Tribal Relations News

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"Resilience in Partnerships"

Director's Welcome

Resilience is the capacity to withstand stress and catastrophe, to adapt and overcome adversity. Being resilient doesn't mean there is no stress and pain; instead, the road involves addressing challenges head on. We see this in ecosystems and in people-in our individual lives, our families, our communities, and for the Forest Service and its partners. This newsletter highlights the Forest Service and Tribes partnering to enhance resilience while addressing challenges.

First, we showcase how the Forest Service and Tribes are working to incorporate Native cultures into agency culture and policy. For example, the Alaska Region's Alaska Tribal Leaders Committee (ATLC) hosted a series of "Cultural Conversations" on the Chugach National Forest to increase cultural awareness and exchange. We also welcome Chelsea Suydam, an Alaska Native intern, to the Forest Service recreation staff. At the International Union of Forest Research Organizations' World Congress in Utah last year, several sessions focused on Native cultural uses of wood. We are also working with the Sustainable Forestry Initiative to promote traditional knowledge in forest certification through their new Forest Management Standard.

We were also impressed at how the agency and Tribes are rebuilding and restoring natural landscapes. For instance, the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians and Huron-Manistee National Forests have made great strides in restoring Lake Superior's Lake Sturgeon population. Also, the Hopi Tribe and Kaibab National Forest hosted a summer mentoring/crew program to clean up several natural springs on the Forest that are sacred to the Tribe. In another partnership, the American Indian Center of Chicago sent tribal students to the Forest Service laboratory in Rhinelander, Wisconsin, and the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest to learn about edible plants and agency careers. Finally, we learn about fighting invasive species through traditional ecological knowledge from Ken Parker, Seneca Nation horticulturalist.

Looking forward, this edition highlights models and practices that encourage resilience. For instance, Forest Service staff are working with multiple Tribes to conduct Heritage training in Louisiana and beyond, in preparation for future collaboration. Take a look at the G-WOW model, which bridges Western science and Ojibwe lifeways in addressing climate change. And read about President Obama's recently designated tribal Climate Change Champions.

Among the strongest communities are Tribes, who despite struggling through tragic histories, are moving toward greater community health. Here we honor the Cherokee Nation and Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, as we describe the Cherokee National Forest's acquisition of pieces of the historic Trail of Tears.

-Fred Clark, Director
Office of Tribal Relations

-Little Band of Ottawa Indians' Drum Group member celebrates the annual release of Lake Sturgeon in Lake Superior.
-Photo credit: The Tribe.

Getting to Know Chelsea Suydam

Imagine living in a town of 300 people. Imagine that there is no road system connecting the town to other communities, so all travel is by airplane or boat. Imagine that you get to enjoy some of the best, freshest fish in the world.

Chelsea Suydam, intern with the Forest Service Washington Office's Recreation, Heritage, and Volunteer Resources staff, doesn't have to imagine it – she lived it. Chelsea grew up in Seldovia in southwest Alaska. She lived there for 9 months of the year, and spent the other three months in a fishing village called Chignik Lagoon. She basically lived in both of these places from birth until leaving for college. Her family would go out on their commercial fishing boat and she did her part to help. Her family recently moved to Homer (a larger town across the bay), and her brother is continuing the fishing tradition now that he has graduated from high school.

"I grew up in a pristine environment, and was respectful of it. Knowing that beautiful land is there and how wonderful it makes me feel drives me to protect it."

Chelsea is a member of a Seldovia Village Tribe, part of the Cook Inlet Regional Incorporated Alaska Native Corporation. She is an ethnic mix: Sugpiaq (Alutiiq), along with some Norwegian, French, and possibly other European lineage. Seldovia was once a Russian fur trade post, and the town's original Russian name, Seldevoy, translates to "Herring Bay." Her childhood experiences fishing and picking berries inspired her to major in geography and environmental studies at Dartmouth College. Her Geographic Information System- GIS (mapping) skills and creativity made her a perfect fit for a year-long internship with the Recreation staff upon graduation in 2014.

Her many projects include creating infographics about volunteer services and collecting/organizing data about the 21st Century Conservation Corps initiative. While in DC, she has also been able to attend interesting conferences such as the First Stewards Conference about Tribes and climate change. Her internship was made possible by the non-profit organization MobileGreen, which places youth in green careers.

Chelsea plans to go back to Alaska eventually, but is really enjoying her time with the agency. She also believes her native heritage gives her a unique perspective, saying "I grew up in a pristine environment, and was respectful of it. Knowing that beautiful land is there and how wonderful it makes me feel drives me to protect it."

We wish Chelsea the best in her Forest Service career and beyond!

Chelsea during a blanket ceremony for her Dartmouth College graduation

Photo: Native American Studies administrator Sheila LaPlante

Native Peoples' Roots In Native Plants- A Visit with Ken Parker

By Mike Ielmini, Forest Service National Invasive Species Program Manager

Ken Parker hard at work

Ken Parker, a Seneca Nation horticulturalist, brings his tribal perspective to fighting invasive species: *"*it is my goal to restore the wisdom from our Elders [about] the many uses of each plant and their relationship to the environment," he explains. "The revival of this knowledge is as important as the cultivation and harvest of the plants.*"*

In October 2014, the Canadian Council on Invasive Species and other North American invasive species management organizations, including the Forest Service, hosted a strategic tri-lateral conference to address the detection, prevention, and control of aquatic and terrestrial invasive species regionally. We discussed invasive species' impact on tribal lands and the indigenous peoples' culture. First Nations, Indian tribes, and Mexican indigenous groups presented on invasive species' threat to their communities, and the importance of promoting native plants and animals to preserve their cultural history and protect their native lands for generations to come.

Ken's presentation at the conference awakened and energized the audience on the importance of coupling native plant restoration programs with the prevention and control of invasive species. A Seneca native, he is committed to preserving tribal cultures by promoting the use of native plants from a traditional ecological knowledge perspective. Ken has devoted decades to growing, installing, teaching and promoting North American indigenous plants- Ken literally has 'roots' in the indigenous plant market.

Currently the Native Plant Consultant and Project Director of the Haudenosaunee (also known as Iroquois or Six Nations) community's "Food is Our Medicine" Project (a Seneca Nation and Seneca Diabetes Foundation partnership), Ken envisions Native communities learning and experiencing the gift of health by growing their own gardens, participating in ongoing community horticultural events, learning sacred traditions directly from their Elders, and fostering youth cultural education for the next seven generations. Ken's vast knowledge of native plants has inspired the development of numerous Native American horticultural programs, workshops and lecture series. He has been working closely with the Intertribal Nursery Council, a Forest Service– managed, tribally guided initiative.

Ken also worked with the Seneca Nation of Indians to develop a Native Plant Policy in 2013. This policy ensures that new landscape planting in public spaces on Seneca lands will be exclusively comprised of local indigenous species. Continued planting of non-native species poses a significant threat to ecosystems and to their culture. To guide these planting decisions, a Recommended No Planting List, along with lists of Native Plants of local counties have been created as well.

No other Indian Tribe has established and formally enacted an indigenous plant policy. In doing so, the Seneca Nation has demonstrated its commitment to continuing and expanding efforts to reintroduce native species, preserve its culture, and protect and maintain the Seneca community's ecological footprint. The Native Plant Policy has focused attention – and action – on Seneca ecology and history. Ken Parker's Food is Our Medicine initiative and the Seneca Nation's planting policy can serve as models for Indian Tribes and scientists wishing to make culturally-informed planting policies and reintroduce native species that have, for too long, been relegated into a secondary role in the life and health of many indigenous peoples.

"It is my goal to restore the wisdom from our Elders [about] the many uses of each plant and their relationship to the environment."

-Ken Parker

Remembering the Trail of Tears on the Cherokee National Forest

By Mariel Murray, Forest Service Office of Tribal Relations

You know your job is special when you help ensure history and public lands are passed on to the next generation. This year, during a temporary assignment to the Forest Service Lands unit in the Southeastern region, I got to do just that.

The Forest Service Lands and Realty Management department is divided into several parts, with the Lands division in charge of surveying National Forest System land, maintaining boundaries and ownership/title records, and adjusting and acquiring land. In the western United States, most of the National Forests were created by Proclamation and Executive Order in the late 19th/early 20th century. The eastern United States was more densely populated, however, so such large federal land designations were not politically viable or practical.

This all changed with the Weeks Act in 1911, which enabled the federal government to purchase land to protect watersheds and navigable waters. Under this authority, the Forest Service pieced together land to create eastern forests, but the agency is still filling in the checkerboard by purchasing private inholdings, conducting land exchanges, and accepting land donations.

As the Forest Service's Acting Assistant Program Manager for Land Adjustments for the Southeastern region, I enjoyed collaborating with our hard working Lands staff to "put more green on the map." This included reviewing potential acquisitions to ensure that there were no legal or environmental issues. The most thrilling project was assisting the Cherokee National Forest acquire parts of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail and Fort Armistead.

With population growth and the Georgia gold rush increasing non-Native encroachments in Cherokee territory in the early 19th century, tensions grew between the state and the Tribe. In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act. In 1832, in *Worcester vs. Georgia*, the Supreme Court ruled that Indian tribes were sovereign. Yet President Andrew Jackson ignored the Supreme Court by negotiating a skewed removal treaty with the Tribe and ordering them off their homelands.

Thus, the U.S. government forcibly removed over 13,000 Cherokee members from Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee to Oklahoma from 1836-1838. Only 9,000 survived the arduous journey. In Tennessee, they sent the Tribe out on the historic Unicoi Turnpike, a path that the Cherokee had used for thousands of years. The government also used a fort they had set up on Cherokee land- Fort Armistead- as one of the principal military installations for orchestrating the removal.

Remarkably, much of the actual Trail of Tears does not only still exist; it exists in its original form and its forest setting. To commemorate this tragic history and provide a vital connection for Cherokee people to their ancestral homeland, the Cherokee National Forest acquired the Fort Armistead site (near Coker Creek, Tennessee) in 2007, and has been acquiring parts of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. Congress passed the National Trails System Act in 1968, enabling the National Park Service to administer the Trail and directing the Forest Service to protect and acquire related lands within National Forests.

This summer, Dave Ferguson, the Forest Realty Specialist, and Quentin Bass, the Forest Archaeologist/Tribal Liaison, took me to see the Fort and parts of the Trail they were working on acquiring. Though sobering, hearing the history while walking along the Trail and seeing the Fort's remains encouraged me to work with them to ensure that this history will never be forgotten. I am pleased to report that in October 2014, the Forest was finally able to acquire the final 222-acre parcel from the original 392-acre parcel with help from the nonprofit The Conservation Fund and funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

I wish the Forest the best in its current efforts to work with the Cherokee Nation and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to preserve the area and raise awareness of the tragic history.

On the Trail of Tears in the Cherokee National Forest

The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians' Nmé, King of the Fish

"It is an ancient fish; a person could only get knowledge from a large fish or mshiike (turtle) because they have been here long enough to see so much." - Jay Sam, Tribal Elder

The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians believe that Nmé (lake sturgeon) are the king of the fish. They are so important to the Big Manistee River watershed, and indeed, the Great Lakes generally, that most of the Tribe's vocabulary for fish uses "nmé" as the root word. The Little River Band, part of the historic Anishinaabek people, have gathered annually for bountiful fish runs, but since the 19th century, the population has declined due to overfishing and dams.

In the early 2000s, the Indian tribe established a fish restoration program to bring back their sacred fish. Working with the Forest Service, they built a streamside incubator in a covered trailer on the banks of the Big Manistee River next to a river access site managed by the Huron –Manistee National Forests. As part of a long-standing partnership, the Forest Service gives the Tribe road access to reach the incubator. The agency also allows the tribe to run utility lines across National Forest System lands to power the trailer and draw water from the river that is used to acclimate the young sturgeon to the river water. District Ranger Jim Thompson coordinates with the Tribe, and Chris Riley (the Forest's Zone District Fish Biologist) and Bob Stuber (Forest Fish biologist) meet with the Tribal biologist yearly.

The Forest Service recognizes that the Tribe has a right to fish on the land due to their1836 treaty, as the Forest is within the land the Tribe ceded in the treaty, and the Forest Service is the largest landowner within the reservation boundary. Yet the agency also views the Tribe as a great partner, and the program as a win-win situation. As Dr. J. Marty Holtgren, the Tribe's Senior Fisheries Biologist, also emphasized, "the Forest Service and the Tribe typically want the same thing—more native species on the Forest." The partners are considering expanding to the Muskegon River in another Ranger District.

When they first began, the Tribe drafted a Stewardship Plan representing their holistic management approach, addressing not only the Big Manistee River where the nmé return to spawn, but also the entire watershed and Great Lakes basin. A Little River Band of Ottawa Indians Cultural Context Task Group, composed of Tribal members and Tribal government staff, presented the cultural perspective, while their biologists set biological criteria.

The restoration cycle typically starts in the spring, when the Tribe's fish biologists from their Department of Natural Resources collect eggs and larvae. They then grow fish in the pools of river water to large sizes in summer, and release them in the fall with unique tags so that the Tribe's Department of Natural Resources can track the fish. The annual release is always marked by a big community celebration with music and festivities, where people come from far and wide not just to see the juvenile sturgeon released, but also to personally release fish themselves. As Chris Riley noted, this community participation has been integral to building a lot of personal ownership in what the tribe is doing. The agency has provided financial assistance to these gatherings in the past.

-Tribal Elder Paul Carey releasing a sturgeon during his last annual ceremony. -Photo credit: The Tribe

District Ranger Thompson has attended each of the annual release ceremonies that includes traditional drumming and singing. "It's an honor to be invited to attend and to be a part of their ceremony," Thompson said. In several years, enough fish have been released that Thompson has been given an opportunity to personally release one of the young sturgeon into the river. "It's kind of humbling to hold a fish in your hand that could be alive in 100 years, and to realize that these sturgeon have lived in this river for thousands of years." Thanks to the tribe's efforts, the sturgeon will live in the Manistee for the benefit of many generations to come.

Chugach Cultural Conversations

By Mona Spargo, Forest Service Alaska Public Affairs Specialist

Alaska Native history, heritage, culture, and traditions are an integral part of the rich lands and natural resources that now comprise the Tongass and Chugach National Forests.

Acknowledging the need to establish an effective working relationship with Alaska Natives, the Forest Service Alaska region created the Alaska Tribal Leaders Committee (ATLC) in partnership with Tribal delegates in 2009. Recently, the Committee held a regional series of *Cultural Conversations* to promote dialogue amongst the diverse Tribes surrounding Alaska's National Forests and the National Forest managers. The *Conversations* are intended to help the agency become more culturally aware of key partners and audiences.

One *Conversation* occurred in late September 2014, when Chugach National Forest leadership met with Native leaders and youth from southcentral Alaska at the Alaska Native Heritage Center at the Athabascan House in Anchorage. The Chugach is teeming with Alaska Native traditions and cultures, as they have inhabited the area for millennia. Many villages are within the Forest boundaries, and our ability to care for the land is predicated on understanding the people who live and use it.

The day began with a welcome from Forest Service leaders and a blessing and prayer from Chief Lee Stephan of the Native Village of Eklutna. After introductions from the agency and members of the four Alaska Native tribes in attendance – Eklutna, Chickaloon, Eyak and, Kenaitze – Father Michael Oleska delivered a keynote on cultural communications. Father Michael, who serves as a Russian Orthodox priest in over a dozen Alaska Native villages, is a gifted storyteller who seeks to foster greater understanding across boundaries of race and culture. Father Michael spoke of cultural traditions and norms from both Native and non-Native perspectives, discussing language intonation, cadence, and speed, and how these spoken differences influence our perception and attitudes.

-Father Michael Oleska, Russian Orthodox priest in many Alaska Native villages, speaking on Native and non Native perspectives.
-Photo credit: Torey Powell

After a shared potluck lunch, Native Village of Eyak member Roberta Gordoff shared a tribal youth perspective. She spoke of her experience growing up and finding her place as a young Native caught between two cultures, including the joy and difficulty of bridging them. Roberta's discussion was as enlightening to Native tribal members as to Forest Service participants. Jennifer Yeomen of the Kenaitze Tribe followed with her perspectives on working with the Forest Service while growing up on the Kenai Peninsula.

The day concluded with a dialogue on history, heritage, culture, forest resources, and our relationships with each other and the land. We shared ideas on how to improve our mutual understanding, including how to work together more effectively. Finally, attendees toured the Center, including the Hall of Cultures which showcases Alaska indigenous cultural items such as tools, watercraft, clothing, pieces of art, and musical instruments.

One interesting revelation was the high value our Native partners place on their relationships with Forest Service individuals rather than the organization as a whole. This can be a challenge in an organization like the Forest Service, which changes leadership frequently. It takes time and effort to establish a connection with an individual, and when the person moves on, Native leaders must begin with anew.

Few questions were resolved that day, but all felt that through the *Cultural Conversation*, they had made progress in addressing improved communications and fostering understanding between the agency and its Alaska Native partners.

Kaibab National Forest: A Classroom For Communities

By David Hercher, Kaibab National Forest Public Affairs Specialist

In Native American communities, there is an abiding respect for life, nature, family, elders, and community. This was apparent as Hopi tribal elders and the Hopi Tribe Workforce Investment Act Program partnered with Kaibab National Forest staff to mentor Hopi tribal youth and restore two natural springs on the Forest from July 28 to August 1, 2014. This project is the culmination of over two decades of relationship-building between the Tribe and Forest.

This spring's restoration project is the first Tribal-Forest Service collaborative project to be implemented since the February 2014 release of the new Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) for the Kaibab National Forest, which emphasizes shared stewardship. In 2006, the Forest began revising its Forest Plan, a document that provides guidance and direction to Forest Service staff on meeting the needs of the public through forest stewardship. During Tribal Consultation on the new forest plan, tribal partners were concerned about the conditions of the Kaibab's natural springs, and wanted to restore them. Protecting the Kaibab's natural waters emerged as an important concern for both the Tribes and the Agency.

During this summer's spring restoration/mentoring week, over 40 people from the Forest Service and Hopi Tribe removed graffiti at Castle Springs and a decaying corral, rusted barbed wire, and trash in the vicinity. The group also uprooted invasive vegetation encroaching on an adjacent meadow, constructed water catchments for both wildlife and grazing cattle, and built a fence to protect the Spring. Meanwhile, they constructed a more visible path along Big Springs to deter visitors from making their own paths, alleviating the spider web effect of footpaths that was damaging fragile soils.

As part of the overarching stewardship focus, the Forest Service hopes to learn tribal traditional ecological knowledge for consideration in future land management activities. The sharing of traditional ecological knowledge simply means passing along the knowledge gained from one generation or culture to the next to sustain local resources such as the natural springs. As Mike Lyndon, Kaibab National Forest Tribal Liaison explained, "All lands managed by the Forest Service were once tribal lands. Prior to the creation of national forests, native people lived here for centuries and amassed a tremendous amount of information about how we care for the land." Dan Meza, Forest Service Tribal Relations Program Manager for the Southwestern Region, echoed "The knowledge the Hopi elders shared was such a benefit to the youth, and to us Forest Service representatives. The work we did was especially beneficial to the land we all cherish and care so much about."

Hopi staff and elders agree. As Robert "Chuck" Adams, a member of the Pipwungwa (Tobacco) Clan from the Tewa Village of Hano, noted: "These resources are our lifeline, water is life and showing people so they understand this link and its effect to our communities and our families is important. It is important for all of us to come together and work as one… protecting, educating and restoring." He added, "What the Kaibab National Forest is doing now is leading, conferring and sitting down at the table to collaborate with the tribes to get our heads together."

Currently, project partners are already planning a meeting to discuss further development of this new partnership and the next collaborative project. "Every time we get out on the ground and work together, the relationships become stronger, and it always opens the door for the next project. We're looking forward to continuing the work we're doing together," said Kaibab National Forest Supervisor Mike Williams.

Photos of the project are available here. The complete version of this article may be viewed here.

-Hopi Tribe Workforce Investment Act Program students and Joel Nicholas, Hopi Cultural Preservation Office Archaeologist (right) help restore the Kaibab springs.
-Photo credit: David Hercher

Native Wood Cultural Traditions Star at IUFRO World Congress

By Howard Rosen, Forest Service Retiree & Volunteer
Landscape Restoration and Ecosystem Services Research

During the opening session of the 24th International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) World Congress, traditional tribal musicians and dancers awed attendees. The Twoshields Production Company of Nino Reyos provided performers from the Laguna Pueblo and Northern Ute Indian Tribes, putting on a spellbinding show including a hoop dance. This was the first time this important international forestry meeting was held in the United States, in Salt Lake City, Utah on October 6-11, 2014, and the Forest Service helped organize the U.S. booth along with ensuring tribal participation at the meeting. The meeting was bustling with 2500 delegates from 100 countries, 150 technical sessions, over 2000 posters, technical tours, and a very large forestry trade exposition.

The IUFRO Wood Culture Working Party (WCWP) is an interdisciplinary science group dedicated to cultivating a better understanding of the use of wood from a cultural perspective. Research in wood culture improves people's relationship with nature and provides new ways to understand wood from an economic, environmental, and social value perspective. The group hosted several technical sessions, posters, and exhibits emphasizing Native American culture.

For example, Dennis 'dg' Hatch of the Chippewa-Anishinaabe tribe- a sculptor and flute maker- and his wife Nathalie Picard, a member of the Huron-Wendat First Nation in Quebec, Canada- a flutist, composer, singer, and storyteller- entertained the audience in a flute duet at the WCWP evening technical session (see photo above).

Mark Sixbey, a Tsimshian woodcarver from Metlakatla, Alaska, and Travis Stewart, a contemporary artist of Chinook, Rogue River, and Kalapuya descent living on the Grand Ronde Reservation in Oregon, demonstrated their traditional woodworking design, tool-making and wood sculpture (see photo left)

These Native artists showed conference attendees many of the rich cultural traditions that come from wood.

Photos credit: Howard Rosen

The Guiding for Tomorrow or "G-WOW" Initiative: Changing Climate, Changing Culture

"Gikinoo'wizhiwe Onji Waaban." This is an Ojibwe expression meaning "Guiding for Tomorrow." Nicknamed "G-WOW," it is also the name of an innovative interagency and intertribal initiative increasing climate change literacy in a culturally relevant way for students and adults.

Early in 2010, Joe Rose, Bad River tribal Elder, Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIWC) member, and Medewin (medicine man), invited Jason Maloney, Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center-US Forest Service to attend a meeting of the GLIFWC *Voigt* Intertribal *Task Force.* At that meeting, they discussed how the Center could cooperate with the Commission, including the Ojibwe Nations in the Ceded Territories. Jim Zorn (GLIFWC leader), Sue Erickson (GLIFWC member), Jim St. Arnold (tribal elder), Cathy Techtmann (University of Wisconsin-Extension), Paul Strong (Forest Supervisor on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest), Bob Krumenaker (Superintendent-Apostle Islands National Lakeshore) and Jason then starting working together on a climate change project that later became G-WOW.

These partners noticed that changing climate conditions were affecting Lake Superior, causing record low water levels, resource management (wildlife and plant species), and public safety issues. GLIFWC members worried that these changes would affect tribal members' treaty rights to hunt, fish, and gather on the Ceded Territory of northern Minnesota, Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, which includes National Forest lands. Informed by Ojibwe cultural practitioners, the G-WOW Initiative became a culturally relevant approach to addressing the Lake Superior region's climate change impacts. The model integrates the latest scientific research with place-based evidence of how climate change is affecting traditional "lifeways" of the Lake Superior Ojibwe. For example, climate change threatens the sustainability of *manoomin (*wild rice) and the Ojibwe cultural practice of wild ricing. *manoomin.*

G-WOW is unique because it is based on understanding the impacts of climate change on key species that support cultural practices, making it readily adaptable to other cultures and locations. G-WOW's service learning emphasis also promotes community action. Funding has come from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, and the National Parks Foundation.

G-WOW outreach tools include:

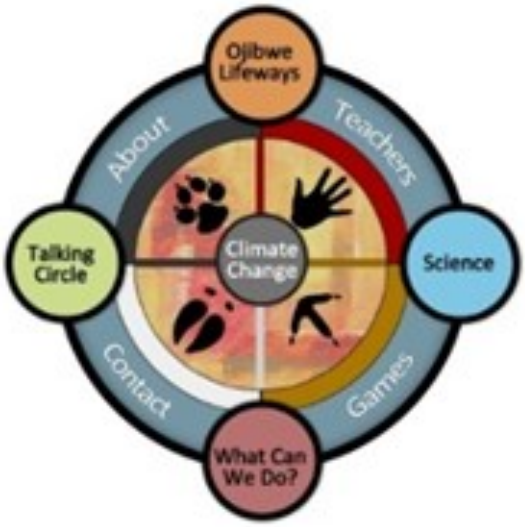
G-WOW Service Learning Website
Through videos, games, and templates, this interactive website encourages learners to investigate how place-based evidence of climate change is affecting traditional Ojibwe lifeways. Using activity guides, learners develop their own climate change hypothesis and create a service learning activity to share on the website's "talking circle" blog.

G-WOW Culture and Climate Change Discovery Center
This major 200 sq. ft. interactive exhibit & kiosk at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center uses the G-WOW model to explore the impacts of climate change on manoomin (wild rice) and the Ojibwe cultural practice of planting and gathering it. The kiosk features the G-WOW curriculum to expand on the exhibit's educational themes and provide a fun, interactive learning experience.

Boat trip to Bad River/Kakagon manoomin (wild rice) beds

Photo credit: Catherine Techtmann

G-WOW Changing Climate, Changing Culture Professional Development Institute



These 4-day professional development opportunities are designed to increase educators' ability to apply the G-WOW model with students and community members. Participants gain skills in integrating place-based climate change investigations with Ojibwe traditional ecological knowledge, culture, and language. A "Virtual G-WOW Trainer" is coming soon.

The G-WOW project team has trained a cadre of educators and reached thousands of students. In 2013, they were recognized by a Forest Service Eastern Regional Honor Award for "Courageous Conservation." The strong partnerships also spurred further collaborations in culturally relevant climate change education. For example, the G-WOW team, Fond du Lac Tribal College, and other partners secured a $1.09 million NASA Innovations in Climate Change-Tribal (NICE-T) grant to expand G-WOW through outreach to tribal communities in Ojibwe Ceded Territory in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. The G-WOW project is also a partner in the Chicago Botanical Garden's Connecting Climate to Communities Initiative (C3I), which was recently cited in President Obama's White House "Climate Literacy and Education" briefing paper.

G-WOW fostered other collaborations between the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center--over the past five years, they accomplished storytelling, native foods, and ethnobotany projects, and are currently developing outdoor activities that will be featured in Ojibwe language textbooks.

For more information on the G-WOW Initiative and programs please contact:
Cathy Techtmann, Environmental Outreach State Specialist, UW-Extension, 715.561.2695
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Safety Corner

Winter Safety Tip:

Walking or Driving

caperfrasers.wordpress.com

New SFI® Forest Management Standard Strengthens Tribal and Aboriginal Relations

By Andrew deVries, SFI Vice President of Conservation and Indigenous Relations

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) works to ensure forest health through its Forest Management Standard, and seeks to strengthen tribal and aboriginal relations.. The new SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard builds on principles shared by tribes and aboriginal groups, and is designed to enhance the relationship between sustainable forestry and those groups.

SFI has a strong track record of addressing tribal interests, and more tribal groups use SFI than any other forest certification standard (over 25 tribal groups have lands certified to the SFI Standard). The SFI Standard continues to grow in popularity with tribes which have land-management responsibilities because it's aligned with traditional values.

"The Yakama Nation has a traditional timber-based economy in Washington. We rely on sustainable forest practices to foster economic development and community growth while maintaining harmony with nature. SFI certification confirms that we are meeting these goals," says Steve Andringa, Yakama Nation Program Manager of Tribal Forestry.

The 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard explicitly recognizes that forests are central to the cultural beliefs and livelihoods of many tribal and aboriginal peoples with a new objective called "Recognize and Respect Indigenous Peoples' Rights." This new objective reflects SFI forest management requirements about respect for tribal rights and values.

-Photo credit: Dave Walkem, Stuwix Resources.

SFI principles include sustainable forest management, protecting water quality, maintaining biodiversity, and conserving wildlife habitat. The SFI Standard also directly respects traditional aboriginal knowledge about forests, the identification and protection of historical and culturally important sites, and the use of non-timber forest products. The Standard's strong focus on training and knowledge transfer helps facilitate passing knowledge from tribal elders to foresters, loggers, and youth.

"As an SFI Board member, I am pleased that the new standard reflects tribal values more strongly, and that tribes in the U.S. and aboriginal peoples in Canada were able to provide direct input to the standard revision," said Chief David Walkem, President of Stuwix Resources, a First Nations forest company in British Columbia, Canada.

SFI reaches out to the tribal community in many ways, including by maintaining relationships with the Forest Service Office of Tribal Relations. This relationship builds on past partnerships with the Forest Service, including engagement in the Roundtable for Sustainable Forestry, and longstanding support for Forest Service State and Private Forestry programs through working with state forestry agencies and the National Association of State Foresters.

Another way SFI builds relationships is through the SFI Conservation and Community Partnerships Grant Program. Several tribal and First Nations organizations have been successful in obtaining grants, including the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry. The College developed and implemented an educational program that focused on the sustainability of ecologically and culturally significant tree species. The program was incorporated into a youth camp run in partnership with the Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force.

SFI values its relationships with tribal and aboriginal communities in the U.S. and Canada, and hopes to continue to build these relationships.

For more information on the Sustainable Forestry Initiative's tribal programs, please contact me (andrew.devries@sfiprogram. org or 613-424-8734).

Research & Development Review

Environmental Justice Project Builds Forest Service-American Indian Center of Chicago Partnership

By Cherie LeBlanc Fisher, Forest Service Northern Research Station Social Scientist

In August 2014, three young tribal adults and the American Indian Center of Chicago (AIC)'s Urban Ecology Program Coordinator visited the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest and the Forest Service Northern Research Station laboratory in Rhinelander, Wisconsin. During the four day trip, Michael Garcia (Choctaw), Rachel Gurneau (Ojibwe), Lilah White (Ojibwe/Hoĉąk), and Dr. Eli Suzukovich III (Little Shell Band of Chippewa-Cree) met agency staff, learned about agency careers, worked in the laboratory, visited recreation and research field sites, and met local tribal representatives working in natural resource management.

The Center visitors on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest Photos credit: Forest Service

The trip to the Research Station grew out of an American Indian Center of Chicago and Forest Service special project involving plant and soil testing at the Dunning Read Conservation Area in Chicago. The Center wanted to start collecting edible and medicinal plants at Dunning Read, and consulted agency experts to find out if there were pollutants in the plants. The answer was unknown, so the team, including Forest Service Northern Research Station staff Bruce Birr and Dr. Ron Zalesny in Rhinelander, Wisconsin, and Dr. Lynne Westphal and I in Evanston, Illinois, devised a plan.

In the summer of 2014, AIC interns helped collect dozens of soil and plant samples at Dunning Read while learning field sampling protocols. The Forest Service laboratory in Rhinelander is testing the samples for heavy metals to determine the plants' edibility. The Northern Research Station's Civil Rights & Diversity Committee awarded Special Project funds to pay for the laboratory testing as well as the AIC interns' trip to Rhinelander.

In Rhinelander, the visitors spent several hours at the Forest Service lab. They used a sieve and a grinder to prepare Dunning Read samples for testing, and learned about the atomic absorption spectrophotometer machine that analyzes the samples for metals. Afterward, the interns said that their lab experience was important because young people are often asked to collect samples but rarely get to see what happens to them. Dr. Suzukovich emphasized that lab experience is vital for teaching and getting youth excited about science careers.

Dr. Suzukovich (left), Michael Garcia (center), and Lilah White bag a soil sample at Dunning Read.

The field sampling and lab processing also gave careers in science and natural resource management some context, helping the interns see the research project's broad scope. Intern Lilah White noted, "The experience definitely allowed me to understand how research is conducted by a large group of scientists, doing their own individual research for a larger singular purpose by working together."

Another highlight was meeting with Wisconsin Intertribal Conservation Advisory Commission tribal intern Melissa Lewis. She described her research on wild rice and about the value of internships for building experience and expanding career options. The tribal interns reflected that they were able to relate to Melissa, making their science career paths seem realistic and achievable.

I hope to see their young faces again—maybe in agency uniforms!

Regional Round Robin

National: White House selects Tribes as Climate Action Champions

The White House recently selected 16 local and tribal communities as the first cohort of Climate Action Champions. According to the White House blog, The selected communities have considered their climate vulnerabilities and taken action to cut carbon pollution and build resilience. They will benefit from peer-to-peer learning, mentorship, and targeted support from Federal programs. Furthermore, a coordinator will assist each Climate Action Champion to foster coordination and communication across the Federal agencies, national organizations, and foundations. The coordinator will also assist in raising awareness of funding and technical assistance opportunities.

Champion tribal communities will be offered the chance to participate in the Department of Energy's Office of Indian Energy Strategic Technical Assistance Response Team (START) program- an in-depth technical assistance program- as well as other targeted technical assistance and capacity building programs designed to help develop energy and resiliency planning and project development support for clean energy and energy efficiency projects.

2014 Tribal Climate Action Champions include:
Blue Lake Rancheria Tribe (CA): The Blue Lake Rancheria, a Federally recognized tribal government, began its strategic climate action plan in 2008 and is a regional leader in strategically planning and implementing both climate resiliency and greenhouse gas reduction measures. To date, the Tribe has reduced energy consumption by 35 percent and has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions 40 percent by 2018, utilizing a range of approaches.

Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians (MI): The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians demonstrates a holistic approach to climate action and preparedness through their energy strategy, emergency operations plan, integrated resource management plan, solid waste management plan, sustainable development code, and land use planning process, with ambitious goals including a net-zero energy goal. The tribe aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 4 percent per year.

Read more at the White House blog,

Southern Region: Kisatchie Forest Hosts Heritage Training for Jena Choctaw with Comanche Help

In December 2014, the Kisatchie National Forest hosted a three-day training for Heritage Paraprofessionals that included Forest employees and neighboring Jena Band of Choctaw Indian members. The Forest and the Tribe have developed a close relationship over years of strong cooperation and consultation. The Forest's Heritage staff has been assisting the Jena Choctaw in developing their own heritage program by training tribal members in archaeological field methods. This recent training was special because the Kisatchie archaeologist teachers, including Danny Cain (Forest Zone Archaeologist), were assisted by the Comanche Nation Heritage Crew. The Comanche Crew works on the Forest under a Master Participating Agreement between the Comanche Nation and the Southern Region. The Forest enjoys partnering with the crew, which is led by Gary Parker who recently received a Special Award from Chief Tidwell.

Jena Choctaw Councilwoman (and former Tribal Heritage Preservation Officer) Dana Masters surveying.

Photo credit: Daniel Cain, Kisatchie NF

The Jena Choctaw will put their newly certified heritage crew to work right away, conducting surveys on nearby tribally-owned lands. Alina Shively, the tribal Deputy Tribal Heritage Preservation Officer, added that "the Kisatchie National Forest Heritage Program and its staff...have provided the Jena Band of Choctaw the education and training necessary to identify, record, and, thus, protect cultural resources, which is a priceless gift for both parties."

Consultation Corner

USDA Forest Service
Tribal Relations Consultation Schedule
Updated January 7, 2015

Table 1- Schedule of Current and Upcoming Tribal Consultation

Topic	Type	Start Date	End Date
Tribal Relations Directives	Maual and Handbook	June 6, 2013	Open until further notice
Community Forest Program - Proposed Rule	Manual	December 2014	To Be Determined
Bighorn Sheep Management Directives	Manual	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
Invasive Species Management Directives	Handbook	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
Rangeland Management Directives	Manual and Handbook	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
Recreation Site - FSH 2309.13	Handbook	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
Ski Water Rights – FSH 2709.11	Handbook	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
Threatened and Endangered Species (TES) Animal and Plant Habitat Biodiversity Guidance Directives	Manual	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
Wilderness Management Directives	Manual	Delayed	To Be Determined

Table 2 - Completed Tribal Consultation

Topic	Start Date	End Date
Farm Bill Section 8105 (Forest Products for Traditional and Cultural Uses) – Regulation and	April 20, 2010	September 1, 2010
Administrative Appeal Rule – 36 CFR 214	August 11, 2010	January 10, 2011
Wind Energy - Directive	August 25, 2010	February 1, 2011
Planning Rule – Pre-publication of Draft Proposed Rule	September 23, 2010	December 13, 2010
Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program	September 30, 2010	February 20, 2011
Farm Bill Section 8103 (Reburial) - Manual Revision	October 5, 2010	May 31, 2011
Planning Rule – Post-publication of Proposed Rule	December 13, 2010	March 22, 2011
Paleontological Resources Preservation	March 7, 2011	July 13, 2011
Management of National Forest System Surface Resources with Non-Federal Mineral Estates	March 7, 2011	July 13, 2011
National Aerial Application of Fire Retardant Environmental Impact Statement	April 25, 2011	August 25, 2011
National Environmental Policy Act Categorical Exclusions Supporting Landscape Restoration	May 6, 2011	August 31, 2011
Burned Area Emergency Response - Manual Revision	May 24, 2011	October 7, 2011
Planning Rule (120 days prior to estimated date of Final Rule)	July 14, 2011	November 14, 2011
Sacred Sites (Draft Report to the Secretary of Agriculture)	July 2011	November 2011
Small Business Timber Sale Set-Aside Program - Policy Directive	February 1, 2012	May 31, 2012
Objection Process Consultation, Revision of Regulations at 36 CFR 218	April 2, 2012	September 7, 2012
Planning Rule Directives	February 27, 2013	June 28, 2013
Paleontological Resources Preservation	May 23, 2013	July 22, 2013
Fire and Aviation Management Directives	June 6, 2013	October 6, 2013

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Editor's Note

I would like to thank everyone for their valuable contributions to this newsletter, including those in the OTR.

I am starting a year long assignment, and will therefore not be serving as your Editor.

Please contact Estelle Bowman at ejbowman@fs.fed.us for future stories.