

The Four Winds

Newsletter of the American Indian Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS (AIANEA)



Winter - Niibin 2010

Respect, Harmony, and Beauty



Elder Quote

"This ground that we walk on is our mother. This air we breathe is our life. This sun that comes up is our guide."
Norman Lopez, 8/12/08

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Please send articles on what is happening in your area. News stories, articles of interest, gatherings, pow wow's, whatever you want to share! Email to membership@aianea.com

Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen—Incoming President Letter

O-si-yo (Hello) AIANEA Members!

Happy New Year and welcome to the second decade of the 21st century. Additionally, we celebrate the 15th anniversary of the American Indian Alaska Native Employees Association (AIANEA) for NRCS! I am extremely honored to be your 2010 President during this exciting time. I have been a member of the association since 1995 and on the National Council since 2001. I am very proud of the journey the AIANEA has traveled during this first 15 years, the increase in membership, the tremendous accomplishments, and the difference the association has made in numerous lives.

I want to welcome the newly elected National Council members: Ralph Goh, West Regional Representative; John Harper, Southeast Regional Representative; Stacy Kimble, Midwest Regional Representative; and Gina Kerzman, in her change to 2nd Vice President! In addition, I extend my gratitude to the outgoing National Council members: Sharron Santure and Phillip Dixon. Thank you for leadership and the value you brought to the association. I am fortunate to serve with the continuing National Council members: Ciro Lo Pinto, Blythe Koyiyumptewa, Harold Bryant, Levi Montoya, Leota Burnett, and Nels Liljedahl. Please communicate often with any of us so that we can ensure an association that meets the needs of the membership.

In 2008 and 2009, the AIANEA Visioning Committee worked in conjunction with the membership to develop the 'Visions for the Next Seven Generations 2009 Action Plan'. By utilizing input from association members, the plan visions and actions were developed to accomplish your vision for AIANEA. Some key components include: Relationships Among AIANEA, NRCS and Tribes; Elder Involvement and Knowledge Sharing; and Leadership, Growth and Mentorship within the association. This is only the beginning! Because of the dedication of committee members and the overall AIANEA membership, American Indians and Alaska Natives; tribes across the county; AIANEA Elders and other Elders; and NRCS employees and leadership will be positively impacted for seven generations! There is a lot of work to do and it will take all of us to accomplish it. The Visioning Committee invites new committee members. You can become involved by contacting Crystal Leonetti (crystal.leonetti@ak.usda.gov) or Ciro Lo Pinto (ciro.lopinto@pa.usda.gov), committee Co-Chairs. In addition, please contact the committee Chair of any other AIANEA committee you are interested in joining!

The 2010 Conference Planning Committee is very busy planning an extraordinary conference, which will take place in Rapid City, South Dakota on June 7 – 11, 2010. It promises to provide valuable cultural, technical, and career development training while exposing us to the native culture of the Dakotas! Look for a draft agenda and registration form soon at www.aianea.com.

Please remember that, as we begin a new year, it is important to submit your membership dues to remain a member in good standing. Please see the membership form located in this newsletter and submit to Harold Bryant, Treasurer.

Remember, I invite you to contact me or any National Council member with any questions, concerns, or suggestions. Our most valuable asset is you, the members. To retain that asset, communication is key. You can find the contact information for all of us in this newsletter and at www.aianea.com.

I wish you and your families a blessed and peace-filled 2010!

Wa-do (Thank you),

Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen,
2010 AIANEA President



David Wise—Outgoing President Letter

AIANEA Members,

It was a great honor to serve as your President this past year. I was privileged to have the opportunity to work with our dedicated leadership, National Council, Elders Council, and Standing Committees, and I would like to thank everyone for their extraordinary commitment to the Association.

Over the past year, it has been exciting to see the AIANEA Visioning Plan unfold. The plan brings our collective visions together to guide the AIANEA toward Seven Generations, in leadership and mentorship, in elder involvement and knowledge sharing, and in government-to-government commitment. I have been so pleased to help lead the AIANEA as we put this plan into action to make a difference in Indian Country. I know that the AIANEA will go far as we follow the path that the AIANEA Vision Plan has laid out for us.

Our 2009 training conference in Green Bay, put together by our dedicated planning committee, was a great success. The Oneida Nation of Wisconsin were excellent hosts, and our partnership with the Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council made the opportunities presented even more engaging. The Working Effectively with American Indians Executive Training for NRCS leadership was a tremendous success. I know that throughout the conference, we all gained valuable tools and insight for working with the First Nations of this country.

I wish our new President, Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen, the best of luck in the year ahead. I know that the AIANEA is in the best of hands under her leadership.

Miigwech for the opportunity to serve as your President in 2009. I am so proud to be part of the AIANEA

David Wise

2009 AIANEA President

AIANEA Conference Information

Co-Hosted by the Dakota's

June 7-11, 2010

Best Western Ramkota-Rapid City

2111 North La Crosse Street

Rapid City, SD 57701

Phone: 605-343-8550—1-800-780-7234

<http://rapidcity.ramkota.com/>

Rapid City Airport (RAP)

Airport Express Shuttle ten miles to hotel

For Best Western Hotel Complimentary

Shuttle: 605-343-8550

Per Diem:

Lodging- \$ 118.00

MI&E: \$51.00

Total: \$169.00

First and Last Day 75% \$38.25

City: Rapid City

County: Pennington

State: South Dakota

Rapid City Information:

<http://www.visitrapidcity.com>

..... FACT

The Dakota's have a combined 10,897,345 acres of Reservation Land.

Current Tribes:

- * Mandan * Hidatsa * Arikara
- * Chippewa
- * Lakota/Nakota/Dakota (Great Sioux Nation)



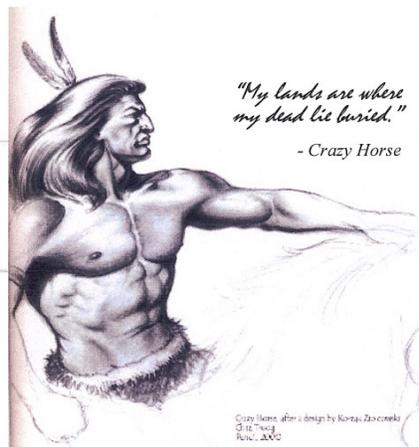
2010 American Indian/
Alaska Native Annual
Training Conference
Co-Hosted by the Dakota's
June 7- 11, 2010

HOTEL INFORMATION

Best Western Ramkota
2111 N. Lacrosse Street
Rapid City, SD 57701
1-800-780-7234

<http://rapidcity.ramkota.com/>

Amenities: Water Park, Complimentary High Speed Internet in all Meeting and Guest Rooms, Lounge/Restaurant, Pets Allowed, Complimentary Airport Shuttle, Coffee Maker and Hair Dryer in all Rooms, Room Service, and Fitness Room

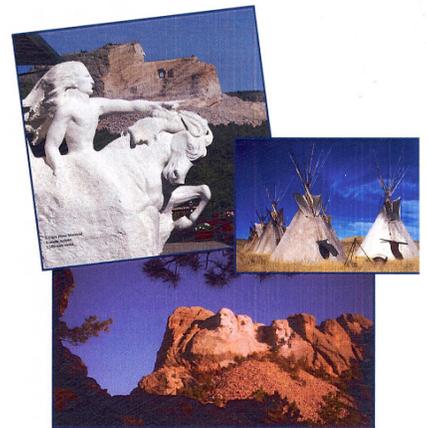


"My lands are where
my dead lie buried."

- Crazy Horse

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G. H. Taylor,
Rene, 2000

Join Us in the Dakotas!



2010 American Indian/ Alaska Native
Annual Training Conference

June 7 - 11, 2010
Rapid City, SD

Tribal Significance in the Area

Wind Cave

The Cave is regarded as sacred to American Indians. Lakota origin stories tell of ancestors emerging from the cave. At present, it is the 4th longest cave in the world. Complex geology, unusual formations, and a variety of minerals make Wind Cave a world-class cave.

Mt. Rushmore



"American Indians have inhabited the Black Hills for thousands of years. With westward expansion of America in the 19th century, additional cultures started to live in the area. Today the Black Hills is a diverse mixture of all these cultures, which is what makes the region so rich in history, storytelling, arts, and languages. This diversity also makes the Black Hills and Mount Rushmore an ideal place to tell the American story and all its facets?"

Lakota/Nakota/Dakota Heritage Village



With several furnished tipis and interactive educational programs, this area teaches visitors about Native American languages, traditional living, arts, and storytelling as presented by members of South Dakota tribes. (at Mt. Rushmore)

Bear Butte



Mato Paha or "Bear Mountain" is the Lakota name given to this site. It has a continuing role as a holy mountain and founding place of religion for several tribes of Plains Indians. Many American Indians see Bear Butte as a place where the creator has chosen to communicate with them through visions and prayer.

Wounded Knee Memorial

Marker and mass grave of American Indians killed in the last major encounter of the US Indian Wars.

Up to 300 Lakota men, women, and children were killed by a squad of the 7th Cavalry of the US Army on December 29, 1890. When the museum can support itself, ownership and operation will be turned over to the Lakota people. The current owner is amateur historian, Steve Wyant.



Crazy Horse

"My fellow chiefs and I would like the white man to know the red man has great heroes, too." These are the words Chief Henry Standing Bear wrote to sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski in 1939 urging him to visit the Black Hills and carve a mountain sculpture honoring American Indians. When finished, Crazy Horse will stand 641 feet long and 563 feet high. *Museum, Gift Shops, Tours, Dancers, and Food*



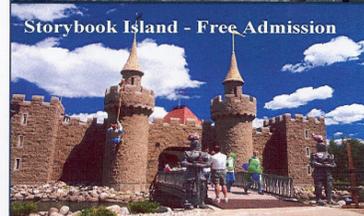
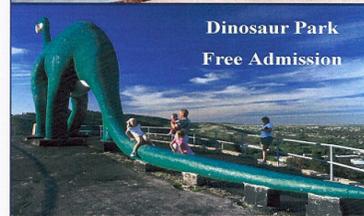
Vore Buffalo Jump

One of the world's premier archeological sites is located at the edge of the northern Black Hills in Wyoming. For over three hundred years, Plains Indian groups stampeded bison over the rim and into a deep natural "sink hole" at the site which is now called the Vore Buffalo Jump. It was one of the most effective means available to the Indians to procure the buffalo which were their primary food and the source of many other materials used in their cultures. It is believed that up to 20,000 of the shaggy bison were trapped at this one location.



61 miles NW of Rapid City. Free Admission

Family Fun



The Colville Reservation Conservation District, and I have been working for the last two years on being able to get costshares on old wire that is on the Rez to be picked up so the wildlife, and livestock keep from getting hung up in it. This year NRCS in this state has put that practice on EQIP to costshare the picking up of old wire. The CRCD is now putting in a letter to the council to make a resolution that the practice of upgrading irrigation from at least 2 out of the last 5 years had to be irrigated before NRCS can upgrade the system, to if the land shows that it had been irrigated at all, within the Reservation boundry, then it would be eligible for upgrade from NRCS, hope it works out. Remember! If you want to see the famous suicide race that has been going on for years, it is every 3d weekend in August. This is where horse, and rider go over a steep incline, swim the river, and race to the finish line, Traditionally only warriors can do this, and young boys become men. Both horses, and riders train for years before they can attempt this feat, and then they have to qualify. - Martin Bales, Nespele, WA

To Ted Herrera:

Congratulations!

After a vigorous review of all abstracts submitted during the Call for Papers, you have been selected to present "Monitoring the Medicine in Habitat: Post-Harvest Regrowth and Mortality in a South Texas Population of *Lophophora williamsii* (Peyote)" as a panel discussion during the 2010 National Tribal Science Forum. The National Tribal Science Forum will be held at the Grand Traverse Resort and Spa in Traverse City, MI, June 6-10, 2010. The forum theme "Mother Earth: Indigenous Knowledge and Science to Promote Positive Change" is being explored in four tracks: Air, Water, Earth, and Community Health. As the schedule stands now, you will lead a 90 minute panel discussion under the Earth Track from 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm on Tuesday, June 7, 2010. The film on Peyote will also preview during the Movie Session on Tuesday evening from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm.

<http://epa.blhtech.com/2010TribalScienceForum>.

Member Spotlight: Dr. Carol Vallee Crouch, Ph.D., Purcell, OK

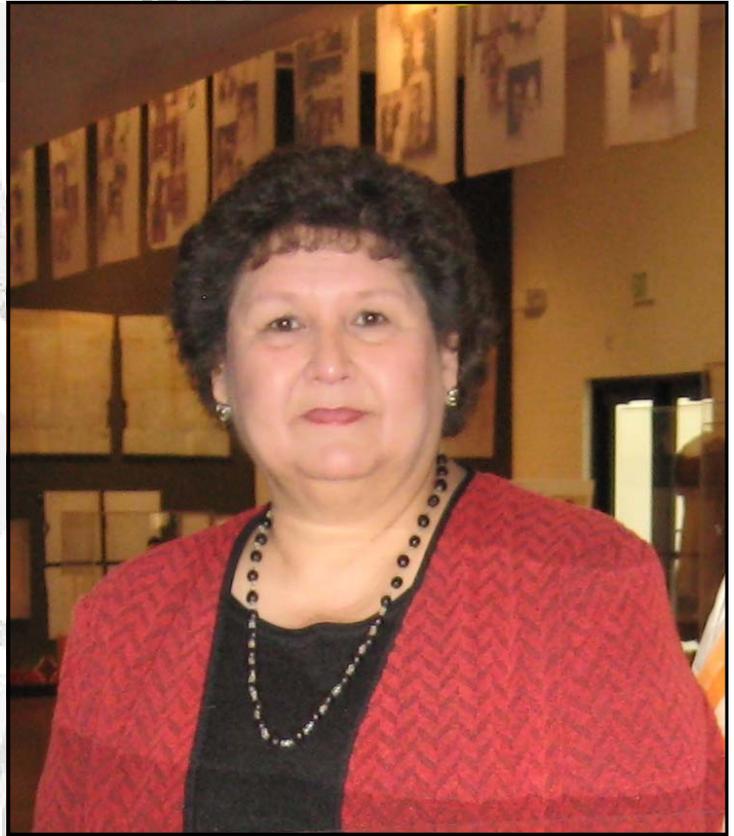
10 Questions with The Four Winds

Tell everyone a little bit about yourself?

Dr. Carol Crouch is a member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation, Pablo Montana. She is employed by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), United States Department of Agriculture, in Oklahoma. She started her career with NRCS as a student trainee and she has worked for the NRCS in the areas of Water Resources, Outreach, Public Affairs, Civil Rights, Conservation Planning, and Tribal Relations. Carol was a full time student trainee for NRCS while she pursued and completed a Master in Public Health degree at the University of Oklahoma, Health Sciences Center, and a Ph.D. at Oklahoma State University.

Carol is a life time member of the NRCS AIANEA. She served as Secretary for the American Indian Alaska Native Employees Association (AIANEA) for three years and served as Vice-Chairman for the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES). She is currently the American Indian/Alaska Native female representative for the NRCS National Civil Rights committee; the NRCS National Special Emphasis Program Manager for American Indian/Alaska Natives; she is serving as an advisor on the NRCS Recruitment and Retention Team and she is an NRCS National Employment Development Center trainer for *Working Effectively for American Indian Tribes* course. In June 2009, she was awarded the NRCS 2009 Award for Excellence for Conservation, Outreach and Education. She is a mentor to sixteen American Indian college students; who are pursuing their undergraduate and graduate degrees; in engineering and natural resources. She is the proud mother of three children and eight grandchildren. She is committed to assisting any student to reach their educational dreams and “making a difference” in the preservation and protection of our Nation’s natural and cultural resources.

- *I have assisted 76 American Indian students in getting accepted to a University and secure scholarships for 55*
- *I have helped 33 American Indian students get funding for graduate school*



How did you come to your current position?

I came to NRCS as the result of an internship through the EPA and the American Indian Science and Engineering Society. I did such a great job during my internship; NRCS hired me as a temporary employee. I then started with NRCS by entering the SCEP programs while I was finishing my MS Degree and MPH degrees at the University of Oklahoma and was entering my PhD in biosystems and agricultural engineering at Oklahoma State University

What was the most challenging obstacle you overcame to achieve this position?

I was the oldest student trainee in the Nation; the first SCEP student pursuing a Ph.D. under the program; first grandmother to be in the SCEP program.

It has been challenging because some NRCS staff members have viewed my higher education as not necessary.

How can others follow in your footsteps?

I'm currently the NRCS AI/AN National SEP...my goal is to make a difference in every NRCS state by assisting each AI/AN in doing their job well. I will highlight their accomplishments and encourage them to be a leader for NRCS in the future.

I'm currently making a difference on how NRCS is dealing with and approaching recruitment and retention with our agency by "bridging the gaps and opening the doors" with partners such as AISES to promote the services and careers NRCS has to offer our Nation's brightest American Indian students. I have been an advisor on the NRCS recruitment and Retention team for 22 months.....and making a difference.

I have the opportunity to speak and present at National conferences and I always encourage others to follow in my footsteps.

What is the most rewarding part of your current position?

As a DC I get to "help people help the land." I have the opportunity to provide services and cost share programs that will assist my local landowners in becoming great stewards of the land. I get to see the difference NRCS makes on the landscape...from start to finish.

I also have the NRCS Tribal liaison duty of providing assistance to the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council and the 39 Tribes of Oklahoma. It is great....I play a key role in making sure all American Indian Tribes and tribal landowners in Oklahoma know about NRCs and the services we provide.

Serving as the female AI/AN representative on the NRCS National Council was one of my most rewards position I have ever held!!

What profession other than yours would you like to attempt?

National Liaison for American Indian Education

Did you have a mentor or what person has the most impact on you as an employee?

I was lucky; my mentors have been in leadership positions with NRCS; such as State Conservationist

What is your favorite saying or quote?

Her favorite quote is by Chief Sitting Bull, "Let us put our minds together to see what kind of life we can make for our children."

What is your favorite word?

"Eagle" "Mother Earth"

What is something that you are looking forward to in this coming year?

The 2010 NRCS American Indian Heritage poster that I over see each year.

The AIANEA conference in SD. I helped ND and SD pre-plan for this event and I'm excited about the tour and the cultural experience everyone will get to enjoy.

Blending NRCS and Native Conservation Practices

By Crystal Leonetti, Native Liaison, Alaska NRCS

I was in a remote Alaskan village on the coast of the Bering Sea on a calm spring day walking across the tundra with the NRCS biologist, NRCS engineer and a Yupik man who had obviously walked across this land many times. It was a beautiful scene with a calm breeze filling my spirit with renewal. As the NRCS crew discussed our conservation practices, the Yupik man was quiet. I saw the look of contemplation in his eyes. Later that day, elders told stories about the way they were taught to take care of the land. And I wondered, "how do I go about documenting this immense conservation knowledge? Further, how do we as an agency embrace and utilize it to make our own conservation library stronger?"

Do you have your own story like this? I have heard from many other NRCS conservation planners of similar situations. By uniting our two kinds of knowledge - Native (also known as Traditional Ecological Knowledge) and Western Science - we can have a longer list of conservation practices, they will be more relevant to tribes and Native people, and other producers can use them too.

I'm working on a guide book to 1. walk our planners through the process of learning and documenting those Native conservation methods, 2. test them on the ground, and 3. write them into NRCS interim conservation practice standards. It will be written so that it is relevant to all tribes and all field offices. I need your help.

If you have an interest, experience, advice, or questions, I welcome you to contact me at crystal.leonetti@ak.usda.gov.

The story of the Yupik man walking across the tundra is to be continued...



Tundra on the Bering Sea coast, awaiting the Best conservation practices

Plant Materials Center hosts first annual American Indian Field Day

By Reina Rogers, American Indian Liaison, NRCS California

Derek Tilley, manager, at the plant materials center in Lockeford hosted a very successful field day oriented towards American Indian youth and adults. Derek was assisted by his staff, Dennis Frommelt, Christina Smith, and Daniel Meyer to provide youth with some practical hands on experience. During the field day, youth were invited to participate in a willow planting activity along the Mokelumne River on PMC grounds. Additionally, participants were given a tour of the facilities including the greenhouse, lath house, seed conditioning machines, farm equipment, and the field plots.

The purpose of the field day was twofold: to provide direct technical information on plant materials and listen to feedback on tribal plant material needs. Second, it served as a venue to provide information about NRCS programs and technical assistance available to Tribal Nations as well as individuals.



Derek Tilley, PMC Manager, shows off the lath house and how it is used to participants at the PMC American Indian Field Day



One group of youth brought cameras and plan on creating a video of their summer experiences.



Derek explaining to the group how the seed cleaning equipment works and storage requirements to keep seed viable.

NRCS Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council Partner with the American Indian Science and Engineering Society to Encourage College Degrees in Environmental Science and Engineering

By Dr. Carol Crouch, DC, Oklahoma NRCS

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has always been committed to encouraging students to secure degrees in Environmental Science, Natural Resources and Engineering. To support their efforts; NRCS has had a memorandum of understanding agreement with the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) for the past five years. NRCS and AISES have partnered to deliver a joint “mission and vision” to increase the number of American Indian students, from K through 12th grade and college, to pursue science and engineering degrees and careers in the related fields. The Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (OTCAC) has been providing the scholarships to American Indian college students who are pursuing a degree in engineering and natural resources through their partnership with the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) for the past four years.

These three partners; NRCS, AISES and OTCAC joined together to host Oklahoma Tribal Educational departmental directors of the 39 tribes in Oklahoma.

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation partnered with OTCAC, NRCS and AISES to host a series of meetings to raise awareness of the scholarships, internships and career opportunities available to American Indian students. Executive Director, Pam Silas, traveled to Oklahoma for a series of meetings with 17 Oklahoma Tribes to inform tribal educational directors of the resources that are available through the AISES organization to increase the number of American Indian students in science activities, college degrees and careers in natural resources and engineering. The partnership efforts of NRCS, AISES and OTCAC to enhance the educational efforts of Oklahoma Tribal Educational departments was a huge success; their partnership efforts will increase the opportunities for American Indian students to advance their activities and education in science and engineering; these students are our future leaders and stewards of our land.



Left to right: Darrel Dominick-OTCAC, Carol Crouch-NRCS, Pam Silas-AISES Ex, Dir, Art Muller OTCAC

Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council Partner at the Annual American Indian Agriculture Symposium

By Dr. Carol Crouch, DC, Oklahoma NRCS

The Annual American Indian Agriculture Symposium was held in Las Vegas, Nevada during the week of December 7 through 11^h 2009. The Agriculture Symposium was hosted by the Indian Conservation Alliance and the Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC). The theme of the conference was “*Caring for Mother Earth.*” The symposium promoted the conservation and preservation of Indian-held natural resources. Indian people have a deep abiding concern for both the wise use and the sustainability of their soil, water, air, plants, and animals. The conference provided the opportunity for tribal leaders from numerous Indian Nations and Alaska Natives to meet and discuss the critical issues dealing with natural resources. The sixth annual American Indian Agriculture Symposium was well attended by 630 tribal leaders from numerous Indian Nations and Alaska Natives landowners from across the Nation.

The Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (OTCAC) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Oklahoma, hosted an information booth at the symposium that provided the attendees with information on conservation programs available in Indian Country. State Conservationist, Ron Hilliard, and District Conservationist, Carol Crouch represented NRCS at the Ag Symposium. Ron and Carol served as panelists during the “Working together with USDA to encourage Native Americans to secure college degrees in natural resources, engineering and related fields of

study” concurrent session. During the general session for all attendees; Carol Crouch and Jack Hicks, farm manager for the Choctaw Nations presented a success story of conservation being implemented and strong partnership in Indian Country entitled “Choctaw Nation-Successful Environmental Quality Incentive Program Practices Implemented.” In addition, Carol Crouch represented NRCS, as a presenter and vacillator, for the following two concurrent sessions; “College Scholarships and Career Development with USDA Agencies” and “Working Effectively with Tribes, Tribal Conservation Districts and Tribal Members.” The Kiowa Tribal Conservation District was also present at the Ag Symposium.

Loss—For all those who have lost someone they love...



The American Prayer

Great Spirit Prayer

Great Spirit, Great Spirit, My
Grandfather,
All over the earth the faces of living
things are all alike. . .
Look upon these faces of children
without number
And with children in their arms,
That they may face the winds and
Walk the good road to the day of
quiet. . .

There is no death. . .
Only a change of worlds. . .
Only a change of worlds.



AIANEA—Standing Committees...

Interested in joining a committee? Let us know!

Contact **Ciro Lo Pinto** at ciro.lopinto@ny.usda.gov

The standing committees are:

Awards

Audit

Communications

Constitution & Bylaws

Elders

Finance & Budget

Membership

Photography

Poster

Scholarship

Silent Auction

Visioning

Visioning Subcommittees

Leadership, Growth and Mentorship

Relationships Among AIANEA,
NRCS and Tribes

Elder Involvement and Knowledge
Sharing,

Membership Form

American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS

“Respect, Harmony, and Beauty”

www.aianea.com

Please make checks payable to AIANEA and mail your membership form and dues to:

Harold Bryant
1510 29th Street
Hondo, TX 78861

Date: _____

Name: _____

Position/Title: _____

Office Address: _____ New Address?

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Fax _____

e-mail: _____

Tribal Affiliation (optional) _____

Type of membership. (Membership is for one calendar year **January 1 to December 31**)

My membership is for the year 20____.

Regular-\$25.00 Check here if this is a renewal membership

Student -\$10.00 full-time high school or college students

Lifetime - \$250.00 or payable in 4 installments of \$65/year

Enclosed is payment # 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____

Tribal College-\$100.00

The 2010 AIANEA National Council

Tanya Meyer - Dideriksen – President

Ciro Lo Pinto - 1st Vice President

Gina Kerzman - 2nd Vice President

Leota Burnett - So. Central Region Rep.

John Harper - Southeast Region Rep.

Ralph Goh - West Region Rep.

Stacy Kimble - Midwest Region Rep.

Nels Liljedahl - East Region Rep.

Levi Montoya - Northern Plains Region Rep.

Blythe Koyiyumptewa - Secretary

Harold Bryant - Treasurer

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