a mother and daughter and/or sisters.

The frame comprises 32 vertical pine poles spaced between 24 and 30 inches apart, and more than 2100 linear feet of willow saplings make up the horizontal lathwork (13 rows spaced 18 inches apart). More than three acres of switch grass were cut to cover the frame and lathe. Volunteers cut and debarked the pine poles at the beginning of the 19-day house building process, and it was necessary to cut additional willow saplings and switch grass during construction.

Under the authority of Section 8105 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-246, 122 Stat. 1651) (reference 36 CFR 223.15(a)), Caddo Elder Phil Cross harvested Loblolly Pine from a plantation along Neches Bluff for use in the construction of the grass house and interior furniture. The construction of the furniture, including benches for students, interpretive beds, and storage racks, began in January 2017.

For more information about the Caddo grass house and the upcoming house celebration, please contact Anthony C. Souther, Site Manager, Caddo Mounds State Historic Site at (936) 858-3218, or by email at Anthony.Souther@thc.texas.gov.

2016 White Mountain Apache Summer Youth Initiative

Stuart Leon, Executive Director, Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission

Building on the success of the 2015 White Mountain Apache Summer Youth Initiative, and in partnership with the Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission and the Forest Service's Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, the White Mountain Apache Tribe engaged six Apache Tribal youth in an eight-week experiential program in a variety of activities including conservation education, wildlife management, fishery surveys and population monitoring, and forest and range management. The youth ranged in age from 17 to 18 years of age, and were selected from an applicant pool at the Whiteriver High School on the Reservation and the Blue Ridge High School in the neighboring Pinetop-Lakeside community. Two White Mountain Apache crew leaders, along with professionals from the Tribe and the Forest, provided consistent daily oversight of the youth participants and their project involvement.

The goal of the White Mountain Apache Summer Youth Initiative has been to engage White Mountain Apache youth in an in-depth natural resource conservation education program that promotes safety, self-esteem, and career awareness. The six White



Tribal Youth Crew members Jah'nay Velasquez, Mariah Clark, and Tyrell Clawson measure stream habitat on Thompson Creek. The Tribal Youth Crew was learning how to identify and measure stream habitat types, why it is necessary, and how different habitat types are utilized by fish. Photo credit to Forest Service employee Stephanie M. Coleman.

Mountain Apache youth participants in the program completed about 1,920 hours of direct contact with National Forest and Tribal natural resource professionals.



Tribal Youth Crew members learn about stream restoration projects on the Forests. Mark Pisano, Forest Service Fisheries Biologist explains a rock V-weir and its function. The photo was taken at Lee Valley Creek where a fish barrier that was no longer needed was removed, and the channel was stabilized with a rock weir at the barrier site. Photo credit to Forest Service employee Stephanie M. Coleman.

Youth participants included Justin Gatewood (returning participant), Hiram Kessay (returning participant), Jah'nay Velasquez, Mariah Clark, Tyrell Clawson, and Chris Greg. Youth crew leaders were Velda Massay (returning leader) and Dena James. The program commenced on June 6 with basic orientation and first aid and CPR training. During the first and second weeks, the participants conducted fishery surveys within the streams and lakes of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. Weeks three through five the participants were able to work alongside professionals from the neighboring Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. During weeks six through eight, the youth conducted wildlife trapping and big game surveys, again on the Reservation. On July 29, an outdoor ceremony and cookout provided the opportunity for the Forest Service and White Mountain Apache Tribe to recognize the achievements of the youth and for each of the youth participants to share what he or she learned, as well as his or her favorite activities.



Mark Pisano explains why a new fish barrier was built on the West Fork Black River. The photo was taken near the location of the fish barrier that had been completed only weeks before as a recovery action for threatened Apache trout. The crew learned about native trout, why the Forest Service takes efforts to recover them, and how it can be accomplished. Photo credit to Forest Service employee Stephanie M. Coleman.

Jah'nay Velasquez and Mariah Clark are currently attending the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona, and Justin Gatewood has enrolled in Pima County Community College in Tucson. Hiram Kessay is pursuing a stint in the U.S. Military. Tyrell Clawson and Chris Greg are seniors at Whiteriver High School.

Native Youth Conservation Corps Introduced on Tonto National Forest

Gregory Hansen, Retired U.S. Forest Service employee and current Tribal Relations Coordinator for the Arizona Conservation Corps

The Arizona Conservation Corps (AZCC) and Tonto National Forest partner with the Salt River Pima/Maricopa, Gila River Pima, Navajo, Hopi, White Mountain, and San Carlos Apache Nations to accomplish priority work projects on National Forest lands. In 2014, the Tonto National Forest hosted a pilot Native American crew in the Phoenix area. The 2014 test effort was successful, and it is now a vested six-month Native American youth corps effort in the Phoenix and Tucson areas. Neil Bosworth, Tonto National Forest Supervisor shares, "I'm excited to be a part of this program; it is important to provide opportunities to connect to nature by providing projects in areas that are important to Tribal youth."

Last October the Phoenix AZCC Ancestral Lands Native crew began their conservation and cultural awareness training at the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community with a welcome and traditional blessing from Salt River Tribal Council Member Ricardo Leonard. Native youth learned about AmeriCorps and AZCC, received [AZCC Ancestral Lands Program](#) orientation and an introduction to conservation education, and were inspired by a "Next Generation Native Pride/ Earth Connections" presentation delivered by a local Tribal leader. Following the orientation a four-day field training was conducted at the Lost Dutchman State Park that included crew/ team-building, trail maintenance and repair instruction, backcountry living-skills, and safety and wilderness first-aid.



2016-2017 Phoenix Arizona Conservation Corps Ancestral Lands Native Crew on the Tonto National Forest. Photo credit to Gregory Hansen.

The Phoenix and Tucson AZCC Ancestral Lands programs offer Native youth ages 18-25 hands-on conservation experience working with county, state, and federal agencies; experience working with Tribal communities; a living wage and AmeriCorps monetary education award; Arizona State University-instructed career development training and mentoring; and unique opportunities to maintain or enhance cultural connections through a variety of culturally-oriented educational activities specifically developed and closely coordinated with the surrounding Indian communities.



2014 Phoenix Arizona Conservation Corps Ancestral Lands Native Crew member accomplishing trail maintenance and repair work on the Tonto National Forest. Photo credit to Gregory Hansen.

Gregory Hansen, Tribal Relations Coordinator for the Arizona Conservation Corps conveys, "we are honored to be partnering with the Tonto on this important new program that carries the primary objectives of accomplishing priority Forest work needs and providing Native youth with opportunities to begin a career in conservation via their meaningful conservation work on public lands and within local and Tribal communities."

AZCC would like to personally thank Paul Burghard, the Forest's Native Crew Field Supervisor for his hard work of coordinating the crew's day-to-day field operations; Greg Shuster for his leadership in serving as the 2016-2017 Tonto National Forest Native Crew Liaison; Tribal Relations Coordinator Noni Nez for her valuable insights, recruitment contacts, and overall guidance; and Carrie Templin for her meaningful review of and contributions to this article.

The AZCC Phoenix Native crew is currently working on wilderness trails within the Tonto NF and is accepting applications for the next Phoenix Native program session slated to begin October 2017. The Phoenix AZCC Ancestral Lands program is among 18 different [Conservation Legacy's Ancestral Lands](#) Native-based programs operating throughout the U.S.

Santa Fe National Forest and the Pueblo of Jemez Extend Formal Government to Government Relationship

Reuben Montes, U.S. Forest Service Tribal Relations Specialist, Santa Fe National Forest

On December 20, 2016, in one of her last official acts, former Forest Supervisor Maria T. Garcia and former Jemez Pueblo Governor David Yepa signed a renewed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) designed to further enhance and strengthen the valuable working relationship the Forest has built with the Pueblo of Jemez.

The first MOU with the Tribe was enacted in December 2010 and expired in September 2016. During this time, the Forest and the Pueblo have conducted regular quarterly government to government meetings at alternating locations to discuss important topics like Pueblo involvement in the SW Jemez Mountains Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP), the Tribe's Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA) project, protection of sacred sites, cooperative law enforcement agreements, and a host of other relevant matters. This regular face-to-face consultation between our respective decision-makers has vastly improved our relationship with the Pueblo and has been touted by the Southwest Regional Office as a model for other forests and tribal governments to follow.

Former Santa Fe National Forest Supervisor Maria Garcia and former Jemez Pueblo Governor David Yepa sign renewed MOU at the Jemez Tribal Council Room on December 20, 2016. Photo credit to Forest Service employee Reuben Montes.



Regional Forester Cal Joyner and other Tribal Council leaders were on hand for the signing ceremony which included a traditional Jemez Pueblo style luncheon hosted by the Tribe. “It has been a sincere pleasure and honor to have watched our working relationship with the Tribe improve over these last years. We’ve encountered some major challenges along the way, but have found that regular communication and coordination has helped us collectively find solutions,” remarked Maria Garcia.

Former Jemez Pueblo Governor David Yepa commented, “The Tribe and the Santa Fe National Forest have embarked on a remarkable journey together. The MOU process works, and the Tribe has valued the strong government to government relationship that has been cultivated.”

The renewed MOU will expire on December 20, 2021. The Santa Fe National Forest has active ongoing MOUs with Ohkay Owingeh and the Pueblos of Tesuque and Cochiti. The Forest and the Pueblo of Santa Clara are exploring the development of an MOU in 2017.

Safety Corner

February is American Heart Month and National Children’s Dental Health Month



The leading cause of death among American Indians and Native Alaskans is heart disease. Keeping your heart healthy can help you avoid serious complications, such as heart disease, heart attacks, and heart failure.

Help kids keep those smiles clean!

5 Ways to Prevent Kids’ Tooth Decay

Care don't share
Don't share utensils with your kids or "love" your te by sharing in your mouth. You introduce easily passing germs to your child.

Eat healthy
and drink fluoridated water

First dental visit
no later than age 1 year old

Seal out decay
Your child needs a sealant applied to their teeth to prevent tooth decay.

Use fluoride toothpaste
As soon as teeth come through the gums. When kids can brush their own teeth, have them brush.

2 minutes **2 times per day**

Mouth Healthy
A program of the ADA American Dental Association
Learn more at MouthHealthy.org

Getting to Know Wade McMaster

Wade McMaster is the new Tribal Relations Program Manager for the Pacific Southwest Region, and although Wade recently (September 2016) moved into the permanent position, he has been in the acting role since December 2015.

Prior to beginning his tenure at the Regional Office, Wade served six years as the Tribal Relations Liaison on the Plumas, Lassen, and Modoc National Forests, working closely with Northern California Tribes and Forest leaders.

During this time, Wade coordinated many agreements to include an interagency agreement between the Plumas National Forest and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to provide a government to government Indian self-determination partnership with the Concow Maidu Tribe of Mooretown Rancheria to complete more than 1200 acres of fuels reduction, as well as a Master Stewardship Agreement between the Pit River Tribe, Lomakatsi Restoration Project, and Lassen, Modoc, and Shasta-Trinity National Forests to partner on various land management projects. In addition to his liaison role, Wade also spent some time as a line officer during a 120-day detail as District Ranger for the Feather River Ranger District on the Plumas National Forest.



Wade McMaster in Washington, DC, representing the Wintu Tribe of Northern California at a meeting with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Federal Acknowledgement and Office of Indian Services. Photo courtesy of Forest Service employee Wade McMaster.



As Region 5

Tribal Relations Program Manager, Wade has been very active in the coordination of several workshops and events in the Pacific Southwest Region, one of them being the latest Sacred Sites Facilitated Learning Engagement in Jackson, California.

Wade is an active member of his Tribe, the Wintu Tribe of Northern California, where he has served as Chairman for more than ten years. The Wintu Tribe of Northern California is a California state-recognized tribe comprising several Wintu Bands with ancestral territory that makes up most of Shasta County in California.

Wade's ancestors come from the Dawnom (Bald Hills) Band of Wintu People.

Prior to coming to the Forest Service, Wade worked in the IT world—ten years at Shasta College and two years at the Pit River Tribal Health Clinic. Wade also served ten years in the Air Force

Left: Wade McMaster playing his native flute at the Grand Canyon. The flute was made by his father Steve McMaster. Photo courtesy of Forest Service employee Wade McMaster.

as a Russian linguist. Wade holds a Master's Degree in Educational Counseling from the University of LaVerne and enjoys writing, performing music, and spending time with his wife Stacie and his six children.

Wade has expressed that he has gone through a variety of careers, and sometimes sees himself as a “jack of all trades,” but feels that his eclectic background has put him on this path to bring people together in order to reconnect people with the land and provide healing.

Interagency Sacred Sites Training is Available for Online Viewing

The USDA and the Forest Service have long recognized the importance of protecting and accommodating access for Native American tribes to places of sacred significance to them. Federal courts have recognized this as well. Since 2012, the USDA has been a signatory party to an interagency [MOU](#) to improve the protection of and Indian access to their sacred sites through interagency coordination and collaboration. Signatories also include the Departments of Defense, Interior, and Energy, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). Under this MOU, which has been extended through December 31, 2024, the signatories are charged with developing tools to assist the federal government in meeting their legal responsibilities to federally recognized tribes. The work of the MOU working group has paralleled the [Forest Service's Sacred Sites work](#), stemming from the [REPORT TO THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE, USDA Policy and Procedures Review and Recommendations: Indian Sacred Sites](#), also published in 2012.

Beginning in 2013, the MOU working group gathered subject matter experts from across the Federal Government, Indian Country, academia, and tribal advocacy groups to create a comprehensive online training module in video format for federal employees and contractors. The training video was finalized in fall 2016 with assistance from the Department of Justice's National Indian Country Training Initiative, and was made available on line on January 17, 2017. The intended audience includes not only federal, state, and tribal governments, but all who are interested in learning about the significance of Indian sacred sites and the importance of maintaining their integrity. The video is an excellent adjunct to the more intensive in-person training being developed by the Forest Service to be rolled out later in 2017. I encourage you to view the [Interagency Sacred Sites Training Video](#), which you can access through the Department of Justice website.

To date, the MOU working group has created and distributed throughout the federal government: 1) a policy review of all relevant/ applicable laws, regulations, and policies; 2) an information paper for stakeholders outside the federal government explaining both the subject matter and the MOU and directing where to find further information; 3) a policy statement on confidentiality explaining the cultural significance of protecting knowledge and the location of these sites from non-tribal members. The work products created under the MOU are exemplary and have been fully adopted by the White House Council on Native American Affairs, which consists of each of the Cabinet Secretaries and the Chair of the ACHP.

As the Forest Service continues to make excellent progress in doing a better job of protecting and providing access to sacred places, it is important to recognize how far we have come. It is also important to recognize how far we have yet to go. The Interagency Sacred Sites Training Video and the policies, procedures, and additional training from the Forest Service continue to move us in the right direction.

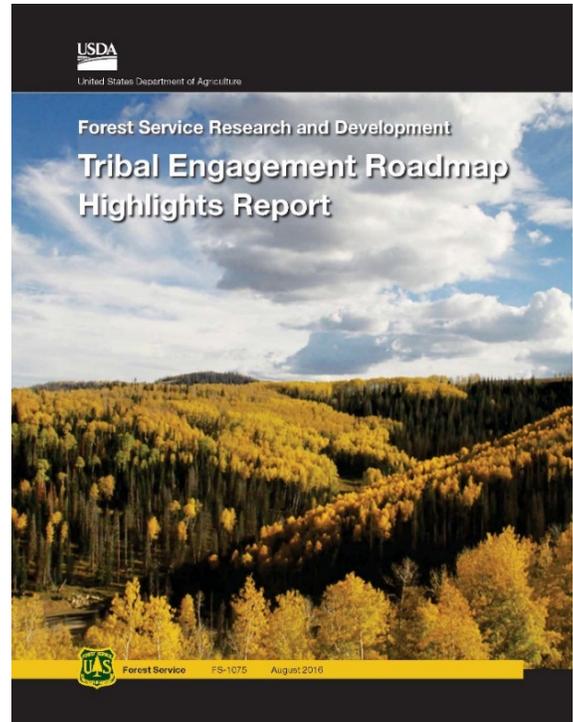
Regional Round Robin

Washington Office

In January, Estelle Bowman returned to the Office of Tribal Relations from her detail with Cooperative Forestry.

The Washington Office – Watershed, Fish, Wildlife, and Air & Rare Plants requests nominations for the 2016 National Rise to the Future – Watershed Resource Awards for Fisheries, Hydrology, Air, and Soil Science. There are various award categories, and nominations are due February 24, 2017. For more information, please contact Nathaniel Gillespie at (202) 697-1055, or by email at ngillespie@fs.fed.us.

The [Research and Development Tribal Engagement Roadmap Highlights Report](#) completed for the 2015 White House Tribal Nations Conference was published last November. The Report highlights 27 examples of Forest Service tribal engagement (e.g. wood energy, forest products, collaborative restoration, wildfire risk/management/technology, non-timber forest products, agroforestry, climate change, fisheries, citizen science, forest carbon, forest inventory, wildlife, sawmill operations, non-native insects, invasive plant species, forest governance, women’s empowerment, traditional ecological knowledge, etc.).



Northern Region

In January, Serra Hoagland began serving as the Forest Service Liaison Officer to the Salish Kootenai Tribal College (SKC) in Pablo, Montana, under the Fire, Fuels, and Smoke Science program in the Rocky Mountain Research Station (RMRS). Serra also co-authored an article published in January by the *Journal of Forestry* titled “Natural Resource Higher Education: Barriers, Deficiencies and Opportunities from the Perspective of the Native Student.” The article is available [online](#) ahead of print.

Cheryl Vanderburg is an Executive Producer of the film titled “Badger Creek” that premiered last November at the 41st Annual American Indian Film Festival. The western United States tour begins at the Big Sky Film Festival in Montana this month, and the film will debut on PBS this spring. “BADGER CREEK is a portrait of Native resilience as seen through a year in the life of three generations of a Blackfeet family living on the rez in Montana. The Mombergs are a loving family who run a successful ranch, live a traditional worldview and are re-learning their language.”

Congratulations Serra and Cheryl!

Southwest Region

In January, Yolynda Begay began a 120-day detail in the Washington Office, and Mike Lyndon is filling in behind her as the Acting Tribal Relations Program Manager for Region 3.

William Reed, who is the Heritage Program liaison to the Office of Tribal Relations, is the newest Regional Heritage Program Leader for Region 3.

Southern Region

Ian Ritchie has returned to Region 8 following his detail in the Pacific Northwest.

This year's [To Bridge A Gap](#) meeting, hosted by the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma in Catoosa (Tulsa), Oklahoma, will take place later this month, February 21-24, 2017.

Alaska Region

The Forest Service hosted [Alaska Native Science & Engineering Program \(ANSEP\)](#) students in 2016 in Anchorage, Juneau, and Sitka. ANSEP is working with many partners to effect a systems change in the hiring patterns of Alaska Native students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) by placing students on a career path. ANSEP has mature partnerships with numerous organizations, and the Forest Service has partnered with ANSEP on the science side since 2008. ANSEP started in 1995 with one engineering student. It has grown to nearly 2,000 Alaska Native students—middle school, high school, university, and alumni.

More than 95% of ANSEP Summer Bridge students transition to science or engineering BS degree programs. Seventy-five percent of ANSEP students either have graduated or are currently enrolled in college.

The Forest Service has supported 21 students since 2010. Of these, 15 students are pursuing STEM degrees at the University of Alaska Anchorage. One has graduated and is attending graduate school.

In the spring issue, we will hear from Kaitlyn Stevens about her experience participating in the Native American Research Assistantship Program.

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On behalf of the Office of Tribal Relations, I would like to express our gratitude for the valuable contributions of all our Forest Service staff and partners who work tirelessly to make a difference. You are truly inspirational, and it has been an honor during my first year with the Forest Service to get to know many of you and share your accomplishments through the Tribal Relations Newsletter.

Please contact Rebecca Hill at (202) 815-4585, or by email at rebeccahill@fs.fed.us, with any comments or future story suggestions for the spring 2017 newsletter. Thank you.