

## Indian Country Priorities and Opportunities for the 2023 Farm Bill Title VIII: Forestry

### Key Points and Recommendations

- Indian forests and woodlands comprise 18.6 million acres, or one third, of the total 57 million acres of Indian land held and managed in trust by the federal government - more than 300 tribes continue to manage forests.
- Many tribal forests and adjacent federal forests contain sacred sites and important trust and treaty-protected resources.
- Parity for Tribes in the Forestry Title enables better access, management and development of tribal and federal forests and woodlands. This protects tribal resources, facilitates job creation, and spurs economic development.

### Background Information and Context

Tribal Nations have engaged in management and stewardship of forestlands for thousands of years, and 313 federally recognized tribes continue to manage forests today. Tribal forest land holdings range in size from 1 acre to more than 5 million acres; roughly 8 million acres of tribal forests are timberlands. Native forests and woodlands comprise 18.6 million acres, or one third, of the total 57 million acres of Native land held and managed in trust by the federal government. Forests represent one of the principal renewable resources available to tribes. Across Indian Country, forests provide more than \$40 million in annual Tribal governmental revenues, 19,000 jobs in and around Tribal communities, as well as wildlife habitat and sources of food and medicine for Native people. The proper health and management of Native forests are crucial to rural economies across America.

### Opportunities for Indian Country in the Forestry Title

*The Intertribal Timber Council (ITC) has been leading on forestry issues in Indian Country since 1976, and is the subject matter expert on forestry issues for Indian Country. Priorities include:*

- **Cooperative Management of Adjacent Federal Lands**
  - The Farm Bill must authorize a pilot for Tribes and the BIA to conduct cooperative, discretionary forest restoration activities on U.S. Forest Service and



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BLM lands using existing regulations governing the management of Indian forests.

- Existing language can be found in Section 302 of the House-passed H.R. 2647 (Westerman, 114th Congress) and Section 3 of S. 3014 (Daines, 114th Congress).

- ***Workforce Development***

- The Farm Bill should authorize the USDA to fund Native American Forestry workforce coordination and development program through an intertribal organization familiar with Tribal forestry issues.

- ***Support Anchor Forests***

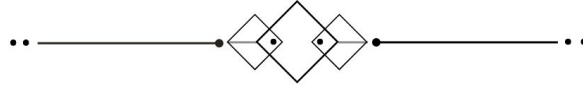
- Provide authority to develop more Anchor Forest initiatives. The Inter-Tribal Timber Council, its member Tribes, the U.S. Forest Service, and other forest resource stakeholders have completed a pilot study in Washington State and report on an “Anchor Forest” concept to foster landscape-scale forest collaboration and management projects intended to improve forest health while preserving local logging, milling, and other critical infrastructure. The pilot study was successful and many tribes in the Great Lakes states and Southwest are interested in developing Anchor Forest projects in their own regions.

- ***Provide additional funding to support P.L. 93-638 Tribal Self-Governance contracts for demonstration projects for forestry management***

- The Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA) authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to enter into contracts or agreements with Tribal Nations to carry out Tribally proposed projects on Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management-managed lands.

- ***Extend and expand Tribal Self-Governance under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 (“638” authority) in the Forest Service***

- Support greater tribal participation in TFPA projects through the application of 638 contracting authority to TFPA projects on Forest Service or BLM lands.
- Make 638 authorities permanent and dedicate funding to TFPA 638 contracts. No funding for this purpose was allocated in the 2018 Farm Bill, so USFS is limited by available funding at the individual National Forest level.



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- ***Amend Title VIII, Section 8624 of the 2018 Farm Bill to include Tribal Nations and Counties.***
  - Amend the necessary language in the 2018 Farm Bill to give full authority to Tribal Nations and counties to retain and utilize revenue generated from Good Neighbors Agreement projects.
  - Expand language in Subsection (2)(C)(i)(I) to include Tribal land as authorized to carry out restoration services under Good Neighbor Agreements
  
- ***Transfer of Lands Back to Tribal Nations***
  - Providing FS with the legal authority needed to facilitate the transfer of federally managed forest lands back to Tribal governments will be one significant step toward correcting historic wrongs.