



Trust Land Resources • Resources Stewardship • Results that Matter

DEPUTY DIRECTOR MESSAGE

Greetings, I completed an extended detail with the Office of Indian Services this October 2023, just in time to roll up my sleeves and identify OTS priorities for Fiscal Year 2024. I am proud of the work OTS was able to accomplish as identified in the Fiscal Year 2023 Accomplishment report available on our main OTS web page at <https://www.bia.gov/bia/ots>.

Our vision in Trust Services is to layout a future that addresses the needs expressed in writing and through verbal comments at nationwide Tribal consultation sessions held in FY 2023. We will soon be rolling out an 2023-2026 OTS Strategic Plan based on a collaborative effort of our Division Chiefs in a 2-day Strategic Plan working session.

Fiscal Year 2024 gives us an extended opportunity to address critical infrastructure projects and Tribal climate resilience work utilizing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding. We are also standing up a newly funded Bison Protection Program under our Directorate of Environmental & Natural Resources.

We made huge advances with Human Capital initiatives by prioritizing hiring of subject matter experts in long vacant positions. Our greatest asset in OTS remains the experience and commitment of our staff, both seasoned and new recruits. Leading OTS has been one of my greatest honors because the work we do has a direct impact on Tribal resource protection and Indian self-determination. It is good to be back!

Johnna Blackhair
Deputy Bureau Director-Trust Services

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“It does not require many words to speak the truth.”

Chief Joseph, Nez Perce

TRUST SERVICES OVERVIEW

JOB OPENINGS & STAFF CHANGES

Job Vacancies

Program	Closed	Position Title/Grade	Location
Climate	11/16/2023	Regional Climate Resilience Coordinator, GS-11-12	Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, AK
Pathways	10/30/2023	Student Trainee, GS-2-4	Negotiable

Welcome New Employees in 2023

Program	Name	Title	Location
NIFC	Robert C. Dodgen	Aviation Operations Specialist	Remote
NIFC	Mildred A. Garcia	Budget Analyst	Remote
NIFC	Shelby Glass	Budget Analyst	Remote
NIFC	Melanie J. Walsey	Financial Specialist	Boise, ID
Forestry FIP	Jennifer D. Kennedy	Forester	Remote
Forestry FIP	Casey R. Sigg	Forester	Lakewood, CO

Best Wishes to Employee Departing Trust Services in 2023

Program	Name	Title	State	Reason
NIFC	Olivia Lucero-Nelson	Administrative Assistant	NM	Retired
Forestry FIP	Thomas Lowell	Forester	CO	Transfer USFS

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

The Office of Trust Services leadership gathered together at the National Indian Programs Training Center in Albuquerque for two days of Strategic Planning from September 27-28, 2023. A final draft Strategic Plan is expected to be completed by December 31, 2023.



Photo: working session writing strategic goals from the perspective of each Division. Pictured left to right: Rodney Eisenbraun, Water and Power, Albert Bond, Energy & Mineral Development, Chid Murphy, Resource & Integration, and Payton Batliner, Indian Energy Service Center

Additional photos from the September Strategic Planning Session in Albuquerque, NM



Photo: Facilitator discussing steps in building a strategic planning with Division Chiefs



Trina Locke, Acting Deputy Bureau Director-Trust Services (pictured in green) leads initiative for development of first ever OTS Strategic Plan

TRAINING OPPORTUNITY



OTS Land Management Certificate Program

The Office of Trust Services (OTS) is offering a Land Management Certificate Program to enhance the skills and knowledge of BIA Land professionals through a partnership with the Indian Land Tenure Foundation (ILTF). Participants will gain new skills while earning 14.4 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) issued by the United Tribes Technical College.

Tuition paid by OTS

This is a \$1,200 benefit to the employee (includes 12 online self-study courses) paid by OTS.

Time Commitment

It is estimated the on-line study courses will take between 10-16 hours each. Students may elect to take all 12 classes, or a smaller more focused approach.

Courses focus on

- Land Acquisitions
- Real Estate Principles and Practice
- General Realty
- Land Management and Planning

Target Audience

Central Office, Region or Agency level employees working in any Trust program: Realty, Probate, Forestry, Wildland Fire, Water & Power Resources, Energy and Minerals, Geospatial services, Land Titles and Records, Indian Energy Service Center, Trust land Consolidation, Natural Resources, Workforce Development, Program Management.



Registration is in DOI Talent

Search for "OTS Land Management and follow instructions to submit your request or [click here](#) to access required questionnaire and receive course approval.

For more information contact

Dawn Selwyn, Trust Officer, at dawn.selwyn@bia.gov

WHO WE SERVE



Fancy Shawl Dancer and the Badlands of South Dakota

Office of Trust Services

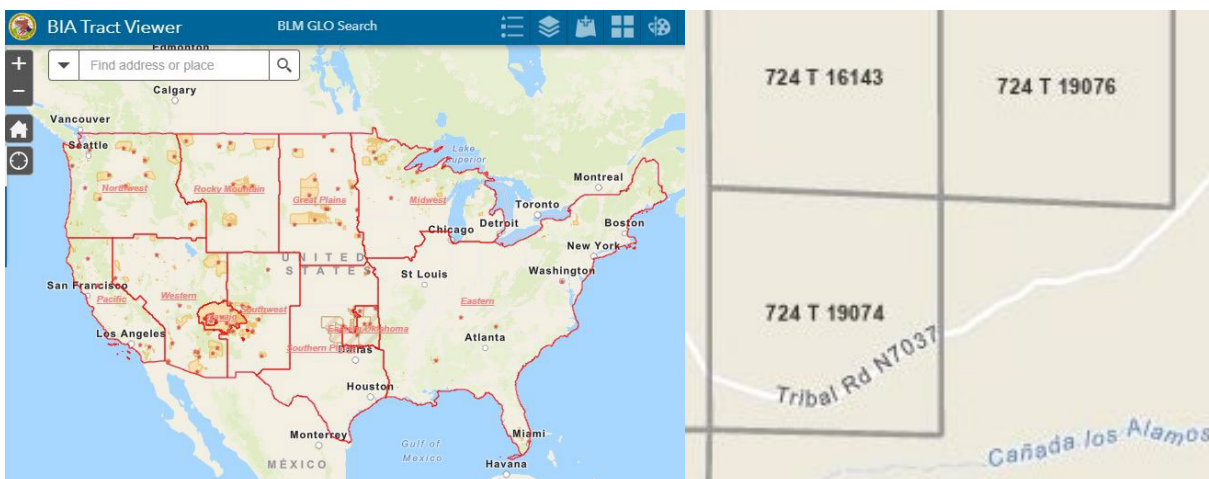
The BIA, OTS has offices nationwide, and assists Tribal governments and allottees in managing, protecting, and developing their trust lands and natural resources, which total 56 million surface acres and 60 million acres of subsurface mineral estates. OTS programs aid landowners in the stewardship of their cultural, spiritual, and traditional resources, and help Tribal governments create sustainable sources of revenue and jobs for their communities.

Federally recognized Tribes

There are currently 574 Federally Recognized Tribes as of January 28, 2022. [Click here](#) for a list of Indian entities recognize by and eligible to receive services from the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs.

U.S. Domestic Sovereign Nations: Land Areas of Federally Recognized Tribes Interactive map is available at <https://biamaps.geoplatform.gov/BIA-OpenData>.

The BIA Tract Viewer allows the user to easily access an interactive map displaying the details for tracts, parcels, and other relevant BIA lands. This viewer provides tools to assist with research, planning, and reporting. On July 5, 2023, the OTS, Branch of Geospatial Support authorized this application and data for public viewing. Indians. estates. OTS programs aid landowners in the stewardship of their cultural, spiritual, and traditional resources, and help Tribal governments create sustainable sources of revenue and jobs for their communities.



BIA Tract Viewer application and view of United States BIA Regions, Tribal lands and Tracts mapped on Tribal lands

INSTAGRAM SHARE: PEOPLE OF INTERIOR-NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH



“I love working with Native Youth and enabling them to explore and fully appreciate their unique connections to their land. They have the energy, drive, and enthusiasm the world needs”.

**Mackenzie Neal
Supervisory Program Manager**

Mackenzie Neal, , the Supervisory Program Manager who leads BIA's OTS Pathways Internship Program and Indian Youth Service Corps (IYSC) was highlighted on the [DOI's People Of Interior's Instagram page](#).

I strive to promote traditional ecological knowledge and love seeing the transformational effects of intergenerational and culturally-relevant programming. My job allows me to touch on many parts of BIA and see the wide range of activities and services we provide to Tribal nations. From Tribal Climate Adaptation to Wildland Fire Management, from Policy to Trust Real Estate, there's so much to do at the BIA!

From the 1800s to the 1970s, my Tribe's lands were heavily polluted by government and private mining operations, resulting in significant and lasting environmental damage. Seeing little progress, my Tribe worked hard to develop its own technical capacity and stepped up to manage our own environmental restoration efforts. The Quapaw Nation is the first Tribe to ever lead a Superfund site cleanup. Since 2013, over 1.5 million tons of harmful waste has been removed and hundreds of acres of local ecosystems have been rehabilitated. When Indigenous communities are empowered to manage their own lands and resources, and when they have the right resources and trained workers to do so, incredible things can happen.

Mackenzie Neal is a Supervisory Program Manager at Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), where she leads the Pathways Internship Program and Indian Youth Service Corps (IYSC). She is located in Fredericksburg, Virginia and attended the College of William & Mary.

BIA PATHWAYS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



- BUILD** work skills and experience
- EXPLORE** different Federal occupations
- LEARN** from a professional workforce
- RECEIVE** on-the-job training

Pathways is an internship program within the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Trust Services. [Click here](#) for more information.

OTS POLICY IMPLEMENTED IN FY2023

FY 2023 Approved National Policy Memos, Indian Affairs Manuals & Handbooks

Policies and procedures document the functions and services provided under the authority of the Assistant-Secretary, BIA Director, and Deputy Bureau Director-Trust Services. It is the goal of OTS to provide clear, concise, and consistent program guidance and administrative policy. We work together with the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action (RACA) to post approved policy and current online forms at <https://www.bia.gov/directives-system>.

National Policy Memos, Indian Affairs Manuals, and Handbooks completed October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023

Program	Reference and Approval Date	Approved	Title
Real Estate	NPM-TRUS-42-A1	Mar 20, 2023	Admin Fees: Retention & Collection for Certain Goods & Services
Real Estate	NPM-TRUS-43-A1	Apr 21, 2023	Modernize Land Description Review Process for Fee to Trust
Real Estate	NPM-TRUS-44-A1	Apr 18, 2023	Streamline Rights of Way & Business Lease Applications Process for BIL, Telecommunication & Renewable Energy Projects
Forestry	NPM-TRUS-45-A1	Aug 10, 2023	Certified Silviculturist Position Task Boo Requirement for BIA Foresters, Amend 1
Real Estate	NPM-TRUS-46-A1	Jun 14, 2023	Adoption of Indian Health Service (HIS) Categorical Exclusion Determination for Sanitation Lines over Indian Lands, Amend 1
Forestry	NPM-TRUS-47	Nov 4, 2022	Carbon Sequestration Agreement Policy
Indian Energy Service Center	48 IAM 1	Feb 14 2023	Indian Energy Service Center OVERVIEW
Real Estate	52 IAM 1	Feb 22, 2023	Real Estate Services OVERVIEW
Real Estate	52 IAM 7	Oct 14, 2022	Corrective Deeds and Affidavits
Forestry	52 IAM 7	Aug 10, 2023	Forestry Silviculture
Trust Land Consolidation	75 IAM 1	Nov 18, 2022	Trust Land Consolidation Overview & Authorities
Wildland Fire	90 IAM 6	Sep 25, 2022	Wildfire Investigation
Wildland Fire	90 IAM 6-H	Sep 25, 2022	HANDBOOK: Wildfire Investigation
Real Estate	52 IAM 9-H	Jan 10, 2022	HANDBOOK: Rights of Way on Indian Lands
Wildland Fire	90 IAM 6-H	May 16, 2022	HANDBOOK: Wildland Fire Origin and Cause Investigation

OTS Policy Priorities for FY 2024

OTS policy priorities are identified in January of each year. December is a time to identify policies to be refreshed (usually on a 3-year cycle) and plan for new policies needed to meet changing organizational structures, legislation, establishment of new programs, etc. Division Chiefs will provide input into priorities for final approval by the Deputy Bureau Director with input from RACA to determine a reasonable project workplan.



BIA Trust Quarterly Newsletter

The Trust Quarterly Newsletter is produced collaboratively by the Trust Services Divisions under the direction of the Deputy Director-Trust Services. Your input and photos are appreciated. To find out more or to submit your ideas and suggestions for future issues, please email Dawn.selwyn@bia.gov or BIATrustQuarterly@bia.gov.



Please submit content for the January issue by December 15, 2023

Newsletters are available for viewing on the BIA website at <https://www.bia.gov/bia/ots>



What is a Continuing Resolution?

As we face a second CR for Fiscal Year 2024 without a budget being passed by Congress it is important to understand what a CR is and how common this practice has become. A continuing resolution (CR) is a type of appropriations legislation that allows federal agencies to continue to operate after the end of the fiscal year on October 1 if regular appropriation bills have not been passed.

According to [executivegov.com](https://www.executivegov.com) Since 1998, 127 CRs have been enacted into law.

- The House and Congress have struggled to sign 12 appropriation bills into law since 1997. The instead use CRs, which are short-term solutions that circumvent the complex budget process of allocating funds.
- Lawmakers frequently pass several CR's in a single fiscal year before agreeing on spending levels for the entire year.

NEWSLETTER DISCLAIMER

The U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Trust Services, strive to make the information within this newsletter as timely and accurate as possible; however, makes no claims, promises, or guarantees about the accuracy, completeness, or adequacy of the content, and expressly disclaims liability for errors or omissions in the content of the newsletter.

Reference in this newsletter to any specific commercial product, process, or service, or the use of any trade firm or corporation is for the information and convenience of the public, and does not constitute endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the Department of the Interior.



March 11, 1824 – March 11, 2024

BIA to Celebrate 200 Year Anniversary in March 2024. Fiscal Year 2024 is going to be a busy year with March 11, 2024, marking the 200th year Anniversary of the BIA. Let us look use 2024 as a foundation for how we shape the future of our work and document and honor advancements in BIA support for the self-determination objectives of tribes, and priorities important to individual Indian owners and Alaska Natives.

BIA History

The Secretary of War John C. Calhoun administratively established the BIA within his department on March 11, 1824. Congress legislatively established the bureau and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs post via the act of July 9, 1932 (4 Stat. 464).

In 1849, the BIA was transferred to the newly created Interior Department. In the years that followed, the Bureau was known variously as the Indian office, the Indian bureau, the Indian department, and the Indian service. The name “Bureau of Indian Affairs” was formally adopted by the Interior Department on September 17, 1947.

Tribal Federal Recognition

In 1994, Congress enacted Public Law 103-454, the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act (108 Stat. 4791, 4792), which formally established three ways in which an Indian group may become federally recognized by Act of Congress or by the Administrative Procedures under the Code of Federal Regulations.

Census of Reservation Indian Populations

Year	Population	Reservations
1860	339,421	9
1870	313,712	10
1880	306,543	14
2023	6,790,000	574

Source: www.census.gov

\$3.5 Million to Restore Bison Populations

The Inflation Reduction Act provides \$3.5 million to support the Intertribal Buffalo Council’s herd development and apprenticeship program created by Secretarial Order 3410. The Council is a collection of 80 Tribes in 20 states that facilitates the management of more than 20,000 buffalo.



\$1.5 Million Ecosystem Restoration, Bison Project Funding

An additional, \$1.5 million from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is available through the BIA, Office of Trust Services to federally recognized Tribes and Tribal organizations to support Tribal bison herd expansion interests, including a focus on ecosystem restoration through bison conservation. For information on the application process visit the Division of Natural Resources webpage or contact Thomas Mendez, Branch of Agriculture by email at Thomas.Mendez@bia.gov.



BRANCH OF TRIBAL CLIMATE RESILIENCE

DESCRM Welcomes a New Employee



Zachary Jorgenson, Regional Tribal Climate Resilience Coordinator

DESCRM welcomes Zachary Jorgenson as the new Regional Tribal Climate Resilience Coordinator for the Great Plains and Midwest Regions. He started in July 2023. Zach joins the TCR team from the Midwest Region where he served as the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Program Manager and Biologist, since 2018. Prior to the BIA, he served as an Environmental Documents Writer (NEPA) for the Minnesota Department of Transportation (DOT), and as a Contaminants Biologist for the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Zach has a lot of experience working with Tribes on addressing impacts of climate change on Tribal natural resources, significant experience with providing funds to Tribes, a history of managing large programs, and brings a strong commitment to communication with Tribes.

Zach has a master’s degree in aquatic Toxicology from St. Cloud State University and a bachelor’s degree in marine biology from California State University, Long Beach. He enjoys spending time with his wife and two kids, backpacking, playing drums, biking, and spending as much time outdoors as possible.

Historic \$120 Million available to Tribes and Tribal Organizations through Annual Awards Program

On July 19th President Biden’s commitment to bolstering environmental resilience within tribal communities reached a significant milestone with the announcement of a groundbreaking \$120 million in funding through the “Investing in America” agenda. This substantial allocation aims to empower tribal communities to proactively plan for the increasingly severe climate-related environmental threats to their homelands. This funding, part of the Bureau of Indian Affairs’ Tribal Climate Annual Awards Program, marks a historic moment as one of the largest amounts ever made available to Tribes and Tribal Organizations. Recognizing the pressing need for resilience in the face of climate challenges, this financial support underscores the administration’s dedication to fostering sustainable solutions and addressing the unique vulnerabilities of tribal lands.



SERVE THE EARTH AND YOUR COMMUNITY.
BECOME A CONSERVATION LEADER.

NYCALC

Native Youth Climate Adaptation Leadership Congress

June 25 – June 30, 2023

2023 Native Youth Climate Adaptation Leadership Congress

The 2023 Congress, held at the National Conservation Training Center from June 25 to June 30, brought together 92 youth participants, including 76 high school students and 16 college-age students (Junior Faculty and Trainers Team), accompanied by 20 adult mentors. With representation from 47 Tribes, the focus was on exploring an intergenerational approach to Indigenous climate justice.



The event featured Open Space Technology sessions, where students addressed the "big question" collaboratively. Coordinated and funded by the BIA and FWS, with support from a Core Team of 15 federal, tribal, and non-profit organizations, the program included workshops on environmental issues, leadership development, and career skills.



Notable guest speakers, such as Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, enriched the experience. At the week's end, students presented their ideas, and a record number applied for NYCALC mini grants to implement projects in their home communities. The official press release can be viewed [here](#).

NYCALC works to build student confidence in their cultural identity as they learn about indigenous traditions and climate concerns across the United States and territories. This week-long Congress engages students as they develop conservation leadership skills and build on their knowledge and abilities to address climate challenges in their communities.



BRANCH OF CULTURAL RESOURCES

Art-in-Office Program

The Bureau of Indian Affairs' Museum Art-in-Office Program curates a substantial museum collection that reflects and preserves the history of the BIA, the Bureau of Indian Education, and Native American culture for present and future generations. Artwork is displayed across the twelve regional offices or Indian schools for Indian Affairs staff, political appointees, and associated office and divisions.



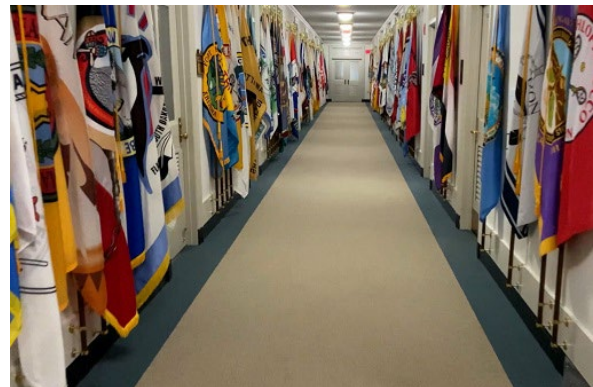
Allan Houser statues placed near fireplace in Secretary Haaland's Office

Hall of Tribal Nations

The Hall of Tribal Nations exhibit displays American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal flags from Indian nations nationwide. It is in the corridor of the Office of Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs of the Stewart Lee Udall Department of Interior Building, or Main Interior Building (MIB). Tribal flags are displayed during essential meetings or gatherings with Tribal Nations.



Bryan Newland, ASIA, posing with guests visiting the MIB with tribal flags lining the hallway



Hall of Nations is a permanent exhibit curated by the BIA Museum Program, which proudly displays American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal flags from across the United States



Secretary Deb Haaland

Museum Presentations

In February 2023, Branch Chief Billie and DC Staff Curator Justin Giles presented DOI-wide on the BIA Museum Program, the scope of collections and the BIA museum.

Native American Heritage Month November 2022

BIA Museum presented the topic of the Indigenous History of Stick and Ball Games at FBI Headquarters, Baltimore, MD, using artwork from the BIA museum collection. The presentation conveyed that Indigenous North American stickball is a team sport typically played on an open field where players with two sticks each attempt to control and shoot a ball at the opposing team's goal. Choctaw stickball from Oklahoma makes the ball from deerskin and the sticks.



Stickball game in Cherokee, North Carolina

Tribal Leaders Summit December 2022

DOI Tribal Nations Summit invited tribal leaders throughout the United States to attend: President Biden and Vice President Harris welcomed all participants.



Justin Giles, DC Staff Curator, manages the Tribal flags used throughout MIB. Photo of the Tribal Nations Summit 2022.

The BIA Museum is often requested to assist in receiving tribal delegations, dignitaries, and general event support and management.

DOE Tribal Clean Energy Summit October 2022

U.S. Department of Energy and the BIA Museum/DC Curator collaborated to use selected tribal flags from the ASIA Hall of Tribal Nations to accentuate the tribal nations attending the DOE Tribal Energy Summit.



Tribal flags on loan to DOE. DOE Secretary Jennifer M. Granholm and DOE Office of Indian Energy director Wahleah Johns group photo with tribal leaders at the 2022 Tribal Clean Energy Summit in Washing, DC. Photo by Donica Payne



Stewart Lee Udall, Department of the Interior (Main Interior) Building entryway, 1849 C Street, N.W. Washington, DC

Community and Constituent Services & Outreach

- October 2022 - ASIA Newland meet and greet [Yale Native American Law Student Association](#) and Cultural Center at MIB
- November 2022 - DOI/Indian Affairs leadership meet and great with [William & Mary](#) students and professors
- February 2023 - ASIA Newland meet and greet with [Not Invisible Act Commission](#)
- March 2023 – ASIA Newland staff meet and greet with BIA [Office of Justice Services](#) (OJS) Staff



Secretary Haaland's photo on roof of the Main Interior building with visitors

BIA Museum Reston Collections move

In November 2022, approximately 300 objects and all museum files were moved to MIB.



Native American Bar Association tour with Assistant Secretary Bryan Newland. Conference room walls adorned with Adam Ansel photographs from BIA collection.



Curators label the Reston, Virginia before packing artifacts for move to the Main Interior building in Washington, DC



Woodrow Wilson Crumbo, Creek-Potawatomie Tribe of Oklahoma mural in the South Penthouse, Main Interior building

Department of Interior Museum Collaborations

We have Initiated collaboration for DOI/BIA programs to include basket collections in new gallery space at MIB. The exhibition is scheduled to open in November 2024.

The BIA Museum Program headquarters in Washington, DC and is not currently conducting public tours. We encourage you to enjoy our online exhibits and check back from upcoming public exhibitions.

BIA Museum Web Redesign

The Museum Program launched a new BIA Museum webpage and is working on a new online exhibit to showcase artwork in our collection.

Please visit our website at

<https://www.bia.gov/service/BIA-museum> to explore the online exhibits.



Preparing a few of the baskets in the collection for the November 2024 exhibit



BRANCH OF FOREST RESOURCES PLANNING

SILVICULTURAL SYSTEMS Even-Aged vs. Uneven-Aged Forest Management: Understanding the Differences

Forests are vital ecosystems that provide numerous benefits, including timber production, wildlife habitat, clean water, and carbon sequestration. Forest management strategies play a crucial role in maintaining the health and sustainability of these ecosystems. Two primary approaches to forest management are even-aged and uneven-aged management. In this article, we will delve into the characteristics, advantages, and considerations associated with each approach.

Even-Aged Forest Management

Even-aged Forest management involves the manipulation of forest stands to create a uniform age structure. Key features of even-aged management include:

Regeneration Harvests

Regeneration harvesting, such as clearcutting, seed tree and shelterwood treatments are a common method employed in even-aged management. It involves harvesting all or most of the trees in a designated area simultaneously. This approach allows for efficient timber production and simplifies regeneration efforts.

Regeneration

After these types of treatments, regeneration can be achieved through natural processes or artificial means such as planting seedlings. Desired species composition can also be addressed in these treatments. The new stand will consist of trees of the same age, resulting in a uniform canopy and growth pattern.

Simplicity and Efficiency

Even-aged management is relatively straightforward to implement and manage. It allows for efficient timber harvesting operations, as large areas can be harvested at once. The uniform age structure also facilitates future logging cycles.

Growth and Yield

Even-aged stands tend to have faster growth rates and higher yields compared to uneven-aged stands. This is because trees receive similar levels of sunlight, nutrients, and growing conditions, facilitating rapid development.



Silviculturist field visit with timber team

ILLUSTRATION FOR UNEVEN-AGED STAND STRUCTURES



Habitat tree, downed coarse wood & dead standing tree

Common types of even-aged silvicultural treatments:

Clearcutting

All trees are removed and the new stand regenerates in open conditions.

Seed Tree

The best individual trees are retained for natural regeneration of the stand.

Shelterwood

Most trees are removed but some are retained for shade of new regeneration. Shelterwood cutting is the progression of forest cuttings leading to the establishment of a new generation of seedlings of a particular species or group of species without planting.

Coppice Cutting

Used in stands that regenerate from stump or shoot sprouting such as aspen. Stands are generally clearcut.

The photo below represents an even-aged longleaf pine stand in East Texas that is being managed for habitat for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker.



Even-aged Longleaf pine stand in East Texas

Uneven-Aged Forest Management

Uneven-aged Forest management focuses on maintaining a mixture of different tree ages, species, and sizes within a stand. A tribally managed forest with old and young growth, and areas cleared for elk and deer foraging sites is depicted in the photo below.



Photo credit Brian Bull

ILLUSTRATION FOR UNEVEN-AGED STAND STRUCTURES



Key features of uneven-aged management:

Selection Harvesting

Employs selective harvesting techniques. Individual trees or small groups of trees are carefully chosen for removal, maintaining a varied age structure.

Regeneration

Natural regeneration is often preferred. By creating small canopy gaps through selective harvesting, adequate sunlight reaches the forest floor, promoting the establishment of new seedlings.

Biodiversity and Habitat

Promotes greater biodiversity and provides varied habitat conditions. The presence of different tree ages and sizes creates a mosaic of microhabitats, benefiting a wider range of plant and animal species.

Aesthetic and Recreational Value

Typically exhibit a more natural appearance, resembling the complexity found in undisturbed forests. This enhances recreational opportunities such as hiking, birdwatching, and wildlife observation.

Common types of uneven-aged silvicultural treatments:

Single Tree Selection

Individual trees or small groups are removed throughout a stand to achieve an uneven-aged stand structure.

Group Selection

Larger groups of trees are removed to mimic multi-tree mortality events in an effort to create an uneven-aged structure throughout a stand. Group size is debatable.



An uneven-aged Scots pine stand in the Czech Republic

The uneven-aged silvicultural pathway is being implemented to make the stand more resilient to the increasing number of wind, wildfire and bark beetle events that are increasing in the even-aged conifer stands in the Czech Republic.



Consider This

Both even-aged and uneven-aged management approaches have advantages and considerations that need to be weighed

Timber Production vs. Biodiversity

Even-aged management prioritizes efficient timber production, while uneven-aged management emphasizes biodiversity conservation and ecological complexity.

Regeneration Success

Even-aged management can rely heavily on artificial regeneration techniques, whereas uneven-aged management relies more on natural regeneration, which can be influenced by site conditions and species characteristics.

Stand Resilience

Uneven-aged stands often exhibit higher resilience to disturbances such as windstorms or pest outbreaks due to their diverse age structure, while even-aged stands may be more vulnerable.

Long-Term Planning

Uneven-aged management requires careful planning and monitoring to ensure the desired age structure is maintained, while even-aged management allows for more predictable rotation cycles.

Weighing an Even or Uneven Strategy

Even-aged and uneven-aged forest management approaches represent distinct strategies with different objectives and outcomes. Even-aged management usually prioritizes timber production and efficiency, while uneven-aged management spotlights biodiversity conservation and ecological complexity.



Retired Forester Robert Young

The choice between the two approaches depends on various factors:

- Land manager objectives
- Site conditions
- Ecological considerations.

By understanding the characteristics and trade-offs of each approach, land managers and foresters can make informed decisions to ensure sustainable forest management that balances economic, ecological, and social needs.



Oil Rig operating on the Southern Ute Reservation

Orphan Wells Program Office (OWPO)

OWPO, Bureau of Land Management and IESC

Weekly Meetings

These coordination meetings with OWPO are on the issuance of the first round of grant awards for the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) \$150 Million earmarked and available to Tribes for:

- Plugging and remediation of orphaned wells on Tribal lands.
- Development of standard operating procedures for in lieu of grants administered by the IESC
- Coordination of Tribal consultation sessions.

Contract Coordination

The IESC will finalize the submission to the BLM Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract on the In-Lieu of grant application. Executive Technical Work Group (TWG) holds bi-weekly meetings to discuss the planning of Tribal Engagement Sessions.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, signed into law by President Biden on November 15, 2021, defines and orphaned well as a well that is not used for an authorized purpose – such as production, injection, or monitoring – and for which no operator can be located, or the well operator is unable to plug the well and remediate and at reclaim the well site.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

The IESC serves as the BIA office that is responsible for coordinating the IIJA funding and program activities. The IIJA provides funding to benefit eligible Tribes via two means:

- Grants to eligible Tribes may directly receive and use grant funding to perform the plugging, remediation, and reclamation of orphaned wells on its lands, either through a Tribally owned entity or through the services of a contractor procured by the Tribe to perform the work.
- Alternatively, an eligible Tribe may request DOI perform the plugging, remediation, and reclamation of orphaned well sites on its lands on the Tribe's behalf.

Renewable Energy Accelerated Development Initiative (READI)

The IESC in collaboration with DEMD are developing a proactive process within the Department that supports Tribes and Individual Indian owners by significantly increasing the pace of renewable energy development on Indian lands.

A professional services contract was procured at the end of April 2023, and will end on November 30, 2023.

Five hybrid meetings and two virtual meetings were held across the country inviting Tribal leader to provide input during August and September 2023.



READI Tribal Engagement Session in Albuquerque, NM on September 11, 2023

Next Steps on READI

A draft literature report was submitted and is in the process of being finalized. Tribal comments will be received until September 29, 2023. At the end of the contract a final comprehensive recommendations report will be shared answering the following questions.

- What are Tribes’ needs from the BIA to proactively promote Tribal renewable energy development?
- What should the BIA do to address Tribal needs for renewable energy development?

The final recommendations report will be implemented in FY 2024.

Standard Operating Procedures Fluid Minerals - Indian Training

Multi-Agency training for the Onshore Energy and Mineral Lease Management Interagency Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) establishes policies for government agency collaboration for energy and mineral leasing on federal and Indian trust land. The SOP establishes common standards and methods for creating efficient and effective working relationships between government agencies to achieve the DOI goal of accurate energy and minerals accountability for onshore federal and Indian lands.

The SOP is a living document that is adjusted to reflect the evolving needs of stakeholders. Regular reviews and coordinated updates with the impacted organizations throughout DOI by:

- Improving the performance of interagency activities
- Eliminating procedural ambiguities
- Establishing clear responsibilities
- Updating organizational references

Upcoming Training

SOP Training is scheduled for in person on October 31 - November 1, 2023, in Vernal, Utah.



Standard Operating Procedures Fluid Minerals – Indian Training – In person in Lakewood, CO on August 1-2, 2023



Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in North Dakota. Credit: Bureau of Reclamation

The Executive Management Group (EMG) Meeting

The Executive Management Group (EMG) will provide the IESC Director with a broader scope of expertise, technical assistance, and advocacy. The EMG may provide guidance on how to navigate the multi-agency aspects of strategic planning and may assist in prioritizing future projects. The EMG is comprised of the following: Director, BIA or their delegate, Director, Office of natural Resources Revenue (ONRR), or their delegate, Assistant Director for Energy, Mineral and Realty Management, BLM, or their delegate, and Director, Bureau of Trust Funds Administration (BTFA), or their delegate.

The next EMG Meeting is tentatively scheduled for December 2023. Location and date TBD.

Federal Partnership Charter Meetings

The purpose of a Federal Partnership team is to serve as a Department of the Interior inter--bureau/office forum for Indian energy and mineral resource development, royalty management coordination, and information exchange at the local office level. The departmental bureaus and offices represented on the Partnership team operate under the Federal trust responsibility to Federally recognized Indian Tribes, Indian allottees, and Alaska Natives.

Upcoming Federal Partner’s Meetings have been scheduled for the Fiscal Year.

Fiscal Year 2024 Upcoming Federal Partners Charter Meetings

Federal Partner Charters	Meeting Dates	Scheduled Time (Mountain Standard)
Fort Berthold Federal Partners with MHA Nation Meeting	TBD	8:30 AM – 4:00 PM
Navajo Region	October 5, 2023	9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
Uintah & Ouray (U&O) Region	November 2, 2023	8:30 AM – 12:00 PM



Federal partners with the BIA Indian Energy Service Center include the U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR), Division of Energy and Mineral Development (logos above). Department of Energy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Corps of Engineers, and Environmental Protection Agency (logos below).

Indian Energy and Minerals Steering Committee (IEMSC) Meeting

The Indian Energy and Minerals Steering Committee (IEMSC) is comprised of senior level management representatives from bureaus and offices within the Department of the Interior with direct responsibility for managing Indian energy and mineral resources and revenue management.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the BLM, the DOI - Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development (IEED), the Office of Surface Mining (OSM), the ONRR, the DOI - Bureau of Trust Funds Administration (BTFA), and the Office of Minerals Evaluation (OME).

The IEMSC's goal is to share information and solve issues involving energy and mineral development and revenue management on Indian lands at the lowest level feasible and to raise issues that cannot be resolved or that would require policy changes to the attention of the appropriate Assistant Secretary(s) or the Special Trustee.

The next IEMSC meeting is tentatively scheduled for December 2023. Location and date TBD.



TAAMS Mineral Leasing Training

Purpose: Training will be provided via WebEx to BIA and Tribal Contract/Compact Staff. Training is provided by CGI and a Realty Specialist from the Indian Energy Service Center. The IESC will continue to post additional trainings and overview sessions as they are conducted.

Upcoming Training dates for FY 2024 will be held virtually with dates to be determined.



BIA Navajo Scouts Learn the Ropes to Support Incident Command Post Supply Unit

Camp crews are the backbone to maintaining a clean camp environment and supplying firefighters and administrative staff with all major needs related to the fires' incident management. The camp crew maintenance and camp crew supply units set the incident command post (ICP) up for success. They do this by setting up the camp layout, safety signage and barriers, supplying ice, water, and sports drinks, maintaining ICP grounds daily and supplying camp and firefighter needs to maintain a clean and fully stocked camp to meet incident needs.

The camp crew supply unit provides a vast number of needs for incident staff, such as hose, pumps, chain saw equipment, Meals Ready-to-Eat (MRE), fire resistant clothing (Nomex), batteries for radios and headlamps, tables, and chairs. Supplies that need to be restocked are ordered from the closest of the 16 regional fire caches throughout the nation.



The incident command post camp crew for the Cottonwood Ridge, Snake Ridge, Mustang Ridge, and Spoon fires

For this assignment, supplies are being ordered from the Prescott Interagency Fire Cache. Supplies are ordered using a specified form and can be delivered to a ground unit or by air, if necessary.

Ten (10) Navajo Fire Scouts, part of a Type 2 initial attack (IA) crew, from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Fort Defiance Agency has helped fill the critical shortages for the camp crew needed at the ICP for the Cottonwood Ridge, Snake Ridge, Mustang Ridge, and Spoon fires.

Four of the 10 Scouts have opened a task book to become qualified as Receiving and Distribution Managers (RCDM) to support wildland fire response needs in the future.



Crewmembers of the BIA Navajo Scouts Type 2 IA and the receiving and distribution managers supporting the Cottonwood Ridge fire incident command post outside Show Low, Arizona.

“The whole crew has been so professional... helping us maintain a good, clean, and well-stocked supply unit and yurt.”

As experienced firefighters, they already know what the supply cache needs are for our firefighters, which helps the cache run smoothly with quality control of orders.”

Brad Kramer
Receiving & Distribution Manager

Becoming qualified as an RCDM provides the Scouts that have open task books with the opportunity to become qualified as an asset in another capacity within fire response. Currently, camp crew supply units have critical shortages for RCDM, ordering manager, and supply unit manager positions throughout the nation. These positions are needed within every ICP on fires to fill incident supply needs.

When asked what the firefighters come to the supply cache for most, supply unit cache staff confirmed it was for clean Nomex, gloves and paper towels. Personal hygiene is important to firefighters to stay healthy to keep doing the job they’re doing to keep communities and values safe from wildfire.

“I like learning all about how we generate orders, supply and support firefighters,”

“I also like being able to socialize and meet everyone who supports fires. Normally, as firefighters, we go out with our crews, work, come back, eat, sleep, get ready then do it all over again, so we don’t get to meet everyone who supports the fires.”

Jefferson Curtis
BIA Navajo Scout Type 2 IA
RCDM task book holder



BIA DWFM engaged with over 200 students at AISES

Recruiting

In October, the Division participated as an exhibitor of the 2023 American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) National Conference. At the conference, Fire and Fuels staff and partners engaged with high school and college students on new technology within wildland fire management and career opportunities. Fuels management partners presented on the new technologies used to assist the BIA and other agencies within wildland fire management.

The purpose of attendance was to spread awareness of the BIA wildland fire management program and recruit for difficult to fill positions with the Division.



BRANCH OF FIRE USE & FUELS

Wildland Fire Risk Methodology

Fuels Management recently completed an Inter-Agency Agreement (IAA) with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and BIA for the development of Wildland Fire Risk Methodology that specifically addresses inclusion of Tribal non-monetary and monetary values.

Abandoned Mines Lands

Fuels, Forestry and Abandoned Mines Lands programs and Tribes have been collaborating to improve delivery of services for Tribes.

Reserved Treaty Rights Lands

Tribes and Fuels have collaborated to develop and fund at least \$8.7M of Reserved Treaty Rights Lands (RTRL) Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). BIL funds were identified this spring for RTRL to increase the RTRL budget to \$15M (\$9M BIL, \$6M Base). Fuels projects greater than \$5.8M of RTRL Base funds will be allocated to Tribes by the end of FY23.

National Women's Leadership Module Lead

Fuels is close to advertising for a new National Women's Leadership Module Lead that will work with the National Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Center (NIPFTC) to expand the program. We will also be hiring a National Fire Ecologist and a National Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation Coordinator.

Unmanned Aircraft Utilization

Fuels is collaborating with the BIA National Aviation Office for the development of Unmanned Aircraft utilization.



A hand crew walks to dinner at the Colt Fire base camp in MT, Photo by Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC)

FIRE PREVENTION

Standard Position Descriptions

National prevention staff provided subject matter expertise regarding the development of the Standard Position Descriptions for the Prevention GS-0456 series. These have been completed through the GS-11 grade. Development of the GS-12 grade for prevention is ongoing.

Wildland Fire Investigation Handbook (90 IAM 6)

National prevention staff along with Regional Prevention staff have reviewed and updated The Wildland Fire Investigation Handbook and 90 IAM 6 Wildland Fire Management Wildfire Investigation Manual. The final copies have been submitted to RACA for approval.

Wildfire Prevention Spatial Assessment & Planning Strategies

Development of the Wildfire Prevention Spatial Assessment and Planning Strategies (WPSAPS) software application is ongoing. BIA staff is providing leadership and technical guidance for the development team. The staff also continues to assist interagency partners with WPSAPS by providing training support in the form of lead and unit instructors and updating student and instructor training guides. To date, over 270 individuals have attended the training with coordination managed by the Division's training staff.



Prescribed burn, photo NPS

POST WILDFIRE RECOVERY

Tribal Lands Affected by Wildfire

Since June, the Post Wildfire Recovery Program (PWR) has assessed over 52,000 acres of Tribal Trust land that were affected by wildfires. Members of the Department of Interior Interagency Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Team have been utilized to evaluate soil burn severity and post-wildfire threats to human life, safety, and property as well as critical natural and cultural resources important to each Tribe. The interdisciplinary team engages with Tribal leadership and staff to develop a collective system of emergency treatments to reduce flooding, debris flow and erosion threats to critical values.



Slater Fire burned area on the Klamath National Forest with Elliot Fire burning in background. Photo USFS.

Funding for Burned Area Rehabilitation Treatments

The Team has also developed burned area rehabilitation (BAR) treatments to initiate the path to long-term recovery and highlighted the opportunity for Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding to continue ecological restoration and recovery of burned lands.

In total, proposed emergency treatment funds includes \$914,000 for spring and cultural site protections, road stabilization, flood warning systems and more. BAR treatments include \$3 million for reforestation, invasive and noxious weed treatment, and replacement/repair of resource protection and fences. PWR has continued to utilize emergency stabilization, BAR and BIL BAR funds to assist Tribes and Pueblos with implementation of treatments.

BRANCH OF FIRE OPERATIONS

Wildland Fire Apprenticeship Program

The Division is now implementing the Wildland Fire Apprenticeship Program (WFAP.) We are looking to hire and enroll up to 20 apprentices for the 2024 fire season. Currently, apprentices will be funded using BIL funding. This program is set up for GS 3, 4, and 5 entry-level personnel and dedicated to the professional qualities and training needed to be successful in wildland fire management. Announcements for the WFAP will be available at USAjobs.gov in Spring 2024.

Benefits to participating through the WFAP is that it does not require a college degree. Personnel who complete the program can convert, non-competitively, into an open GS-5 senior firefighter position.



Field Day for Wildland Fire Apprenticeship Program



BIA Fire Vehicles, photo NIFC

Engine Operator Courses

2024 Engine Operator (ENOP) courses and planning is already taking place. The Great Plains and Western Regions have eagerly scheduled ENOP courses. Regions looking to host an ENOP course need to coordinate with BIA Training Specialist Mike Black, who will coordinate funding requests, logistics and course preparation. This course is complex and can be complicated to teach and plan. Using a coordinator to help with planning makes a big difference in its overall success and merit.

Federal Fire Workforce Development Program

The Federal Fire Workforce Development Program (FWDP) is also in phase 1 of its implementation. Initial staff are being hired, an up-to-date competency analysis is being performed by the Office of Personnel Management to refine exact qualifications and characteristics needed for GS 3-9 fire personnel across many functional areas. The FWDP seeks to fill in the gap between NWCG incident position coursework, day job duties and to properly prepare people for the next stage of their fire career.

National training staff continue to serve as fire subject matter experts for the development of the DOI GS-0456 standard position descriptions. Work is currently being done to implement dispatch, regional, national and WFAP positions through the new standard.

BRANCH OF BUDGET

The Budget Office has distributed Tribal firefighter compensation funding for FY22 to 10 of the 11 regions involved. These funds total \$10.8M for approximately 540 Tribal full-time employees.

Additionally, the office has responded to Supplemental funding requests from regions by providing \$612,000 to six regions in Preparedness carryover and collections funding.

The office recently completed hiring actions for two budget analysts and one supervisory budget analyst.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE SOUTHWEST REGION



DIVISION OF TRUST SERVICES

Logistics of Service

The BIA Southwest Region is in Albuquerque, NM. This Region includes staff located at five agencies servicing 24 Tribes in a three-state geographic area.

Interactive Map of Indian Lands [Click here](#)

The map below highlights the Southwest Region service area to 2 Ute Tribes, 1 Apache Tribe, 19 Pueblos and the Ramah Navajo Chapter of the Navajo Nation and the Ysleta del Sur Tribe in Texas.



Trust Division in the Region

Programs at the Regional level are ore hands on when it comes to working with the Tribes. Branch Chiefs work closely within the Region and with agency office Superintendents to respond to services for Tribes in the following program areas.

- Environmental, Safety & Cultural Resources Management
- Forestry, Fuels & Wildland Fire
- Natural Resources & Water Resources (Water Rights, Protection, & Irrigation)
- Land, Titles & Records Office
- Real Estate Services & Probate
- Geospatial Services

SOUTHWEST Region

Our Regional Trust Programs are committed to serving and honoring our collective trust duty to our Indian Tribes. By collaborating with tribes and indigenous communities, we uphold the principles of justice, equity, and sustainability while protecting and managing natural and cultural resources.

Who We Are...Who We Serve

8 BIA Agencies
24 Federally recognized Tribes
67,456 Tribal members
4,869,744 acres
Service area: CO, NM, TX

Water Rights

Water laws in the U.S. are based upon the concept of prior appropriation, or “first in time, first in right” and give priority to those water users presumed to have first put the water to beneficial use. Only federally recognized tribes are given this right.

Prolonged drought and increased wildfires, less precipitation and reduced, shorter periods of snowpack, stresses water resources in the region.

Regional Trust Point of Contact

Waylon J. Denny, Deputy Regional Director-Trust
BIA, Southwest Regional Office
1011 Indian School Rd, NW
Albuquerque, NM 87104
Email: Waylon.denny@bia.gov

SPOTLIGHT ON SOUTHWEST REGION DEPUTY



Waylon J. Denny BIOGRAPHY

Prior to his appointment as Deputy Regional Director-Trust Services, Mr. had been Acting Deputy Regional Director since October 2020. He also holds college degrees in environmental sciences – fisheries & wildlife sciences. He has 19 years of federal service starting in 2004 with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), having served posts in Wyoming, Oklahoma, and Montana.

His work with BLM consisted of HAZMAT (awareness, assessment, removal operations, superfund), environmental permitting, compliance, and reclamation in both the fluid and solid minerals realm. He began his BIA career at Western Regional Office in Phoenix, AZ, in December 2011 as the Environmental Scientist-Remedial Project Manager (RPM) until being promoted to the post of Branch Chief (Regional Environmental Scientist) for the Division of Environmental, Safety, and Cultural Resources Management (DESCRM) at Southwest Regional office in July 2014.

He has held a number of BIA field leadership positions including Acting Superintendent, Mescalero Agency, Acting Superintendent, Flathead Agency, and is a graduate of the Department of the Interior's (DOI) Senior Leadership Program. A program designed for DOI employees at the GS-14 and GS-15 level in leadership roles. The program focused on competencies at an advanced level that are critical to successfully lead and navigate in the challenging and complex federal arena.

Interview

Mr. Denny joined the Trust leadership team as a Deputy Regional Director in January 2022 and was recently interviewed about his experiences.

What is your favorite Trust program? Why?

I do not have a favorite Trust program per say, as all the trust programs within purview all play an important role and responsibility in carrying out the mission of the BIA, and the Tribes (Pueblos) we serve here at the Southwest Region (SWR).

What was your first government job?

The start of my federal career was with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Buffalo Field Office, in Buffalo, Wyoming, as a Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) Intern – Petroleum Engineering Technician (PET) for two years. It was a great learning experience and provided me with great insight and experience as to the various nuances of public land management. While serving as an intern I found my passion for working to benefit Indian tribes and individual Indian beneficiaries.



Waylon Denny performing HAZMAT field work early in his career as a Petroleum Engineering Technician

Which of your Trust duties was/were an unexpected surprise? Why?

When I assumed my permanent appointment as Deputy Regional Director-Trust Services on January 31, 2022, an unexpected surprise was how unique and complex trust management can be within the BIA. BIA trust programs are definitely the backbone of our organization. Each project that crosses my desk comes with its own unique set of challenges requiring strategic thinking and the ability to come up with creative ideas and solutions to navigate these challenges.

What do you see as your greatest challenge in FY 2024?

The influx of project dollars from the President’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) projects increased workloads immensely. We are working around the clock to ensure efficiency, timely processing, and approval times for these projects because they benefit our Tribes and Pueblos. Like all other Regions across the BIA, Southwest Region succession planning for all my trust programs will address the challenges we faced with an aging workforce and a need to backfill positions. My goal is to setup my trust programs for future success.

What is your greatest BIA success?

I’ve always thought of myself as forward thinking; therefore, I would say my greatest success within BIA has always been my ability to build (plan, create, and execute) programs. I love building programs; I don’t believe in operating an autopilot and leaving things status quo. I believe trust programs must also be fluid and change with the times to be successful.

What do you do for fun?

When I’m not spending time with my family, I am an avid outdoorsman. This entails elk and deer hunting, fly-fishing, ice fishing, camping, and hiking. Pretty much in that order.

What advice would you give to others who would like to be a Deputy?

Leadership, leadership, leadership. Know the difference between a manager and leader. Always rise to the challenge and don’t be afraid to work outside your comfort zone. Have the ability to take criticism to grow into your leadership future. It’s a great role to be in and worth the personal time and effort.

How would you like others to remember your time as Deputy for Trust?

I would like others to remember my time as the Deputy as someone who modernized and upscaled my trust programs. Also, that I set programs up for the future by creating efficiency and opportunity for employees to progress in their careers.

Who is the person you most admire in BIA?

I admire all BIA employees who came before me. We constantly build off our leaders who came before us in BIA. The BIA is unique as we are the only DOI agency that provides direct services to Tribes and tribal communities with the work we do, and we have such great employees within BIA who always rise to the challenge and get the job done no matter how stressful the job is a times. My hats-off to them, as they are the real MVPs!



Jicarilla Apache Nation

Mission

The mission of the Southwest Region, Division of Environmental, Safety and Cultural Resources Management (DESCRM) is to provide leadership, guidance, policy, and support for all matters involving human health, safety, environmental, and cultural resources laws, which apply to, or might affect Indian trust lands or restricted lands and federal facilities owned or operated by Indian Affairs.

The division assures compliance with applicable environmental and cultural resource statutes such as National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Archeological Resources Protection Act, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. The Division is composed of multi-disciplinary staff, who oversee and address complex and varied issues that arise in pursuit of its mission to serve Tribes, Nations, and Pueblos within the Southwest Region.

Projects

DESCRM has received over 137 projects that are in various stages of review and approval. To date, 97 projects have been completed. DESCRM was fortunate to assist the Jicarilla Apache Nation with two projects, habitat restoration and non-native fish removal.

The Jicarilla Apache Game and Fish Department proactively initiated a series of conservation measures to restore the floodplain and stream habitats along Amargo Creek to benefit and support the multiple life-stages (e.g., larvae, juvenile, sub-adult, and adult) of native fishes that included Flannelmouth Sucker, Bluehead Sucker, Mottled Sculpin, and Round Tail Chub. Amargo Creek is a tributary to the Navajo River.

Tributaries, like Amargo Creek can be utilized as a nursery refugium to support growth and survivorship of larval and juvenile native fishes. In turn, the tributary could also serve as a forage base refugium for adult native fishes. In conjunction with these restoration efforts, the Jicarilla Apache Game and Fish Department has also implemented removal efforts to suppress invasive non-native species such as Channel Catfish, Common Carp, and Yellow Bullheads in the Navajo River. These removal efforts have been ongoing to enhance the native fish populations and deplete the presence of these non-native fishes.



Laguna Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) staff and the SW Regional Archaeologist record an abandoned operational feature of the Mesita Dam. The buttressing dirt beam is on the upper left with heavy equipment stabilizing the dam in the background.

In addition to providing technical assistance, the Regional Biologist has been partaking with the development of an electrofishing techniques training geared for Tribal fish biologists. Collaboration among U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – National Conservation Training Center, Jicarilla Apache Game and Fish Department, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Southwest Tribal Fish Commission, SWRO-Bureau of Indian Affairs (SWRO-BIA), and Native American Fish and Wildlife Society has been ongoing since July 2023.

Cultural Resource Survey: Mesita Dam

In April 2023, the (then) Southwest Regional Archaeologist, Erin Laughlin, and (now) Acting Regional Archaeologist, Harding Polk II, traveled to Laguna Pueblo reservation to conduct a cultural resource survey of the historic Mesita Dam along Pagate Creek. Earlier in the year it was discovered that the dam was suffering structural integrity issues that could result in a failure of the dam. Emergency measures were enacted to counteract the compromised integrity by augmenting the weakened area with substantial deposits of clay and soil to act as a buttress to reinforce and stabilize the weakened section of dam

NEPA Categorical Exclusion Clearance

The Regional Archaeologist consulted with the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer to complete an emergency NEPA Categorical Exclusion clearance. Additionally, the Southwest Region’s Cultural Resources staff, aided by staff from Laguna’s THPO office, conducted a survey of the area below the dam to ensure no cultural resources would be impacted by the construction. Background research revealed that the dam dated to at least 1949 but had been subject to at least two modifications since that time. The survey also revealed several features related to the operation of the dam. The emergency stabilization has been completed but more a permanent solution to correct the dam’s deficiency is still needed and is being planned.

Basic Electrofishing Training

The project course, entitled “Basic Electrofishing”, is scheduled to be taught in October 2023. A training as such, which is specifically Tribal fish biologist, will be a first of its kind. The training course will be taught by Dr. Alan Temple along with Tribal fish biologist representing USFWS, Jicarilla Apache Game and Fish Department, and SWRO-BIA.

Emergency Management Training

The Regional Safety Office is dedicated to safety management and prevention. The office has provided training to the Superintendents and the Region's Senior Leadership at Quarterly trainings which also incorporated Emergency Management. The training topics included: Emergency Action Plans, Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP), the Everbridge emergency notification system, and what to do if/when employees are injured/killed and/or property is damaged in an emergency event.

Upcoming events

Training: Intro to Flake Tool Technology

The Southwest Region, Division of Environmental, Safety and Cultural Resources Management will be hosting an "Introduction to Flake Tool Technology Workshop" from October 17 through October 20, 2023, in the BIA Southwest Region Training Room #133, Building 1, 1001 Indian School Road, NW, Albuquerque, NM. Attendees are limited to 15 spots. There is no fee for this workshop.



Flake tool, Stone Age hand tools, usually flint, shaped by flaking off small particles, or by breaking off a large flake which was then used as a tool.

The workshop is open to all Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) and their staff. If all 15 spots are not filled by the THPOs, other staff members may attend and will be based on chronological order of notification of interest to attend. Attendees are limited to the Tribal personnel within the Southwest Region.

Have you ever found flaked stone artifacts in the field? Did you wonder how they were made? What is the process to make them? What skills do you need to make them? Then this workshop is for you!

The workshop focuses on learning how to apply the skills of flintknapping, pecking, and grinding to making stone tools. It will give you the opportunity to experiment with the methods. This workshop objectives include:

- Introduction to the initial stone flaking reduction methods and then analysis of the chopper and core reduction flakes.
- Review of core, blade, bipolar, and biface technologies
- Review and compare biface and pressure debitage and with core and blade debitage
- Review debitage from all lithic reduction technology methods

If interested, please email Cynthia Williams, Archeologist, DESC RM, at Cynthia.williams@bia.gov as soon as possible.

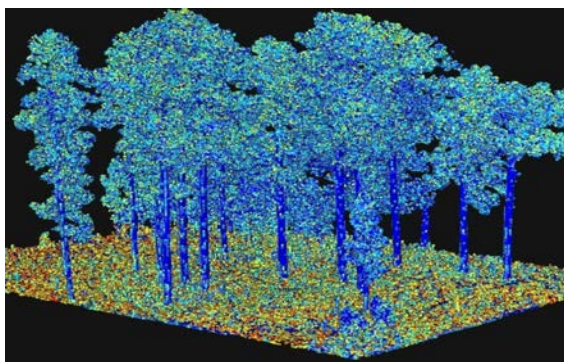


Assisting the helicopter landing and firefighters assessing a burned area after a fire

The objective of the Southwest Region Division of Forestry, Fuels & Wildland Fire is to provide support, guidance, and technical proficiency and/or direction to best benefit Southwest Pueblos and Tribes with goals and issues regarding Forestry and Fire.

The Forestry Program contributes to the well-being of tribal communities by promoting sustainable forestry practices that respect cultural values and traditions. Our Forestry Program ensures that tribes have access to resources, technical expertise, and the ability to manage their forests. This not only strengthens tribal sovereignty but also provides economic opportunities through timber harvesting and non-timber forest products.

The Branch of Forestry strives to provide for the efficient, effective management and protection of trust forest resources for the benefit of American Indians in recognition and in concert of their resource management goals – all with the spirit of self-determination, and consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s trust responsibilities. Programs and responsibilities include:



3D Fuel Modeling

Forest Management Inventory & Planning (FMIP)

section prepares and/or comments on Forest management plans, Forest Inventory Analysis, Environmental Assessments, and Forest Histories. The FMIP section also coordinates and supervises inventory operations which includes scheduling, directing, supervising, and conducting forest-wide field work and data collection for the continuous forest inventory (CFI). The FMIP section also develops vegetation typing, land classification, and forest planning maps.

Timber Management

Timber sales allow for the sustainable harvest of forest products for commercial purposes on reservations. The availability of timber for harvest depends on the age and condition of the timber, land status, and public demand, among other land use considerations. If the Tribes want to market their forest resources to tribal and non-tribal members, they will issue a free-use or paid permit for the following special forest products. Plant materials like seeds, berries, greenery, mushrooms, and seedlings. Firewood used to heat people’s homes is also considered a special forest product. Special forest products found on tribal lands may be harvested for recreation, personal use, or as a source of income such as harvesting and selling fence posts and poles.

Woodlands Management

Addresses the management of woodland forest types found on Indian lands. Specifically, woodlands are described in 25 CFR § 163.1 as follows: “Woodland means forest land not included within the timberland classification, stocked, or capable of being stocked, with tree species of such form and size to produce forest products that are generally marketable within the region for products other than lumber, pulpwood, or veneer.”

Forest Development

includes BIA/Tribal Forest land management activities undertaken to improve the sustainable productivity of commercial Indian forest land (both timberland and woodland) with emphasis on accomplishing on-the-ground projects.

Forest Health

is primarily tasked with the identification of insect or disease outbreaks and providing technical assistance on recommended suppression treatments. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’ Forest Service provides technical assistance and funding for the suppression of forest insects and diseases on Tribal lands and the Forest health Protection (FHP) field staff works closely with the SERO staff.

Wildfire Prevention

The mission of the Wildfire Prevention Program is to reduce the frequency of human-caused wildfires across Indian Country. Human-caused fires are the greatest cause of wildfires in Indian Country. Statistics show intentionally started human-caused wildfires have the highest frequency of all causes. As a result, in 2002 the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) initiated an aggressive Wildfire Prevention Program to address human-caused fires.



Wildland Fire Management

Our Wildland Fire Program is dedicated to safeguarding the well-being and safety of tribal communities while addressing the increasingly severe threat of wildfires in the face of climate change. This program focuses on fire prevention, preparedness, and response, directly contributing to equity and justice by protecting lives, homes, and sacred lands. Additionally, it supports local economic opportunities by hiring and training tribal members as wildfire responders.

The Branch of Wildland Fire Management has the responsibility to protect lives, property, and resources while restoring and maintaining healthy ecosystems through cost-effective and creative fire-management programs, collaboration, and promoting Indian self-determination. These efforts include:

Post Wildfire Recovery

Post wildfire recovery is the spectrum of human-led efforts to repair and stabilize property and natural resources after a fire. Although natural recovery is preferable, some wildfire incidents cause damage that require special efforts to mitigate. Some examples of such damage include loss of vegetation that would lead to soil erosion, water runoff that creates flood threats, or the movement of sediments that can endanger homes or water reservoirs vital to wildlife and human communities.

Wildfire Response/Suppression

Wildfire response and suppression provides wildland fire response and all-risk support to Indian Country, other lands within the United States and international partners protecting communities, homes, infrastructure, forests, pastures, watersheds, game habitat and Tribal enterprises. To support its wildfire response, the BIA maintains a wildland fire engine fleet developed to meet the demands of wildland fire and all-risk response, supports initial attack crews and Interagency Hotshot Crews to support fire suppression activities across Indian Country. The Southwest Region also supports and maintains the Vulcan Peak and Ute Mountain Helitack programs. Helitack crews participate in wildland fire response, prescribed burning, and fire rehabilitation. They also transport personnel during Tribal Official and Administrative flights, wilderness studies, search and rescue operations, and forest management flights.

Fuels Management

Fuels management embraces Tribally embedded tenets and principles of ecosystem health, resilience and cultural values that support the maintenance and restoration of Tribal lands by reducing the potential of severe wildfire in forests, woodlands, and rangeland ecosystems.



Forester conducting a prescribed burn

Tribal Wildland Firefighter Temporary Special Pay Supplements

The Department of the Interior (DOI), through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), administers Tribal Wildland Fire Programs through P.L. 638 Tribal contracts and Tribal self-governance compacts. Tribal wildland fire personnel play a key role in wildland fire management. Tiering off Executive Order 13985 on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, the DOI wants to ensure Tribal wildland firefighters are fairly and equitably compensated. To that extent, the BIA will provide Tribal Nations with funding to provide Tribal wildland firefighters Temporary Special Pay Supplements for Fiscal Years (FY) 2022 and 2023. These pay supplements will be like the ones authorized and funded for federal wildland firefighters by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

Under BIL, the maximum amount for any federal employee to receive through this special pay supplement per fiscal year is \$20,000. DOI projects that the funding for the BIL special pay supplements for federal firefighters will be depleted by the end of FY 2023 (September 2023). The President's 2024 budget request proposes and funds permanent pay increases for Federal and Tribal wildland fire personnel.

The BIA will employ similar criteria to determine the eligibility of Tribal wildland firefighters for a Wildland Firefighter Temporary Special Pay Supplement for Fiscal Years 2022 (retroactive to October 1, 2021) and 2023.



Vulcan Helitack Crew, BIA Southwest Regional Staff, and Secretary Haaland

Secretary Haaland’s Visit to the Mescalero Apache Indian Reservation May 3, 2023

Secretary Deb Haaland paid a special visit to the Mescalero Apache Indian Reservation which entailed meeting with the Mescalero Leadership and Tribal Council to discuss issues pertaining to the Mescalero Tribe and Indian Country. Secretary Haaland met with and spoke with Bureau of Indian Affairs’ wildland firefighters to express her gratitude for their service.

Secretary Haaland flew over recent wildfire burn incidents on and near the Mescalero Reservation to get a firsthand view of wildfire effects and recovery.

Secretary Haaland dedicated a newly constructed bridge at the Mescalero Apache Tribe’s Inn of the Mountain Gods.



Alexander Etkind, Fire Ecologist

Newest member to the team

Alexander Etkind recently joined the Bureau of Indian Affairs as Fire Ecologist for the Southwest Region. With over thirteen years of experience working within fire adapted ecosystems, Alex’s background in wildland fire, forestry, and ecology includes work with the New Mexico Forestry Division, the New Mexico Land Conservancy, the National Park Service, and as a consulting forester and prescribed burn contractor. Born in Massachusetts, Alex had the privilege of beginning his wildland fire career working on the lands of the Wampanoag, and he looks forward to assisting Tribes and Agencies in the Southwest Region in his new role. Alex has a bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts and a master’s degree in Sustainability and Environmental Management from Harvard University. He is always seeking to learn more about the relationship between people and the land.



Rio Jemez, Pueblo of Jemez mountains

The Natural Resources and Water Program plays a vital role in the conservation and management of tribal lands and natural resources. By implementing sustainable land-use practices and protecting the cultural heritage of tribal communities, we uphold our trust and treaty obligations while ensuring the well-being of tribes and insular communities.

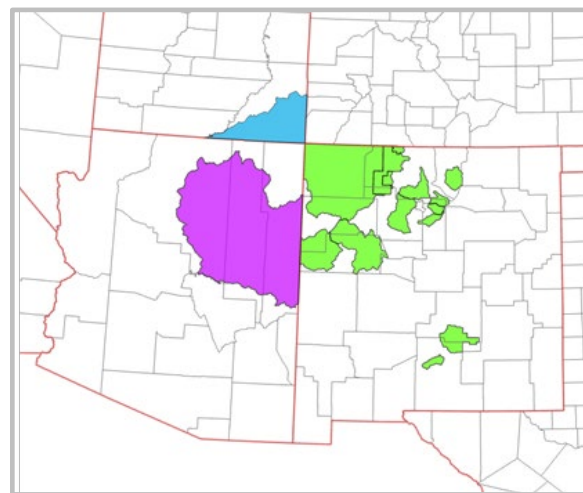
This program empowers tribes to assert their sovereignty over natural resources, ensuring that they have a meaningful say in the management and conservation of their ancestral lands. By providing resources and support, the program facilitates sustainable resource development, protecting both the environment and the rights of indigenous communities.

Water Rights

Our Water Rights Program plays a pivotal role in addressing equity and justice for tribal communities by securing and protecting water rights. Access to clean water is essential for well-being, and this program supports tribes in managing their water resources effectively. It also aligns with the Department's Strategic Goal 3 by balancing the use of water resources sustainably, supporting communities, and contributing to the local economy.

The Southwest Regional Water Rights Coordinator is the first designated full-time position within the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) that provides technical assistance to tribes for 15 water rights adjudications spanning three BIA regions and provides baseline data gathering and technical assistance to tribes for water management efforts.

The Water Rights Program actively supports alternatives to litigation through ten (10) Secretary's Indian Water Rights Office (SIWRO) assessment, negotiation, and implementation teams. Recent negotiation activity resulted in local settlements with the State of New Mexico in the Zuni River Basin, Rio San Jose, Rio Jemez, and Rio Chama. These local settlements have provided the backbone for Tribes and Pueblos to secure their water rights through federal legislation.



SIWRO Areas being involved in state adjudications



Taos Pueblo Governor Gary J. Jiron meeting with SIWRO Team, and New Mexico State Engineer at a mutual benefit project site



Lt. Governor Benjamin R. Salas of Zia and Tribal Council member surveying damage to irrigation dam after the flood

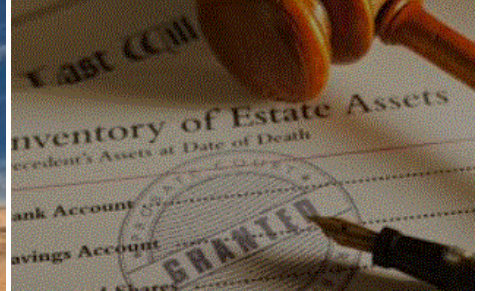
Newest member to the team

Please welcome aboard our newest member Dr. Sarah K. Delavan who is our General Engineer, Designated Engineer. Dr. Delavan comes to Bureau of Indian Affairs, Southwest Region's Division of Natural Resources with a long history of reservoir and flood risk management with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers along the coast of Texas and the Columbia River system in the Northwest.



Dr. Sarah K. Delavan, General Engineer

Dr. Delavan spent a year working as a staffer on the U.S. Senate Committee for Environment and Public Works resulting in the passage of the \$17B Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act in 2021. Prior to her time as an Assistant Professor of Environmental Engineering at the University at Buffalo, she gained a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Civil Engineering from Georgia Institute of Technology in Environmental Fluid Mechanics.



The Division of Land Titles & Records Office is responsible for Southwest, Navajo and Western Regions and has four main functions in providing title service and maintenance to 110 Indian reservations and public domain areas in a nine-state region, encompassing approximately 34 million surface and subsurface acres of federal trust tribal/individual land. The primary functions are to record legal instruments affecting Indian tribal trust land, determine and certify federal Indian and tribal land titles, serve as the government's official repository for all legal instruments affecting Indian and tribal trust land and maintain the Bureau's official land title maintenance system.

Some of the most common requests to our division involve recording of documents, providing inventory reports for decedents, receiving, recording and title update for Indian probates, providing certified Title Status Reports (TSR) and verifying land status. There have been over 6000 documents / requests processed by our division for fiscal year 2023. Our division has prided itself with meeting and exceeding our required timeframe for meeting our performance targets set by the Department in accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993.

Imaging of Probates

The Title Support Unit (TSU) under the Division of Land, Titles & Records Office is responsible for imaging probates into TAAMS for the three regions we service. Our division is currently working on a project to scan probates starting from approximately 1989 to around 2006 since the probates during this timeframe were not scanned into TAAMS. Our TSU staff have imaged over 3000 probates since the start of our project. This inhouse mandate has greatly aided our division's ability to modernize our processes from in person to digital retrieval of information. This has saved countless time and effort in processing requests along with providing the agencies we service with accurate and quick access to information required to process requests.

New Project

As with other regions within the Bureau of Indian Affairs, our division has initiated a project to fix images that were developed from aperture cards and uploaded in the TAAMS database. The aperture cards, at times, provided images that made it difficult to retrieve information accurately. To fix this issue, one of the solutions has been to retrieve Trust Patents from the Bureau of Land Management website and uploading those documents directly into TAAMS. This is an ongoing process with our division and generations to come expected to greatly benefit from this project.



REAL ESTATE SERVICES

The Division of Real Estate Services & Probate provides assistance, advice, oversight, monitoring, and coordination for the protection, management, planning, conservation, development, and utilization of trust and restricted Federal Indian-owned lands that include acquisition, disposal, tenure, rights-of-way, permits, leasing, and sales. The primary mission of the Probate Services is to compile inventories of Indian Trust assets and family information, and to coordinate the timely distribution of trust assets with the Office of Hearings and Appeals, the Division of Land Titles and Records, and the Bureau of Trust Funds Administration.

Fee-to-Trust

The Fee-to-Trust (FTT) mission is the priority of the Southwest Region's Division of Real Estate Services with a focus on restoration of tribal homelands. This primary focus supports the Secretary and Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs’ vision of restoring tribal homelands and ultimately resulted in the development an internal team filled with cross disciplinary expertise.

To assist in tracking the pending FTT cases, Southwest Region developed an internal tracking process used by the cross disciplinary team to assist each other in responding to any issues or concerns from Tribes.

FY 2023 Completed Fee-to-Trust Applications

For calendar year 2023, the Division processed eighteen FTT applications with eight of those applications completed. The remaining ten FTT cases range from step 4 to step 15. We anticipate completing three more FTT cases by the end of the calendar year.

Completed	Pueblo	Tract/Parcel Name
Apr 5, 2023	Nambe	Daniels
Apr 5, 2023	Nambe	Hunton
Apr 5, 2023	Nambe	Triangle Inn
Apr 6, 2023	Isleta	Mesa del Sol
Apr 18, 2023	Isleta	Tract 10
Aug 9, 2023	Taos	Lineberry
Aug 24, 2023	Picuris	Mica Mine
Aug 28, 2023	Laguna	Major

The Division continues to work with the Tribes to provide technical assistance, training, and collaboration to reach their goals of taking their properties into Trust.

HEARTH

The Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Home Ownership Act of 2012 (HEARTH Act) offers a voluntary, more efficient land-leasing process for Tribes by amending the Indian Long-Term Leasing Act of 1955, 25 U.S.C. Sec. 415.

Under the HEARTH Act, once Tribes' governing Tribal leasing regulations are submitted to and approved by the Secretary of the Interior, they are authorized to negotiate and enter into surface leases under their approved HEARTH Act regulations without further approval from the Department of the Interior.

Our division continues working with its Tribes to gain HEARTH Act Secretarial approval. The Southwest Region is proud to assist reaching a significant milestone for the Tribe's desiring to implement the HEARTH Act by assisting the Pueblo of Santa Clara become the Bureau of Indian Affairs' 100th HEARTH Act approval.

Broadband

The Division assists with the processes and reviews applications for rights-of-way (ROW) or business leases for broadband infrastructure development projects that are funded through federal infrastructure investment legislation and the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP) available to Tribes. This includes funding from other Department of the Interior (DOI) federal agencies for ROW, permits, or other agencies' authorizations for broadband development available to Tribes' Tribal utilities.

Our division is currently working with Tribes and other Federal partners that are involved with the Santa Fe Indian School FAST-41 broadband project. This project's goal to provide internet to rural communities in portions of the communities of the Pueblo of Acoma, Navajo Nation, Ramah Navajo, and the Pueblo of Zuni.

Public Law 93-638

The Division continues to work with the Tribes of the Southwest Region to achieve their goals for advancing self-governance and self-determination by providing technical assistance to those Tribes who desire to contract their realty program under P.L. 93-638. For those Tribes who have contracted the realty program, our division assists the Tribes to gain access to the Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (TAAMS) along with the navigation of TAAMS modules and TAAMS components.

PROBATE SERVICES



Probate Services provides technical assistance and training to the Tribes within the Southwest Region that have contracted their Probate program under P.L. 93-638 and to Agencies that do not have a Legal Administrative Specialist. Probate Services also provides assistance with the navigation of TAAMS modules and TAAMS components.

Probate Services has 34 cases at the Office of Hearings and Appeals and is planning on meeting its IA-PMS of 93% closed accounts. Currently, DPS have closed 21 out of 22 cases.



Byron Yepa, Regional Geospatial Coordinator, Southwest Region

Regional Geospatial Coordinator Role

Byron Yepa, Regional Geospatial Coordinator (RGC), Southwest Regional Office, serves as an advisor to the Deputy Regional Director on matters related to Geographic Information Systems (GIS) activities. The Geospatial Services program objective is to provide oversight, develop, integrate, implement, and support the utilization of geospatial software, applications, and data resources to increase efficiency and promote collaboration amongst programs and resources.

There is a RGC located at every BIA Regional Office, which enhances the role of a liaison between tribes, BIA Agencies and Regional Office, Central Office, and other federal agencies.

GIS Services

GIS services provided to the SWR include the development of national and regional GIS standards for use throughout the BIA for mapping trust resources, which include but not limited to land ownership, rights-of-way, leasing, forestry, wildland fire, archeology, law enforcement and many others.

The RGC serves as the primary contact for ArcGIS licenses and training for BIA agency and regional employees, along with coordinating access to the BIA web mapping applications, such as the BIA GIS Content Portal. They also provide geospatial support through technical assistance with tribal geospatial programs.

Training and Support

On August 9, 2023, in collaboration with BIA SWR LTRO, Rusty Coffey, Cartographer, SWR LTRO and Byron Yepa, Regional Geospatial Coordinator, provided refresher training to LTRO staff focused on legal land descriptions and navigation within the BIA GIS Content Portal. LTRO staff were able to navigate within web mapping applications that provides another tool to assist in verifying legal land descriptions, PLSS data and BIA tract and parcel data.

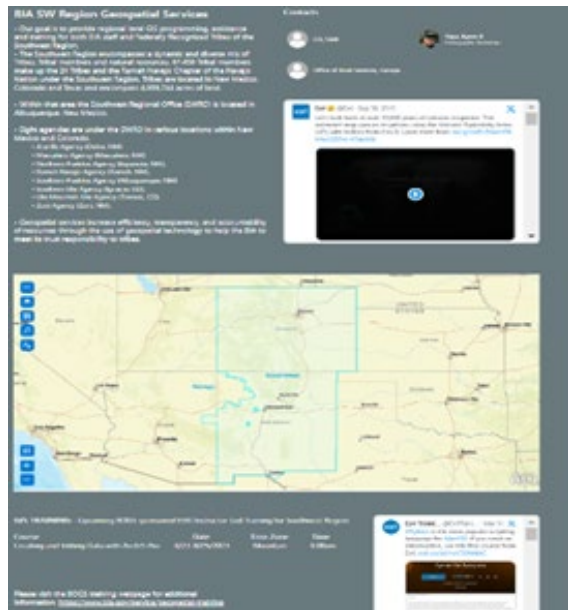
The SWR is in process to obtain additional GIS training focused on essential workflows within ArcGIS Online and ArcGIS Pro, along with field maps and data management within ArcGIS Pro.

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SWR GIS SharePoint

The development of this region-specific site is providing a one stop resource for GIS. BIA SWR GIS users have access to links for geospatial data resources that are hosted by federal, state, tribal and local entities. Along with the latest training opportunities and links to the Esri training academy website. Users can also submit a map request form if there is a need for a specific map to be created by the RGC. And lastly, a simple map viewer locating the BIA SWR jurisdictional area.



The site is a part of the BIA National Geospatial Committee site and can be accessed here: [https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/doi-bia-NGC/SitePages/Southwest-Regional-Office\(1\).aspx](https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/doi-bia-NGC/SitePages/Southwest-Regional-Office(1).aspx)

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