



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

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Tribal Relations News

Director’s Welcome

Welcome to the winter 2018 [USDA Forest Service](#) Tribal Relations Newsletter. We have a wonderful lineup of articles from across the country for you to enjoy – and be inspired by. I am certainly inspired by the feature articles in this edition. I am also inspired by the diversity of the authors. None of them are Forest Service tribal relations personnel. Rather, these authors offer stories and perspectives as “regular” Forest Service staff, members of the private sector, volunteers, and retirees. But the Forest Service mission is there, every step of the way, as you will see from the diversity of topics and geographies. And, as shown in the Opportunity Corner and the Recent Publications section, Forest Service Research & Development and the National Forest System have been busy with outreach for members to the Forestry Research Advisory Council and publishing great new works in the *Journal of Forestry*. As you can tell, it is the great employees from across the Forest Service and our wonderful partners who do the tribal relations work, not just those of us with a tribal relations job title!

Don’t forget to check out the [U.S. Forest Service Office of Tribal Relations](#) website (<https://www.fs.fed.us/spf/tribalrelations/>) where you can also find announcements, blogs, older editions of the Newsletter, and tons of resources. We look forward to telling the Forest Service tribal relations story through the web format we proposed last summer once our website updates are complete.

In the meantime, we continue this edition with an article submitted by Forest Service volunteer Angela Aleiss that relates how the Forest Service is working to protect the treaty rights of the Tulalip Tribes through co-stewardship of resources important to the Tulalip within the geographic boundaries of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest in the Pacific Northwest.

Bobby Gonzales of Tribal Energy Resource, LLC, expands on the how Forest Service policy “to establish and maintain effective relationships with tribes with respect to cultural resources” is implemented on the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest in the Southern Region.

Moving to the Southwest, Marshall Masayesva of the Southwest Conservation Corps Ancestral Lands program highlights the first ever partnership between the Forest Service and Ancestral Lands Hopi where, on the Tonto National Forest, crew members repaired sections of the Arizona National Scenic Trail. Ancestral Lands Hopi also partnered with the Four Forest Restoration Initiative and the Kaibab National Forest to restore Elk Springs.

The next article reports how a Forest Service Wood Innovations Grant awarded to the Village of Tazlina will help defray expenses associated with the planning, engineering design, cost analysis, and permitting for the Tazlina Cordwood Fired Boiler District Heating System in Tazlina, Alaska.

Forest Service retiree and volunteer Howard Rosen shares the history of the International Wood Culture Society and the World Wood Day Foundation, as well as highlights from the 2017 World Wood Day celebration held in Long Beach, California.

From the Southern Region, Forest Service Public Relations Specialist C.J. Norvell recounts cycling with the Choctaw Nation Trail of Tears Bike Team in the annual ride retracing the Trail of Tears to remember the removal and honor the Tribe's ancestors.

The Regional Round Robin follows the introduction to Bryan Begay and Delphine Arizana, two conservation-minded Native youth who share their recent Forest Service experiences.

We hope you enjoy these stories. They are representative of the great work that Forest Service employees, Tribal citizens, and others are accomplishing all across the United States. In the spirit of shared stewardship, we look forward in the New Year to our continued work with American Indian and Alaska Native partners to improve the Nations' forests and grasslands and better serve Native peoples. And we look forward to sharing more of this inspiring work, illustrating the benefits of working together across boundaries.

--Fred Clark--

U.S. Forest Service and Tulalip Tribes Partner for Huckleberry Enhancement Project

Angela Aleiss, U.S. Forest Service Volunteer

In the late summer, members of the Tulalip Tribes head to the mountainous region of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest to gather huckleberries. Snow-covered peaks and lush green meadows surround the remote area known as *swədaʔxali*, "Place of Mountain Huckleberries." The harvest is more than just food gathering: it is also a social time for tribal members to spend with their family and friends and learn about traditional culture.

For thousands of years, *swədaʔx*, or Big Huckleberry, has been an important source of food and medicine to the Tulalip. When the ripe reddish-blue huckleberries are mashed and semi-dried, they can supply essential nutrients and vitamins without elevating blood sugar levels. Traditionally, the Tulalip not only ate huckleberries but brewed tea from the leaves and used the juice to dye their clothes.

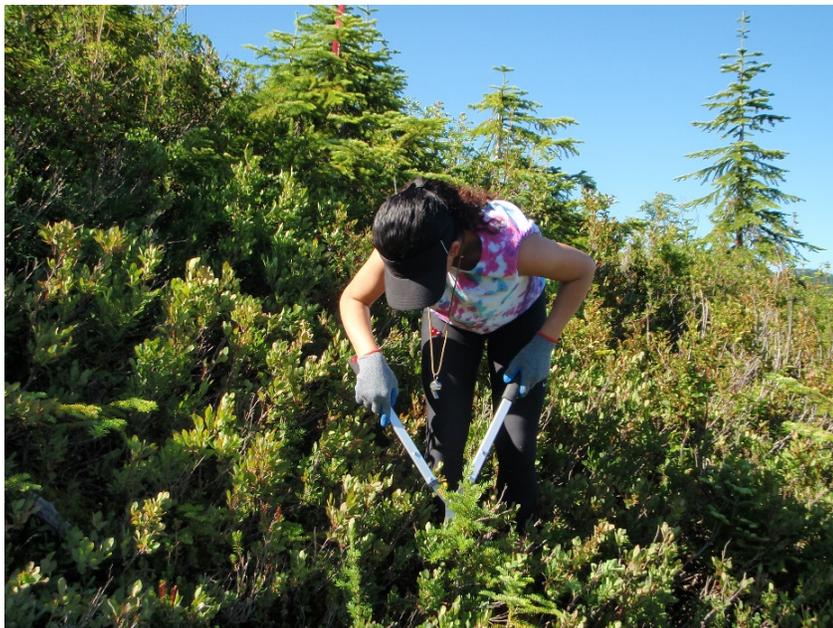
Today the Forest Service and the Tulalip Tribes are working together to co-steward important cultural resources under the initiative known as the Huckleberry Enhancement Project. The partnership is part of the 10-year co-stewardship plan established in 2016 between the Forest Service and the Tulalip to restore and enhance the *swədaʔxali* area. The Project draws upon Article 5 of the 1855 Treaty of Point Elliott, which protects the Tulalip's right to fish, hunt, and gather in unclaimed lands.

“Dynamite Patch” huckleberry gathering area at *swadaʔxali*, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Photo credit to Libby Nelson, Senior Environmental Policy Analyst, Tulalip Tribes Natural Resources Department.

“We’re trying not to lose any ground. Traditional foods are really important to us.” - Ray Fryberg



Ray Fryberg, Executive Director of the Tulalip Tribes Natural Resources Department, is happy that the Forest Service is working with the Tulalip. Although he worries how recreation and timber have impacted the huckleberry harvest, he believes that the Huckleberry Enhancement Project is essential to preserving tribal culture. “We’re trying not to lose any ground,” he said. “Traditional foods are really important to us.”



A Tulalip youth removes competing vegetation to enhance huckleberries. Photo credit to Libby Nelson, Senior Environmental Policy Analyst, Tulalip Tribes Natural Resources Department.

Huckleberries were once more abundant because forest fires were more frequent. Historically, Native peoples used fire as a tool to promote huckleberry growth and berry production. With fewer fires, emerging conifer trees like the Pacific Silver Fir and Mountain Hemlock encroach on the huckleberry meadows and eventually shade out the berries. Other shrubs, like Mountain Ash, can also compete with the huckleberry, leaving an eight- to ten-foot diameter footprint where the berries cannot grow.

That is why during the summer, Tribal youth and staff from the Tulalip Natural Resources Department and the Forest Service work together to remove or prune the trees. As the teens gather on the mountainous slope, they assist with clearing the cut saplings to free the huckleberries.



***Swadaʔx* or Mountain Huckleberry (*Vaccinium membranaceum*).**
Photo credit to Libby Nelson, Senior Environmental Policy Analyst, Tulalip Tribes Natural Resources Department.

“We need to clear the trees when they’re relatively young,” said Russell Moses, Forester with the Tulalip Tribes Natural Resources Department. “We leave a tree about every 20 to 30 feet. The places we started clearing initially had 700 to 800 trees, a foot and a half to 14 feet,” he added. But there are also false huckleberries, which grow in clumps and have no fruiting body. “They just take up a lot of ground on the land,” Moses explained.

Inez Bill, Tulalip Tribes Rediscovery Program Coordinator, explained that the 10-year co-stewardship plan is not only important in the continuing struggle to uphold treaty rights; it also helps keep people involved in taking care of resources for future generations. “This work at *swadaʔxali* is an expression of Tulalip’s sovereignty regarding our foods, and our commitment to support the dietary needs and the lifeways of our people,” she said.

*“This work at *swadaʔxali* is an expression of Tulalip’s sovereignty regarding our foods, and our commitment to support the dietary needs and the lifeways of our people.” – Inez Bill*

Tribes and the U.S. Forest Service: Walking in both worlds

Bobby Gonzales, Tribal Energy Resource, LLC

The Forest Service has a legal obligation to engage with Native American tribes. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) mandates that federal agencies “...consult with any Indian tribe that attaches religious and cultural significance to historic properties that may be affected by the agency’s undertakings”. The Forest Service policy is to establish and maintain effective relationships with tribes with respect to cultural resources.

The key to effective tribal engagement between the Forest Service and Native American tribes is to manage tribal interests while improving the stewardship of national forests. For the Forest Service or any federal agency, improving trust and collaboration with Native American tribes can be a daunting task. In order to meet that challenge head-on, the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest developed a Programmatic Agreement (PA) to simultaneously facilitate their management of heritage resources and engage tribal

governments. Provisions in the NHPA allow federal agencies to use a PA to formalize and facilitate the tribal consultation process.

As part of the PA, the Forest provided a cultural resource training and certification program to several Native American tribes of the region. The Forest trained “tribal heritage technicians” to participate on archaeological crews performing archaeological field survey work required for Forest Service projects. By training tribal heritage technicians, the Forest began developing long-term, meaningful relationships with those tribes. Tribes have a wealth of traditional environmental knowledge which has been passed down through generations. The Forest has increasingly recognized the unique value of this knowledge, as some tribes are not opposed to forest management (tree harvesting, etc.), and many of them are highly effective forest managers providing thousands of jobs to tribal members.

The Ozark-St. Francis National Forest’s approach to tribal engagement is founded on our values and the principle of developing and maintaining collaborative, long-standing relationships. The Forest Service’s relationship building with Native American tribes is based on trust and respect and applying a flexible approach which respects the diversity of Native American cultures, their historic relationship to the land, and their unique legal status.

Editor’s Note: “Lessons from a Programmatic Agreement and Heritage-Based Consultations between Tribes and the National Forests of Arkansas and Oklahoma” recently published in the *Journal of Forestry* is available [online](#).

U.S. Forest Service and Ancestral Lands Hopi Tackle the Highline Trail of the Arizona National Scenic Trail

Marshall Masayesva, Southwest Conservation Corps Ancestral Lands Hopi Program Coordinator

Ancestral Lands Hopi (AL-Hopi) is in its first year of operation, and the AL-Hopi #603 “Na’le Crew,” the first-ever summer adult crew, was fielded in partnership with the Forest Service’s Tonto National Forest,

Project Partner Paul “Pablo” Burghard, and Arizona Trails Association (ATA) representative Shawn Redfield. The Na’le Crew was specifically trained as a trail crew to tackle the Highline Trail of the Arizona National Scenic Trail in the first-ever partnership between the Forest Service and AL-Hopi.

Na’le Crew members are from the villages of Hotevilla, Oraibi, Kykotsmovi, and Sipaulovi. Photo courtesy of Southwest Conservation Corps – Ancestral Lands Program.



The five-member crew was fielded for three 10-day “hitches” for a total of six weeks during the months of June and July. The crew was relatively green to trail work aside from a week of trails training in Albuquerque, New Mexico, but quickly learned how to set, seat, cut, and secure large stones for placement of steps, water bars, and drains. On the first workday the crew hiked 1.5 miles uphill to the project site, hauling up all the rock tools, food, water, and all other necessary equipment needed for the project. This would become a daily routine as the crew repeated this trek daily for the next six weeks. “First day at the project site, I could see the trail needed some repairing and re-establishment. Drains were filled, brush was over grown, and steps were needed throughout the trail,” observed Crew Leader Joseph Montoya, Hotevilla Village.

The crew then met with ATA Director Shawn Redfield who lined out the daunting work that included repair of blown out, overgrown, and hazardous sections of trail. The crew then set to task and were able to maintain and clear 1.21 miles of trail and corridor. Higher than normal temperatures during the summer months challenged all Ancestral Lands crews in the field, and the crews adjusted to the warmer conditions by starting earlier in the day and taking frequent breaks to cool off and stay hydrated. Lightning was also an issue, as the crew was working in elevated and exposed terrain. This meant starting the day even earlier and getting off the ridge in the afternoons when storms begin to roll though.

“The AZ Trail project was a project I greatly enjoyed. Aside from the great scenery, the work we conducted on the trail was work that I enjoy greatly. I was also surprised to see that there are many sections of the trail that are in dire need of maintenance. Other than that, the project was a lot of fun, and I am eager to visit the trail again soon to see how well our work has held up,” said Corps Member Darion Fredericks, Sipaulovi Village.

Na’le Crew working to restore Elk Springs on the Kaibab National Forest. Photo courtesy of Southwest Conservation Corps – Ancestral Lands Program.

The crew also worked on the Elk Springs Restoration project with the Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI) and the Kaibab National Forest. This was the first time that a partnership between 4FRI and the newly established AL-Hopi program was able to come to fruition. The crew was fielded to decommission a non-functioning water diversion for cattle and install wildlife-friendly fencing to keep cattle from trampling and grazing the spring. The old system consisted of 134 feet of buried and rusted pipe that no longer filled the concrete basin downstream. The crew was tasked with digging out the old pipe that had been previously backfilled with stone and filled with water, making this a very muddy hitch.



Overall, the crew had a great experience and enjoyed the work. This season was the first introduction to trail work for the crew members, as well as camp/work life, and they picked up the skills quickly. These Institute of American Indian Arts and Fort Lewis College students were recruited to encourage and empower them to return to school with AmeriCorps Education Awards. These young men worked hard during the summer season, and we are happy to report that the Na'le Crew successfully completed the term with AL-Hopi, earning each crew member a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award in the amount of \$1,236. We are also happy to report that the Na'le Crew members returned to their respective educational institutions for the fall term. After participating in the summer season, some of the crew members voiced interest in pursuing a degree in land management, with one participant even considering a change in academic major.

The mission of Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC) Ancestral Lands Program is “Empowering individuals to positively impact their lives, their communities, and the environment.” Ancestral Lands currently has offices in the tribal communities of Acoma, Navajo, Zuni, and Hopi, as well as Internship and VISTA positions nationally. Crews complete a wide variety of conservation projects including GIS, chainsaw, agriculture, historic preservation, and more. The SCC partners with land management agencies to create these service opportunities. For more information please visit [facebook@AncestralLands](#) or the [Ancestral Lands web page](#).

Native Village of Tazlina Receives 2017 Wood Innovation Grant

The Forest Service Wood Education and Resource Center (WERC), within the Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry, manages the Wood Innovations Grant Program that provides annual awards to support traditional wood utilization projects, expand wood energy markets, and promote the use of wood in the construction of commercial buildings.

The Tazlina Cordwood Fired Boiler District Heating System Design project involves the planning, engineering design, construction management, and installation of a cordwood-fueled boiler module (replacing the old diesel fuel boilers) to provide hydronic heat to four buildings, including the Native Village of Tazlina health clinic and village offices. Underground insulated heat piping will be installed, as well as hydronic heating equipment in the buildings (baseboard heaters, cabinet unit heaters, or overhead hydronic unit heaters, as required). A greenhouse is planned for the future, and a provision will be made for connecting additional heat loads at a later time for a greenhouse and garage bay, if additional heat is available after a full heating season is completed. The project cost is estimated to be approximately \$300,000. The Forest Service grant will defray the planning, engineering design, cost analysis, and permitting for this project, and the Alaska Energy Authority grant in the amount of approximately \$271,000 will cover construction costs.

This project will improve the economy of Tazlina by providing jobs and creating a new and stable market for small-diameter and low-value wood. Sixty cords of wood for the system will be sourced annually from the creation/maintenance of fuel breaks and hazardous forest fuels reduction projects, creating jobs for local residents supplying cordwood and fueling the boilers. The installation is expected to displace 3,000 gallons of heating fuel per year (reducing fossil-fuel-derived CO₂ nearly 80,000 pounds per year) and inject more than \$25,000 annually into the local economy.

For more information, check out the [WERC web page](#). The [2018 Wood Innovations Program Request for Proposals](#) was issued in October, and the submission deadline is January 22, 2018. The following priorities are included in the Request for Proposals:

- Reduce hazardous fuels and improve forest health on National Forest System and other forest lands;
- Reduce costs of forest management on all land types; and
- Promote economic and environmental health of communities.

World Wood Day 2017 Emphasizes Native American Cultures

Howard Rosen, U.S. Forest Service Volunteer

The [International Wood Culture Society](#) (IWCS) was established about a decade ago as a non-profit, non-governmental international network of wood enthusiasts, dedicated to the research, education and promotion of wood culture. One of the important efforts of the IWCS has been to commemorate World Wood Day (WWD) on March 21st each year (vernal equinox) and thus create an environment for people to celebrate and appreciate wood for everyday use. To help accomplish this effort the [World Wood Day Foundation](#) (WWDF) was created. These WWD celebrations can last several weeks, and American Indians have participated since the very first WWD in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in 2013. Subsequent WWD celebrations were held in Xianyou, China (2014); Odunpazari, Turkey (2015); Katmandu, Nepal (2016); and Long Beach, California, USA (2017).

WWD celebrations feature a variety of activities, which include an opening ceremony, a tree planting, wood carving and turning, wood and furniture design, folk art, wooden musical instrument concerts, a technical symposium, an exhibition, a children’s program, a collaborative project (by many people from many countries), a special project (a wood-covered bus for 2017), a closing ceremony, and a tour. Ahead of the 2017 celebration, IWCS visited the Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin, and

produced a [video](#) of the Forest Service’s ongoing research. Each celebration has a theme, and in 2017 it was “Roots.” The theme fit well for Native Americans, since Native cultures are the roots of our civilization in the United States today.



Jonah Hill, Hopi wood carver and metalsmith, pictured with Forest Service Volunteer Howard Rosen. Photo courtesy of International Wood Culture Society – World Wood Day Foundation.

For WWD 2017, about 600 people from 85 countries participated in the event, including 21 American Indians and Alaska Natives representing at least 13 distinct indigenous cultures. During the 2017 celebration Native Americans took part in various programs, including woodcarving, folk art, and wooden musical instruments. A [video](#) showcasing Native woodcarving was produced by IWCS for the 2017 celebration.

A tour follows most WWD celebrations, and this year members of the Tongva Tribe shared their maritime culture with participants. The Tongva are scattered in and around Long Beach, California, and members strive to maintain the language and social culture of the Tribe.

The WWD celebrations have been excellent examples of how people can work together and demonstrate to each other the beauty and history of their individual cultures.

U.S. Forest Service Employee Participates in Choctaw Nation Trail of Tears Bike Ride

C.J. Norvell, Public Affairs Specialist, Ozark-St. Francis and Ouachita National Forests

It's no coincidence that I found myself riding along the Choctaw Nation Trail of Tears in May of 2017. In fact, it wasn't the first time I had joined this group of riders making the annual trek from historic Choctaw homelands in Mississippi back to the Nation's headquarters in southeastern Oklahoma. In the southeastern counties of Oklahoma, the Choctaw Nation is interwoven into everyday life like the swirls in my Rocky Road ice cream. I grew up here. I work here. I don't possess a card describing my degree of Indian blood, but I am part of a family, a community that embraces and is proud of its collective Choctaw history.

Growing in their commitment to improving health and wellness among their people, Choctaw programs spill over into communities big and small and bring everyone along with them. It was through an initiative like this that I came to be on the Trail of Tears last year. I was invited to join the Choctaw Nation Going Lean Marathon Team in 2010 as I was part of a running and exercise group made up largely of Choctaw Nation employees.



Choctaw Nation Trail of Tears Bike Team in front of the Lower Choctaw Boundary sign at Mile Marker 61 of the Natchez Trace Parkway. This southern boundary was delineated between Great Britain and the Choctaw and later defined in a treaty between the U.S. and the Choctaw concluded in 1786. Photo courtesy of C.J. Norvell.

As the years rolled by, my crazy and athletic friends reminded me of the fun and freedom experienced in the saddle of a bicycle. I bought into their delusion and purchased my very own road bike, and in 2014 joined the 400+ mile journey for the first time. That year was busy with training and raising money to pay for food and lodging for the Trail of Tears Bike Team. Long training rides and time spent selling *banaha*, *tanchi labona* and grape dumplings, traditional dishes of the Choctaw people, developed us as a team and sealed us as family.

My participation in the experience along the removal routes occurred in 2014, 2016 and 2017. The miles each day can be grueling and the temperatures brutal by the end of May. Some days the mileage reached 100, and on easy days we rested after 65-70. And every day we ate ... a lot! We started and ended each day with prayers of protection and thanksgiving, and remembered the removal with stories of significant places along the day's route. We reminded each other to think...to connect our sore muscles, bumps, bruises and overall discomfort, to a heart broken and weary people removed from their homes.



This year I made it to Day Three ... one day off of the Natchez Trace and headed along the southern route toward Louisiana. The rain was slow and steady and felt good, but the roads narrowed to two lanes and the traffic seemed to be in a hurry. You notice much more on the back of a bicycle than you might in a car. You watch out for each other...calling out hazards along the road Gravel!!! Sticks!!! Glass!!! And hear the warning repeated to the riders behind you. Dogs That was the warning I heard on that day ... and we picked up speed ... and then it was black. Later I learned that my tire had slipped on the wet white-painted line on the side of the road, and I was slammed onto the pavement, skidding to a stop in the middle of the state highway. Those prayers for protection were honored as the hurrying cars came to a stop with me safely out of their way.

C.J. Norvell, Public Affairs Specialist, Ozark-St. Francis and Ouachita National Forests. Photo courtesy of C.J. Norvell.

The ride continued without me that week. My mild concussion and contusions healed, but it was a poignant reminder that not everyone who began the journey toward their destination made it...and the route was full of tears. But the people were strong and they continued. I will continue.

Author's Note: The Choctaw Nation Trail of Tears Bike Team was created in 2012 by Nancy Jefferson as a way to honor her ancestors. The team has conducted a ride each year since 2012. In 2017, the youngest rider was 14, accompanied by his father, also a rider. The oldest was 65-year-old Mary Ayn. The Choctaw Nation supports the ride with grants, vehicles, and provides for fuel for the trip. The team funds meals and lodging through fundraisers throughout the year.

C.J. Norvell is a Public Affairs Specialist on the Ozark-St. Francis and Ouachita National Forests in Arkansas and Oklahoma. She works remotely out of a facility at the Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority in Talihina, Oklahoma.

Getting to Know Delphine Arizana

Delphine is an enrolled member of the Yakama Nation and also Navajo, and she grew up in Boise, Idaho. Currently a senior at Salish Kootenai College, she is majoring in Business Administration.

Delphine first heard about the Forest Service's Research Assistantship Program (RAP) through her undergraduate advisor. As a RAP student, Delphine had the opportunity to spend a couple of weeks with Joni Packard at the Inter-Tribal Natural Resource Camp outside of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Later in the summer and again this winter, she also interned at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho. At the NIFC Delphine worked as a Procurement Technician in the Forest Service Incident Support Branch for Acquisition Management, and she hopes to return to the NIFC this summer. Delphine is still deciding on where to pursue studies following graduation, and the RAP has provided her both professional development and networking opportunities.



Delphine Arizana, Forest Service Research Assistant. Photo courtesy of Delphine Arizana.

Getting to Know Bryan Begay

Bryan is a member of the Navajo Nation, and he grew up in Kingman, Arizona. Bryan recently completed the Forestry program at Northern Arizona University, and he is looking forward to pursuing a master's degree in forestry and a career with the Forest Service so that he can continue to work with wildlife.

During the summer of 2017 Bryan completed biological surveys for northern spotted owl on the Fremont-Winema National Forest in south-central Oregon. Prior to that, during the summer of 2016, Bryan was the recipient of a research assistantship funded by the Forest Service and The Wildlife Society. He assisted Forest Service Research and Development scientists with bat detection research on the Ottawa National Forest in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.



“It was a refreshingly nice change of pace to be out in the field instead of in school focusing on assignments. It was a chance for me to use the education I received to do a job that I enjoyed immensely,” said Bryan Begay of his field research with the Forest Service.

Bryan Begay, Forest Service Research Assistant. Photo courtesy of Bryan Begay.

In 2016 and 2017 he was also selected to participate in the Native Student Professional Development (NSPD) Program through The Wildlife Society and the Native Peoples Wildlife Management Working Group. The NSPD is a very competitive program that allows students to build strong relationships with other Native American wildlife professionals. This network of Native student leaders has enormous potential to enrich diversity within the wildlife profession and bring long-standing cultural, spiritual, and ecological connections to the land that can inform current natural resource management paradigms. “Bryan’s participation in the NSPD enriched the overall experience of other NSPD members. Bryan is a light-hearted, confident, open-minded individual with a passion for continuing to work with the agency,” expressed Serra Hoagland, PhD, Rocky Mountain Research Station Liaison Officer.

Regional Round Robin

From October 24-26, 2017, Regional Forester Beth Pendleton and Region 10 welcomed Forest Service employees from across the Nation to Alaska’s capital city Juneau for the National Tribal Relations Workshop. Participants included Tribal Relations Specialists, Research Scientists, and Line Officers. The week’s agenda highlighted Alaska’s unique Tribal Relations Program, emphasizing, among other topics, laws applying to Alaska Natives; the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA, 1971); the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA, 1980); the Alaska Tribal Leadership Committee (ATLC); the Federal Subsistence Management Program; and tribal economic development. Participants met with Richard Peterson, President of Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, SEALASKA Corporation CEO Anthony Mallott, and SEALASKA Heritage Institute President Dr. Rosita Worl. Participants were also invited to a traditional foods potluck dinner at the Alaska Native Brotherhood/Alaska Native Sisterhood Elizabeth Peratrovich Hall, and Fran Houston, Áak’w Kwáan Tlingit, hosted participants for a Walking the Land Field Trip at the Auke Village Recreation Area in the Tongass National Forest.



2017 National Tribal Relations Workshop attendees in front of the glass screen of the traditional cedar clan house inside the Walter Soboleff Building. During the grand opening ceremony in 2015, the clan house was given the name *Shuká Hít* (Ancestors’ House).

Northern Region

The 2017 Capitol Christmas Tree “Beauty of the Big Sky” was cut from the Kootenai National Forest in Montana. Seventy companion trees accompanied the 79-foot Engelmann spruce, and Montana residents, civic organizations, and schools made and donated ornaments and tree skirts. Dancers from the Rocky Mountain Ballet Theatre based in Missoula, among them members of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe, traveled to Washington D.C. for the tree-lighting ceremony and performed at the Forest Service Chief’s reception.

Rocky Mountain Region

On December 7, 2017, several Region 2 employees, including the Tribal Relations Program Manager, partners, and volunteers, received the highest honor in the Forest Service—a Chief’s Honor Award—from Forest Service Chief Tony Tooke in a ceremony held in Washington, D.C. Award winners were recognized for innovative, highly impactful work that supports achievement of the Forest Service’s mission, strategic plan, and priorities, which align with USDA’s seven strategic goals. In May 2017, CBS4 in Denver hosted a live program that included discussions with experts and pre-recorded footage on historical and current Native American use of grasslands, fossils and paleontology, bird conservation and research, grassland wildlife, ranching, agriculture, energy development, and multiple-use balance.

In recognition of the 2017 National Native American Heritage Month, the American Indian Special Emphasis Program Manager and Civil Rights staff, with support from Acquisition Management, hosted a lecture on the Fort Laramie treaties by linguistic and treaty scholar Mr. Rick Williams, Oglala Lakota. His presentation provided an analysis of traditional and oral histories relevant to the development of the treaties. His presentation drew 60+ attendees including law students and other agency representatives.

Southwest Region

With Region 3 and Albuquerque Service Center Human Resources Management, the Office of Tribal Relations coordinated a Career Development Day hosted by the Cibola National Forest Supervisor’s Office. [Read more online.](#)

The Forest Service, through its partnership with Mobilize Green, Inc., sponsored the participation of tribal students from the Central Consolidated School District (CCSD) in Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) projects over the summer. [Read more online.](#)

Pacific Southwest Region

On November 15, 2017, in recognition of the 2017 National Native American Heritage Month, Region 5 hosted a Harvest Celebration “Standing Together” highlighting the uses of traditional plants.

Pacific Northwest Region

Two Northwest Tribes and their National Forest partners were honored with Forest Service Rise to the Future Awards on November 15, 2017. The Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe and partner Olympic National Forest and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and partner Malheur National Forest received their awards in person at a ceremony held at the USDA’s Whitten Building in Washington, D.C.

Southern Region

The 2018 To Bridge a Gap meeting will be hosted by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in Tulsa, Oklahoma, May 21-25, 2018.

Eastern Region and Northeastern Area

The Ottawa National Forest and the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community recently partnered to remove non-native invasive honeysuckle on the Kenton Ranger District. [Read more online.](#)

The Enbridge Energy, Limited Partnership request to continue operating and maintaining an existing pipeline and associated facilities on the Washburn Ranger District of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest is under analysis. And on the Bessemer Ranger District of the Ottawa National Forest, consultation is ongoing regarding the proposed closure of the Black River Harbor. The Chippewa National Forest and Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe continue consultation to amend their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Concerns regarding the harvest of birch lodgepole led The Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC)/Voigt Intertribal Task Force to issue a Commission Order amending the gathering codes for National Forest System lands enacted by all GLIFWC-member tribes limiting the harvest of young birch.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) will offer an eight-week online [Climate Academy course](#) (January 10-March 21, 2018) designed to cover the fundamentals of climate science, provide an overview of tools and resources for climate adaptation, and increase climate literacy and communication skills. The course encourages networking among conservation professionals engaged in the management of fish, wildlife, habitat, and cultural resources and provides participants an opportunity to interact with experts as they address case studies across multiple habitat types.

The Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science (NIACS) and USDA Northern Forests Climate Hub will offer the [Forest Adaptation Planning and Practices training](#) as an online, seven-week course (January 15 – March 2, 2018) designed for natural resources professionals working in forests and associated ecosystems in New England and New York.

Region 9 is currently reviewing its tribal relations program and will be briefing the Regional Forester on the program and capacity building. Look for the relaunch of the region's tribal relations website this year.

Alaska Region

The Region 10 Alaska Tribal Leaders Committee have re-affirmed their focus/emphasis areas for fiscal year 2018: Native Language on the Forests and Food Security.

On November 14 and 20, 2017, Region 10 hosted brown bag sessions, in recognition of the 2017 National Native American Heritage Month, highlighting traditional use of plants and medicines and aspects of Southeast Alaska Native culture and language.

Alicia Bell-Sheetter, Washington Office liaison to the Region 10 Tribal Relations Program, is currently on a detail as the Acting Deputy Forest Supervisor on the Tongass National Forest in Ketchikan, Alaska.

Pacific Northwest Research Station

PNWRS Social Scientist and Tribal Liaison Linda Kruger presented results from a study with Alaska Tribes on climate change and first foods at the Tribal and First Nations Climate Change Summit at the Tulalip Resort in Washington State, December 13-14, 2017.

Linda Kruger is also working with the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) to host a listening session at the Alaska Forum on the Environment February 12-15, 2018, in Anchorage, Alaska. The session will engage tribal members in discussions of climate adaptation planning efforts, successes, challenges, and needs going forward.

Opportunity Corner

Wood Innovations Funding Opportunity - The USDA Forest Service [requests proposals](#) to substantially expand and accelerate wood energy and wood products markets throughout the United States to support forest management needs on National Forest System and other forest lands. Funding will be awarded to two separate categories: (1) Expansion of Wood Energy Markets and (2) Expansion of Wood Products Markets. The deadline for submitting grant applications is January 22, 2018. Information on how to apply is available on the [Wood Innovations Grants website](#) or the [Wood Education and Resource Center website](#).

The Forestry Research Advisory Council (FRAC) is outreaching for new FRAC members and is in need of representatives from tribal groups. The council provides advice to the Secretary of Agriculture, and its responsibilities cover regional and national forestry research planning and coordination within Federal and State agencies, forestry schools, forest industries, and non-governmental organizations. For more information, check out the [FRAC website](#) or contact Tracy Hancock, FRAC Designated Federal Official, USDA Forest Service, at (202) 205-1724 or tchancock@fs.fed.us.

Recent Publications

Eastern Region

David Journey, Don Bragg, Roger Coleman, and Bobby Gonzalez recently published “Lessons from a Programmatic Agreement and Heritage-Based Consultations between Tribes and the National Forests of Arkansas and Oklahoma” in the *Journal of Forestry*. Find out more on the [USFS Treesearch website](#) or download a [PDF of the article](#).

Northern Research Station

Mike Dockry, Sophia Gutterman, and Mae Davenport of the NRS recently published “Building Bridges: Perspectives on Partnership and Collaboration from the US Forest Service Tribal Relations Program” in the *Journal of Forestry*. Find out more on the [USFS Treesearch website](#) or download a [PDF of the article](#).

Mike Dockry and Serra Hoagland recently published “A Special Issue of the Journal of Forestry—Tribal Forest Management: Innovations for Sustainable Forest Management.” Find out more on the [USFS Treesearch website](#) or download a [PDF of the article](#).

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The staff of the Forest Service Office of Tribal Relations want you to know how grateful we are for the valuable contributions of all the Forest Service employees and partners who work tirelessly to make a difference as we all care for the land and serve the people through shared stewardship.

Please contact Rebecca Hill at (202) 815-4585, or by email at rebeccahill@fs.fed.us, with any comments or suggestions as we revamp the Office of Tribal Relations website and modernize the delivery of your accomplishments and our mission. Thank you.