

**Communicating Forestry Practices Within Indian County:
A look at how the Menominee Nation communicates with its' members
Destiny Spruce**

As you drive down any road on the Menominee Indian Reservation, you might notice a large, cleared-out lot, where tree habitation used to be, and wonder: Are they building something here? How come it looks so awful? And how could they do this do our forest? I never used to like these clear-cut areas. However, after learning more about the Menominee forestry practices and realizing how sustained clear-cutting is actually better for the forest, I understand the necessity of clear-cutting.

The Menominee Forest Management Plan (FMP) requires clear-cutting of forests, as part of their protocol for forest sustainability. Many forest lands are managed according to the principles of sustained yield, which means timber can not be harvested faster than the forest will allow growth, which ensures that the forest will not become depleted over time. Forest management is often broken into three categories; inventory, the measurement of the forest, silviculture, the harvest and regeneration of trees and forest development, the enhancement/ addition to the forest.

Although clear-cutting of forests is not aesthetical, it is necessary in order to let sunlight reach the forest floor to stimulate a new generation of trees. These cutting methods are crucial to keep or promote many tree species, such as aspen. It also creates ideal habitat for wildlife such as deer and grouse. Without these harvest practices, the diversity of tree species would gradually reduce throughout the forest. The silvicultural guidelines within the FMP are designed to optimize forest health, promote diversity, and prevent disease and insect outbreaks. In my community there are many who get upset when they see clear-cutting activity (or the results). Most of these people have moved off the reservation, come back occasionally and feel our forests are being desecrated. There is not much communication with the general public when it comes to when/where clear-cutting will occur. The Menominee are working towards an Integrated Resource Management Plan (IRMP) that identifies goals and means to achieve goals. One of these goals, how the Menominee communicates forestry issues, is the basis of my research. For this reason, I feel it would be beneficial to research how other tribes throughout the United States deal with communication issues, or the lack thereof, and see if ideas could be applied to my community.