Indian Forest Management Assessment Team report (IFMAT) IV Funding Comparison

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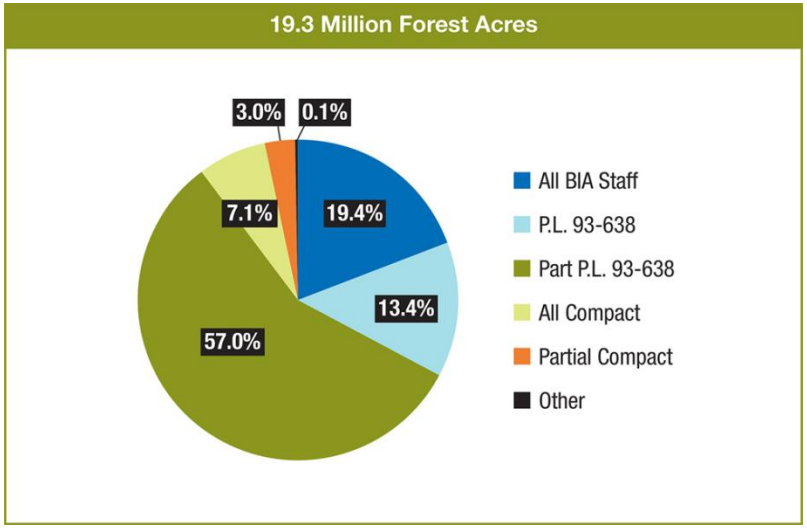
Current Forest Condition

IFMAT Overview

- National Indian Forest Resource Management Act (NIFRMA) of 1990 mandated an independent national assessment of Indian forests and forest management once every 10-years.
- "conduct an independent assessment of Indian forest lands and Indian forest land management practices."
- Findings of the IFMAT report must be prepared and reported to Congress.
- The report covers eight tasks mandated in NIFRMA, and any additional tasks at ITC's request
- The IFMAT IV team visited 41 reservations, and BIA Regional and Central offices over a 2 years period to inform the results of IFMAT IV

Findings of the IFMAT report

- **There is a unique tribal vision of forest management including a focus on stewardship and non-timber forest products as self governance increases**
  - 1991- 66% BIA/34% Tribal
  - 2019- 24% BIA/76% Tribal
- **Tribes continue to question Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) as the measure of success.**
  - Tribes are shifting from a priority on timber revenues to cultural and ecosystem services
  - Harvest volume has dropped from more than 1 billion board feet (1975) to 329 million in 2025.



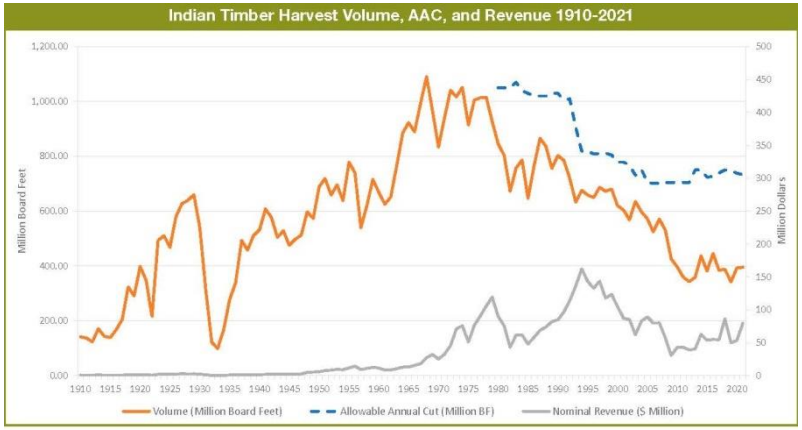


Figure Intro.5. Indian timber harvest, allowable annual cut, and revenue.

Findings of the IFMAT report

- **Funding to support tribal forest management is limited**
  - Increases are not keeping pace with inflation
  - Shift from recurring to non-recurring funding sources (7% reduction since 2011)
  - In addition to reduced funding, Tribal trust forest acres have increased by more than 20% since 1991
  - Forested acres increased from 15.6 to 19.3 million
  - Total Trust acres increases from 49.1 to 57.5 million

Year	Funding	Inflation Adjusted
1991	$40.8 mil	$76.7 mil
2001	$58.7 mil	$84.5 mil
2011	$52 mil	$58.8 mil
2019	$63.6 mil	$63.3 mil

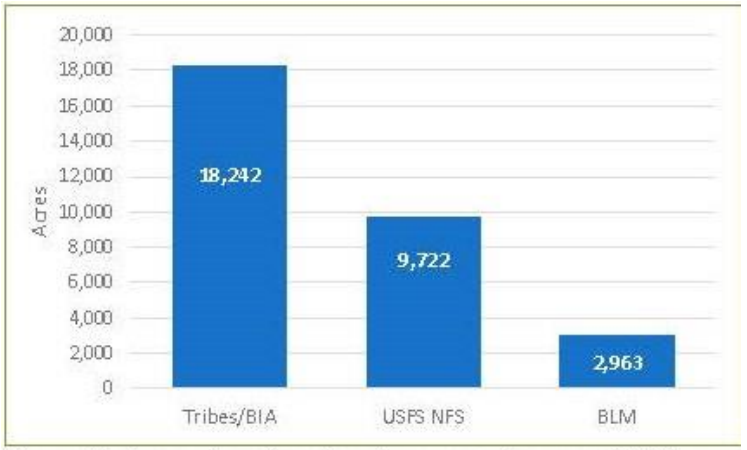
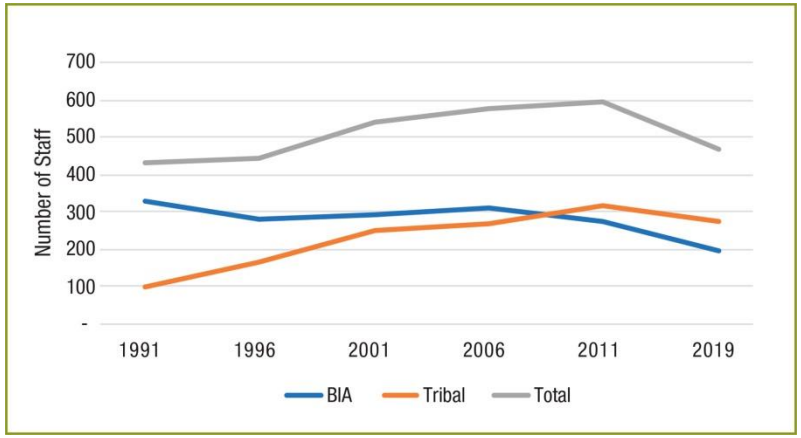
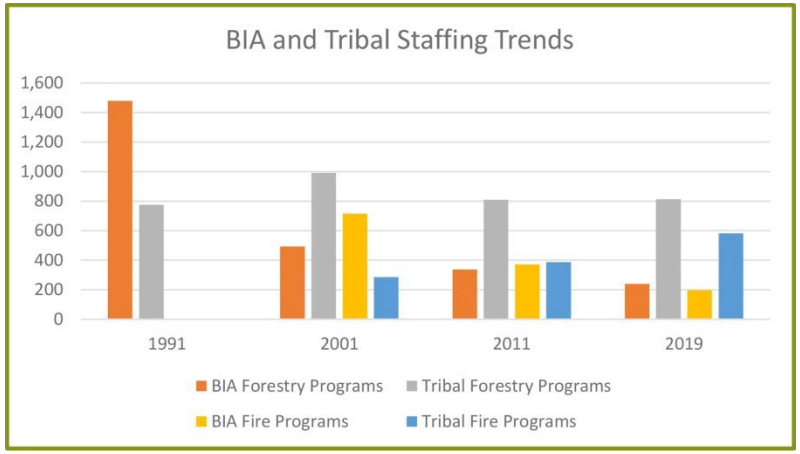


Figure C.2. Comparison of number of acres per forestry staff 2019.

Findings of the IFMAT report

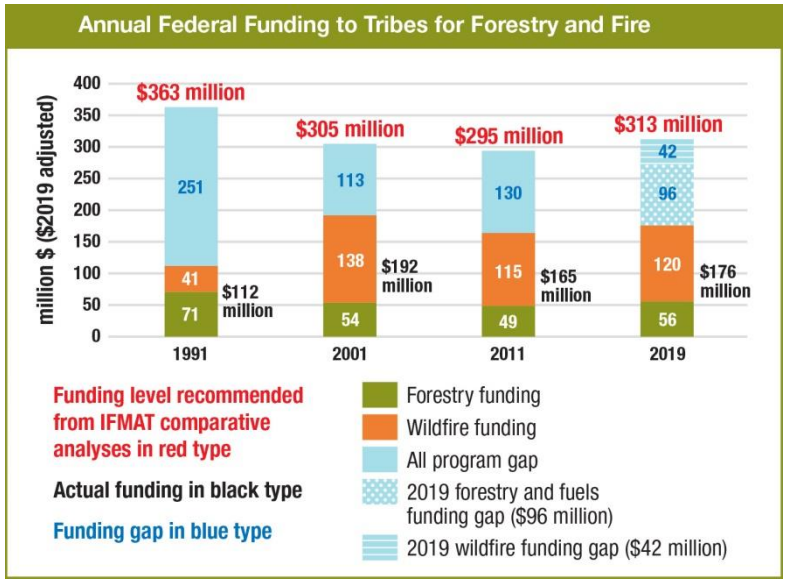
- **Limited staffing and issues around workforce capacity are impacting tribal forest management**
  - 51% of the workforce is over 50
  - 33% less than 40
  - Workforce development will be critical to maintaining and expanding the current workforce
  - BIA DRP losses are having impacts
- **Increased complexity including climate change adaptation, cross-boundary co-management, and growing interest in carbon management**
- **Roads, facilities, and enforcement on tribal forests are in a dire state**





Major Recommendations

- **Achieve funding parity**
  - An annual increase of $96 million is needed to reach per-acre parity with National Forest and BLM funding
  - Multiple compacted programs reported annual funding from BIA had not increased in 20 years
- **Defining the governance structure of tribal forestry for the future**
  - P.L. 93-638
  - ITARA (Extended through 2036)
- **Address immediate threats to tribal forests**
  - Includes both on reservation needs, and capacity to use of co-management authorities on adjacent federal land





Off-Reservation Authorities

- **Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA)**
  - Authorized as a pilot under the 2018 Farm Bill
  - Limited use due to funding and staffing limitations
- **Good Neighbor Authority (GNA)**
  - Tribes authorized to participate under the 2018 Farm Bill
  - Tribes were added to that authority, but could not use program revenue. That issue was addressed with the EXPLORE Act passage in Jan, 2025
- **Shared Stewardship Agreements**
  - Agreements with the U.S. Forest Service to accomplish work on Forest Service managed land

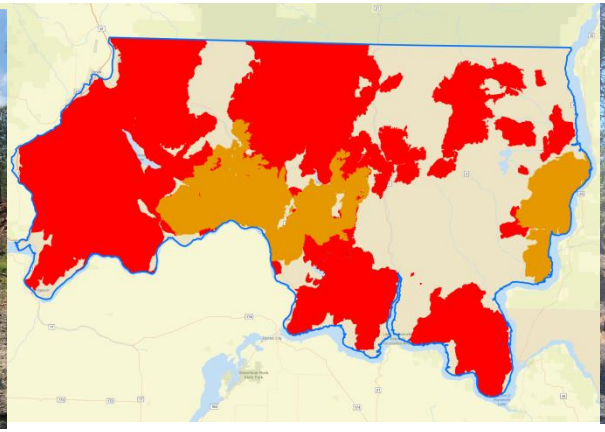




Fire Management

- **New U.S. Wildland Fire Service**
  - All the former Department of Interior (DOI) fire staff have been consolidated into one fire service
  - Office of Tribal Trust
  - New mechanism and contracts to get funding to tribal 638 programs
  - The uncertainty associated with the new fire management bureau makes funding to achieve forest management goals more important.







Next Steps

- **Continue to support Tribal forestry Funding**
  - Based on the finding and recommendations in the IFMAT report consistent incremental increases are needed to build the programs that Tribes need
- **Recognize the benefits to both Reservation and off-reservation work**
  - Increased tribal staffing capacity increases work both on and off-reservation
- **Brief Department of Interior staff and the Administration**
  - ITC continues to meet with Administration staff and Departments to brief them on the findings of the report, and educate DOI on the importance of forestry and fire funding



