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General Pay Schedule GS 9 step 5 position salary plus an additional 40 percent of the annual salary for such a position to pay for fringe benefits and support costs;

(2) Level two funding assistance shall be equivalent to an additional Federal Employee General Pay Schedule GS 9 step 5 position salary plus an additional 40 percent of the annual salary for such a position to pay for fringe benefits and support costs; and

(3) Level three funding assistance shall be based on equal distribution of remaining funds among qualifying applicants.

(f) Determination of qualification for level of funding assistance shall be as follows:

(1) A funding level qualification value shall be determined for each eligible applicant using the formula below. Such formula shall only be used to determine which applicants qualify for level one funding assistance. Acreage and allowable cut data used in the formula shall be as maintained by the Secretary. Eligible applicants with a funding level qualification value of one (1) or greater shall qualify for level one assistance.

Funding Level Qualification Formula

$$\left[\frac{.5 \times CA}{\text{Tot. CA}} + \frac{.5 \times AAC}{\text{Tot. AAC}} \right] \times 1000$$

where:

CA=applicant's total commercial Indian forest land acres;

Tot. CA=national total commercial Indian forest land acres;

AAC=applicant's total allowable annual cut from commercial Indian forest land acres; and

Tot. AAC=national total allowable annual cut from commercial Indian forest land acres.

(2) All category 1 or 2 reservations that are eligible applicants under §163.36(d) of this part are qualified and eligible for level two assistance.

(3) All category 1, 2 or 3 reservations that are eligible applicants under §163.36(d) of this part are qualified and eligible for level three assistance.

(g) Tribal forestry program financial support funds shall be distributed based on the following:

(1) All requests from reservations qualifying for level one funding assistance must be satisfied before funds are made available for level two funding assistance;

(2) All requests from reservations qualifying for level two funding assistance must be satisfied before funds are made available for level three funding assistance; and

(3) If available funding is not adequate to satisfy all requests at a particular level of funding, funds will be evenly divided among tribes qualifying at that level.

§ 163.37 Forest management research.

The Secretary, with the consent of the authorized Indian representatives' is authorized to perform forestry research activities to improve the basis for determining appropriate land management activities to apply to Indian forest land.

Subpart C—Forestry Education, Education Assistance, Recruitment and Training

§ 163.40 Indian and Alaska Native forestry education assistance.

(a) *Establishment and evaluation of the forestry education assistance programs.*

(1) The Secretary shall establish within the Bureau of Indian Affairs Division of Forestry an education committee to coordinate and implement the forestry education assistance programs and to select participants for all the forestry education assistance programs with the exception of the cooperative education program. This committee will be, at a minimum, comprised of a professional educator, a personnel specialist, an Indian or Alaska Native who is not employed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and a professional forester from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

(2) The Secretary, through the Bureau of Indian Affairs Division of Forestry, shall monitor and evaluate the forestry education assistance programs to ensure that there are adequate Indian and Alaska Native foresters and forestry-related professionals to manage the Bureau of Indian Affairs forestry programs and forestry programs maintained by or for tribes and ANCSA Corporations. Such monitoring and

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evaluating shall identify the number of participants in the intern, cooperative education, scholarship, and outreach programs; the number of participants who completed the requirements to become a professional forester or forestry-related professional; and the number of participants completing advanced degree requirements.

(b) *Forester intern program.* (1) The purpose of the forester intern program is to ensure the future participation of trained, professional Indians and Alaska Natives in the management of Indian and Alaska Native forest land. In keeping with this purpose, the Bureau of Indian Affairs in concert with tribes and Alaska Natives will work:

(i) To obtain the maximum degree of participation from Indians and Alaska Natives in the forester intern program;

(ii) To encourage forester interns to complete an undergraduate degree program in a forestry or forestry-related field which could include courses on indigenous culture; and

(iii) To create an opportunity for the advancement of forestry and forestry-related technicians to professional resource management positions with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a tribe, tribal forest enterprise or ANCSA Corporation.

(2) The Secretary, through the Bureau of Indian Affairs Division of Forestry, subject to the availability of personnel resource levels established in agency budgets, shall establish and maintain in the Bureau of Indian Affairs at least 20 positions for the forester intern program. All Indians and Alaska Natives who satisfy the qualification criteria in §163.40(b)(3) of this part may compete for such positions.

(3) To be considered for selection, applicants for forester intern positions must meet the following criteria:

(i) Be eligible for Indian preference as defined in 25 CFR part 5, subchapter A;

(ii) Possess a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent;

(iii) Be able to successfully complete the intern program within a three year maximum time period; and

(iv) Possess a letter of acceptance to an accredited post-secondary school or demonstrate that such a letter of acceptance will be acquired within 90 days.

(4) The Bureau of Indian Affairs shall advertise vacancies for forester intern positions semiannually, no later than the first day of April and October, to accommodate entry into school.

(5) Selection of forester interns will be based on the following guidelines:

(i) Selection will be on a competitive basis selecting applicants who have the greatest potential for success in the program;

(ii) Selection will take into consideration the amount of time which will be required for individual applicants to complete the intern program;

(iii) Priority in selection will be given to candidates currently employed with and recommended for participation by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a tribe, a tribal forest enterprise or ANCSA Corporation; and

(iv) Selection of individuals to the program awaiting the letter of acceptance required by §163.40(b)(3)(iv) of this part may be canceled if such letter of acceptance is not secured and provided to the education committee in a timely manner.

(6) Forester interns shall comply with each of the following program requirements:

(i) Maintain full-time status in a forestry related curriculum at an accredited post-secondary school having an agreement which assures the transferability of a minimum of 55 semester hours from the post-secondary institution which meet the program requirements for a forestry related program at a bachelor degree granting institution accredited by the American Association of Universities;

(ii) Maintain good academic standing;

(iii) Enter into an obligated service agreement to serve as a professional forester or forestry-related professional with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the recommending tribe, tribal forest enterprise or ANCSA Corporation for two years for each year in the program; and

(iv) Report for service with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a tribe, tribal forest enterprise or ANCSA Corporation during any break in attendance at school of more than three weeks duration. Time spent in such service shall

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be counted toward satisfaction of the intern's obligated service.

(7) The education committee established pursuant to §163.40(a)(1) of this part will evaluate annually the performance of forester intern program participants against requirements enumerated in §163.40(b)(6) of this part to ensure that they are satisfactorily progressing toward completing program requirements.

(8) The Secretary shall pay all costs for tuition, books, fees and living expenses incurred by a forester intern while attending an accredited post-secondary school.

(c) *Cooperative education program.* (1) The purpose of the cooperative education program is to recruit and develop promising Indian and Alaska Native students who are enrolled in secondary schools, tribal or Alaska Native community colleges, and other post-secondary schools for employment as professional foresters and other forestry-related professionals by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a tribe, tribal forest enterprise or ANCSA Corporation.

(2) The program shall be operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs Division of Forestry in accordance with the provisions of 5 CFR 213.3202(a) and 213.3202(b).

(3) To be considered for selection, applicants for the cooperative education program must meet the following criteria:

(i) Meet eligibility requirements stipulated in 5 CFR 213.3202;

(ii) Be accepted into or enrolled in a course of study at a high school offering college preparatory course work, an accredited institution which grants bachelor degrees in forestry or forestry-related curriculums or a post-secondary education institution which has an agreement with a college or university which grants bachelor degrees in forestry or forestry-related curriculums. The agreement must assure the transferability of a minimum of 55 semester hours from the post-secondary institution which meet the program requirements for a forestry related program at the bachelor degree-granting institution.

(4) Cooperative education steering committees established at the field

level shall select program participants based on eligibility requirements stipulated in §163.40(c)(3) of this part without regard to applicants' financial needs.

(5) A recipient of assistance under the cooperative education program shall be required to enter into an obligated service agreement to serve as a professional forester or forestry-related professional with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a recommending tribe, tribal forest enterprise or ANCSA Corporation for one year in return for each year in the program.

(6) The Secretary shall pay all costs of tuition, books, fees, and transportation to and from the job site to school, for an Indian or Alaska Native student who is selected for participation in the cooperative education program.

(d) *Scholarship program.* (1) The Secretary is authorized, within the Bureau of Indian Affairs Division of Forestry, to establish and grant forestry scholarships to Indians and Alaska Natives enrolled in accredited programs for post-secondary and graduate forestry and forestry-related programs of study as full-time students.

(2) The education committee established pursuant to this part in §163.40(a)(1) shall select program participants based on eligibility requirements stipulated in §§163.40(d)(5), 163.40(d)(6) and 163.40(d)(7) without regard to applicants' financial needs or past scholastic achievements.

(3) Recipients of scholarships must reapply annually to continue funding beyond the initial award period. Students who have been recipients of scholarships in past years, who are in good academic standing and have been recommended for continuation by their academic institution will be given priority over new applicants for selection for scholarship assistance.

(4) The amount of scholarship funds an individual is awarded each year will be contingent upon the availability of funds appropriated each fiscal year and, therefore, may be subject to yearly changes.

(5) Preparatory scholarships are available for a maximum of two and one half academic years of general, undergraduate course work leading to a

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degree in forestry or forestry-related curriculums and may be awarded to individuals who meet the following criteria:

(i) Must possess a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent; and

(ii) Be enrolled and in good academic standing or accepted for enrollment at an accredited post-secondary school which grants degrees in forestry or forestry-related curriculums or be in a post-secondary institution which has an agreement with a college or university which grants bachelor degrees in forestry or forestry-related curriculums. The agreement must assure the transferability of a minimum of 55 semester hours from the post-secondary institution which meet the program requirements for a forestry-related curriculum at the bachelor degree granting institution.

(6) Pregraduate scholarships are available for a maximum of three academic years and may be awarded to individuals who meet the following criteria:

(i) Have completed a minimum of 55 semester hours towards a bachelor degree in a forestry or forestry-related curriculum; and

(ii) Be accepted into a forestry or forestry-related bachelor degree-granting program at an accredited college or university.

(7) Graduate scholarships are available for a maximum of three academic years for individuals selected into the graduate program of an accredited college or university that grants advanced degrees in forestry or forestry-related fields.

(8) A recipient of assistance under the scholarship program shall be required to enter into an obligated service agreement to serve as a professional forester or forestry-related professional with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a tribe, tribal forest enterprise or ANCSA Corporation for one year for each year in the program.

(9) The Secretary shall pay all scholarships approved by the education committee established pursuant to this part in §163.40(a)(1), for which funding is available.

(e) *Forestry education outreach.* (1) The Secretary shall establish and maintain a forestry education outreach program

within the Bureau of Indian Affairs Division of Forestry for Indian and Alaska Native youth which will:

(i) Encourage students to acquire academic skills needed to succeed in post-secondary mathematics and science courses;

(ii) Promote forestry career awareness that could include modern technologies as well as native indigenous forestry technologies;

(iii) Involve students in projects and activities oriented to forestry related professions early so students realize the need to complete required precollege courses; and

(iv) Integrate Indian and Alaska Native forestry program activities into the education of Indian and Alaska Native students.

(2) The program shall be developed and carried out in consultation with appropriate community education organizations, tribes, ANCSA Corporations, and Alaska Native organizations.

(3) The program shall be coordinated and implemented nationally by the education committee established pursuant to §163.40(a)(1) of this part.

(f) *Postgraduate studies.* (1) The purpose of the postgraduate studies program is to enhance the professional and technical knowledge of Indian and Alaska Native foresters and forestry-related professionals working for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a tribe, tribal forest enterprise or ANCSA Corporation so that the best possible service is provided to Indian and Alaska Native publics.

(2) The Secretary is authorized to pay the cost of tuition, fees, books and salary of Alaska Natives and Indians who are employed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a tribe, tribal forest enterprise or ANCSA Corporation who have previously received diplomas or degrees in forestry or forestry-related curriculums and who wish to pursue advanced levels of education in forestry or forestry-related fields.

(3) Requirements of the postgraduate study program are:

(i) The goal of the advanced study program is to encourage participants to obtain additional academic credentials such as a degree or diploma in a forestry or forestry-related field;

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(ii) The duration of course work cannot be less than one semester or more than three years; and

(iii) Students in the postgraduate studies program must meet performance standards as required by the graduate school offering the study program during their course of study.

(4) Program applicants will submit application packages to the education committee established by §163.40(a)(1). At a minimum, such packages shall contain a complete SF 171 and an endorsement, signed by the applicant's supervisor clearly stating the needs and benefits of the desired training.

(5) The education committee established pursuant to §163.40(a)(1) shall select program participants based on the following criteria:

(i) Need for the expertise sought at both the local and national levels;

(ii) Expected benefits, both to the location and nationally; and

(iii) Years of experience and the service record of the employee.

(6) Program participants will enter into an obligated service agreement in accordance with §163.42(a), to serve as a professional forester or forestry-related professional with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a tribe, tribal forest enterprise or ANCSA Corporation for two years for each year in the program. However, the obligated service requirement may be reduced by the Secretary if the employee receives supplemental funding such as research grants, scholarships or graduate stipends and, as a result, reduces the need for financial assistance. If the obligated service agreement is breached, the Secretary is authorized to pursue collection in accordance with §163.42(b) of this part.

§ 163.41 Postgraduation recruitment, continuing education and training programs.

(a) *Postgraduation recruitment program.* (1) The purpose of the postgraduation recruitment program is to recruit Indian and Alaska Native graduate foresters and trained forestry technicians into the Bureau of Indian Affairs forestry program or forestry programs conducted by a tribe, tribal forest enterprise or ANCSA Corporation.

(2) The Secretary is authorized to assume outstanding student loans from established lending institutions of Indian and Alaska Native foresters and forestry technicians who have successfully completed a post-secondary forestry or forestry-related curriculum at an accredited institution.

(3) Indian and Alaska Natives receiving benefits under this program shall enter into an obligated service agreement in accordance with §163.42(a) of this part. Obligated service required under this program will be one year for every \$5,000 of student loan debt repaid.

(4) If the obligated service agreement is breached, the Secretary is authorized to pursue collection of the student loan(s) in accordance with §163.42(b) of this part.

(b) *Postgraduate intergovernmental internships.* (1) Forestry personnel working for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a tribe, tribal forest enterprise or ANCSA Corporation may apply to the Secretary and be granted an internship within forestry-related programs of agencies of the Department of the Interior.

(2) Foresters or forestry-related personnel from other Department of the Interior agencies may apply through proper channels for internships within Bureau of Indian Affairs forestry programs and, with the consent of a tribe or Alaska Native organization, within tribal or Alaska Native forestry programs.

(3) Forestry personnel from agencies not within the Department of the Interior may apply, through proper agency channels and pursuant to an inter-agency agreement, for an internship within the Bureau of Indian Affairs and, with the consent of a tribe or Alaska Native organization, within a tribe, tribal forest enterprise or ANCSA Corporation.

(4) Forestry personnel from a tribe, tribal forest enterprise or ANCSA Corporation may apply, through proper channels and pursuant to a cooperative agreement, for an internship within another tribe, tribal forest enterprise or ANCSA Corporation forestry program.

(5) The employing agency of participating Federal employees will provide for the continuation of salary and benefits.