

The Four Winds

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

AIANEA 2009 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE

Membership Dues

- Student - \$10.00
- Regular - \$25.00
- Tribal College - \$100.00
- Tribal - \$500.00
- Lifetime - \$250.00 1 x payment/or payable in 4 installments of \$65/year

Please Mail to:

Harold Bryant
Treasurer
1510 29th Street
Hondo, TX 78861



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



Roylene Rides-at-the-Door with husband Brian Patterson

Winter- Niibin 2008

Effective December 2008 Roylene Rides-at-the-Door will be the new State Conservationist for Washington!!!!!!

CONGRATULATIONS!

Respect, Harmony, and Beauty

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Election Time

AIANEA Members:

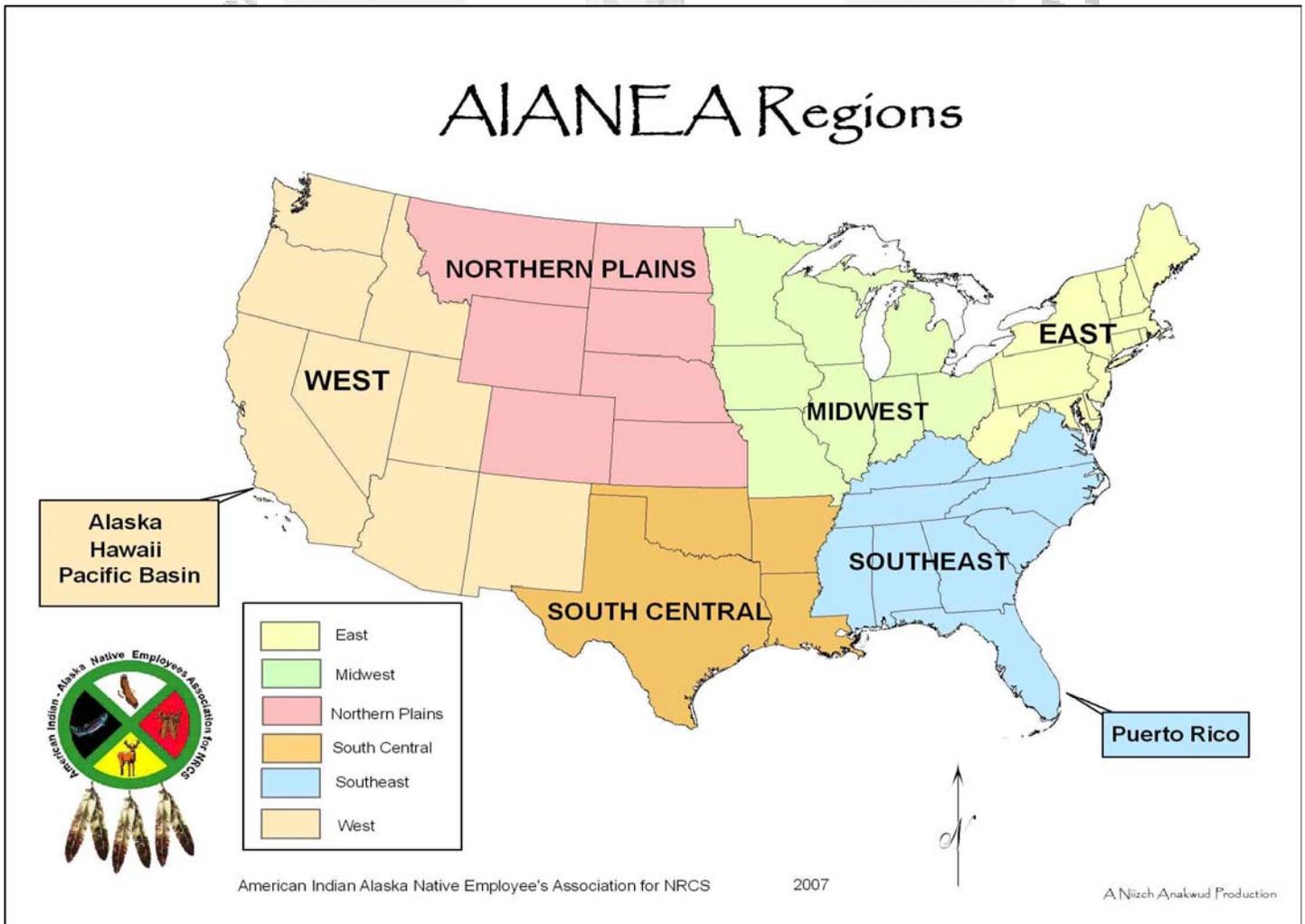
It's getting close to AIANEA election time and I would like to give you the opportunity to nominate an AIANEA member as a candidate for 2nd Vice President, and for the following Regional Representatives; East, South Central, and Northern Plains. Remember, any member can nominate a person for 2nd Vice President, but only members in the respective regions can nominate the Regional Representatives. AIANEA implements a three-year leadership development Presidential position. When you vote a person in as the 2009 2nd Vice President, they will hold that office for one year. The following year 2010, the 2nd Vice President transitions into the 1st Vice President position, and then the third year 2011, that person becomes the President of the Association. Regional Representatives hold two-year terms and have a voting seat on the National Council.

Please submit your nominations to dave.wise@mn.usda.gov and millie.titla@az.usda.gov, by November 21th, 2008. This should ensure that we receive all nominations. I will contact each nominee to make sure they are willing to serve if elected and request each nominee to send in a bio that can be posted on our website.

To view the duties of each of these positions, go to our website at www.aianea.com

I look forward to some great nominees. Have a great day!

Millie Titla, 2008 AIANEA President



Membership Form

American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS

“Respect, Harmony, and Beauty”

www.aianea.com

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

Harold Bryant
1510 29th Street
Hondo, TX 78861

Date: _____

Name: _____

Position/Title: _____

Office Address: _____ New Address?

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Fax _____

e-mail: _____

Tribal Affiliation (optional) _____

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

My membership is for the year 200____.

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

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

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

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

Tribal College-\$100.00

Tribal - \$500.00

Member Spotlight: Kurt Cates Tribal Conservationist , Pocatello, ID

10 Questions with The Four Winds

Tell everyone a little bit about yourself?

I was born and raised on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation in Eastern Idaho. My family lived in a railroad boxcar that had been remodeled into a house when I was born. The day I was born the city of Pocatello, Idaho was being flooded by heavy snowpack, warm weather and rain....an omen??

My dad worked on farms most of my life. I also had aunts and uncles that farmed and raised cattle. This and the days fishing with my dad and brothers gave me a love of the farming/ranching lifestyle and the outdoors. My parents had 4 kids of their own and over twenty foster kids. They adopted one and took legal guardianship over two others. My family has been blessed to be part of the lives of all of these kids.

My wife was raised on a “mom and pop” farm and ranch in Teton Valley, on the Idaho side of the Teton Mountains. We met during a state FFA convention. We have been married for almost 28 years and have two daughters. We love boating, camping, fishing and hunting. I am proud to say that only one year that we have been married did we have to buy meat from the store. My oldest daughter has taken 3 moose, 1 deer and got her first elk this year. My youngest daughter likes bird hunting and has provided grouse for the family dinner.

How did you come to your current position?

I am currently the Tribal Conservationist for the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes...the Tribe I am enrolled in. I earned an associates degree in Agronomy. When I graduated from college I got a job working with a fertilizer company spreading fertilizer and spraying chemicals on farms and ranches. This job was very long hours most of the year so my wife went to the Dept. of Labor and found me a job as a technician for the SCS. I applied and they hired me. After a couple years I converted to a soil conservationist. When the NRCS opened a full time position on the Fort Hall Reservation, I applied and got the job. It has been a “win-win-win” situation. The NRCS had a Tribal

Member that was qualified for the position, I got to “go home” to my home Reservation and rekindle old friendships and make new ones and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe got a government employee that understood their positions and ways of life and could help guide the program parts of NRCS to meet their needs.

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

The most challenging obstacle to being in my current position was getting my family settled in a new location. My wife and kids have been supportive of us moving so far away, but I did have to bribe them a little. The kids are now enjoying school and their friends.

How can others follow in your foot steps?

A college education is a must. I was a little late going to college, but it was worth it. I can't even imagine where I would be if I hadn't received a degree. The best piece of advice I could give any student or even someone that has graduated high school...or not... would be to get a high school diploma or equivalent and then go to college. Get a bachelors degree or higher. Persevere as our ancestors did and push through the tough times. At this point, I am the only one in my family to have a college degree. My older sister just started college last year...which goes to prove that it's never too late. I love to hear about people in their elder years receiving college degrees!

What is the most rewarding part of your current position?

Seeing a project get completed and the producer loving it and appreciating the help they received from us... both technical and monetary. Seeing the environment improve because of the work we do.

What profession other than yours would you like to attempt?

A couple comes to mind. I think it would be a blast to be a radio disc jockey. With my warped sense of humor I think I would do all right at this. I also



enjoyed journalism in high school. If I didn't have this job, I might be an Agriculture Journalist of some kind. From an early age I always wanted to be in the military...probably a fighter pilot...but I developed sugar diabetes in third grade so that hope was dashed. My wife points out that if I was a career military man we probably wouldn't have met...so things happen for a reason!

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

I think the people that had the most impact on me as an employee was actually my parents. They taught and showed us that you need to give an honest days work for an honest days pay. Dad worked long hard hours on the farms and mom mostly was a stay at home mom, which is one of the hardest jobs in the world! The Tribal elders and their teachings and examples always have an impact on me as a person and employee.

I think my supervisors I had as a technician and soil conservationist also had an impact. They were very supportive of my advancement and helped in any way they could to help me advance.

What is your favorite saying or quote?

I have a few of them....“Only worry about the things you can have an impact on”... I guess “don't sweat the small stuff” kind of goes along with that. A lot of people worry about things that are out of their control. “Laughter is the best medicine” is also one I like. My family has always had laughter and we all have a good sense of humor. Many family dinners were served with good food and laughter. I try to instill that on my daughters and those around me.

What is your favorite word?

Ability is my favorite word. No matter what our limitations we all have the ability to do something.

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

More time with my family is always something to look forward to. Hunting is something I always look forward to, especially if my daughters or other family members go with me....camping and fishing with them also. Just being able to continue what I am doing...and one more year closer to retirement!

Preserving an ancestral resource: Wampanoag Tribe conservation practices protect Menemsha Pond

Conservation: Our purpose. Our passion.

LANDOWNER SUCCESS STORY

David Vanderhoop, Wampanoag of Aquinnah Shellfish Hatchery

Aquinnah (Gay Head), Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts

“Menemsha Pond has fed our ancestors for thousands of years. It’s very important to the Wampanoag people,” says David Vanderhoop, Manager of the Wampanoag of Aquinnah Shellfish Hatchery and a member of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head, on the island of Martha’s Vineyard, Massachusetts. The tribe’s aquaculture operation produces oysters in Menemsha Pond and markets them as “Tomahawk Oysters” to local stores and restaurants.

“We’ve harvested from the pond since time immemorial. Every single Wampanoag has had his ancestors eat from this pond. I believe it’s a very, very important resource to keep healthy. That’s why I’m so passionate in trying to make sure this project is a success.”

Vanderhoop is speaking about the tribe’s participation in a pilot project with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to develop best management practices (BMPs) for shellfish aquaculture. Growers on Martha’s Vineyard and the Cape Cod mainland were eligible for technical and financial assistance to implement the practices through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), a first-in-the-nation application of this federal farm conservation program.

Shellfish aquaculture best management practices protect water quality by controlling oil and gasoline emissions from outboard motors, endangered species through gear management, and shellfish health through buffers, record keeping and monitoring.

The Wampanoag Tribe has run the shellfish hatchery since 1999, when David’s brother Matthew Vanderhoop started

the project. The tribe had run a pilot aquaculture project in the 1970s, successfully growing scallops until funding ran out and the project ended.

“We decided that we would put this hatchery up for not only the economic viability of growing oysters, but also to help the pond stay healthy. With all the native shellfish in the pond – the hard shell clam, the quahog, the scallop, the soft shell clam and oysters – it’s an important natural resource not only for the tribal people but also the non-tribal people in the town,” says Vanderhoop.

Vanderhoop explains that over-fishing and pollution have contributed to decline of shellfish populations in many places on the East Coast. “With this project, and with the help of all the different grants that we’ve gotten, we’ve been able to help maintain the shellfish population in the pond,” says Vanderhoop.



Although the aquaculture operation has had environmental benefits for the pond, there has been some impact, as well. The tribe has been proactive about reducing its impact.

“We grow on top of the water simply because that system is a lot less maintenance. With our system, the oysters are in mesh bags that float on the surface. To clean the bags, all we do is flip the bag over once every two to three weeks. The sun bakes off the algae that grow on the bags. It’s a lot less maintenance than a deep water system.”

The bags are kept afloat with Styrofoam tubes, called noodles, similar to the colorful ones that kids float on in a swimming pool. Because of the wave action in Menemsha Pond, which opens onto Vineyard Sound, the tubes get chipped and the chips wash ashore and accumulate in the eel grass.

“The last couple of years, we had a beach clean up in the spring and summer. We walk the beaches and gather the eel grass. We take it upon ourselves to go in there and clean it

up,” says Vanderhoop. “Any bags that get loose or noodles that come off, we take it seriously. If it comes from us, we clean it up. Even if it doesn’t come from us, we clean up the trash and keep the environment clean.”

“In 2005, our director at the time, Rob Garrison, put his feelers out and asked different agencies if they could be of assistance to us. He contacted NRCS and was able to secure some funding for specific parts of the project, mainly making sure that the shoreline stayed as pristine as before we started. The help that we got from the NRCS was just what we needed at the time.”

“I feel really thankful that the NRCS was able to help us in that way,” says Vanderhoop, adding that NRCS assistance not only helped them with their environmental concerns but also with their relationship with the town. “I think it’s had a positive effect on what this project has to offer the tribal members and non-members.”

“The Wampanoag Tribe was the first aquaculture operation to sign onto the fledgling EQIP shellfish program,” says NRCS District Conservationist Don Liptack, who oversees the agency’s Barnstable field office. “They also provided valuable input for the development of the best management practices.”

Liptack adds the Massachusetts Aquaculture Association and the Southeastern Massachusetts Aquaculture Center were also involved in development of the BMPs and outreach efforts.

The operation’s BMPs have included replacing the foam noodles with hard plastic noodles that won’t chip. “That has been a heavy expense in terms of time and money but we’ve shifted that way because its better for the environment,” says Vanderhoop. “We had as many as 12,500 bags out there at once and we’ve had to change the noodles on each one of those bags because they had a small impact on the environment.”

Vanderhoop explains their oyster aquaculture process:

“We spawn them here in the lab, they live here for six to eight months, then we put them out in the field in Menemsha Pond. From the hatchery they are moved into an upweller system, which is a system where the water is funneled through bins with screens that the oysters are sitting on. The water goes in one end, goes through the oysters and out the other end. They remain there for another three to four months.



“From the upweller they’re moved to a shallow grow-out site. It takes two and a half to three and a half years for an oyster to reach maturity or marketable size, which is over three inches.”

“The bags are different size mesh and are floated on top of the water. A lot of oyster growers put their oysters in cages which go on the bottom. We are one of the few that grow ours on top of the water.”

“I believe that with this operation has actually enhanced the health of the pond. We maintain between two million and three and a half million oysters in the pond. These, along with other shellfish, are filter feeders and they do filter out much of the nitrites and nitrates, whether they come from the natural influx or man-made influx. So, I think it’s impacted the health of the pond in a good way.”

Vanderhoop points out another environmental consideration: Herring Creek, which flows into Menemsha Pond, is a natural anadromous fish run for alewives and herring come from the salt water through the Herring Creek and into the brackish water of nearby Squibnocket Pond.

“With this project and the help of the NRCS, we’ve been able to control a lot of the waste management and the environmental impact that we could have had on the area,” says Vanderhoop. “We’ll continue to maintain the area as pristine as possible, as it was when my ancestors were here. We are conservation minded and we’re here for the good of the town. It’s important today but it’s also important to my children and my people.”

By Diane Baedeker Petit, Public Affairs Officer, NRCS
MA413-253-4371, diane.petit@ma.usda.gov

News From Washington State

Twenty years ago, Janet Pakootas' family was harvesting hay on allotted land which was being irrigated with a wheel line irrigation system. When some family members passed away, the land went into probate. This meant that nothing could be done to the land until the probate was completed and divided up into equal parts for the rest of the family. During that time, the weeds took over and the irrigation system deteriorated.

When Janet received control of the land she wanted to get it back into working order. Janet, who is a beginning farmer, wanted to get rid of the weeds, upgrade the irrigation system and have better management of her livestock. She also wanted to plant a windbreak along one side of her place to protect the wildlife against the winter weather. Janet decided to sign-up for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

It took about a year to install the center pivot irrigation system due to electrical policy concerns. "Now I can have hay for my animals and other Tribal members and not have to go off the reservation to buy it" said Janet. She is utilizing a smaller amount of water with the upgraded irrigation system, which is good for when quantities are low. Weed control is a major concern on the reservation and she feels she is doing her part to manage this problem.

Assistance was provided by NRCS through the EQIP which helped upgrade the irrigation system. The program also assisted with cross fencing and water troughs for livestock. Janet is also

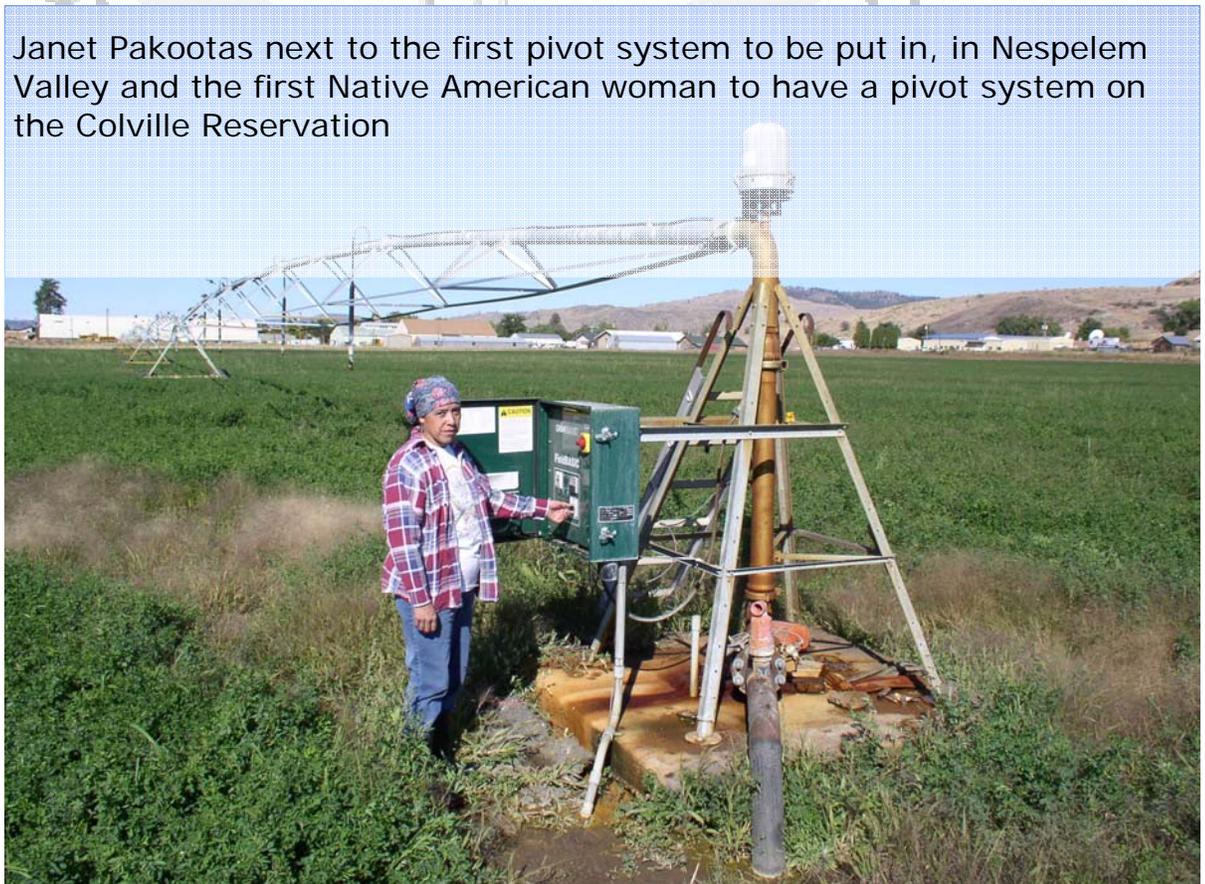
completing nutrient and pest management plans.

It was exciting to know that NRCS looks at each producer as an individual. Normally, in order to upgrade an irrigation system, it has to be irrigated two out of the last five years. Because of her situation with probate laws, NRCS waived the year limits because the land had been irrigated up to the day probate took over. It is great to know that Janet is the first person, as well as the first Native American woman, to have a center pivot irrigation system on the Colville Reservation. Even as a beginning farmer, Janet knew that if she could install this system, it would improve the quality and quantity of water – the life source.

NRCS has always turned money back to the state from the Tribal pool because there hasn't been enough interest in EQIP. Since the pivot has been installed, more people have been coming in to sign-up for conservation assistance. This is the first year we have more applicants than we can assist.

by: Martin Bales

Janet Pakootas next to the first pivot system to be put in, in Nespelem Valley and the first Native American woman to have a pivot system on the Colville Reservation



Elder Jerry Wolfe

by: North Carolina Arts Council



In the early years the Cherokee people lived in little villages. And their only means of travel was trails.

And the trails normally followed the river.

And from one little village to the next village, maybe they had a runner that carried news.

So begins Jerry Wolfe's story of Tlanusi'yi, "the place of the leech," as the Cherokees knew it long before it became the town of Murphy, North Carolina.

An elder in the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Jerry Wolfe is a master of Cherokee stories and other traditions that are central to Cherokee culture in western North Carolina. Through cultural outreach programs of the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, he talks to thousands who visit the Qualla Boundary. He also assists teachers in the Cherokee schools. When the tribal community rededicated the Kituwah mound at the site of the mother-town of the Cherokee, he was a natural choice to offer a prayer in the Cherokee language.

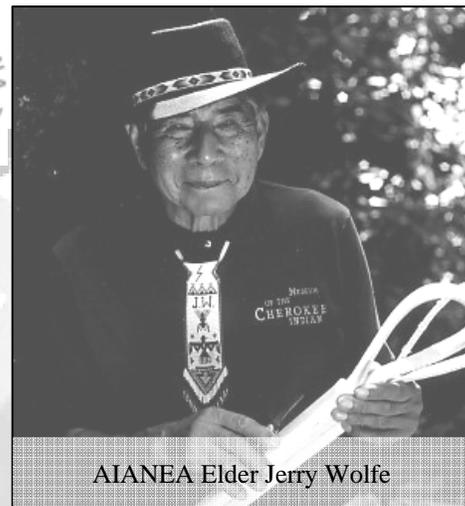
Jerry Wolfe is from Big Cove, one of the most traditional Cherokee communities on the Qualla Boundary. Born in 1924, he grew up in a log cabin with his mother, father, and three half-sisters. "We just lived off the fat of the land," he says with a smile as he describes how the family carried drinking water from a nearby spring and grew virtually everything they needed in order to survive. His parents, Owen and Luciana Wolfe, spoke the Cherokee language. "My dad, I had to speak to him in the Cherokee language because that's all that he knew," he says. "We didn't have anything to watch like television, or a radio to listen to, so he'd always tell some kind of happening or legend. So I remembered several of the stories he told."

Like his father, Jerry Wolfe played Indian ball, or "stickball," when he was a young man. "When I was

growing up," he says, "the Cherokee Indian ball games were the talk of the town." The games then, as now, were rough, played with no pads and few rules. Players used three-foot long sticks, constructed with sinew webbing at one end, to carry a leather ball through a goal to score. The opposing team did whatever it could to prevent scoring, including tackling, wrestling, and swatting opponents with the ball sticks.

Over the years, Jerry Wolfe has become widely recognized for his knowledge of stickball. He is always asked to announce the stickball games held annually at the Cherokee Fall Festival, especially the women's games. In addition to providing commentary, he educates spectators about stories and traditions that have defined this Cherokee game for at least five hundred years. When Cherokee women wanted to revive the tradition of women's stickball, they came to him for help. With his coaching, and with the ballsticks he made, Cherokee women played their first stickball game in 130 years at the Cherokee Fall Festival in 2000.

Several ballsticks carved by Jerry Wolfe are on display in a permanent exhibit at New York City's Museum of Art and Craft. According to tradition, hickory must be used to make the sticks. "When I get the timber, I usually sprinkle some tobacco on the stump of the tree from which it was cut," he says. "I do that as an offering, a payment. You'll have better luck if you do something like that in return."



AIANEA Elder Jerry Wolfe

PRESIDENT SIGNS BACA BILL CREATING NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE DAY 2008

Friday After Thanksgiving Will Now Be Designated as Day of Tribute

Washington, DC – Earlier this month President Bush signed into law legislation introduced by Congressman Joe Baca (D-Rialto), to designate the Friday after Thanksgiving as Native American Heritage Day. The Native American Heritage Day Bill, H.J. Res. 62, is supported by the National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) and 184 federally recognized tribes, and designates Friday, November 28, 2008, as a day to pay tribute to Native Americans for their many contributions to the United States.

"I am pleased the President took quick action on signing this legislation, which recognizes the importance of Native Americans to our history and culture," said Rep. Baca. "It is critical we honor the contributions of Native Americans and ensure all Americans are properly educated on their heritage and many achievements."

The Native American Heritage Day Bill encourages Americans of all backgrounds to observe Friday, November 28, as Native American Heritage Day, through appropriate ceremonies and activities. It also encourages public elementary and secondary schools to enhance student understanding of Native Americans by providing classroom instruction focusing on their history, achievements, and contributions. As a state Assemblyman, Rep. Baca introduced the legislation that established the fourth Friday of September as Native American Day in California – which became state law in 1998.

H.J. Res. 62 was originally passed by the House of Representatives on November 13, 2007. The bill was passed with technical adjustments by unanimous consent in the U.S. Senate on September 22, 2008. Then, on September 26, 2008, the House of Representatives unanimously

voted to pass the legislation again, this time including the adjustments from the Senate. The legislation was signed into public law by the President on October 8, 2008.

"This law will help to preserve the great history and legacy of Native Americans," added Rep. Baca. "Native Americans and their ancestors have played a vital role in the formation of our nation. They have fought with valor and died in every American war dating back to the Revolutionary War, and deserve this special acknowledgement."

"Since my time in the California State Legislature, I have fought to ensure Native Americans receive the recognition they deserve," continued Rep. Baca. "After introducing the legislation that established Native American Day in California, I am proud to have introduced and passed the legislation that creates a national day of recognition. I thank my good friend James Ramos, now Chairman of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, for standing with me from the beginning on this long journey to ensure the contributions of Native Americans are recognized and appreciated by all."

Native American Heritage Day Act of 2008

(Enrolled as Agreed to or Passed by Both House and Senate) On Oct. 10, 2008 H.J. Res. 62 became Public Law No: 110-370

One Hundred Tenth Congress of the United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Thursday, the third day of January, two thousand and eight Joint Resolution To honor the achievements and contributions of Native Americans to the United States, and for other purposes.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the 'Native American Heritage Day Act of 2008'.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that--

- (1) Native Americans are the descendants of the aboriginal, indigenous, native people who were the original inhabitants of the United States;
- (2) Native Americans have volunteered to serve in the United States Armed Forces and have served with valor in all of the Nation's military actions from the Revolutionary War through the present day, and in most of those actions, more Native Americans per capita served in the Armed Forces than any other group of Americans;
- (3) Native Americans have made distinct and significant contributions to the United States and the rest of the world in many fields, including agriculture, medicine, music, language, and art, and Native Americans have distinguished themselves as inventors, entrepreneurs, spiritual leaders, and scholars;
- (4) Native Americans should be recognized for their contributions to the United States as local and national leaders, artists, athletes, and scholars;
- (5) nationwide recognition of the contributions that

Native Americans have made to the fabric of American society will afford an opportunity for all Americans to demonstrate their respect and admiration of Native Americans for their important contributions to the political, cultural, and economic life of the United States;

(6) nationwide recognition of the contributions that Native Americans have made to the Nation will encourage self-esteem, pride, and self-awareness in Native Americans of all ages;

(7) designation of the Friday following Thanksgiving of each year as Native American Heritage Day will underscore the government-to- government relationship between the United States and Native American governments; and

(8) designation of Native American Heritage Day will encourage public elementary and secondary schools in the United States to enhance understanding of Native Americans by providing curricula and classroom instruction focusing on the achievements and contributions of Native Americans to the Nation.

SEC. 3. IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE DAY.

Congress--

- (1) designates Friday, November 28, 2008, as 'Native American Heritage Day'; and
- (2) encourages the people of the United States, as well as Federal, State, and local governments, and interested groups and organizations to observe Native American Heritage Day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities, including activities relating to--
 - (A) the historical status of Native American tribal governments as well as the present day status of Native Americans;
 - (B) the cultures, traditions, and languages of Native Americans; and
 - (C) the rich Native American cultural legacy that all Americans enjoy today.

The 2008 AIANEA National Council

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