

The Four Winds

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



Welcome the second AIANEA newsletter. We have been busy—First a warm welcome to our 2008 President—Millie Titla, Phoenix, AZ.

Second—We welcome our existing and new National Council members. And our newest Elder Ted Herrera.

Third—AIANEA is proud to announce that our 2008 Annual meeting will be held jointly with APIO in Spokane, Washington, August 11–15. The conference will be held at the Mirabeau Park Hotel. Please see our web site at www.aianea.com as more exciting details develop.

Winter - Niibin 2008

Respect, Harmony, and Beauty



Spokane, Washington

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President's Corner

Da Go Tee. On behalf of AIANEA, I would like to wish you and your family a prosperous and joyous New Year! It is truly an honor and a privilege to serve as your President this year. It is the mission of AIANEA to provide educational opportunities that foster the recruitment, retention, professional development, and career advancement of American Indians and Alaska Natives within NRCS, and other federal agencies. Therefore, it is my goal to also continue the legacy and foundation that was established by our founding members and its successive leadership with the knowledge and wisdom from our Council of Elders.

For this year's training event we will again be partnering with NRCS' Asian Pacific Islander Organization (APIO) on August 11-15, 2008, in Spokane, Washington! Through our partnership with APIO in 2006, we made new friends and learn about other cultures. Based on our needs of the Association the National Council decided to partner with APIO again. One highlight about this year's training is the opportunity for our members to give presentations during one of the workshop sessions as a way for them to gain public speaking experience. The National Council is also soliciting volunteers from the general membership to join the Conference Planning Committee. If you are interested in planning this year's joint conference, please let me know and I will forward your name to the Conference Planning Committee.

I would also like to welcome our newly elected officers to the National Council:

Second Vice President: Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen, Des Moines, Iowa

West Regional Representative: Gina Kerzman, Pendleton, Oregon

Southeast Regional Representative: Phillip Dixon, Gainesboro, Tennessee

Midwest Regional Representative: Nils "Buster" Landin, Indianapolis, Indiana

I am also happy to have a new advisor on our Council of Elders, Ted Herrera, from Texas.

The beginning of this New Year also brings the need to renew your membership. Membership is good for one calendar year (January 1 through December 31). I would like to encourage you to send those dues in and renew your commitment to the mission of the Association. Thank you to those who have already sent them in.

I look forward to serving you and for a great year. Goo shoo doo leh.

Ahi'Yee, - Millie Titla

2008 AIANEA President

The AIANEA Elders and Elders' Committee:

Who Are They and What Does it Mean?

Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen,
AIANEA Elders' Committee Chair

Elders are very important to American Indian and Alaska Native people. They are the cultural and spiritual "cornerstone" and voice of the people. They have experienced life and gained knowledge, wisdom, compassion, insight, humility, and many other enduring qualities. They are tremendously respected for their good hearts and how generous they are in sharing the knowledge and wisdom they have gained to help others travel their life's path.

The AIANEA decided that in order for the Association to have a vision and to follow a path that is culturally based, we established a group of Elders that we could listen to for needed guidance. The Elders' Council was initiated in 2001 with four Elders. Today, the AIANEA has nine Elders representing tribes from across the country. Three of the original four Elders are still on the Council. The AIANEA Elders' Council are:

Leland Debe, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Cloquet, MN

Louie Dick, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla, Cayuse, OR

Ted Herrera, Venado Nation, San Antonio, TX

Joe Joaquin, Tohono O'odham Nation, Sells, AZ

Norman Lopez, Ute Mountain Ute, Towaoc, CO

Marie Meade, Yupik Eskimo, Anchorage, AK

Loretta Metoxen, Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, Oneida, WI

James 'Billy' Smith, Poarch Band of Creek Indians, McDavid, FL

Jerry Wolfe, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Cherokee, NC

The Elders' Committee members are AIANEA members that work and provide assistance to the Elders. They also strive to keep the AIANEA connected to the Elders. Each Elder is assigned an Elder Representative to personally assist them, provide communication, and

work with them regarding their needs associated with the annual training conference. The Elder Representatives are:

Anna Whitebird-Perales – Leland Debe and Loretta Metoxen

Gina Kerzman – Louie Dick

Harold Bryant – Ted Herrera

Gerald Allison, Jr. – Joe Joaquin

Leota Burnett – Norman Lopez

Crystal Leonetti – Marie Meade

David Elliott – James 'Billy' Smith

John McCoy – Jerry Wolfe

In addition, the following AIANEA members provide significant guidance and assistance as members of the Elders' Committee:

Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen – Chair

Martin Bales – Keeper of the AIANEA Eagle Staff

Joann Herrera – Secretary

Blythe Koyiyumptewa

Felix Nez

Roylene Rides at the Door – Keeper of the AIANEA Hide

The Elders are willing to share with all AIANEA members and annual conference attendees. They seek the opportunity to spend time with us, both individually and through presentations and workshops. During the conference in Anchorage, Alaska, we were reminded time and time again by the Elders that we, as the younger generation, need to listen to what the Elders are telling us. They share their experiences and tell us their stories to help us travel a path that is in line, both culturally and spiritually, with our history and ancestors. The Elders have also assisted AIANEA members as they endure some difficult times in their lives and helped them through this with cultural guidance.

We, as an NRCS employee association, are very fortunate to have this tremendous group of individuals, both Elders and Committee members, to guide us and keep us on the right path. Let us utilize this as we travel in harmony and beauty.

NRCS Crossing State Lines to Help

By Dan McCandless

Our vehicle climbed higher and higher up a mountain road. To the left was an almost vertical drop through thick timber, to the right, and equally steep wall of trees that you could nearly reach out and touch. Consecutive hairpin turns simply reversed the view from one side to the other. Although the road was wide enough to accommodate a single vehicle, sometimes it felt like there must have been at least one tire dangling over the edge. The valley was so deep and the ridges so close together that our GPS navigation system seemed worried too. With a beep of concern it asked, "Are you inside?" When we responded, "No," it followed up with, "Are you in North Carolina, USA?" "Yes, we were in North Carolina, right in the heart of the Qualla Boundary, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians' reservation, thank you for trying to keep track of us."

The GPS satellite pinpointed our exact location again as we stopped near the crest of a hill. Here, what looked like a logging trail led up to the top of the ridge. After about 200 yards of huffing and puffing our way up the trail, it opened up into a wide clearing. Chickadees and other songbirds flitted around us in the grass and then four hen turkeys launched themselves over a brush pile and into the timber. Considering it was a cool December day it was rewarding to see some wildlife on this North Carolina ridge but even more gratifying considering this particular clearing had only recently been established for the purpose of attracting wildlife.

"We constructed this clearing just this summer," explained John McCoy. John is the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service Tribal Liaison with the Eastern Band of Cherokee. "We used the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) to clear out some of the timber and understory, and then we brought in a variety of plants for increased food and cover," McCoy continued, "But it turned off dry this summer and we had to stop some of the planting. We were even a little concerned what we did plant may not take, but it doesn't look too bad. Now that we have a little moisture we can get a few more trees in the ground before it gets too cold." That's why we were

there this day, to plant a few more trees. McCoy showed us the "water bars" low ridges of earth carved parallel to the slope to help hold the soil in place until the plants can put down roots. He explained how that same technique was used on the road we took getting up here. "Before these roads were fixed there were huge ditches being washed out on the sides of the road and down the middle, you had to have a tank to get around back here." McCoy stated, "After a rain tons and tons of soil turned the water brown because of the erosion from poorly constructed roads. The native fish population has suffered also, and if you don't have good access to this land, how are you going to be able to manage it?"

Helping John get the trees in the ground was Ivan Dozier, a fellow NRCS employee all the way from Illinois where he serves as an Assistant State Conservationist. Ivan has Cherokee ancestors from right here in this area and he was in Cherokee not just to plant trees but for a personal visit. Anyone who has ever been around NRCS folks knows that when they travel around the countryside it's their nature to point out conservation practices on the land or to identify places that could use a little more help. Through cost share contracts such as WHIP, NRCS has been able to develop over 20 acres of wildlife habitat area within the Cherokee Tribal Reserve. McCoy said he has noticed that since the start of wildlife openings a few years ago the wildlife population has made a dramatic recovery.

"This conservation work becomes a way of life," Dozier said, "I met John at one of our NRCS American Indian-Alaska Native Employee Association meetings. We found out we had even more than conservation in common. This is great to see what they have going on here. I look forward to coming back and checking on this clearing."

The pair got down to business and planted a half a dozen apple trees that are a lot like some of the old native variety known as "Winter jon". They also planted about 20 American Chestnut trees that have been bred to provide resistance to the diseases that have nearly wiped out this important nut producing tree from the landscape. These new trees complemented hardwood mast trees that were left at the site and joined the herbaceous species that were being established here. McCoy pointed out more turkey tracks and those of deer among the millet, buckwheat, clover,

and orchard grass plantings. “We also tried some native warm-season grasses on the south facing part of the slope. It will be interesting to see how it takes. It will add even more diversity if it survives, but with its growth habit it could take another year or two before we know for sure.”

“At a little over three acres this clearing is larger than what we usually do but it serves a bigger area too, I talk to the tribal leadership before we make any decisions and I do my best to fit what they want within program guidelines.” McCoy explained. As a tribal member and lifelong resident of the community, John is in a unique position to be able make that two-way street of communication between tribal interests and the NRCS mission really work. This is something Dozier can appreciate too. “In Illinois NRCS works primarily with private landowners, these days, with trusts and multiple partnerships it is becoming a rare thing to have a single decision maker for a farm.” He said, “Any time you work with more than one person it gets more complicated.”

Dozier also noted that even though the land was quite different the objectives were the same for both men. “We do an inventory of the natural resources – soil, water, air, plants, and animals – and provide recommendations that will improve the environment in a way that is consistent with the needs of the people.” Level land is at a premium in Cherokee. It’s found only along the floodplains near rivers and creeks and is used primarily for homes and businesses. While many are pleased that the community is growing and thriving, it does put more pressure on the forest lands as more people look for a place to build their homes. The tribe even had to do a land swap with the National Park Service to find a suitable site for a much needed new K-12 school complex. As McCoy quipped, “the Cherokee are stuck between a rock and a steep place.”

As we left the site, McCoy pointed out one of those extra touches that bring the relationship of people and land together. “We dragged some of the good logs from the site that we cleared down here to the road. That way people from town can have easier access to it for firewood and they won’t be tempted to go up the steep hill and damage the plantings or disturb the fragile soil.”

On the way back down the mountain, we stopped at a small roadside stream to wash the dirt from our hands. Just as McCoy had said, even though there had been recent rain, the water was clean. We also took advan-



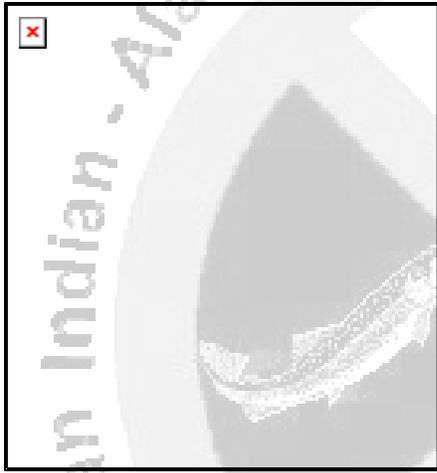
Ivan Dozier & John McCoy

tage of the stream to bring the cold, crystal clear water to our face in observance of the Cherokee tradition of “going to water” for healing and purification. It was a fitting end to our task.

We stood by the road and reflected more on the day. “I’ve been up in Illinois and Ivan has shown me the conservation practices they do up there. Things like terraces, grassed waterways, and filter strips on great big crop fields. Here our fields are pretty small. It’s mostly just subsistence farming, family plots of traditional foods like white flour corn, beans and potatoes, a field of traditional corn may be only an acre or less. Five acres would be huge,” said McCoy, “These woods are real important for us to manage too. Our people get out here to hunt, gather greens, mushrooms, herbs, and firewood. It’s our way of life. And it’s a good feeling to be able to help out with that.” “Sure is,” Dozier agreed with a big smile, “it sure is.”

Member Spotlight: Herb Webb, Tribal Conservationist Flathead Indian Reservation, Montana

10 Questions with The Four Winds



Herb, tell everyone a little bit about yourself:

Well right now I'm the Tribal Conservationist on the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana. I've been with the agency (SCS and NRCS) for 23 years plus a few months, all that time here in Montana. I am married (my wife's name is Vickie) with no kids, but we do have 3 dogs. Academically I was educated at the Bachelor's level in wildlife conservation and at the Master's level in range management. In real life my education continues and hopefully for many more decades. When I was a kid we traveled a lot because my dad was in construction. So Montana is the 8th state that I've called home. My folks settled in Oklahoma which is my mom's home in about 1970 and they still live there. I am a Cherokee tribal member from Oklahoma. I enjoy many things, arts and crafts, woodworking, hunting, fishing, cloud cartography and just kicking back sometimes.

How did you come to your current position?

Well it was a combination of timing (being in the right place at the right time), luck and some patience.

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

Looking back I don't really perceive it so much as challenges or obstacles. I guess for me it was not falling into a trap of believing what others wanted for me was really the right thing for me. Some of that started in

college when upon finishing a Master's several folks thought I should go for a PhD, which didn't interest me. Working for NRCS what I mean is there are lots of opportunities and good ones. Many people encouraged me to look at State or National positions and I have to say it is appealing at some level, but it never really felt right to me. I really like it in the field, small towns in the country are way more appealing than cities, so I've stayed. If I had taken the steps to move up as others had suggested, I would have missed this opportunity. Plus I was enjoying what I was doing at that time and didn't have a burning desire to change simply for the sake of change. Plus those opportunities are still there. If I change my mind at some point in the future, I can still pursue them.

How can others follow in your foot steps?

Know what's important to you. Listening to advice from other people, at all levels in the agency is important. There are many who will help and who do want to help but when you do make a decision, make sure it's your decision.

What is the most rewarding part of your current position?

There are lots. Where I get to live, it's really great here. Getting to work with the Tribe. The diversity of the job is really important to me also. I get to do different things; from projects on weed control and irrigation to wetland restoration and grazing management. We recently worked on a project for protecting bat habitat, which is something I never would have thought about when I started with SCS.

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

I have allowed many people to lead me where I want to go, but I have to say the most influential was my first DC, his name is John Streich.

What is your favorite saying or quote?

There are many, but two that comes to mind right now are: "Be energetic enough to make some things happen, patient enough to allow some things to happen, and smart enough to know the difference" AND "The one who dies with the most toys..... still dies".

What profession other than yours would you like to attempt?

Professional Artist/Craftsman or maybe produce and host my own TV show on travel, hunting and fishing.

What is your favorite word?

Too many good ones to pick just one. fun, freedom, casual, relax, chocolate

Do you have any words of wisdom to people just starting out in NRCS?

Learn what you can about everything that you have a chance too. You never know when that knowledge may help you in the future. Also it's very important to keep in mind what the purpose of all this "stuff" is about.



Making a difference on the land is our goal. All the plans and planning, financial programs, forms, computer stuff, committees etc, can be very distracting. Remember that they all are tied to what we do with people who can make changes on the land. I'd also say be patient. Sometimes a good project gets done quickly, sometimes it may take years (hopefully not). But if it really is a good project, it can be worth the wait.

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It is available for purchase at

<http://www.aianea.com/merchandise.htm>

And click on the order form

Become More Involved in AIANEA.

Joining a committee is as simple as contacting the Chair of the committee and saying I want to help.

Committees

Constitution and Bylaws

Chair – Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen
Tanya.meyer@ia.usda.gov

Audit

Chair - David Wise Dave.wise@mn.usda.gov

Elders

Chair – Tanya Meyer – Dideriksen
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Awards

Chair – Crystal Leonetti
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Scholarship

Chair – Kurt Cates Kurt.cates@id.usda.gov

Membership

Chair – Yvette Dulle Yvette.dulle@stl.usda.gov

Communications

Chair – Yvette Dulle Yvette.dulle@stl.usda.gov

Ad Hoc Committees

Photography

Chair – Carol Crouch Ph.D
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Poster Committee

Chair – Carol Crouch Ph.D
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Silent Auction

Chair – Leota Burnett Leota.burnett@ok.usda.gov

2008 Conference Planning

Chair – Shiraz Vira shiraz.vira@wa.usda.gov

Visioning Committee

Chair – Crystal Leonetti
Crystal.leonetti@ak.usda.gov

Preserved seeds restore aboriginal food systems

Posted: May 30, 2007 by: [Lee Allen](#) / Today correspondent

Photos courtesy Native Seeds/SEARCH --

TUCSON, Ariz. - "To own a bit of ground, to scratch it with a hoe, to plant seeds and watch the renewal of life - this is the commonest delight of the race, the most satisfactory thing a man can do."

Written nearly 150 years ago, those words hold the eternal truth of sowing and reaping, the basis for humanitarian thought and affirmative action demonstrated by Native Seeds/SEARCH in southern Arizona.

In 1983, four Tucsonans involved with feeding the hungry began to worry that seed stock for future crops was disappearing. They contributed \$100 each to cover the cost of locating 40 varieties of endangered seeds to ensure those specific strains would not permanently disappear. Now, nearly 25 years later, 2,000 varieties of seeds have been saved from extinction.



Native Seeds/SEARCH, a regional seed bank and a leader in the heirloom seed movement, began as a way to help the Tohono O'odham reservation, which is comprised of nearly 2-1/2 million acres of desert bordering Arizona and Mexico. Cultural change and environmental destruction meant that the community was no longer able to grow some of the specialized corn, beans and squash that it needed.

"If we had to duplicate our seed collection today, it would be impossible because many of the originals are no longer available," said Barney Burns, one of the original founders. "Ours is a treasure trove that provides an irreplaceable genetic library to draw on as a basis for sustainable, environmentally-friendly Native American agriculture of the future."

"These seeds represent cultures that have survived for thousands of years in the Southwest," said Kevin Dahl, executive director of the organization. "Ancient farmers figured out how to be successful in pretty marginal growing conditions - little water, soil heavy in alkalinity, hot growing conditions. It wasn't an easy task."

Native Seeds/SEARCH arose as a result of requests from the Tohono O'odham reservation, some 2-1/2 million acres of desert bordering Arizona and Mexico. The O'odham had once cultivated native seeds through traditional floodwater methods, but cultural change and environmental destruction had reduced surviving farms to only a few scattered plots. And while some community members felt a need to continue growing specialized corn, beans and squash, they could not locate the seeds of their ancestors. Fortunately, as a regional seed bank and a leader in the heirloom seed movement, Native Seeds/SEARCH could.

"We've collected seeds from over 30 different cultural groups and have successfully saved over two thousand varieties," Dahl said. "Corn is the biggest collection we have, about 600 accessions or varieties collected from a specific locale. In a Southwest crop complex, the Three Sisters [corn, beans and squash] were of greatest importance because they're very productive. Corn provides lots of carbohydrates. Beans provide a lot of protein. And squash gives up a lot of nutrition. Grown together as companion crops, all three store well for a long time."

"We steward these precious seeds, true links to the past," Dahl said. "We support the role these seeds play in the diverse cultures of the region and these remaining pockets of diversity are worth seeking out and saving. This is living heritage and we need to maintain this palate of genetic material."

Farm land is being reclaimed at the San Xavier Tribal Farm Cooperative south of Tucson and traditional fields are being planted again with traditional crops and by

the Tohono O'odham Community Action group in Sells, where planting is done by hand and without chemicals. Before the project began a decade ago, 100 pounds of beans was an achievement. A recent harvest brought in 10,000 pounds.

"TOCA supplies tepary beans to all their food banks," Dahl said. "So when people on the nation get food boxes, the beans are included as part of restoring the food system. It's all part of the creation of a sustainable food system that contributes to the revitalization of the O'odham himdag - the Desert People's Way."

Native Seeds/SEARCH has been involved, either as provider or partner, in many restoration projects that provide seeds to individual farmers as well as larger-scale tribal projects. Its 2006 Annual Report indicates "roughly 5,000 packets of seeds were delivered through our Native American free seed program," Dahl said. "Sometimes the gift returns. We probably supplied seeds at the beginning of many of these efforts, but they're way past that now and self-sufficient. In fact, as part of the tribal compact for gaming, the nation gives a certain percentage of gaming revenue to nonprofits and they've donated \$50,000 to our capital campaign for a bigger space to hold seeds that are now stacked floor to ceiling."

This seed conservation program is considered somewhat unique in a contemporary use-it-and-throw-it-away society. Fingering an ear of dried corn similar that grown by the earliest of desert inhabitants, Dahl said, "We fill a niche in the arid Southwest. The model we've developed has been successful. If what we're doing is preserving a living heritage, connecting with Native farmers, providing and exchanging seeds, our grass-roots organization is working pretty well to ensure that history is saved for posterity."

The 2008 AIANEA National Council

Millie Titla - President

David Wise - 1st Vice President

Tanya Meyer - Dideriksen - 2nd Vice President

Leota Burnett - So. Central. Region Rep.

Phillip Dixon - Southeast Region Rep

Gina Kerzman - West Region Rep.

Nils "Buster" Landin - Midwest Region Rep

Ciro Lo Pinto - East Region Rep.

Levi Montoya - Northern Plains Region Rep.

Carol Vallee Crouch - Secretary

OPEN—Treasurer

Medicine Wheel

By Patrick J. Broyles

While working at the Manhattan, Kansas Plant Materials Center I built a Medicine Wheel and did research on its origins and meanings. This was portrayed on a poster presented at the AIANEA Training Session in New York. Below are the narratives which went with the poster.

History

"Medicine Wheels" have been found in many different parts of North America. The name "Medicine Wheel" came from early settlers identifying Indian artifacts of rock rows radiating out from the center like wagon wheel spokes. Medicine Wheels were typically built with 4 lines of rock radiating from the center. However, some circles with as many as 32 lines have been documented.

Some have been dated to be more than 2,000 years old. Since American Indians were not aware of wheeled vehicles before European influence they could not have named these artifacts "wheels". "Medicine Circles" is a closer interpretation to their original name.

Medicine Wheels served many purposes. One was to act as a calendar by tracking the seasons and stars. Another purpose was for ceremonial and life teachings.

Number Meanings

While each American Indian tribe had its own specific interpretation of the various aspects of Medicine Wheels; there is one common point, the significance of the number "4".

There are 4:

seasons in a year: Spring, summer, autumn & winter.

major directions: East, south, west and north.

basic elements: Water, wind, earth and fire.

parts of a day: Dawn, daylight, dusk and night.

stages of life: Childhood, adolescence, adult and elder.

natures of man: Physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

parts of well being: Physical, intellectual, social and spiritual.

sacred colors: White, yellow, either black or blue, and either red or green.

Color Significance

The Medicine Wheel at the Manhattan Plant Materials Center (PMC) was made to show traditional beliefs of many tribes. What is on the ground and in this brochure is a consensus of many tribal cultures, it is not meant as an accurate teaching of any religious belief. Thus, what is explained below is shared tradition among many tribes, but no one tribe agrees with everything.

Each Medicine Wheel was a circle divided into quarters with each quadrant representing distinct traits.

East is the color yellow signifying physical aspects, wisdom, and clarity. It symbolizes spring and dawn.

South is either the color green or red signifying love, trust, and emotions. It symbolizes summer and day.

West is either the color black or blue signifying intellect, logical thinking and experience. It symbolizes autumn and evening.

North is the color white signifying cleansing, spirituality, and purity. It symbolizes winter and night.

Though not used in this Medicine Wheel the colors blue and green are held in high esteem by many tribes. The color blue signifies the sky or water. The color green signifies the vegetation covering our earth.

American Indians viewed life as a continuous cycle, with no beginning and no ending, just like a circle. The first written alphabet by an Indian tribe was not until 1828 when Sequoyah invented the Cherokee alphabet. Historically, oral teachings were used to pass on knowledge and history. Often an elder would draw a Medicine Wheel in the soil with a stick and use it as a teaching aid to instruct children in the ways of life. They believed life mirrors the daily rotation of the earth or the cycling of the seasons. As a person is born into this world so too does the sun rise from the east

daily and spring begins a new growing season annually. As a child turns into an adolescent so too does daylight drive out the darkness and summer brings full growth of plants. As youth turns to maturity so too does the sun set in the west and fall brings harvest. As one increases in age and lore to become an elder so too does darkness come with night and winter's frost causes leaves to drop and plants to stop growing.

How many stones are there in a Medicine Wheel?

Some Medicine Wheels with 4 rows have 36 and some have 37 stones. Why the difference? Let's look at what the stones signified (among many tribes) and where they are located.

The large center stone symbolized the Creator of everything we are and see.

The seven smaller inner stones surrounding the center represented Mother Earth, Father Sun, Grandmother Moon, and the four basic elements consisting of water, wind, earth and fire.

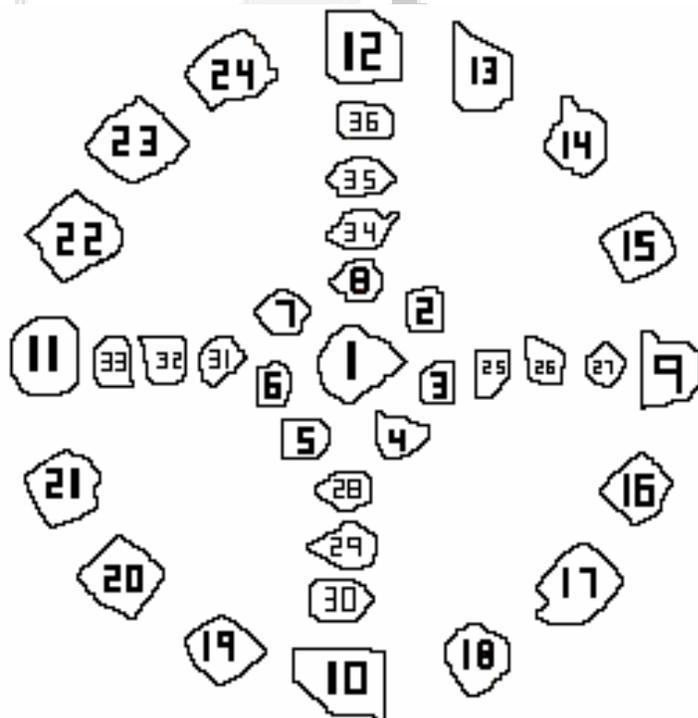
There are four stones at each of the major compass directions. Each was interpreted to represent traits of each direction discussed on the other side.

There are 4 spirit pathways between the center stone and each major compass direction. Each pathway has 3 stones. Each stone stood for a specific idea dealing with the major interpretation of the directional rock.

The stones forming the outer circle between the 4 direction rocks represented a moon. Each tribe had a particular name for each full moon, just as we have a name for each month. Each moon rock represented what that month meant.

This is where the difference in the number of stones lies. If each stone represented a month and there are 12 months in a calendar year then the total would be 36 stones for the Medicine Wheel. However, there are 13 full moons in some calendar years. Thus, some tribes divided the year into 12 months and some divided it into 13 moon cycles. Tribes who recognized 13 moons as a full year placed 4 rocks rather than 3 between the west and north directional stones.

Stones Significance	
1	Creator.
2	Grandmother moon.
3	Mother earth.
4.	Soil.
5.	Water.
6.	Fire.
7.	Air.
8.	Father sun.
9.	East.
10.	South.
11.	West.
12.	North.
13.	January.
14.	February.
15.	March.
16.	April.
17.	May.
18.	June.
19.	July.
20.	August.
21.	September.
22.	October.
23.	November.
24.	December.
25.	Physical aspect.
26.	Wisdom.
27.	Clarity.
28.	Love.
29.	Trust.
30.	Emotions.
31.	Intellect.
32.	Logical thinking.
33.	Experience.
34.	Cleansing.
35.	Spirituality.
36.	Purity.



Camas Reintroduction

Submitted by Kurt Cates

The Camas plant (*Camassia quamash*) has been used by Tribes throughout the northwest as a staple in diets. The Camas is high in nutrition, carbohydrates and fiber. The Elders tell us that in the old days, the hunters used to take camas that was baked and then dried on hunting trips. It was high in nutrition, lightweight and a good source of energy.

Here at Fort Hall, the Camas plant used to grow abundantly, as told by some of our Elders. When the Tribe allowed sheep grazing on the Reservation, the Elders tell us that the sheep ate the Camas into oblivion here at Fort Hall.

Recently the Tribe with assistance from NRCS has been attempting to bring the Camas back to Fort Hall. In the spring/early summer, some of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribal members take a trip to the traditional Camas fields near Fairfield, Idaho. The county that Fairfield is in is named Camas County after the plant that still grows somewhat abundantly in the area. In 2006, some Tribal members brought back bulbs from Fairfield and we planted them in the traditional garden behind the Fort Hall NRCS office. The bulbs were watered heavily during the summer of 2006 and also in the spring of 2007. Camas likes “wet feet” while trying to set seed. In the spring of 2007 the Camas emerged and produced some seed. We gathered the seed and will be working with Fort Hall Elementary School students to plant the seeds and see if they will grow. The plants will then be taken back out onto the Reservation lands and transplanted. With some luck and guidance from the Elders and the Creator, the Camas will flourish once again here at Fort Hall.

In the spring of 2006, we took some of the Camas bulbs and roasted them the traditional way in a pit behind the NRCS office. A Tribal Elder tended the fire for 3 days and 2 nights to keep the pit hot enough to roast the bulbs. We invited all Tribal Employees to come and taste the roasted Camas. Most of the Tribal employees had never tasted Camas. Some thought it was good and others didn't. When roasted, Camas resembles a sweet potato in appear-



ance and taste. This is quite a transformation, as the Camas is white and looks like an onion when raw, with little flavor to it.

During Memorial Day weekend, the Tribe organized a “Camas Prairie Homecoming” to Fairfield. This was done in conjunction with the town of Fairfield and their Chamber of Commerce. The highlights were a parade with many Tribal Members taking part and a Pow-Wow to show the local towns’ people and the tourists some of our traditions and dances. Another event was a relay run that was 26 miles. Each runner would run as many miles as they could. We had 14 runners and finished in a little over 4 hours. I was fortunate enough to run 3.5 miles. Sometimes we would have 4 or 5 people running at the same time. A group of Elders from Warm Springs, Oregon came over to join us in the Camas dig and Pow-Wow. They were amazed at the size of the bulbs on the Camas Prairie plants. They said that their Camas bulbs are much smaller. We presented them with a large cooler loaded with the bigger bulbs; they were very pleased with the gift.

We hope to keep this celebration with Fairfield going to help them with tourism and help keep the traditions of the Shoshone-Bannock people alive.

This fall, we will be planting some of the bulbs throughout the Reservation and plant more in the spring of 2008. We will keep this up until we can get a good population going back here at Fort Hall. We hope to “welcome home” the Camas that once grew here.

Welcome our Newest Elder

Ted Herrera

Ted Herrera was born in the Coahuiltecan Sacred Land along the Rio Grande where the Peyote grows (Mirando City, Texas) to Maria Lara, a Tlaxcala, Huichol Indian and Eduardo Herrera a Tlaxcala, Carrizo Coahuiltecan Indian.

Ted is one of five Tribal Leaders of the Texas recognized Tap Pilam Coahuiltecan Nation headquartered in San Antonio, Texas.

Ted is from the Coahuilteco Nation and lives in San Antonio, TX.

He retired in 1998, as the Kelly Air Force Base Program Manager, for the Production Quality Control Program, where he had oversight responsibilities for writing policy and procedures that governed over 5,000 Air Craft Journeymen in 54 job skills.

In March 2000, started partnership with Hugh Fitzsimons raising Buffalo for ceremonial and economic development.

Ted presently serves on the following committees:

USDA/NRCS Texas State Technical Committee, as an advocate for stakeholders of tribally owned land and land owned by Tribal members.

Mexico–North Research Network, sponsored by the Smithsonian Institute, addressing the life flow constraints of indigenous people on both sides of the Rio Grande.

As a consultant to the Texas Historical Commission on investigations of artifacts for proper disposition when uncovered by construction work on Texas highways.

As the Coahuiltecan Nation's NAGPRA consultant with the Army Corp of Engineers for Ft Sam Houston, San Antonio TX.

As the NAGPRA liaison with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

As the Coahuiltecan Nation's Liaison with UTSA on a language development Program

Liaison between the Tap Pilam Coahuiltecan Nation and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Board member of Mantel Rock Native Education and Cultural Center

Board Member of Friends of the Indigenous Elders

Ted is also a member of the following organizations:

Member of North American Iroquois Veterans Association

Member of Nationally Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

Member of Spiritual Elders of Mother Earth

Founder and Spiritual leader of Rio Grande Native American Church

In their spare time Ted and his wife JoAnn of 38 years also enjoy putting on educational programs to educate students of all ages in the Texas public school system about indigenous cultures/traditions. They also maintain strong ties with their extended Huichol families in Mexico who keep them well supplied with arts/crafts to sell at pow wows.

