REPORT ON THE STATUS OF INDIAN FOREST LANDS
FISCAL YEAR 2018

AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 312 (C)
OF THE

NATIONAL INDIAN FOREST RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ACT
P.L. 101-630

SUBMITTED TO

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INDIAN, INSULAR AND ALASKA NATIVE AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AND

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE

SUBMITTED BY

DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF TRUST SERVICES
DIVISION OF FORESTRY AND WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

WASHINGTON, D.C.

March, 2019

Indian Forestry Status Report to Congress
Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Trust Services
Division of Forestry and Wildland Fire Management

Fiscal Year 2018

Purpose

Public Law 101-630, Title III, 104 Stat. 4532, titled the *National Indian Forest Resources Management Act of 1990*, requires the Secretary of the Interior to submit an annual Indian Forestry Status Report to Congress. Section 312 (c) of this Act reads as follows:

> *STATUS REPORT TO CONGRESS- The Secretary shall submit, within 1 year of the first full fiscal year after the date of enactment of this title and within 6 months of the end of each succeeding fiscal year, a report to Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the United States House of Representatives, the Select Committee on Indian Affairs of the United States Senate, and to the affected Indian tribes a report on the status of Indian forest lands with respect to standards, goals and objectives set forth in approved forest management plans for each Indian tribe with Indian forest lands. The report shall identify the amount of Indian forest land in need of forestation or other silviculture treatment and the quantity of timber available for sale, offered for sale, and sold for each Indian tribe.*

This Report is prepared and submitted by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the primary Federal agency responsible for fiduciary trust oversight of forest management activities on Indian forest lands.

The BIA Forestry Mission

The mission of the BIA, Office of Trust Services, Division of Forestry and Wildland Fire Management is to provide specialized budget and policy oversight and technical expertise in forest and wildland fire management to Native American Indian Tribes and Alaska Natives. In cooperation with 310 Tribes, over 18.5 million acres of Tribal and allotted trust forestland are actively managed for a variety of purposes. Forests provide an essential source of revenue and jobs for Tribes and individual Indians, and play an important role in sustaining tribal cultures and traditions. Management activities within forestlands are governed by forest management plans which outline ecologically and biologically sustainable forest management practices formulated to meet tribal goals and objectives. Forest management activities include timber sales, timber stand improvement (thinning), prescribed burning, and reforestation.

The BIA is committed to helping tribes manage forests to provide a sustained yield of forest products and to restore and maintain resilient and ecologically-functional lands. BIA's interdisciplinary approach to forest resource management includes partnerships

with Tribal forestry and fire programs, Federal, State, and local land management agencies, the Intertribal Timber Council, academia, and non-governmental agencies. Tribes actively work with cooperators such as the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management through the Tribal Forest Protection Act and other authorities which create opportunities for larger cross-jurisdictional treatments. The BIA supports Tribal goals aimed at achieving a balance of the protection of valued landscapes with the production of economic benefit through active forest management.

Fiscal Year 2018 Accomplishments:

- 13,773 acres planted (Reforestation)
- 16,223 acres thinned (Timber Stand Improvement)
- 750 million board feet of timber available for harvest (allowable annual cut)
- 388 million board feet of timber harvested generating $54 million in Tribal income

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY2017	FY2018
Timber Harvested *(thousand board feet)*	355,887	445,642	384,246	388,002
Timber Available for Harvest *(thousand board feet)*	723,000	727,000	740,000	750,000
Stumpage Income Generated *($ dollars)*	$ 44,852,102	$ 55,074,148	$54,526,516	$86,127,672
Thinning Acres	18,044	14,111	17,073	16,223
Reforestation Acres	11,114	9,825	11,306	13,773

Current Challenges

Indian forestry has historically faced an array of complex challenges, and this continues to be true. Climate change, insect infestations and disease outbreaks, wildfire, and development and land conversion all threaten the health of Tribal forests. The decline in budget allocations and the loss of forestry staffing and experience, along with the nation-wide decline in industrial infrastructure for processing forest products have all adversely impacted the ability to actively manage forest health by creating resilient landscapes through forest product sales, timber stand improvement (thinning), and reforestation. Since 2008, the volume of forest products harvested from Indian forest lands has been approximately one-half of the amount available. Harvest of forest products is crucial to maintaining the health and resilience of Tribal forest lands, and is the only demonstrably revenue-positive way in which to do so.

The National Indian Forest Resources Management Act and the Indian Forest Management Assessment Team

The National Indian Forest Resources Management Act of 1990 (NIFRMA, P.L. 101-630, Title III, 104 Stat. 4532) directs the Secretary of the Interior to undertake forest

management activities which "… develop, maintain, and enhance Indian forest land in a perpetually productive state in accordance with the principles of sustained yield and with the standards and objectives set forth in tribal forest management plans." In addition, the NIFRMA also directs the Secretary of the Interior to undertake forest management activities which ensure "…the regulation of Indian forest lands in a manner that will ensure the use of good method and order in harvesting so as to make possible, on a sustained yield basis, continuous productivity and a perpetual forest business." It is clear from the NIFRMA and Indian Forestry's other authorities that the management of the forest through the harvest of forest products is vital to the maintenance of forest health, sustainable ecological resilience, and tribal communities and economies dependent on wood fiber extraction enterprises.

The NIFRMA requires the Secretary of the Interior to conduct an independent assessment of Indian Forestry every 10 years. During the development of the NIFRMA, Congress declared that the United States has a trust responsibility toward Indian forest lands, and that Federal investment in Indian forest management is significantly below the level of investment in Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, or private forest land management (25 USC Sec. 3111).

The Indian Forest Management Assessment Team (IFMAT) found in their recently completed 2013 report that "the federal government continues to inadequately fulfill its trust obligations to Indian forestry" and that "funding and staffing levels are lower now than at the time of IFMAT-I and well below those of comparable public and private programs."

The IFMAT assessment can be found at:
http://www.itcnet.org/issues_projects/issues_2/forest_management/assessment.html

For questions related to this report, please contact Matthew Anderson, acting Chief Forester, Division of Forestry and Wildland Fire Management, BIA Office of Trust Services, at (505) 563-3372 or, matthew.anderson@bia.gov.

Mailed inquiries may be sent to:

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FY 2018 INDIAN FORESTRY STATUS REPORT TO CONGRESS											
	Current Approved Forest Management Plans	Reforestation		Timber Stand Improvement		Available Volume		Timber Volume		Timber Harvested	
Reservation		Planted Acres	Need Acres	Thinned Acres	Need Acres	Timberland (Thousand Board Feet)	Woodland (Thousand Cords)	Offered (MBM)	Sold (MBM)	Volume (MBM)	Value ($)
ALASKA TOTALS	**11**	**0**	**62**	**21**	**5,141**	**10,583**	**0**	**9,651**	**251**	**251**	**$ 110,375**
EASTERN TOTALS	**24**	**0**	**741**	**423**	**18,113**	**40,900**	**0**	**10,008**	**9,376**	**17,706**	**$ 1,490,036**
EASTERN OKLAHOMA TOTALS	**14**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**2,267**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**$ -**
GREAT PLAINS TOTALS	**15**	**4**	**13,300**	**0**	**5,443**	**2,921**	**50**	**30**	**0**	**75**	**$ 2,620**
MIDWEST TOTALS	**41**	**683**	**60,017**	**5,210**	**35,193**	**177,307**	**0**	**87,129**	**86,677**	**81,857**	**$ 8,697,996**
NAVAJO TOTALS	**1**	**0**	**5**	**0**	**91**	**15,900**	**483**	**23,230**	**23,230**	**17,473**	**$ 100,701**
NORTHWEST TOTALS	**49**	**10,835**	**99,204**	**7,510**	**256,227**	**373,526**	**38**	**238,697**	**227,818**	**255,503**	**$ 68,162,785**
PACIFIC TOTALS	**70**	**0**	**14,809**	**0**	**25,419**	**14,546**	**314**	**15,474**	**14,683**	**7,807**	**$ 1,900,973**
ROCKY MOUNTAIN TOTALS	**7**	**1,637**	**31,511**	**324**	**95,318**	**16,690**	**4**	**6,407**	**5,935**	**421**	**$ 44,447**
SOUTHERN PLAINS TOTALS	**22**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**600**	**0**	**17**	**17**	**17**	**$ 3,788**
SOUTHWEST TOTALS	**23**	**544**	**28,222**	**1,407**	**88,554**	**34,600**	**66**	**929**	**929**	**3,245**	**$ 136,259**
WESTERN TOTALS	**37**	**70**	**65,546**	**1,328**	**82,289**	**60,520**	**56**	**50,570**	**10,561**	**3,648**	**$ 5,477,692**
NATIONAL TOTALS	**314**	**13,773**	**313,417**	**16,223**	**611,788**	**750,361**	**1,014**	**442,143**	**379,478**	**388,002**	**$ 86,127,672**