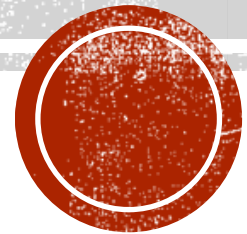


# **THEN, NOW AND TOMORROW: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO TRIBAL FOREST MANAGEMENT**

Adrian Leighton, Salish Kootenai College



# A LONG HISTORY OF STEWARDSHIP

- Native peoples have been part of the ecosystems where they lived for thousands of years
- Interactions generally reciprocal and included stewardship of plants, animals and water
- This place based accumulated knowledge often referred to as “Traditional Ecological Knowledge” (TEK) or Indigenous Knowledge (IK)
- The melding of traditional practices and perspectives with western science has created a vibrant and innovative model of forestry



Southern Sierra Miwuk engage in a ceremony and traditional methods to ignite the prescribed fire.  
Brent Johnson, NPS



# TRUST RESPONSIBILITY

- Varies by tribe, but primarily based on treaties signed (over 400)
- “Marshall Trilogy” a series of three Supreme Court cases (1823-1832) that defined Trust
- “Domestic Dependent” Nations- sovereign but with “federal primacy”
- Federal Government the Trustee
- Dawes General Allotment Act of 1887





# FEDERAL FOREST MANAGEMENT OF TRIBAL LANDS

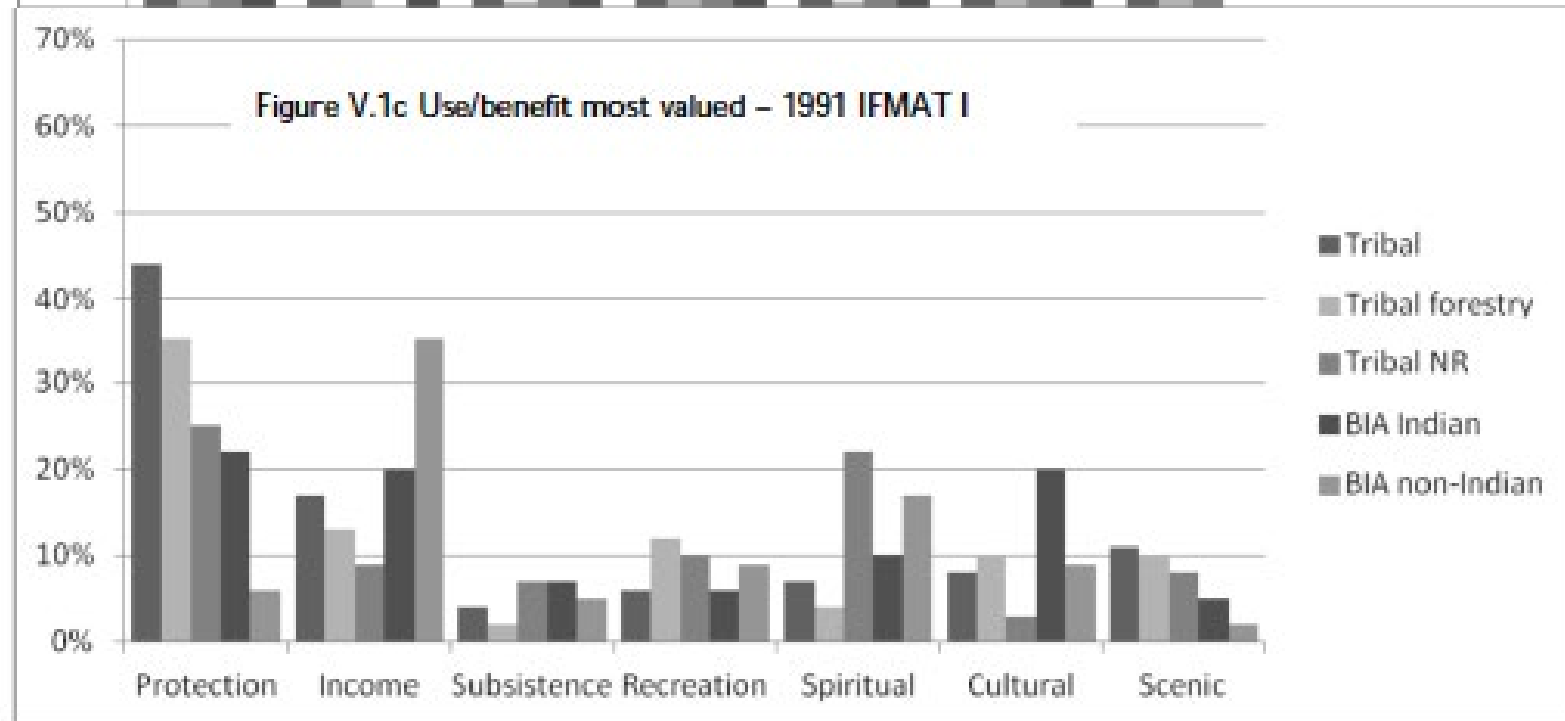
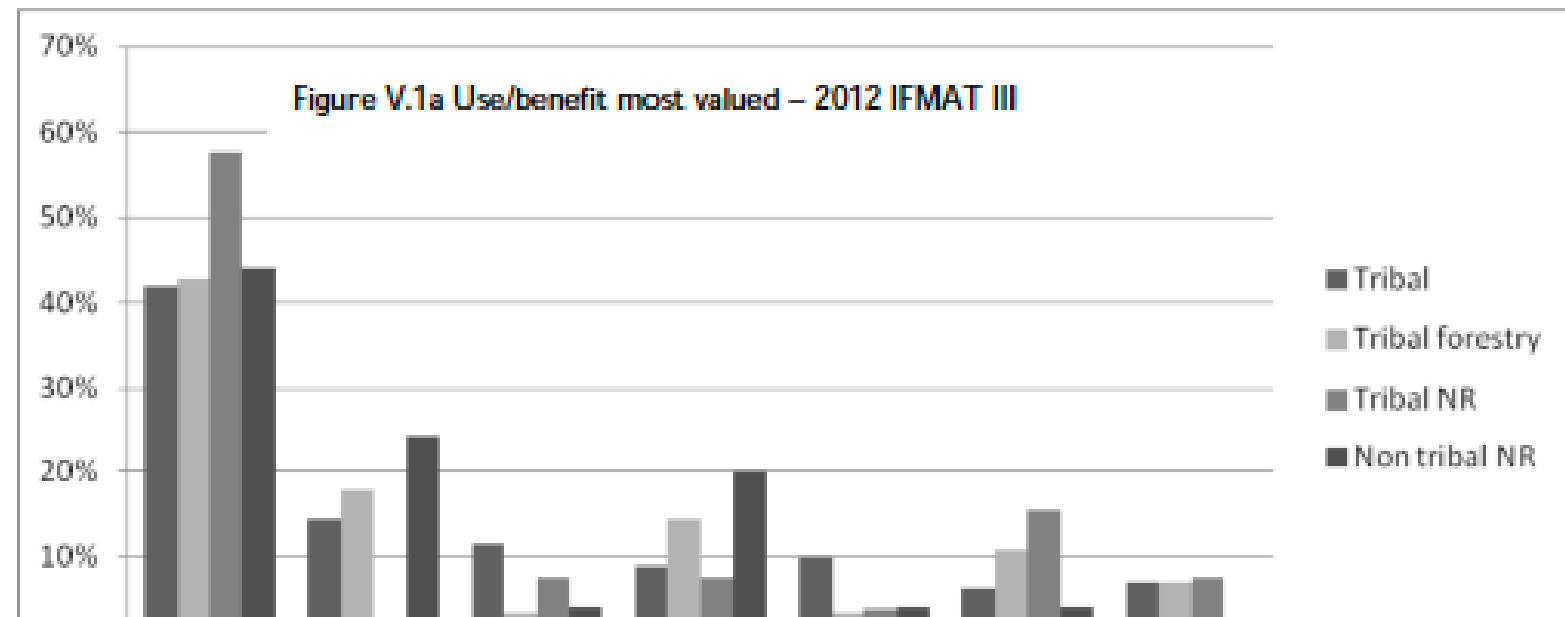
- "Bare right of occupancy" until Dead & Down Act of 1889
- Forestry Branch created 1910
- Sustained yield management directive codified into 1934 Indian Reorganization Act
- Sustained yield and economic development "drove the bus". Tribal vision or values often not front and center
- Funding and staffing shortages have been an issue for over a century
- In 1990, approximately 25% of foresters non-native



Clear cut block on an allotment on the Quinault Indian Reservation. 1960s. Harold Weaver, Forest History Society

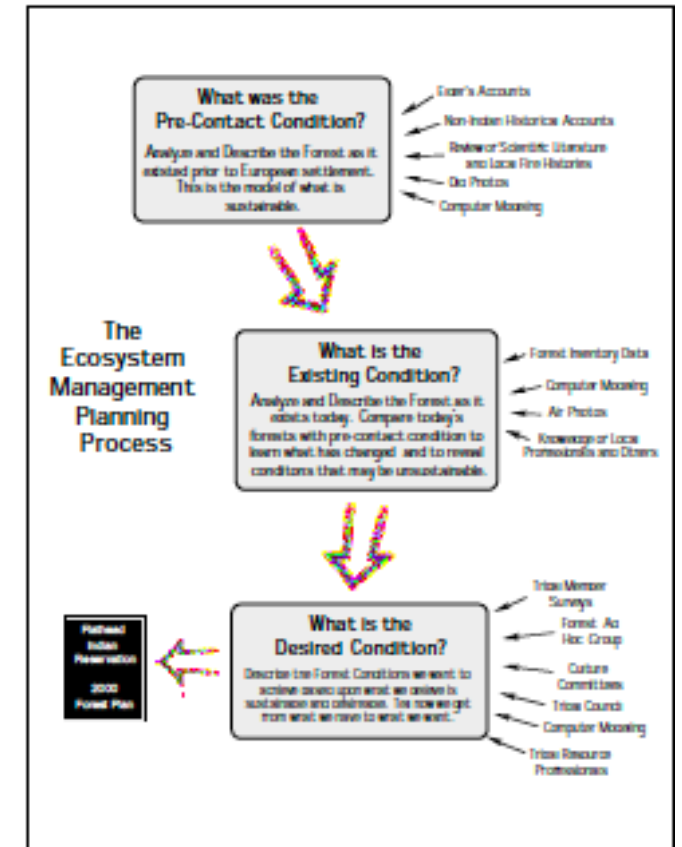






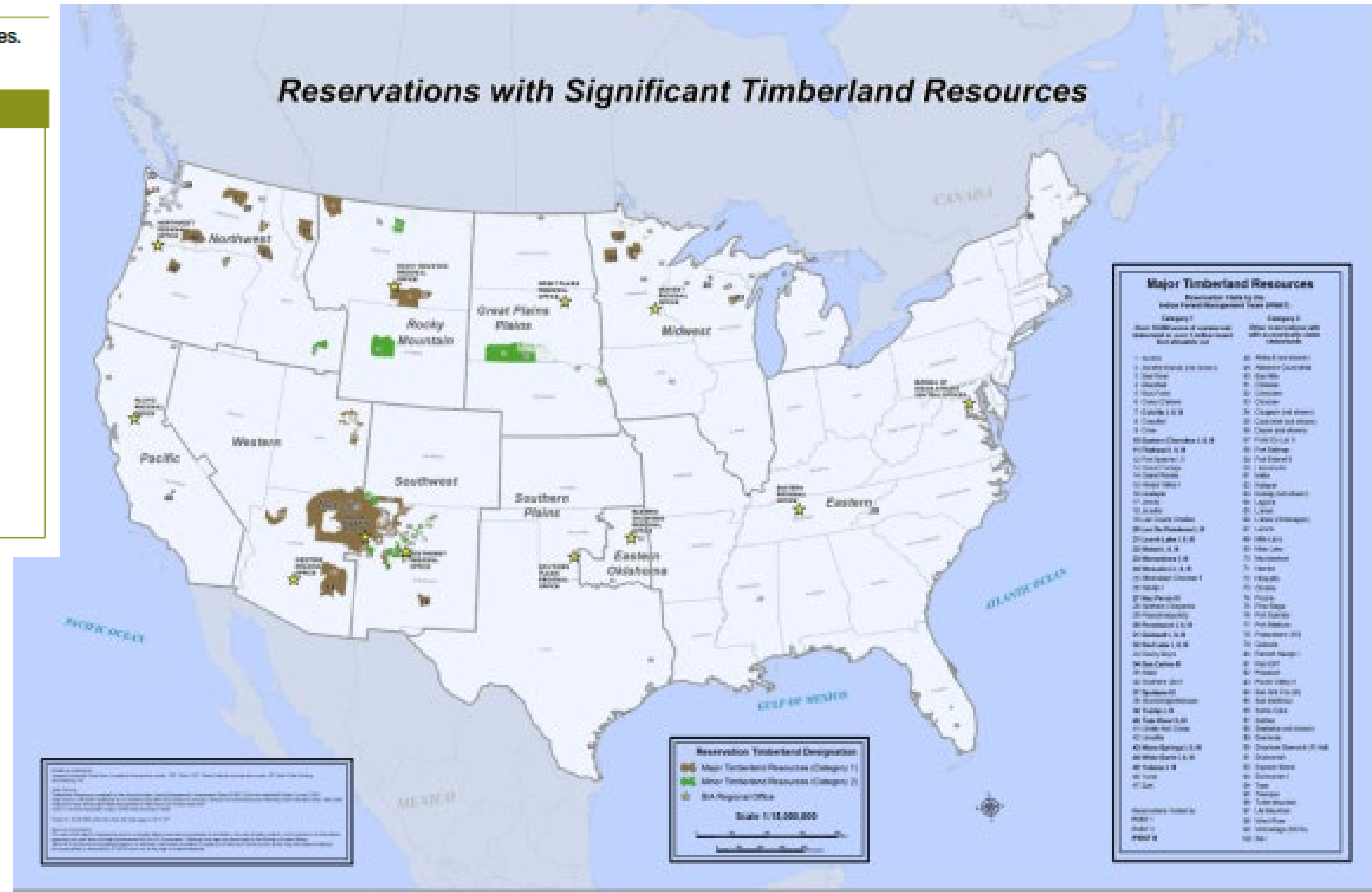
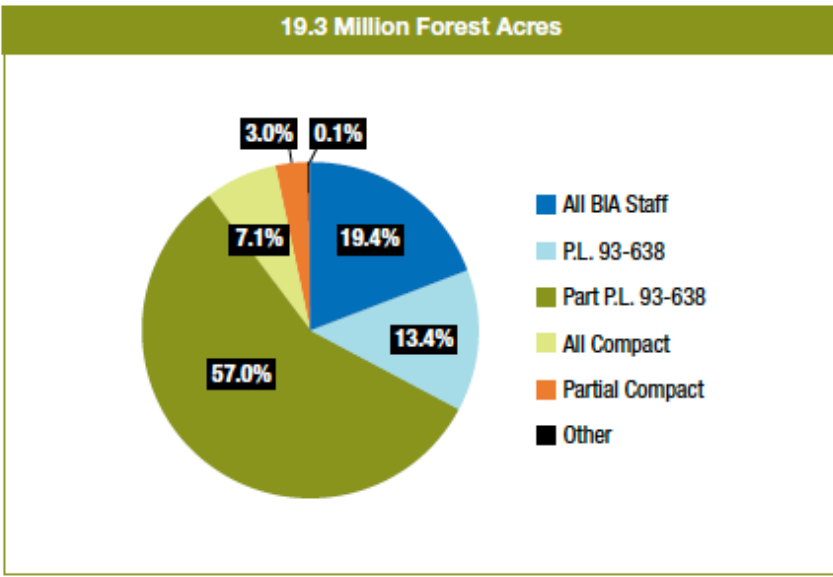
# A MOVE TO TRIBAL SELF DETERMINATION

- 1975: Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act (PL-638) authorized tribes to “sub-contract” programs.
- In 1994, PL-638 further amended to allow more tribal self governance through compacts
- 1990: National Indian Forest Resource Management Act (NIFRMA).
- 2016: The Indian Trust Asset Reform Act (ITARA) authorizes tribes to create their own forestry regulations
- In last two decades, programs such as the Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA), the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA), and Reserved Treaty Rights Lands (RTRL) have given tribes the opportunity to manage on federal lands



Flathead Indian Reservation Forest Management Plan, 2000

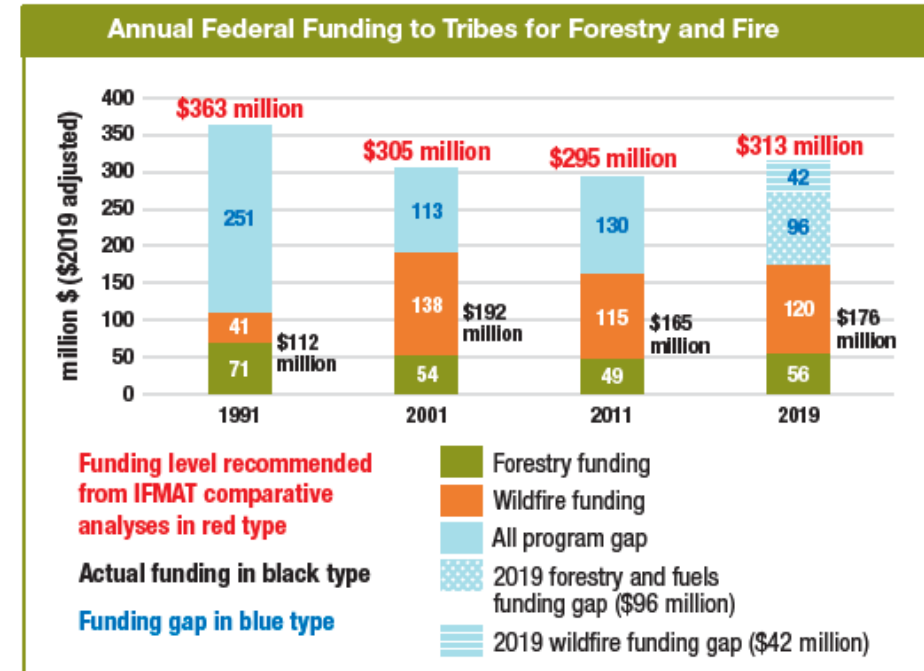
**Figure ES.1.** Forestry Self-governance program by number of trust acres.  
 (Source: 2019 F&PA report).





# "STATE OF THE ART" FORESTRY

- NIFRMA created the Indian Forest Management Assessment Team (IFMAT) process
- IFMAT released 4 times over last 30 years
- Has documented increased satisfaction among tribal members as tribal compacting and contracting have increased
- Tribes showing creative, innovative forest management that is becoming a national model
- However, consistent underfunding and staffing shortages are major challenges



Annual federal budgeted funding level to tribes for forestry and fire adjusted to \$2019. IFMAT IV recommended funding level of \$313 million is based on a comparative analysis to the U.S. Forest Service and other federal programs. This amount does not include estimated federal contributions of \$11 million from other BIA programs or other federal sources such as NRCS. It also does not include needed funding to address the road maintenance backlog which was \$200 million in 1991 and has increased to \$1.33 billion in 2019. Subtotals may not add to total due to rounding.

