



AIANEA National Council Teleconference Minutes

Tuesday, November 21, 2017

Respect, Harmony and Beauty

Council Members & Guests Attending:

President

Dr. Carol, Crouch, Oklahoma

2nd Vice President

Cameron Clark, Wyoming

Secretary

Melissa Sturdivant, Texas

Treasurer

Bill Parrish, Pennsylvania

Northeast Region Representative

Cassius Spears, Rhode Island

West Region Representative

Susan Looper, Nevada

Guests Attending

None

Past Presidents Attending

None

Meeting Minutes:

- a. Meeting was called to order at 12:10 pm (Central) by Dr. Carol Crouch, President. Carol extended her appreciation to all of those who attended the meeting.
- b. Welcome, introductions & roll call
A roll call of those in attendance was taken by Carol and Melissa. A quorum was not achieved, so business before the Council was limited.
- c. Treasurer Report
The treasurer's report was emailed to the Council. Bill provided information about the financials. Bill also reported that Pam has not had much luck getting through to the Texas Comptroller Office to inquire about transferring the 501(c)3 account from Arizona to Texas. Pam has not been able to get in touch with anyone, nor has Carol.
- d. Minutes for Review
The minutes were emailed to the Council.
- e. National AIAN SEPM Report
Facilitator: Deborah Clairmont, NAIANSEPM

Deborah was not able to be on the call. Carol asked Melissa to comment on the recent activities at NHQ in Deborah's absence. Melissa reported that she assisted Deborah with the development of the outreach and NRCS participation at the USDA's AIAN Heritage Month Observance event at the Whitten Building. Melissa added that Steve, Noller and Sandy Penn were involved and helped with pulling everything together and made a successful event. Melissa reported that she set up an AIANEA outreach booth during the event.

f. Regional Representatives' Reports
Facilitator: Dr. Carol Crouch & Regional Representatives

1. South Central Region Representative, Derek Kelso
The following information was provided related to events planned in Oklahoma:

<p>Upcoming Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working on the Choctaw Nation Soil Health demo area • Soil Health Workshop @ Cheyenne Arapaho • Working with the Quapaw Tribe to develop soil health demo projects, in addition to other tribes • NEDC WEWAIT workshop • NEDC WEWAIT workshop • IAC conference <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hard Rock Casino and Hotel Las Vegas, NV 	<p>12/4 & 12/5</p> <p>11/27 to 12/1 4/9/2018</p> <p>12/11 to 12/14</p>
<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRCS will be featured in the Winds of Change Magazine – AISES in the next issue • AISES Annual Conference will be held in Oklahoma next year 	

2. Northeast Region Representative, Cassius Spears
Cassius reported the following items to the National Council:
- a) Rhode Island is hosting the Intertribal Agriculture Council’s Eastern Native Youth in Food & Agriculture Leadership Summit in 2018. (See attachment A for 2017 report – New York)
 - b) The national Food Sovereignty Summit has been tentatively scheduled in Southern New England, August of 2018.
 - c) The northeast region has established a two Regional Tribal Liaison working under Barry Hamilton: Suzanne Baker from New York and Cassius Spears from Rhode Island.

3. West Region Representative, Susan Looper
Susan reported that Nevada celebrated American Indian-Alaska Native Heritage Month by hosting a statewide Lunch-n-learn with native food sampling. She partnered with the Nevada AIAN SEPM and a tribal rep from the West RTCAC.

g. National Tribal Liaison Officer Report
Facilitator: Barry Hamilton, National Tribal Liaison Officer
Barry was not able to attend the meeting.

h. Committee Updates
Facilitator: Dr. Carol Crouch & Committee Chairs

1. *Elders Committee* – Tanya Dideriksen
Tanya submitted a written report of the recently-held Elders Council meeting. See her comments noted below. Tanya also submitted a proposal before the Council to involve our AIANEAs Elders with the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES). No discussions at this time. See Attachment B.

We held an Elders Committee teleconference on Nov. 8. We discussed the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation teleconference that Melissa and I participated in Oct. 3. The Elders decided that the suggestion of going with a major publisher was premature for our project. They are open to potentially applying for funding in 2018 once we know what is available from the LDF (LDF will be discussing this in Jan.). The LDF suggested a change in book format and the Elders are open to that but feel that we need to get more completed on the book before making such a decision.

The Elders approved of the attached AISES/AIANEA Partnership document as developed by Melissa Sturdivant. So, this is coming as a recommendation from the Elders and Elders Committee.

We reviewed the progress made on the Elders in the 21st Century book and things are moving forward.

I would like to note that Loretta Metoxen does not have an Elder Representative and it would be great if the National Council could send something out to the membership, seeking possible representatives. Charlotte Pyle is doing the work of the book project with Loretta but feels it might be better to have her Elder Rep be someone closer to Wisconsin.

Carol asked Melissa to elaborate on this last item, and Melissa explained that since Ann Perales' retirement, Elder Loretta has not had anyone serving on the Elders' Council as her representative. Melissa shared that Charlotte Pyle, who is working on the *Elders in the 21st Century* book project, is helping to draft some of the material for Loretta's portions of the book. But, in regard to a permanent NRCS representative in the Wisconsin region, who can work with Elder Loretta, we need to find someone who might be interested. Carol discussed reaching out to Tanya and see what we can do to find someone to work with Elder Loretta.

2. *Scholarship Committee* – Susan Looper & Melissa Sturdivant

Melissa reported that the scholarship application was completed and debuted on November 1. Yvette helped to get the webpage in order and helped with setting up our email address to receive applications. So, the scholarship application has been distributed, but Melissa noted that she had checked the email account and there have been no scholarship submissions to date.

Melissa reported that the Scholarship Committee is meeting tomorrow to discuss some questions which have emerged, and to review the evaluation matrix tool that she has developed. Susan added that some of these items include shifting the time frame of the application to spring and late summer to allow students to have transcripts available to apply for scholarships. Carol asked about the logistics of having students physically sign and initial each page, and that for some, it poses a potential barrier. The Committee will review this, too.

Susan added that there is a lot of old data on existing websites that have older applications still available. Susan added that we will have to strategize how to get the new application out and to publicize and direct traffic to the webpage as the main source for scholarship information.

Carol asked if students can submit an application in two or more categories. Susan said that she will bring this up with the Committee and see if we can discuss this and make a determination.

Discussions followed about trying to direct all traffic to the webpage.

Carol will coordinate and send the announcement for the scholarships to American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) for e-blast distribution.

3. *Bylaws Committee* – Melissa Sturdivant

Melissa reported that the bylaws are still being worked on and edited. She removed the information about the poster as suggested by Deborah.

i. Old Business.

1. *Status of Regional Rep & VP Positions.*

Carol stated that the response to the elections has been very positive and she's received a lot of responses. The deadline is December 1 for the 2nd VP position.

Carol reached out to an AIANEA member in Montana to serve as the *Northern Plains Regional Rep* and this employee is speaking with their supervisor to get approval for working in this position.

Carol will get with Cameron and Kirt as she transitions with the end of her term.

2. *2019 National Training*. Cameron reported that the planning committee met recently. He indicated that there are 12 or so sub-committees, and we are a year-and-a-half out from the conference date. Four associations are involved in the conference planning. Cameron volunteered to work on the program committee. Discussions followed.
 3. *CPA*. Carol asked Melissa if she knows of the status with this and Melissa reported that Pam has not been able to get in touch with the Texas Comptroller Office to inquire about the 501(c)3 transitioning to Texas, and all of this is tied together with the Articles of Incorporation as well. It is basically at a stand-still right now until we can transition the 501(c)3 and start conducting business in Texas.
 4. Carol reported that the Intertribal Ag Council is planned in early December and a Tribal Liaison meeting is planned as part of that meeting.
 5. Carol commented that Melissa reminded her that we need to schedule the annual business meeting. Melissa suggested that Committee Chairs be invited and Yvette needs to be informed so that she can send out a notice to the membership.
- j. Carol extended her appreciation to those Council members attending and with no further business, the Council meeting was adjourned at 12:55 pm, Central.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Melissa Sturdivant, AIANEA National Council Secretary. Please respond to melissa.sturdivant@tx.usda.gov with questions or comments.

IAC Eastern Region Native Youth in Food & Agriculture Leadership Summit

Lea Zeise

10/3/17

The Intertribal Agriculture Council's Eastern Native Youth in Food & Agriculture Leadership Summit drew 15 Native youth to Seneca Nation territory for four days of workshops and hands-on activities focused on conservation and agriculture from indigenous and western perspectives. The youth ranged in age from 15 – 23, representing eight Tribes from Maine to Louisiana. Two additional youth leaders from outside the region joined the event.

The youth came ready to learn and jumped right into activities. Day one got their hands dirty at the Seneca Faithkeepers School, a Seneca language immersion preschool. Local NRCS staff John Whitney and Nicole Kubiczki had prepared a soil analysis dig for them, and the youth scooped up the soil to ball it up and identify its type with reference manuals. Their hands barely had a chance to dry off before they began transplanting delicate Seneca sweetgrass plugs provided by USDA NRCS Big Flats Plant Materials Center. They worked quickly and carefully, placing each plug into soil inside and outside the Faithkeepers School high tunnel, which was made possible with EQIP funds. This offered an opportunity to discuss the use of NRCS programs to preserve culturally important plants. Nicole offered the youth folders and information about soil science, NRCS programs, and how to get involved, and answered questions about her education and career paths. The activities at the School sparked several conversations about soil science, careers in conservation, and preserving Native languages, culture, and plants.

The next stop was at the Seneca Fish & Wildlife Department where staff led the youth through their conservation and endangered species protection programs and encouraged them to hold hellbenders and endangered turtles. The pictures tell the story better than words – see the next page.

The youth also sat attentively and engaged with two panels that discussed higher education and careers in natural resources and agriculture from the perspective of recent graduates and established staff from Seneca Nation and Intertribal Agriculture Council. The experience was rounded out with a visit to Holly and Ross John's entrepreneurial aquaponics system where youth explored cutting edge technology and new business opportunities in agriculture. The youth also heard from IAC's Program Manager, Zach Ducheneaux, about maintaining our cultures while embracing new technologies and from New York State Conservationist Greg Kist about how he values the relationship his office has with Tribes.

Throughout these experiences, the youth learned about the importance of cultural identity, leadership, self-sufficiency, and determination in pursuing their goals in agriculture. In just four days, a dozen agriculture and natural resources professionals encouraged the youth to find their passion and follow it by pursuing any and all opportunities until they found the right fit. In the evenings, the youth bonded over a campfire, sharing stories, songs, and language from their nations. Through the hands-on activities, the group made friends, memories, and leadership skills that will carry them forward. These friendships and proficiencies are the beginnings of their professional network and skills bank that will assist them as they find their path and future careers. And after this event, they'll have plenty of natural resources and conservation careers in mind to choose from.

IAC is grateful to the host Tribe, Seneca Nation of Indians, for playing a key role in planning and sponsoring the youth summit, and for sharing the cultural and agricultural aspects of their community. A special thanks also goes to the following NRCS offices for their sponsorship of the event: Alabama, Connecticut, Maine, New York, North Carolina, and Rhode Island. This event would not have been made possible without your generous support.





AIANEA Elders & AISES – A Perfect Match to Teach the Next Seven Generations

Proposal: To keep our AIANEA Elders engaged and at the forefront of emerging issues, and to provide them a venue where they can be teachers and advisors and share their knowledge and wisdom for the next seven generations.

Methods:

AIANEA Elders attend the AISES National Conference, and partnered with NRCS Cadre members, conduct a breakout session to discuss indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge, emerging issues such as climate change, water quality and quantity, food sovereignty and other influences and factors affecting Mother Earth and indigenous ways of life.

1. Session will address emerging issues and how indigenous methods and traditional ecological knowledge can affect change and improve stewardship and demonstrate how NRCS “Helps People help the Land” holistically. NRCS Cadre members can integrate how NRCS conservation practices meld together with Indigenous or Traditional Ecological Knowledge to put conservation on the ground. Highlight the areas where we find balance in what we do each day.
2. Session will address emerging issues and how indigenous methods and traditional ecological knowledge can affect change and improve stewardship and demonstrate how NRCS “Helps People help the Land” holistically. NRCS Cadre members can integrate how NRCS conservation practices meld together with Indigenous or Traditional Ecological Knowledge to put conservation on the ground. Highlight the areas where we find balance in what we do each day.
3. If the Association cannot afford travel expenditures for a panel of Elders to be involved and attend the annual AISES National Conference, we can still conduct a session such as this during the AISES National Conference as part of an NRCS-led educational session during AISES. How we do it can be worked on, but getting it done and having this as an annual process for our Elders to be involved would demonstrate their importance to our Association, to NRCS and AISES leadership, and for the youth who are involved with AISES.

Rationale:

1. Our AIANEA Elders are our greatest resource for understanding where we are and we are going – they are our teachers and mentors and are needed by our youth. We need to involve them in a setting where each can have a voice, and where each can continue to be involved with NRCS and AIANEA.

2. AIANEA has invested in our Elders and our relationship with AISES. But, this investment needs to go beyond just award and recognition as an AISES *Sequoyah Fellow*. Our Elders need to be present at the AISES National Conferences so they can continue to be involved and can share their wisdom. Having our AIANEA Elders continuing their involvement with AISES in a natural partnership and encourages the sharing of indigenous knowledge so that our youth, as they pursue STEM education and careers, can affect change in a relevant and meaningful manner.
3. We put form and function together and bring our Elders with us (NRCS Cadre and AIANEA Members) to teach how NRCS can be the Agency of choice as youth decide on a career and demonstrate how STEM and native culture can work in harmony to solve some our problems and concerns facing our future generations. As NRCS employees, we can model how we do this each day.
4. Even though we are limited in our national training options, we need to seek out opportunities to involve our Elders in local, regional and national communities so they have a voice and a venue to share their knowledge and wisdom. AISES has an Elders Circle who offer mentoring and support to all those who attend AISES. But, NRCS is missing its Elder community – our AIANEA Elders.

Background Knowledge:

At the 2017 AISES Conference held in Denver, CO, a break-out session was conducted entitled, “Climate Change: the Power of (Indigenous) Knowledge.” It was a 50-minute session set up as a panel discussion. I attended this session and was amazed at the number of students attending with standing-room only and more than 200+ present and listening attentively. The students were engaged and seemed to be passionate about the concerns of climate change. Mostly, the students spoke of their struggles back on campus trying to affect change in their respective communities. The students were hungry for knowledge and real-life suggestions of how to affect change. The session was targeted to college-level students, but those in attendance ranged from middle school to adulthood.

The panel did not consist of any Elders, but of Native Scientists, Academia or Practitioners:
Georgia Madrid, EEO/Diversity Program Specialist, NOAA Research – Session Moderator
Roger Pulwarty, Chief Scientist, NOAA Physical Sciences Division
Bill Thomas, Senior Lead for Indigenous, Island and International Issues, NOAA’s Office for Coastal Management
Dan Wildcat, Haskell Indian Nations University