February 13, 2023

RE: Tribal Engagement Session: Tribal Reforestation

Dear Tribal Leader and Tribal Nurseries/Colleges/Experts:

On behalf of the Secretary, you are cordially invited by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to participate in an upcoming Tribal Engagement Session on Tribal Reforestation Efforts.

WHAT: Tribal Engagement Session
TOPIC: Tribal Reforestation: Tribal Forests, Federal Forests, Seeds, Nurseries
WHO: Tribal Leaders, Tribal Nurseries/Colleges/Experts
DATE: Thursday, February 23, 2023
TIME: 2:30 – 4:30pm ET
ZOOM: ZOOM LINK
RSVP: Tribal.Relations@usda.gov

The engagement session is to assist in developing guidance and an implementation plan to:

(a) increase climate-informed afforestation, agroforestry, and reforestation (planting and natural regeneration) including critical consideration given to climate-informed reforestation in areas such as fire scars that can help avoid carbon loss from forest soils; and

(b) increase Federal cone and seed collection, and seed and seedling nursery capacity sufficient to meet anticipated demand, including collaboration with additional USDA agencies and Tribal partners.

This is a Tribal Engagement Session, and we encourage tribal leaders, tribal nurseries, tribal colleges/universities with forestry/natural resources departments, and other tribal forest experts in the field to participate in this engagement session and provide commentary.

Engagement Questions:
1) What are the major needs and barriers to increasing nursery demand and capacity?
2) What are the major needs and barriers to increasing seed demand and capacity?
3) What are the major needs and barriers regarding funding and resources?

Additional potential topic areas:
1) Workforce availability/development/training
2) Youth development/opportunities
3) Cooperation/collaboration
4) Nursery facilities/modernization
5) Incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge
6) Contracting/agreements
7) Research
Background: On June 23, 2022 the Secretary of Agriculture released Secretary’s Memorandum (SO) 1077-004, Climate Resilience and Carbon Stewardship of American’s National Forests and Grasslands, intending to build on the Administration, Department, and Agency’s previous actions on climate change, equity and forest resilience. Following the release of this memo, the Secretary stood up a cross-mission area working group on reforestation to harness the OneUSDA approach to meeting the directives in Presidential Executive Order (EO) 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, EO 14072, Strengthening the Nation’s Forests, Communities, and Local Economies, and SO 1077-004. SO 1077-004, includes direction to scale up and optimize Climate-Smart Reforestation by April 22, 2023.

Questions and Updated Information. Updated information will be posted on the OTR website at: https://www.usda.gov/tribalrelations/tribal-consultations. Any questions on logistics for this engagement session can be directed to Tribal.Relations@usda.gov.

This engagement session will be held virtually. Information on accessing the Zoom session can be found below.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to this discussion.

Heather Dawn Thompson (Cheyenne River Sioux)
Director, Office of Tribal Relations
U.S. Department of Agriculture

ADDITIONAL ZOOM AND CALL IN INFORMATION

Tribal Reforestation Engagement Session

Thursday, February 23, 2023
2:30 – 4:30pm EST (1:30pm CST, 12:30pm MST, 11:30pm PST, 10:30am AST)

Zoom Link: https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1611270858?pwd=NjA3KzZqdnVravtSMEhmZk1TMGY3QT09

Meeting ID: 161 127 0858
Passcode: 240633

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