



Forestry Testimony in D.C.

Tribal Forest Manager Jonathan Brooks joined a distinguished panel in Washington D.C to provide testimony to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs concerning the effects of forest management and wildfires in Indian Country. Senator

“Our forests have been actively managed through various forest management activities, predominantly sustainable timber harvests (logging), prescribed fire, pre-commercial thinning, and hazardous fuels reduction thinnings. Logging began early in the 1900’s, and since that time, our management



Jonathan Brooks, Senator John McCain and Logan Lawson

John McCain, Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs Kevin Washburn, Mescalero Apache Nation President Danny Breuninger, and Philip Rigdon, Intertribal Timber Council President were also among those providing valuable input and testimony. In a written statement, Jonathan declared:

has evolved into what it is today. Our tribal leaders, our people, and our trust agents have embraced a history, a culture, and a need for forest management which has helped create a healthy and sustainable forest landscape that has adapted to the demands, needs, and objectives of the WMAT and the forest itself. The forests have always been a part

our culture and our heritage, providing food, water, medicine, and materials for survival; and now today that includes providing jobs and economic gains for the benefit of the Tribe and our people.” Over and over again Jonathan stressed the importance of active forest management. In one particularly poignant portion of his testimony he stated: *“Preserving and protecting our forests is our duty, and that has only been accomplished through our legacy of active forest management. Actively managed southwest pinyon/juniper woodlands, ponderosa pine forests, and mixed conifer forests are forests that are far more resilient against the threat of today’s devastating, catastrophic wildfires than unmanaged forests, which do not receive frequent thinning, logging, and/or prescribed burning.”* His testimony continued with Jonathan giving examples from the Rodeo-Chediski Fire, the Wallow and Rock Creek Fires, work done in coordination with the Apache/Sitgreaves NF through the Tribal Forest

Protection Act, and some biomass removal and utilization projects. He emphasized that *“The goals and objectives that guide our forest management are multifaceted and provide a wide range of economic, cultural and ecological benefits for our land, our resources, and our people.”* In an exchange with Senator McCain during the Q&A period, Jonathan stated that *“We manage all diameter classes of trees. We practice uneven-aged management which creates a more sustainable and healthy ecosystem. We don’t go in and create stands of trees that are the same age.”* This excellent testimony appeared well received by the Senate Committee and people present. The entire testimony can be found on-line through www.indianz.com/News/2014/013691.asp - *“All of this is possible due to the active and responsible management of these forests between the WMAT and the BLA.”* — Jonathan Brooks