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

Respect, Harmony, and Beauty



Welcome to the

newsletter.

AIANEA

We need your help to increase membership this year so we are having a membership contest—the

pring - Niibin 2008 member who recruits the most 'new' members will win a dinner for 2 in Spokane—or near their home town. Come on everyone-spread the word about our association.!

We would also like to WELCOME and congratulate Harold Bryant on becoming the new Treasurer for AIANEA!

Best Wishes on your journey Nils with your teaching assistant position at Purdue (Iniversity.

Everything on the earth has a purpose, every disease an herb to cure it, and every person a mission. This is the Indian theory of existence. Mourning Dove [Christine Quintasket] 1888-1936) Salish

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President's Corner

The past five months has been extremely busy for our Association. More specifically, the National Council Members and Committee Members have worked hard to increase membership, increase the scholarship award, revise the constitution and bylaws, and provide quality training at our annual conference.

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To experience the great work of the Association in person, I encourage all of you to join us in Spokane, Washington, August 11-15, 2008 for this year's conference and register for the 2008 American Indian Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS and Asian Pacific Islander Organization, *EMBRACING THE DIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST: CULTURE, CONSERVATION AND COMMUNITY.* The conference registration form will be posted on our website soon.

This year's training will spotlight Nila Rinehart, professional facilitator, Corporation for Positive Change. Nila will teach us about positive change and help us through our visioning process. Moreover, she will be delivering a keynote address and conduct the "Positive Change" workshop. We are looking forward to Nila's teaching and we know it will be beneficial to the attendees, the Association, and NRCS Leadership.

To make the conference run smoothly we have recruited Harold Bryant from Texas to be the new Treasurer for the Association. Harold is an asset. He comes to us with 17 years of experience as the Treasurer for the Range Management Society. In addition, Harold is a retired NRCS employee, and is excited to join the National Council. During this transition, I would like to thank Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen for her years of dedication and hard work as Treasurer and helping Harold come on board.

Last, please remember to submit any tribal issues or concerns to your Regional Tribal Representatives on the NRCS Tribal Workgroup. The representatives are: Herb Webb, Western Region, Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen, Central Region, and David Elliott, Eastern Region. These representatives meet quarterly with Edith Morigeau, National Tribal Relations Coordinator, by teleconference to discuss tribal issues and work to identify solutions. This is an opportunity for those working in Indian country to move the tribal voice up to NRCS leadership.

Gozhoo Doleel. Ahi'Yee, - Millie Titla 2008 AIANEA President

COMMENTS FROM OUR READERS

What an excellent newsletter. It was so well written and interesting to read. Thank you. Pat Tyrrell

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This really is a GREAT job! Leota

Dear AIANEA Communication Committee...I just had to take a few minutes to tell all of you that you are doing a "WONDERFUL" job in producing a quality newsletter. The Four Winds newsletter is very informative and it is so good to hear about our native employees doing well for their communities and for Mother earth. My heart is full and my spirit soars with the mighty eagle. I also want to thank all our Elders for their wealth of knowledge and their willingness to give back to this younger generation. You have made my Day! :>)Richard Vigil, STC

I just skimmed the newsletter and printed it out for further perusing this evening. It looks great and the reading is great. I plan to submit an article sometime when things slow down from Fort Belknap Montana. But I was so impressed with the newsletter, that I wanted you to know. Terry Buck Fort Belknap D.C. in Montana

2008 Annual Meeting Update EMBRACING THE DIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC NORRTHWEST: CULTURE, CONSERVATION AND COMMUNITY.

Have you registered for this year's AIANEA Conference?

If not, it's time! This year's conference will be August 11th through August 15th in Spokane, Washington, and promises to be full of fun activities and informative . The Asian/Pacific Islander Organization will be holding their conference concurrent with us, so this is a chance to broaden your horizons and see friends from across the cultural aisle. There will be breakout sessions on Building Outreach and Recruitment Programs, Appreciative Inquiry, Persuasive Speaking, Elder's Panels, and Professional Business Writing (to name just a few!) plus field tours, a live auction, great entertainment, and much, much more!

Did we mention this is being held in Spokane? The town motto – 'Near Nature, Near Perfect' – says it all. This sprawling metropolis has all the amenities you'll want or need with 50 lakes within 50 miles and offers a variety of great things to do after hours or on the weekend!

Take a look at the agenda, find out the latest news, learn about the Spokane area, and get yourself registered for this great event on the web at <u>www.aianea.com/conference 2008.html</u>. Don't miss this opportunity to update you skills, network with others, and bring back fresh new ideas to help you further the programs in your state. See you there!! Tour:

- Spokane House-Tribes and early settlement in Washington State
- Spokane Tribal Hatchery
- Fort Spokane
- Living Snow Fence and Soils of the Palouse
- Spokane County Tour

For a full description of the tours, please see the registration form at **www.aianea.com/conference**

2008.html

There are some very exciting concurrent sessions planned.

- Building an Effective Recruitment Program for Special Emphasis Programs
- Appreciative Inquiry: it's uses in organizational change and community development
- Persuasive Speaking

Please take a moment and register for our exciting conference! www.aianea.com

Spokane Tribal Hatchery





Conference After-Hours Activities

Welcome to Spokane! While you're here, you may want to check out some of the wonderful sites and activities Spokane has to offer!

- Visit Riverfront Park. Stroll through this downtown park with the beautiful Spokane River running through it. Ride the historic 1909 Looff carousel, see the famous Clocktower, or if you're not afraid of heights, try out the Spokane Falls Aerial SkyRide Gondolas, which can accommodate 6 each and move over the park and river up to 600 feet per minute. While you're downtown, check out the great restaurants and shopping, also!
- Visit the most famous scenic tourist spot in the county: the Bowl and Pitcher at Riverside State Park. These unique basaltic rocks are a geologic phenomenon resulting in spectacular scenery, complete with a swinging suspension bridge. Definitely a view to remember!
- Visit Greenbluff, a collection of orchards, farms, and ranches just north of Spokane. Pick fruit right from the tree, try some homemade apple cider or fresh peach pie, and browse the unique gift shops for one-of-a-kind treasures.
- Take a tour of our local wineries. There are 11 wineries within 20 minutes of Spokane. Find your own way, or arrange to take one of our local winery tours.
- Go golfing. There are numerous local options, but for a cut-above experience, visit the floating green at the Coeur d'Alene Resort. (Reserve at least 30 days in advance, though; this course fills up fast!)
- Visit Bing Crosby's boyhood home, tour the Crosbyana Room at Gonzaga University to see Bing Crosby memorabilia, or, for the serious fan, take a complete Bing Crosby tour that also includes Downriver Golf Course where he learned to play golf, the Bing Crosby Theater where he performed between vaudeville acts, and numerous other sites that figured prominently in his life.
- Visit the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture (the MAC). The MAC offers an exciting rotation of many unique collections, including items from America's largest collection of Northern Plateau Indian art and artifacts.
- Stop by the Davenport Hotel. This stunning 5-star hotel in downtown Spokane was built in 1914 and restored to its original splendor in 2000. The opulent architecture, woodwork, marble, and decorating alone is worth the trip, but also check out their spa, restaurant, and more.
- Stroll through Manito Park. Covering over 90 acres, Manito Park is one of Spokane's largest and most beautiful parks. It includes a Lilac Garden, the Nishinomiya Japanese Garden, Rose Hill, Duncan Formal Gardens, and the Gaiser Conservatory. The gardens are spectacular during the growing season and the conservatory is a wonderful stop any time of the year. A perfect way to spend a summer evening!
- Visit the Japanese Cultural Center at Fort George Wright. Fort George Wright, a former Calvary headquarters, figured prominently in the early settlement of Spokane and is now a branch campus of a university in Spokane's sister city, Nishinomiya, Japan. Visit the university's Japanese Cultural Center, featuring exhibits of traditional Japanese art, crafts, costumes, and traditional ceremonial dress.
- Explore Finch Arboretum. Stroll around this extensive botanical and tree garden, featuring more than 2,000 ornamental trees, shrubs, and flowers on 65 acres.
- Take a scenic cruise on Lake Coeur d'Alene, the St. Joe River, or the Spokane River. Day, Dinner, or Fun Fleet cruises of all kinds depart daily.

- Visit Cat Tales Zoological Park. Travel 25 minutes from downtown to Cat Tales, home to over 40 exotic and endangered cats. You may even have the opportunity to hand feed a lion or tiger!
- Try River Rafting on the Spokane River. Just minutes from downtown you can board a raft for a scenic trip down the Spokane River. Your guide will take you through some small rapids and point out the local wild-life. Paddle along or just sit back and enjoy the ride.

Try Historic Spokane's 'Age of Elegance' Dine-Around Tour. Enjoy a great night of dining while learning the rich history and seeing beautiful historic homes of Spokane. Start with drinks and hors d'oeurves at an 1889 Queen Anne Victorian Mansion, then view the famous architecture and stunning woodwork while having an elegant dinner at the Glover Mansion. Finally, stop at Hannah's Garden Inn, a beautifully-restored turn of the century Kirtland Cutter estate, for dessert and coffee. Now this is dining in style!

Have some extra time before or after the conference dates?

Check out these options for those who want to explore further afield!

- See the Seattle Mariner's play Tampa Bay at Safeco Field in Seattle (August 9th and 10th only)
- Go Jet Boating or Rafting in Hells Canyon. Arrange any number of excursions to and on the Snake River! Take a simple raft ride, or go all out and visit the Native American Teepee Camp for a hands-on experience taught by Native Americans. Learn the skills Lewis and Clark were taught in order to survive by native peoples who had an intimate understanding of the land and its natural resources, then take a trip in a long boat down the river. Add lunch and/or a jet boat ride if you like; either way this is an unforgettable trip through the beautiful and rugged country of the Northwest!
- Get a realistic glimpse of the old mining days by visiting Wallace, Idaho, the Silver Capital of the world. Stop at Cataldo Mission, the oldest building in the State of Idaho, built by the Coeur d'Alene Indian Tribe and Jesuit Missionaries, then visit the Crystal Gold Mine or ride the trolley up to the Sierra Silver Mine where you'll put on your hard hat, go into the mine, see veins of ore, and learn how the miners worked and lived.
- See the Grand Coulee Dam and Laser Light Show. Catch a tour bus in Spokane that will take you to the Grand Coulee Dam. Tour the Visitor's Center at this impressive landmark, then kick back and watch the laser light show projected directly on to the dam itself.
- Kids of all ages will enjoy Silverwood Theme Park and Boulder Beach Water Park. Located less than an hour away in beautiful North Idaho, Silverwood Theme Park has over 65 rides and attractions, including three roller coasters, the Boulder Beach Water Park, a steam engine train, live entertainment, restaurants, and more. Open 7 days a week from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., so visit on the weekend or after your conference during the week!

Visit Fort Spokane, one of the cultural jewels of the Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area. For thousands of years, this area was a gathering place for native tribes fishing the rapids of the Spokane River. In 1880, the U.S. Army established a fort above the confluence of the Spokane and Columbia Rivers. In 1898, the military fort was closed, and the buildings were then used as an Indian boarding school and tuberculosis hospital. In many ways the Indian experience at Fort Spokane is a microcosm of the Indian experience across the United States. *Information on all of the above, and many, many more options available to you while you're in Washington State, is available at <u>www.VisitSpokane.com</u>, or contact Eileen Jackson, Chair, Washington State Civil Rights Advisory Committee, at (509) 323-2934.*

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USDA NEWS RELEASE

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USDA SECRETARY SCHAFER WELCOMES

DAWN CHARGING,

DIRECTOR OF

NATIVE AMERICAN PROGRAMS

WASHINGTON, April 7, 2008 -U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer has appointed Dawn M. Charging USDA's Director of Native American Programs, noting her ability to see opportunities for people to reach their full potentials. The Director of Native American Programs, located in the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, is USDA's primary contact with tribal governments and their members.

"Dawn Charging understands the

unique responsibility of the federal government to our nation's Indian Tribes," said Schafer. "Her heritage in the Three Affiliated Tribes and her service in both tribal and state governments bring an appreciation of tribal governments and a dedication to relationshipbuilding through mutual respect and consultation."

In 2004, Charging entered the North Dakota House of Representatives as the first Native American to serve the entire Fort Berthold Indian Reservation and parts of six counties in West Central North Dakota. Charging also served the Three Affiliated Tribes Tourism and Government Services Director acting as a liaison between tribal, county, state and federal government.

As Director of Native American Programs, Charging is the principal adviser and representative on all matters related to USDA policies and programs of



American Indians and Alaska Natives. She chairs USDA's Native American Working Group, which reports to the Secretary of Agriculture and provides advice, support, and other assistance to coordinate and guide USDA policies and programs that affect Indian tribes.

Charging served as communications director/ photographer and film commissioner for the North

> Dakota State Tourism Department. She was an accredited member of the Native American Journalists Association, Outdoor Writers Association of America and Great Lakes Outdoor Writers Association. Her photographic images and writing has appeared in local, regional and national newspapers, magazines, publications and books.

Dawn M. Charging was raised on a small grains farm and production cattle ranch in west central North Dakota, on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation. She is an enrolled member of the Three

Affiliated Tribes - the home of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Tribes.



Elder's Meditation of the Day

Taken from http://www.whitebison.org

"As we plunge ahead to build empires and race for supremacy we should stop and listen to [the female] song of life. For without the female there is no life."

--Oren R. Lyons, Spokesman, Traditional Circle of Elders

Women are created with the ability to produce life. Women have a special tie to the Earth Mother. They have something in common. They are the source of life. The Earth Mother gives songs to the Woman to sing. These songs are about life, about beauty, about children, about love, about family, about strength, about caring, about nurturing, about forgiveness, about God. The World needs to pay attention and listen to Her. She knows.

Great Spirit, let me listen to Her songs



Elder's Meditation of the Day May 21

"A vision could put you on a path you don't want to follow."

--Archie Fire Lame Deer, LAKOTA

There is a saying, "You move toward and become like that which you think about." If we keep thinking about a bad thing, we will move in that direction. If we think about fear in some area of our life, we will probably experience this fear. We move toward and become like that which we think about. If we think about secret things, these secret things will come to pass. Our visions are very powerful. Visions determine our direction, our lives. If you think about lustful things, it's a matter of time before you'll be wrestling with it. We should think about our visions to make sure they include the Great Spirit in every area.



Member Spotlight: Ciro LoPinto, Soil Conservationist, New York

10 Questions with The Four Winds

Tell everyone a little bit about yourself?

Right now I'm a Soil Conservationist in New York State. I've been with the agency for somewhere between 22 and 23 years. I started as a volunteer in NJ, pre-Earth Team. I've worked in NJ and NY, with my eye on PA for future NRCS work. I'm married (my wife's name is Anne) and my wife owns an organically operated farm in Pennsylvania. My educational background is Environmental Science and Ecology. All of my agricultural training is either selftaught or through training received after college. I've served at least 20 years in Civil Rights, in one form or another...Chair, Vice-Chair, SEPM. I've spent many years as a semi-professional musician, gardener/ farmer and "craftsperson". The craft I lean towards most is Kachina doll carving. My mom is part Hopi, so I took an interest in that art form about 20 years ago.

How did you come to your current position?

My current position is the same position I've held since I joined SCS. I dabbled with the thought of being a Soil Scientist when I first started looking into SCS, but I'm not that focused. I like the "jack of all trades" nature of being a Soil Conservationist.

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

Achieving a Soil Conservationist position was never challenging, maintaining the knowledge and gaining the experience to be more effective is the personal challenge for me. I believe that a person can become stagnant or ineffective if they don't keep gathering knowledge/training and putting it to use on the job... or in their life. I always try to take some new training each year that would make me a better Soil Conservationist or Civil Rights Advisory Committee member. As far as personal challenges or obstacles on the job, I'd say becoming embroiled in my own civil rights dispute was the most disappointing or disillusioned portion of my career. I learned a lot from that incident. I'd never want to go through that again.



Ciro LoPinto

How can others follow in your foot steps?

Someone would have to get to know me first, to decide if my footsteps are worth following. I ask a lot of questions and "justice" means a lot to me. I try to be really "present" while being involved in day to day life. I think "being there" when tough things go down really textures a person's life experiences and helps them to make tough decisions. I don't shy away from troublesome things or events. Some people may even say that I help to cause them... that was a joke!...really.

What is the most rewarding part of your current position?

I enjoy getting to know producers at a deeper level than just applying for some program. I appreciate it when they share their long term goals or explain the quality of life that they desire. At that point I feel that I can truly help them make the management decisions that would help them to achieve these goals. With that kind of information I can help the producer realize that their decisions affect their community, their social network, their finances and the environment. That's real.

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

The people that had the most influence in my career were in three different disciplines. The first was an "old time" District Conservationist that seemed to know just about everything and he also allowed me work time for self-study to make myself a more well rounded conservationist. The second was an Engineer who really helped me to learn how to "run the rod", survey, design and understand the math behind what I do...she taught me to be more observant also. The third was a State Administrative Officer, she really helped me learn, understand and love Civil Rights work.

What is your favorite word?

I would probably have more than just one favorite word, but I'll give it a shot...Love...Earth...Smile. Pretty corny huh?

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

Join Civil Rights...and see the world.



What is your favorite saying or quote?

I probably won't get this exactly correct, but Albert Einstein said something like..."When you change the way you look at something...the thing you are looking at changes."

What profession other than yours would you like to attempt?

I think I might have enjoyed a Law career maybe, if I could be helping people or communities with personal justice issues. I've done the musician and artist thing at a fun and semi-professional level, I'd rather keep it that way, not having to make a living from it. Farming would be my other choice.

Founding Families Return

In unison, the hands of Leota Burnett (AIANEA South Central Regional Rep.) and Sherryl Marable traced lines in the air.

The two lifted their arms to the sky and brought them back to their chest.

Phrase by phrase, the duo recited "The Lord's Prayer" in a Native American sign language.

It was their offering in a dedication ceremony for a statue depicting their ancestor Paschal Fish and his daughter, Eudora.

"It blends both the Shawnee side and the white side of me," Marable said.

Burnett and Marable performed for the citizens of Eudora and also their own family members ------ some of whom they hadn't met until this weekend. Burnett is from Miami, Okla., and Marable is from Chelsea, Okla.

"It's kind of like an unplanned family reunion," Sesquicentennial Committee member Tom Tucker said.

Tucker brought in descendants of both Fish and Charles Durr to the city's both Fish and Charles Durr to the city's 150th anniversary ceremonies.

The two men, along with Louis Pfieff, signed the deed that transferred 774-1/2 acres from Paschal Fish to the German Settlement Society in 1857.

All but one of the members Tucker contacted from the Fish family arrived, as well as one he didn't know existed. Oklahoma native DeAnn Carver found out about the ceremony from a friend and decided to make the trip, she said.

Once in Eudora, the resemblance of the other Fish family members surprised her.

"Some of the ladies looked like my great aunts," she said.



Sherryl Marable and Leota Burnett perform "The Lords Prayer" Saturday before the unveiling of the Eudora and Paschal Fish statue. Marable and Burnett are Paschal Fish's direct descendants

Tucker found descendants from three of Paschal Fish's children, Eudora, Mary Ann and Leander.

Jeanne Mercedes Reynolds, the great-granddaughter of Eudora Fish, came to the city from Eureka, Calif.

She brought a medallion presented to her grandmother, Eudora Emmons Reed, by the city in 1957 at its centennial celebration.

She caught an early glimpse of the statue as it was lowered on the pedestal Thursday. By Saturday, the impression didn't fade.

"Awesome doesn't begin to do it," Reynolds said.

Lawrence artist Jim Brothers depicted Eudora Fish as a 9-year-old girl hugging her father. Brothers researched Shawnee heritage and clothing styles to create a picture of how the father and daughter might have looked at the time of the city's founding.

"He captured the past and the future," Reynolds said. The descendants of Charles Durr also experienced the sesquicentennial spirit.

Massachusetts native Judith Hogalander visited the city many times in the past. But the celebration marked the first time she had returned in several years, she said.

"Eudora has grown and the community spirit that existed years and years ago is still here," Hogalander said.

Local resident Bob Durr didn't travel near as far, but he also said he appreciated the celebration.

"There's been some good times and some bad times in Eudora," Durr said. "This is one of the better ones."

Other Fish descendants attending included were: Ramona Sue Allums, Henderson, Texas; Jerry Emmons, Fort Gibson, Okla.; Wynona Fish Howser and Dorothy Fish Hall, both of, Muskogee, Okla.; Claire Eudora Fish Warner, Los Angeles, Calif.; and Leota McKim, Bluejacket, Okla.

Other Durr descendants attending were: Brent and Brenda Durr, Eudora; and Clayton Durr, Arlington, Va.





Hannah Copp stands next to the Eudora and Paschal Fish statue by Lawrence artist Jim Brothers. Hannah was the model for Eudora.

USDA-NRCS Partner with Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma to Develop Kiowa Tribal Conservation District

Tribal Conservation districts are being established across the United States to focus on working with USDA agencies and other local partners to care for Mother Earth, strengthen agriculture, encourage youth 4-H and FFA, work to increase the number of Tribal farmers and ranchers and to help protect and strengthen the amount of culturally significant plants and animals. These Tribal Conservation districts are established by the Tribe or Tribal entity and they enter into a working agreement with USDA agencies to assist in the delivery of conservation to all populations; which helps the agencies mission to achieve parity in the delivery and implementation of USDA conservation programs to all populations.

The Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma signed their Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma Conservation District/USDA mutual agreement during the *Native Americans* Coming Together Caring for Mother Earth, Indian

Agriculture Symposium that was hosted by Indian Nations

Conservation Alliance & Intertribal Agriculture Council in Las Vegas, Nevada, December 13, 2007.

Representing Oklahoma at the Indian Agriculture Symposium and the signing ceremonies for Oklahoma was State Conservationist Ron Hilliard and District Conservationist, Carol Crouch, Billy Evans Horse, Kiowa Tribal Chairman and Kiowa conservation district members. Gary Mast, Deputy Under Secretary, Conservation, USDA; represented USDA in the official signing of the working agreement between the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma and USDA.





homa, are shaking hands and the conservation district directors are looking on.

Metoxen's history tied to the Oneidas

by Sarah Riley - The Green Bay News-Chronicle

credits: Tribal historian Loretta Metoxen translates this Oneida language message which means, in part, 'Went to Green Bay to buy a pizza pie.' (News—Chronicle file photo)

Loretta Metoxen grew up on the Oneida Reservation and after a 16-year stint in the military, came back and threw herself fully into the politics and history of the tribe.

Over the years, she has helped uncover stories about the tribe and its extensive history in the state.

But it's her many children, 27 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren and the beauty of the reservation that has kept her on the reservation.

"I've walked most of the reservation from one end to the other," she said. "The reservation itself is beautiful."

After 16 years in the U.S. Air Force, Metoxen and her husband decided they wanted to live and raise their children close to her family in Oneida.

"I mainly determined that they needed to know their family," she said about her children. "I grew up on a farm and my family kept the farm - for nearly 55 years."

Metoxen's family's farm was a stage coach stopping point between Oneida and the Chicago Corners area. Walkers and riders often stopped at the house for a break and a warm drink, so the family got to know most people in the area.

"It was really convenient to stop at our place, so I got to know everybody," she said.

Those people turned into a built-in support system for Metoxen and her family as they built their life here.

Metoxen started working at the Oneida Cultural Center in 1996. She was first elected to a tribal position in 1967. "And I stayed involved with tribal politics for the next 29 years," she said.

Among many other things, the cultural center tracks

the tribe's movement from New York in 1863 to its current band of 15,000 in Wisconsin. The tribe was removed from the state so the government could build the Erie Canal and other structures, Metoxen said.

When members of the tribe arrived in Oneida over the span of 20 years, they built a settlement and prospered. White



pine trees were used to build structures and fields were cleared for farming.

"They did well when they arrived," she said.

The Dawes Allotment Act took that away in 1887 by sectioning off tribal land for individuals instead of the tribe as a whole. "They lost all their land by 1929," the year the Great Depression started. The tribe lost its strength as a group for many years afterward, Metoxen said.

"Everyone was in poor circumstances, but the Oneidas were worse off than most," she said.

Many men and women enlisted in the military and eventually ended up in major cities where work programs were available. Eventually, another government program would strengthen the tribe back in Wisconsin.

President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs helped tribes organize again and other programs helped with housing.

"I think that's when we got our big boost in terms of organization," she said. Relatives reconnected and started researching their ancestry back in Oneida. The funds from establishing a casino in 1988 helped even further.

AIANEA Member Goes on 6 Month Detail to DC for USDA Civil Rights

By CRYSTAL LEONETTI

Once upon a time, in a land far, far away, an Alaska NRCS employee was sitting at her desk, working hard at her job as the Alaska Native Liaison/ Anchorage District Conservationist. The phone rang (a normal occurrence). On the other end was the USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR) Deputy Assistant Secretary, Annabelle Romero. The employee was pleasantly shocked to hear from a person of such prestige in the ranks of USDA! As it turns out, Ms. Romero had called to see if this employee was interested in working on a special, temporary assignment to the OASCR/Outreach & Diversity/1994 Program. The employee, after some laborious consideration about leaving her normal (though never dull) duties behind, graciously accepted the offer. She began October 28, 2007 and ended April 30, 2008. And, here's what Crystal Leonetti, the Alaska NRCS employee/USDA detailee, had to say about her experience:

There's nothing quite like learning about something new by completely immersing yourself in it for a period of 6 months! I've learned so much about the 1994 Program, Tribal Colleges and Universities, the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, the USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, the USDA Office of Outreach and Diversity, and got an insider's view of the inner workings of USDA in Washington, D.C.

My main focus was the 1994 Program. It is a very young program within USDA, and its mission is to ensure that Tribal Colleges and Universities equitably participate in USDA employment, programs, services, and resources. "1994" in the title stands for the 1994 Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994. It's the Act that gave land grant status to 33 existing Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). There are three people currently employed by the 1994 Program. Stephanie Koziski is the Program Analyst and has an incredible institutional knowledge about this program and a very keen interest in seeing American Indian and Alaska Native people reaching for a dream by striving for their post-secondary education. Lisa Coleman is the Program Assistant, who keeps the program running at a constant pace. The new Director, Mr. Lawrence Shorty who is Navajo and Choctaw, began his job on May 12.

Status report on the current events at the 1994 Program:

- 1. A Memorandum of Agreement between USDA and the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) was signed on February 5, 2008 in Washington D.C. by Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer and President of AIHEC Cheryl Crazy Bull. This MOA reaffirms the partnership between USDA and AIHEC and revises the MOA signed in 1998. It will be posted soon at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/ partnerships.html.
- 2. The 1994 Program is almost finished with its first USDA/AIHEC-created Strategic Plan. A subcommittee of the USDA/AIHEC Leadership Group, made up of USDA Mission Area Representatives and TCU Presidents worked long volunteer hours to create a comprehensive 2-year strategic plan which will guide the work of the 1994 Program Office and involve all of USDA as well as each TCU.
- 3. The USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program is entering its first year in a pilot phase! For all the NRCS field staff who have been wondering when the USDA will implement this... well, here you go! For the 2008-2009 School Year, USDA is going to make the offer to Tribal Colleges and Universities to submit their top candidates for the scholars program (open only to attendees of, or graduates of TCUs) for potential scholarships to USDA agencies. We're hoping for 10 scholars this first year. The following years, beginning in the 2009-2010 school year, there will be a normal application process.

4. .The first-ever USDA/1994 Tribal College Liaison Specialist positions are being advertised now. The USDA/AIHEC Leadership Group determined that we will place two GS-9/11 Tribal College Liaisons, one to cover the West Region at Little Big Horn College, and one to cover the Central Region at Sitting Bull College. We hope that this will get a good link between the college campuses and USDA headquarters

In addition to the above 4 initiatives that I worked on, I also spent time on marketing materials and planning for a Tribal College tour in New Mexico and Arizona.

Just as important as the actual work that is performed on a detail in D.C., so is the proper protocol that should be followed to make things run smoothly. After getting myself in trouble more than a couple of times, I realized "Toto, we are not in Alaska anymore"! For those of you considering a detail or visit to D.C., here are my words of advice about the all important (and often dreaded) protocol: First, always make appointments to speak with your supervisor or their supervisor or their supervisor or.... Often times their day is booked well in advance, which is why it is important to make

appointments....well in advance. Second, go to meetings ONLY if invited! (in a nicely pressed black suit). Third, it's always a good idea to send progress updates to your supervisor and the colleagues you're working closely with (document, document, document). Fourth, go UP the chain of command – not straight to the top! Lastly, bring an ample supply of chocolate from home (suggested: Wild Berry Products in Alaska) when you visit colleagues in D.C. Then, if you're lucky enough, they'll forget your uninvited appearances, chain of command infringements and "regional" attire.

I've learned a tremendous amount in a fairly short period of time, and have had the privilege to meet many great people in USDA as well as leaders in the Tribal College community that I wouldn't have otherwise had an opportunity to meet and get to know. I've also learned what skills and abilities I'll need to succeed in the USDA/NRCS. It has been an opportunity of a lifetime and I want to express my sincerest gratitude to Annabelle Romero and Bob Jones, NRCS Alaska State Conservationist for allowing me this exceptional opportunity!

The message I'd like to leave the AIANEA members with is: Don't be afraid to go on a detail to Washington, D.C., and don't be afraid to ask to tele-work from your duty station. It is an experience that will help you grow and improve upon your knowledge, skills and abilities, in many areas.



NRCS Oklahoma Partner with Oklahoma Tribes and Tribal Members to Address Invasive Species

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) district conservationists in Caddo, Comanche, Pawnee, Pontotoc, Payne, Lincoln, Canadian, Blaine, Custer, Roger Mills, Washita, Dewy, Murray, Ottawa and Pottawatomi reported that they have been working effectively with the following tribes or tribal members to address the invasive species Eastern Red Cedar, Musk Thistle and/or Sericea Lespedeza;

- O Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
- O Apache Tribe of Oklahoma
- o Caddo Tribe
- O Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma
- O Chickasaw Nation
- O Citizen Potawatomi Nation
- O Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma
- O Comanche Tribe of Oklahoma

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NRCS Partners with American Indian Science and Engineering Society at Leadership Conference for American Indian College Students from Across the Nation

District Conservationist, Carol Vallee Crouch, Ph.D., for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), attended the American Indian Science and Engineering Society Leadership conference held February 20 through 23, 2008, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The conference theme; *Mission: Excellence*, focused on the objective of providing leadership skills to 100 to 150 American Indian college chapter students during the event. The American Indian students who attend the Leadership conference will return to their university and share the skills with all their chapter members.

The Leadership Conference provides "Hands on Training" to help AISES student members develop leadership skills and provides them with the

- o Delaware Tribe of Western Oklahoma
- Fort Sill Apache Tribe of Oklahoma
- O Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma
- O Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma
- O Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma
- O Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma
- O Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma
- O Wichita and Affiliated Tribes



NRCS employee Brad Elder visits with American Indian landowner about invasive species; Eastern Red Cedars (Caddo County, Oklahoma)

opportunity to receive training from federal agencies and corporate professional leaders. These professionals share their success stories; provide pathways to develop networks for mentoring and future employment opportunities. Dr. Crouch participated in the following sessions; *Getting Ready for Advanced Degree, Life 101 and Leadership Quality Every Student will Want.* The conference also prepares the students to become active, knowledgeable leaders for the Indian community and to serve as mentors for younger students.



Oklahoma NRCS Employees and National Civil Rights Committee Member Attend Civil Rights Training for CRAC

NRCS National Civil Rights Committee (NCRC) partnered with Indian Nations Conservation Alliance (INCA) and IAC to provide Civil Rights Advisory Council (CRAC) Training to NRCS Civil Right Chairs, from across the Nation, during the fourth annual American Indian Ag Symposium entitled, "Native Americans Coming Together Caring for Mother Earth" in Las Vegas, Nevada, December 10-14, 2007. NCRC member, Carol Crouch, and district conservationist in Purcell, Oklahoma, was responsible for developing the training program. The focus of the training focused on the following; CRAC PowerPoint Presentations that provided the attendees with highlights and ideas from CRAC from across the country; Culture Awareness Training from NCRC

members Carol Crouch on Working Effectively with American Indian Landowners & Tribes, Pam Aguon and Phuc Vu on Working Effectively with Asian Pacific, Heather Medina on How to Work with Latino Produces and Kim Bradford on Working Effectively with African American Producers.

The highlight of the training was the panel discussion between the CRAC attendees and eight State Conservationists; who provided one-on-one answers to questions regarding the importance and implementation of Civil Rights within the agency. Oklahoma State Conservationist, Ron Hilliard participated in the panel discussion and instrumental in soliciting the participation of other State Conservationists for the training session. Also attending the training included; West Regional Conservationist, Sara Schmidt, special visit from USDA Deputy Under Secretary, Gary Mast, Oklahoma Civil Rights Chair, David Hungerford and Oklahoma NRCS employee, Shelley Hungerford.



NCRC Members, Regional Conservationist Sara Schmidt and Gary Mast, USDA Deputy under Secretary



NRCS State Conservationist assist with NCRC training for CRAC during panel discussion.

The 2008 AIANEA

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