
Executive Summary

Many National Forest System lands are adjacent to American Indian or Alaska Native Tribes or tribal lands. Federally Recognized Indian tribal governments have a unique government-to-government relationship with the United States Government. In some cases, tribal governments have reserved rights on what are present-day national forests or grasslands that were retained when the tribes relinquished lands to the United States Government. Today, more than ever, Indian tribes, as sovereign governments, are asserting their interests and rights and increasing their governmental capabilities. For all these reasons, it is essential that Forest Service leaders and employees do the following with tribes through the many Forest Service programs in the National Forest System, Research, State and Private Forestry, International Forestry, Human Resources, and others:

- Become knowledgeable.
- Pursue partnerships, research, and technical assistance.
- Establish two-way exchanges of information.

The focus of this resource book is to help Forest Service line officers and employees gain a clear understanding of how to implement the U.S. Government's and the Forest Service's American Indian and Alaska Native policies. The book should foster an appreciation of tribal governments and help the Forest Service further develop effective relationships. Use of this book along with training and action should further the development of this essential relationship. This document is to be distributed to Forest Service and other Federal agencies, American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes, and American Indian and Alaska Native institutions and organizations.

