§ 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 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 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 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.

2. Selection 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 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 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 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
§ 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