



Tribal Relations News

USDA Forest Service

OTR Director's Corner

The theme for this newsletter could easily be "transitions." The current Federal government-wide emphasis on Tribal consultation stemmed largely from President Obama's 2009 Memorandum, which required federal agencies to report more comprehensively on how they were moving toward "complete and consistent implementation of Executive Order 13175." The evaluations, action plans, and annual reporting requirements trickled down through the USDA to the various agencies and offices, and had a big impact on the Forest Service. However, that was not the only source of transition in this Agency. Changes in key personnel and the new perspective they brought to Agency leadership also had a transformational effect. This OTR Newsletter highlights a few of those personnel and their perspectives, as well as some of the many recent Tribal Relations successes within the Forest Service and with our partners.

We miss Joel Holtrup as Deputy Chief of the National Forest System and his ongoing support of Tribal issues. His role in strengthening the Tribal Relations Program and in championing the creation of the Office of Tribal Relations cannot be overemphasized. However, we now have a whole new cadre in the National Forest System Deputy Chief's Office supporting our effort, including the new Deputy Chief, Leslie Weldon. Joel's support of Tribal Relations lives on and multiplies. There are key supporters among the ranks of the NFS Directors and the State and Private Forestry Directors, and in the Office of the Chief. One of the exciting changes is the appointment of Butch Blazer as the new Deputy Undersecretary for Natural

Resources and the Environment.

In the Regions and in the field, the team of Tribal Relations Program leaders continues to change. We offer a more complete survey of these changes in this Newsletter.

I had envisioned 2011 as "the year of consultation" for the Forest Service, and it was; there was so much consultation that a new term of art was solidified: "consultation fatigue". We added a National-level consultation schedule to the OTR Web site, which established reporting requirements, and kept the conveyor belt of directives, regulations, and initiatives for consultation flowing through. In the process, we all learned many lessons about consultation overload and made attempts to combine, bundle, and otherwise streamline the consultation processes without shortchanging our Tribal partners on what the Agency learns from those interactions. We also experimented with greater collaborative processes and focused pre-consultation efforts that have proved invaluable.

In following the theme of transition, I expect 2012 to be "the year of consolidation." By that I mean it is time to bring together and solidify Agency directives and other guidance relating to Tribal Relations. That means revising the Tribal Relations sections of the Manual and Handbook, but also many other areas of the directives. It is time to make explicit many of the implicit aspects of the OTR work. The consultation work accomplished in 2011 has already contributed to this goal and nowhere more prominently than in

two keystone collaborative and consultative efforts: the Planning Rule and the Sacred Sites Policy and Procedures Review.

This newsletter would not be complete without highlighting new developments in FS research around Tribes and Climate Change. The newsletter also reports on two interconnected projects that the Agency is doing in partnership with the Intertribal Timber Council:

- A review of implementation of the Tribal Forest Protection Act;
- Starting up the Third Indian Forest Management Assessment Team (IFMAT) Report;

2012 promises to be a busy and exciting year! As we move forward please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff if we can be of assistance. I can be reached at fclark@fs.fed.us or 202-205-1514.



Photo courtesy of OTR

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Interview With Butch Blazer

Arthur “Butch” Blazer, the new Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment, is passionate about his work. Underneath a quiet exterior lies a deep commitment to restoring America’s forests to health by building relationships and long-standing partnerships.

Butch, a native of New Mexico and an enrolled member of the Mescalero Apache Tribe, strongly supports the Obama administration’s collaborative cross-jurisdictional approach to natural resource management. He is deeply committed to Secretary Vilsack’s priorities for the national forests—and the Nation’s forests—particularly his concern about watershed degradation and his call for targeted approaches to improving forests nationwide, especially at a time of tight budgets.

Butch endorses the Secretary’s “all-lands, all-hands” approach to responding to cross-jurisdictional challenges such as regional drought, invasive species, loss of open space, catastrophic wildfires, devastating outbreaks of insects and disease, and the overarching challenge of climate change. Such challenges cross borders and boundaries, and Butch believes they are best met through collaborative efforts on a landscape scale—through Forest Service partnerships with Tribes, States, private landowners, and other stakeholders across the landscapes shared by all.

“That’s why I took this job,” he said. “I am excited about this administration’s priorities and the Secretary’s all-lands approach. To hear that coming from the top was really fantastic.”

Butch’s background and experience led to his commitment to landscape-scale conservation through partnerships and collaboration, and he feels honored to have been asked to serve the Nation by fostering an all-lands approach.

“As a Native person,” he pointed out, “I was raised learning about the importance of natural resources and the responsibility we all have to care for our lands.”

After earning a degree in agriculture from New Mexico State University, Butch served for 27 years in the Bureau of Indian Affairs, culminating his career there as Superintendent of the agency. He was also elected to the Mescalero Apache Tribal Council and cofounded the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society, twice serving as Board President.

As founder of Blazer Conservation Connections, a consulting company located in Santa Fe, NM, Butch has substantial private sector experience. In 2003, he was appointed as New Mexico’s first Native American State Forester by Governor Bill Richardson. During his tenure, he chaired the Council of Western State Foresters and cochaired the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition.

“I feel very blessed to have had an exciting and diverse career,” Butch noted, “where I was able to work in Federal, State, and Tribal government and with nonprofit organizations. As a result, I feel prepared to take on this new position.”

Butch is passionate about partnerships, and he wants to make sure that the Forest Service uses existing partnerships and establishes new ones to help restore healthy, resilient forests on a landscape scale. As a former State Forester, he views the forest action plans prepared by the States under the 2008 Farm Bill as a good place to start. Using the plans, the Forest Service can work with partners to identify the highest priority landscapes for investing scarce resources while also leveraging outside contributions.

However, Butch acknowledges that many Tribes, for various reasons, were not able to participate in developing the forest action plans. He would like the Forest Service, in collaboration with other land managers, to help Tribes build their capacity for Tribal forest management. He would also like to engage more stakeholders, including youth, in land management planning across landscapes, for the benefit of generations to come.

“I was raised learning about the importance of natural resources and the responsibility we all have to care for our lands.”



Photo courtesy of NRE

BAER with Us!

Flooding, mudslides, erosion, water pollution, unsafe roads, falling trees—these are all very real risks people can face after a wildfire. The after-effects of large fires can cause serious threats to human life, safety, property and emergency risk management is often needed. The BAER (Burned Area Emergency Response) Program helps address this need. The BAER Program has been mitigating emergency risk management since the 70's and to keep the program relevant the Forest Service is currently revising the



Photo courtesy of Penny Luehring

BAER manual. The proposed revisions are intended to bring clarity and consistency nationwide.

Now that the consultation period has ended the comments are being analyzed and considered for inclusion in the final revisions. The final changes are scheduled to be released this winter and implementation will start in the spring of 2012.

If you have any questions regarding the BAER program, please contact Penny Luehring at pluehring@fs.fed.us. As the Forest Service works to make the post-fire emergency response program better, we thank you for BAERing with us!



Photo courtesy of Penny Luehring

Tribal Forest Protection Act

The Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA) is a beneficial Congressional authorization that sanctions Indian Tribes to protect Indian lands from wild fires, insects, diseases, erosion, floods, and other threats—that originate on adjacent or nearby Federal lands—by giving Tribes the power to initiate projects to manage and reduce threats on adjacent federal lands.

The Forest Service and the Intertribal Timber Council (ITC) entered into a cooperative agreement to initiate a TFPA Analysis. The

analysis will look at ways to improve the implementation of TFPA, identify risks, and ensure that projects are successful.

If you have specific questions regarding TFPA please contact Estelle J. Bowman at ejbowman@fs.fed.us or 202-205-4095 and visit the Web site at www.fs.fed.us/spf/tribalrelations/ to review updates.



Photo Courtesy of Six Rivers National Forest

Climate Change Partnership

Forest Service Northern Research Station (NRS) Research Geographer, Dr. Marla Emery has teamed up with University of Maine professors Dr. John Daigle and Dr. Darren Ranco (both members of the Penobscot Indian Nation). This team will work in close collaboration with the Wabanaki tribes of Maine to facilitate a planning process that addresses climate change implications for tribes and other stakeholders in the region. The work is one of three NRS projects bringing together tribal natural resource managers, tribal members, and other stakeholders to plan and manage for potential

climate change impacts. Collaborative work with SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry Professor Dr. Robin Kimmerer (Citizen Potawatomi Nation) and the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Environmental Task Force will assess opportunities for climate change mitigation and adaptation related to forest stewardship in tribal communities. Dr. Emery and the Forest Products Laboratory's Michael Dockry also represent Forest Service Research in a partnership with the College of Menominee Nation, which examines Menominee perspectives on climate change. All studies support work by Native students.

We look forward to highlighting collaborative projects that build relationships and capacity for cross-cultural cooperation related to climate change between the USFS and indigenous nations.

For more information regarding this project please contact Dr. Marla Emery at memery@fs.fed.us or 802-951-6771, ext. 1111.

The Planning Rule

The Forest Service began development of a new planning rule in December 2009, and released the proposed planning rule on February 14, 2011. The proposed planning rule was developed through a collaborative process, including contributions from Tribes, the general public, other Federal agencies, and state and local governments.

Following the release of the proposed planning rule, over 300,000 comments were submitted by the public during the public comment period. These comments were analyzed and the Agency is considering whether changes to the proposed rule may be warranted due to these comments. The final programmatic environmental impact statement (PEIS) is anticipated to be released in January 2012. Thirty days following the release of the PEIS,

a Record of Decision and final rule will be issued.

Since the beginning of the rulemaking process in 2009, the Forest Service has made a concerted effort to engage federally recognized Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations in meaningful Government-to-Government consultation and also through collaborative efforts designed to complement the Government-to-Government consultation process. The collaborative process guiding the development of the planning rule will not end with the release of a new planning rule, collaboration will continue as the rule is implemented and plans are revised or amended under the new rule. In fact, the Department and the Agency feel that collaboration is necessary to make the implementation of this rule successful.

The nationwide consultation sessions and input received from Tribes through other participation opportunities and from the letters submitted by Tribes during the public comment period have not only been valuable in the development of the rule, but have also strengthened the government-to-government relationship between Tribes and the Forest Service.

The Forest Service looks forward to working with Tribes on implementing the new planning rule and continuing to work together on all consultations. If you have specific questions regarding the planning rule please contact Richard Rine at rrine@fs.fed.us and visit the planning rule Web site at www.fs.usda.gov/planningrule.

“The Forest Service looks forward to working with Tribes on implementing the new planning rule and continuing to work together on all consultations.”

Indian Forest Management & Assessment Team Study III



Photo courtesy of ITC

The management of Indian forests consists of a multitude of complex issues including complying with Tribal laws and regulations and federal laws. To help assess the needs, effectiveness, and success of Tribal forestry practices Congress enacted the National Indian Forest Resources Management Act of 1990, which directs the Secretary of the Interior to obtain an independent assessment of the status and management of Indian forests every 10 years.

The independent assessment is commonly referred to as IFMAT (Indian Forest Management & Assessment Team) Study. The first report was provided to Congress in 1993, the second in 2003, and the team is now gearing up for the third report that is scheduled to be presented to Congress in 2013. Since its inception the IFMAT Study has brought Tribal, Federal, and non-federal partners together to advance Indian forest management. The reports are excellent examples of the benefits of Government-to-Government cooperation and coordination among Federal agencies. The reports have also fostered increased coordination among Tribes, BIA, the Forest Service, and NGO's.

The Forest Service has pledged to be a more active partner by participating in the interagency working group

and providing a grant to the NGO Intertribal Timber Council to begin the analysis.

For additional information on the IFMAT Study III please contact Estelle J. Bowman at ejb Bowman@fs.fed.us or 202-205-4095.



Photo courtesy of Barbra Blake

Awards

In 2010 DTR announced the first annual Tribal Relations Awards. Given the great support for these awards and the opportunity to showcase the wonderful talent in the field we are excited to congratulate the 2011 recipients:

Lifetime Achievement Award- Marsha Butterfield
Lifetime Achievement Award- Daniel McCarthy
Leadership in Tribal Relations- Brian Townsend
Tribal Professional Excellence
 Dr. Jeremiah R. Pinto and
 Dr. R. Kasten Dumroese.

Partnership Awards:

- Ozark/St. Francis National Forests
- Ouachita National Forests
- Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
- Muscogee(Creek) Nation
- Caddo Nation of Oklahoma
- Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma
- Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma

We would like to thank everyone for your hard work and dedication. For additional information or to submit a nomination for activities performed in FY 2011 please contact Pam Williams at:

pwilliams@fs.fed.us or 202-205-1514.



Photo courtesy of the Office of Communication (Fred Clark, Marsha Butterfield, Estelle Bowman)

“The Secretary sought to evaluate the unintended consequences of land management decisions affecting Native American Sacred Sites and communities whose cultural survival is deeply rooted to these sites.”

Sacred Sites

In 2009 Secretary of Agriculture, Thomas J. Vilsack, asked the Forest Service to work with the Department of Agriculture (USDA) Office of Tribal Relations (OTR) to review existing laws, regulations, and policies and examine the effectiveness of protection for American Indian and Alaska Native sacred sites located on National Forest System lands. He sought to evaluate the unintended consequences of land management decisions affecting Native American Sacred Sites and communities whose cultural survival is deeply rooted to these sites.

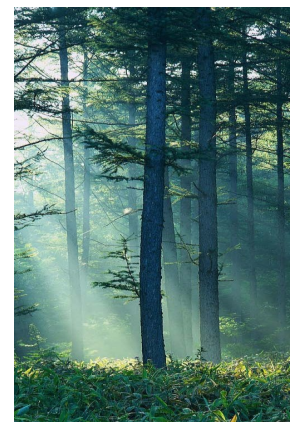
The Forest Service started the collaborative process with a series of more than 50 listening sessions conducted around the country to talk to Tribes and other Native American communities to find out how the Agency can do a better job addressing sacred site issues while simultaneously balancing pursuit of the Agency’s mission to deliver forest goods

and services for current and future generations. They were held in Indian Country, in Alaska Native villages, telephonically, and face-to-face, at inter-tribal venues and at numerous other locations as requested by Tribes. These listening sessions reached out to native communities, engaging not only Tribal leadership but also culture-keepers, traditional practitioners, and unaffiliated native descendants. The review included a survey of Forest Service employees in the field to get feedback on what they think and what they have observed about the effectiveness of the Agency’s efforts to manage land that includes Sacred Sites.

Based on what was heard, the Forest Service and USDA OTR prepared a draft report that was sent to all Federally Recognized Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations for Consultation. The report was also published in the Federal Register for public comment. The Agency

is now reviewing comments and preparing the final report, which will be given to the Secretary this winter.

For more information please visit the Forest Service Sacred Sites Web page at <http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/tribalrelations/sacredsites.shtml>; email TribalSacredSites@fs.fed.us, or call Fred Clark at 202-205-1514.



FS Stock Photo

Personnel: New faces and Congratulations

Over the past year the Office of Tribal Relations has seen many changes, most notable are in the new faces of the staff. We are excited to welcome Estelle J. Bowman, Assistant Director; Pam Williams, Administrative Assistant; Mariel Murray, summer intern; Ericka Luna, Program Specialist; and our newest member, Alicia Bell-Sheete, Management and Policy Analyst. We are also looking forward to Steve Lowery joining the team on a detail assignment for 120 days. Steve hails from the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina and is currently working as a Program Liaison Specialist in the USDA Office of the Executive Secretary.

In addition to our new faces we would like to congratulate Faline Haven on her position with the Department of Interior. Faline served as a Management and Policy Analyst for 3 years, and while she is greatly missed, we look forward to working with her in her new role.



Pam Williams at the USET Conference

We would also like to thank Chris Farley, who served as the OTR Acting Assistant Director. Chris is the Climate Change Specialist in Research and Development, and still works closely with OTR and projects that serve Indian Country.

We are also excited to announce some changes in the field; Merv George

(R5) is the new Deputy Forest Supervisor on Six Rivers National Forest; Willie Begay is the acting Region 6 Tribal Relations Liaison; Cheryl Vandenburg is the acting Deputy Director State & Private Forestry (R1 and R4) and Christine Bradbury (R1 and R4) is the acting Tribal Relations Specialist.

Last, but certainly not least we would like to extend our gratitude and warm felt congratulations to Ken Kessler (OTR) and Garry Harris (R6) on their recent retirements. These two gentlemen have been an invaluable resource to the Forest Service and Indian Country and their expertise will be greatly missed.



Photo courtesy of Ken Kessler

The Forest Service, Tribes, and Climate Change

Secretary of Agriculture, Thomas J. Vilsack, announced a \$1 billion U.S. contribution to forest conservation over 2010-2012. The strategic Framework for Responding to Climate Change includes 4 concepts 1) Agency Capacity; 2) Partnerships & Education; 3) Adaptation; and 4) Mitigation & Sustainable Consumption.

In 2010, the Forest Service started a coordinated approach to Tribal climate change research, which includes tribes in the dialogue on climate change and a coordinated approach to research. Five Forest Service research stations, including the Pacific Northwest Research Station, Rocky Mountain Research Station, and the Northern Research Station, now work together.

One of the many important projects that we would like to highlight is the

collaborative project between the University of Oregon Environmental Studies Program and the USDA Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station.

This Tribal Climate Change Project is a collaborative project between the University of Oregon Environmental Studies Program and the USDA Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station. The project aims to understand the needs, lessons learned, and opportunities to work with Tribes on climate change. The three key goals include Tribal adaptation and mitigation planning; Management of off-reservation resources; and Tribal consultation in the context of climate change.

American Indians and Alaska Natives have been planning for the physical effects of climate change. This infor-

mation will be used to inform resource management decision-making in the context of climate change. This project is part of the USDA Forest Service 2010 Coordinated Approach to Tribal Climate Change Research. Other Forest Service Research Stations engaged in this type of research include the Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station and the Forest Service Northern Research Station.

For additional information please contact Ellen Donoghue, USDA Forest Service, PNW Research Station, edonoghue@fs.fed.us; Kathy Lynn, University of Oregon, Environmental Studies Program, kathy@uoregon.edu; or visit the Web site at <http://tribalclimate.uoregon.edu>.

“In 2010, the Forest Service started a coordinated approach to Tribal climate change research...”

Consultation Corner

This section of the newsletter will list current consultation efforts, provide any new or additional information and acts a forum to initiate discussion of consultation and collaboration.

Almost everyone who works in or around the Tribal Relations can attest to the fact that with regard to Request for Consultation (RFCs) - when it rains it pours! At least that has been the case over much of the past year when RFCs seem to come in waves from FS Staffs. Several months ago, we were getting 2 to 4 new consultation requests a month. Recently the pace has slowed considerably.

As some of you know, OTR made valiant efforts to "bundle" consultations earlier

this year in order to try to ease the administrative burden on FS Line Officers and Tribes. The effort was met with mixed success. The idea behind bundling was to try to group RFCs into batches that could be released simultaneously.

OTR will continue to look for opportunities to bundle, combine, dovetail, mingle and merge these types of administrative actions when and where it makes sense. We want you to know that we are thinking about it and are open to more suggestions!

Please check the Web site for updates and upcoming consultations Please check the Web site for updates.

Burned Area Emergency Response

OPENED: 06/24/2011

CLOSED: 10/07/2011

Wilderness Management

OPENED: 06/13/2011

CLOSED: 12/31/2011

Sacred Sites -

OPENED: 07/2011

CLOSED: 10/04/2011

Planning Rule

OPENED: 07/14/2011

CLOSED: Late 2011

Small Business Timber Sale Set-Aside

OPENS: TBD.

For additional information regarding consultation please visit the [Tribal Consultation Calendar](#) or contact Ericka Luna at elluna@fs.fed.us.

Note from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Thank you for your interest in the Forest Service Office of Tribal Relations past success and future work. We plan on releasing a quarterly newsletter that highlights not only the Washington Office but also showcases the amazing work being done in the field and with our partners.

As we start planning for the next newsletter please feel free to contact me about anything you would like to see, a great story you would like to

share, or suggestions on how we can make it better. The expected publication schedule is as follows:

Winter - January

Spring - April

Summer - July

Fall - October

In addition to our newsletter we will be utilizing our Web site more and I encourage everyone to visit often. Likewise, please contact me if you have ideas, stories, or ways that we can

make the Web site better. I can be reached by email at: elluna@fs.fed.us and by phone at 202-306-1649 or 202-205-0980.

Thank you again for your interest. We look forward to working with all of you as we strive to help build long-term collaborative partnerships with Tribes.

Sincerely,
Ericka

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