



**American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS**  
***“Respect, Harmony, and Beauty”***

---

**NATIONAL COUNCIL TELECONFERENCE MINUTES**  
**December 11, 2006**

**Those present:** Steve Myers, Crystal Leonetti, Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen, Leota Burnett, Pat Green, Herb Webb, Millie Titla, David Elliot, Felix Nez and Carol Crouch.

**Not Present:** Buster Landin, Ciro

**Welcome and Roll Call**

President, Crystal Leonetti and called the meeting to order at 11:41 am CST. She welcomed all and conducted the roll call. She thanked everyone for a very good year and for all the individuals on the national council, who have helped her along. As President, this is her last teleconference. She explained that the Association provides an excellent leadership building opportunity and as a result of her Presidency has grown as an individual and a professional. Roll Call: Leota, Steve, Tanya, Millie, Felix, David, Pat and Carol.

**Action items are noted in red. Motions are in blue.**

**Approval of Minutes**

The November 13, 2006, minutes were reviewed and approved with amendments by Council members.

**MOTION 12112006-1:**

Motion was made to accept the minutes of the November 13, 2006 meeting minutes.

Motion made by: Leota Burnett

Motion seconded: David Elliott

Motion passed: Unanimously

**Treasurer’s Report**

Tanya reviewed the Treasurer’s Report that was emailed prior to the teleconference. Tanya reported that she had successfully opened the Scholarship savings account intended for direct deposit donations. The Scholarship savings account was opened with the interest earned from the Scholarship CD that was renewed in October. Tanya recommended that a second signature be added to the Scholarship savings account, as she is the only authorized signatory currently. Recommendation was made that the second signature on the scholarship savings account would be the incoming 2nd Vice President, so that person is authorized for three years.

Tanya reported that the AIANEA is currently paying a transaction fee of 4.22% of the amount charged in each credit card transaction when processing credit card purchases. The Merchant Card Account (ability to process credit card purchases) cannot be frozen a portion of the year, it is either active or cancelled. Tanya provided recommendations for recovering these costs associated with training conference registration. Recommendation was made that the AIANEA National Council adopt a policy that prohibits the use of a credit card to pay neither member dues, purchase AIANEA clothing/apparel nor live/silent auction items. Tanya reported that based on her investigation; there was no benefit to setting an account that would allow payroll deduction for AIANEA membership dues.

**MOTION 12112006-2:**

Motion was made to accept the December Treasurer’s report as presented and reviewed during the AIANEA National Council teleconference December 11, 2006.

Motion made by: David Elliott

Motion seconded: Pat Green

Motion passed: Unanimously

## Region Reports

**Southeast Region** – Pat Green reported the following;

- New State Conservationist in Kentucky – Mike Hubbs, National Agronomist in D.C. Originally from Tennessee.
- S.E. Work Group has developed their first Constitution & By-Laws for the S. E. group to use for guidance.
- New officers elected for S.E. Indian Work Group:
  - Tim Oaks, Chair
  - Cliff Eddy, Vice-Chair
  - Debbie Henry, Secretary
  - Gary Kobylski, State Conservationist, Alabama – Work Group Advisor
- In the process of getting a meeting of East Region SEPM's and Tribal Liaisons for 2007. Letter to Regional Conservationist, Dick Coombe. Possibility of meeting with USET at one of their regular scheduled meetings (Nashville in August).
- S.E. Work Group members trying to get one of each of the American Indian Posters produced since 1991. Need help in getting 1991 South Dakota and 1994 South Dakota will use for display at S.E. Work Group Meetings.
- As S.E. Representative sent out the information on voting for officers and representatives for AIANEA. Even though we could only vote for 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President, nine out our ten members voted and that person no longer works for NRCS. 100% voting.
- Of course a lot of activity in the southern states during November in observance and celebration of American Indian Month. Articles, displays, talks, e-mail trivia, posters distributed, etc.
- In Virginia NRCS sending out letters to each state recognized tribes regarding the possibility of NRCS employment.
- In Kentucky working with KY State Park System or American Indian weekend observance last weekend in January.
- In Georgia NRCS developing a database of all American Indian farmers in the state to identify needed program outreach.
- South Carolina – state leadership met for first time on Catawba Indian Nation.
- North Carolina – NRCS met with Chief Hicks of the Eastern Band of Cherokee. Indians to tour and share results of 2006 EQIP and WHIP projects on their reservation.

**Northern Plains Region** – Steve Myers reported the following;

### Colorado

- Colorado employees have been treated to a stream of emails from Levy regarding our Native American Heritage. I've learned more about plants, their ceremonial and food uses during this month than I have ever known. Thanks Levy!
- We received word last week about the MOU signed between the NRCS and BIA. We are still waiting to find out the ramifications of this MOU and how it may improve our working relationship on reservations. We already have a very good working relationship with the Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute Tribes here in southwestern Colorado.

### Kansas

- The Kansas NRCS State Office is updating a pamphlet that Pat Broyles had written on Medicine Wheels. Pat had even made a Medicine Wheel at the Manhattan Kansas Plant Materials Center. Once the Kansas NRCS State Office has put on the new NRCS Mission Statement and updated logo this pamphlet will be placed on the Kansas NRCS web site so it can be downloaded.
- Mark Janzen, NE, KS, and OK Plant Materials Specialist, has been active with plant materials outreach activity to the Ho-Chunk (Winnebago) Tribe. Mark assisted the Tribe in establishment of its healing garden, named Ai Ki Ruti. The growth in species provided by NRCS is very favorable. If any of you are in northeast Nebraska, you are invited to stop in Winnebago to visit the garden.

### Montana

- Projects at Fort Belknap by USDA Programs

WHIP

- Fort Belknap has one WHIP contract with an enrolled member. The contract covers 37 ac. and involves a fence that will exclude livestock and protect a riparian area. This practice will enhance the wildlife habitat and bring back various wildlife species including Antelope, Deer, song birds and raptors along with other small native creatures, etc.

#### GRP

- Fort Belknap has 5 GRP contracts that will protect 3122.6 ac. from development of buildings or cropland. All of the contracts are with individual enrolled members from Fort Belknap and all of the treated acres are held in trust. All of the acres benefit sage grouse habitat and will preserve the rangeland status of the acres for 10 years so that no land will be plowed or buildings built on the land. One of these contracts is a joint contract with the Fort Belknap Tribe and an enrolled individual so that jointly they will protect these acres. All of the individuals who have GRP contracts also have EQIP contracts on these acres where they are completing fences and developing livestock water to address the resource concerns on these lands. One person is also developing a wildlife pond and planting shrubs to benefit the sage grouse, upland game birds and song birds in the area.

#### EQIP

- Fort Belknap has 62 active contracts and 14 completed contracts with enrolled members or descendants from Fort Belknap that treated 119,538.6 ac and in the amount of \$2,327,186.60 planned. One person who stands out is a producer who improved water efficiency on his 2 center pivots on 260 ac. for each pivot by using EQIP dollars to go from a high pressure system to a low pressure system. He also planted 1500 ac. of cropland back to grassland so that he could have better spring and fall grazing for his cattle which would reduce impacts to the native grazing lands.
- During the Month of November there were three interest articles posted in the Montana NRCS NEWS (a weekly email that is sent to all MT employees.) The first encouraged all offices to participate in a State Wide Observance Luncheon. Recipes relating to Native American and Alaska Natives were encouraged and each office was to organize an office pot luck. I received feedback that only 4 offices in MT participated. The second article focused on Native Languages and the third article focused on native sign language. The information was also posted on the MT NRCS Civil Rights website.

#### North Dakota

- Native American Heritage Month posters mailed out to all Area, Field and Tribal Offices.
- Three Native American informational articles sent to all employees in North Dakota during the month.
- Native American Heritage Month Celebration was held on November 28. The event featured local Native American flutist and story teller Matt Shanandore and Cheryl Long Feather local newspaper columnist who discussed the value of cultural diversity. The event was attended by 60 individuals from various federal agencies in the Bismarck-Mandan area.
- On 11/29, I met with the Environmental Science Instructor and the student counselor at the new science building of the Sitting Bull College to discuss placement of an NRCS display stand. This stand will have brochures of career opportunities with NRCS and brochures of science related subjects for the instructors and students. Brochures of grass, tree, and soils within the Standing Rock Reservation.

#### South Dakota

- I would like to mention that South Dakota's NRCS tribal outreach poster was with the other states that brought their posters to Alaska. SD went through a bit of work to put the poster together and bring it for display in Alaska to promote our Tribal outreach activities. A jpg of the poster for your information.
- November saw one of our quarterly Tribal Advisory Committee meetings. The meeting included topics on special project options through WHIP, an update on funded FY '06 EQIP applications under SD's 17% American Indian Earmark (\$2,839,872), the status of FY'07 programs, and a presentation by Mary Scott, NRCS Liaison, on her cooperative work with the Rosebud Sioux Tribe and BIA in the development of a grazing resolution. This grazing resolution not only protects EQIP contracts on Trust lands, but makes the improvement of Trust lands through the installation of cost-share practices more attractive to potential customers by allowing them to re-coup a portion of their investment if they lose the lease. SD's American Indian Earmark EQIP ranking sheet, developed with assistance from the Tribal Advisory Committee, supports the installation of practices on Tribal fee and Trust lands.
- The Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe Department of Natural Resources, in cooperation with SD NRCS, recently prepared a draft guidance document on their experience of putting the first Tribal Trust lands into the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). Information on where to get this document electronically was available at the INCA/IAC meeting in Las Vegas last week.

**Natural Resources Conservation Service South Dakota**

The NRCS mission is "Helping People Help the Land" by providing leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment. Our vision is "Productive Lands - Healthy Environment." NRCS is making special efforts to provide conservation programs services to American Indians in a manner that improves their understanding of USDA programs and services, increases their participation in USDA programs, and encourages them to participate in resource planning and the decision making process.

## Helping People Help The Land

### 2006 TRIBAL OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

- SD NRCS continues to employ 5 Tribal Liaisons who provide full-time technical assistance to 6 tribes in South Dakota; another Tribal Liaison who is a ND NRCS employee provides full-time technical assistance to one tribe whose reservation lies in both North and South Dakota, a state outreach coordinator assists with all facets of program outreach, and, and a State Tribal Liaison who assists in State wide tribal outreach coordination and information dissemination
- EQIP and CSP planning/program sessions throughout SD
- NRCS program outreach to Limited Resource and Beginning Farmers and Ranchers
- 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Unity in 2006 - Helping Hands Tribal Agriculture Meeting, Spearfish, SD
- 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Ranchers Workshop, Mission, SD
- Women in Sciences Conference (Aberdeen, Watertown, Pierre, Sioux Falls & Hot Springs, SD)
- Women in Blue Jean Conference, Mitchell, SD
- Recruitment information sent to Tribal Colleges in US
- Program and career information at Lake Traverse-Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribal Fair (Pov-Wov), Sisseton, SD
- Tonpa Zina High School Career Day, Sisseton, SD
- Todd County School District Annual Career Fair, Mission, SD
- Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Area High School Career Day, Fort Yates, ND
- Multi-state Tribal Youth Leadership Conference, Rapid City, SD
- Ford du Lac College Job Fair, Cloquet, MN
- Wakpala High School NRCS Career Day, Wakpala, SD
- NRCS Range inventory training for Cheyenne River BIA Land Operations and Tribal Employees
- 2006 South Dakota Tribal Action Poster for the American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association for the NRCS
- Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) councils and staff provide technical assistance for community development and resource issues to people of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Oglala Sioux Tribe, Yankton Sioux Tribe and Rosebud Sioux Tribe
- North Central RC&D and NRCS working with Lower Brule Sioux Tribe on a Carbon Sequestration/Tribal Capacity Project
- North Central RC&D assisted with the organization of the Dakota Plains Weed Management Area which includes both Lower Brule and Crow Creek Sioux Tribes
- SD & ND State Conservations met with new Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman and Standing Rock Tribal Conservation District to discuss NRCS programs, services, partnerships and consultation
- Successful recruitment of Native American employees under Career Intern program and with the National Resources Inventory (NRI)
- Continue the development of consultation protocols for cultural resource concerns with Tribal governments
- Employee development includes cultural awareness training such as in-state "Harmony" workshops which utilize NRCS cadre and local tribal members and cultural resources training that discusses the importance of traditional cultural properties and archeological sites

**SD NRCS EQIP FARMER FUNDS IS A MERICAN INDIAN CULTURE & OTHERS WITHIN RESERVATION BOUNDARIES**

FY	Allocated (Funds)	Actual
1998	\$4,000,000 (12.0%)	\$832,229
1999	\$4,000,000 (12.0%)	\$854,813
2000	\$4,000,000 (12.0%)	\$864,842
2001	\$4,000,000 (12.0%)	\$899,428
2002	\$1,207,123 (3.6%)	\$1,874,368
2003	\$1,762,896 (5.3%)	\$1,649,293
2004	\$2,204,848 (6.6%)	\$4,648,729
2005	\$2,679,162 (8.0%)	\$2,881,936
2006	\$2,879,572 (8.7%)	\$2,268,121

The Tribal Action Poster Committee is composed of representatives from the American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association, the American Indian/Alaska Native Conservation Districts, and the American Indian/Alaska Native Conservation Districts. The poster is available to the public at the program and office locations.

**Tribal Advisory Committee**  
A Tribal Advisory Committee is composed of the Tribal Chair, Tribal Council Chairman, Tribal Conservation District Chairman, Tribal Conservation District members, and Tribal members. The Tribal Advisory Committee is established to provide advice and recommendations to the NRCS on tribal issues. The Tribal Advisory Committee is composed of representatives from the American Indian/Alaska Native Conservation Districts and the American Indian/Alaska Native Conservation Districts. The Tribal Advisory Committee is established to provide advice and recommendations to the NRCS on tribal issues.

East Region – Ciro LoPinto not reporting.

West Region – Felix Nez report the following:

- INCA/IAC Conference - Arizona sent several (6) Conservation District Board Members and 6 NRCS employees to this conference. The Little Colorado River SWCD sent the President and Secretary to this conference. Both Mr. John David and Melvin Riggs were assisted with a \$ 500.00 scholarship. The "scholarship" money was made available to INCA/IAC through various USDA agencies that created this scholarship fund for tribes.
- In addition, Arizona sent (4) Conservation District board members as "Earth Team volunteers, which enabled more participation from Arizona Tribes. The Fort Defiance and Chinle SWCD's sent conservation board members with either the scholarship or as Earth Team Volunteers.
- Millie Titla has formed a new "Indian Outreach" team to explore ways to implement outreach in Arizona. As a result of this effort, Arizona NRCS is looking to host an "Indian Outreach" activity for Arizona Tribes in May 2007. This outreach activity will highlight USDA Departments and its agencies.
- I received many positive responses from West Region AIANEA members on the voting process and a majority of West Region Members responded with votes.
- The Arizona AI SEPM provided many articles and events to the Arizona NRCS, one titled "A witches brew", which was printed by the Flagstaff Daily Sun, about radiation and its effects on the Navajo Reservation. This article made our NRCS EE's more meaningful and always thinking about the "effects" of our conservation practices and not just a document for the six-part folder.
- Arizona NRCS and Utah NRCS has formed a partnership with a Utah Navajo Chapter to provide (1) FTE to the chapter. This person will provide conservation planning and conservation programs to residents in the chapter. Arizona NRCS and Utah NRCS will provide ½ of the salary, a vehicle and equipment, while the chapter provides the other ½ of the salary and the office space.

**Midwest Region** – Buster Landin submitted the following report;

- Attended the USDA graduate school course on Roles and responsibilities EEO advisory committee held in conjunction with the NOPBNRCSE training conference.
- Gave the welcoming address for AIANEA to NOPBNRCSE
- Attended a Math and Science night at Indianapolis Public School # 84 Center For Inquiry - North and did a soils demonstration.

Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen provided the following report from Iowa:

- During American Indian Heritage Month, Tanya provided weekly electronic information regarding the history of tribes in Iowa, both by email and on the Iowa NRCS SEPM webpage.
- Tanya will be assisting an RC&D in Iowa that has the opportunity to work with an elderly woman landowner that desires to donate a sizable artifact collection and create an American Indian cultural center in northwest Iowa. Tanya foresees that the federally recognized tribe in Iowa, as well as historical tribes in Iowa will have input into the planning and development.

**South Central Region** – Leota Burnett and Carol Crouch reported the following;

***National Council South Central Regional Representatives Report  
December 11, 2006***



- Emailed South Central Members requesting information/activities they have been working on to report to the National Council. (One response)
- Emailed grant opportunities to our local tribes.
- Spoke with Harold Bryant about alternative site for our conference.
- Typed up information provided by Harold to present on the teleconference and emailed David and Crystal a copy.
- Contacted State Office regarding American Indian posters and distribution to offices. They were late getting them out.
- Received letter from Darrel and will bring up highlights on the conference.
- Carol Crouch attended the National Civil Rights Committee (NCRC) meeting in Indiana.
- NCRC meeting was held in conjunction with the NRCS Black Professional Meeting (NOPBNRCSE).
- Carol Crouch attended the USDA graduate school course on Roles and responsibilities EEO advisory committee held in conjunction with the NOPBNRCSE training conference
- Buster Landin was on the NRCS Black Professional Conference agenda as the AIANEA speaker.
- Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (OTCAC) attend the IAC/INCA conference in Vegas during the week of December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

**NHQ/Tribal Liaison- Edith Morigeau**

Edith Morigeau, NRCS National Tribal Liaison, was not able to join the teleconference. Crystal did report for Edith the following; the MOU with BIA/FSA and NRCS was signed on 12/06/06 at the "Caring for Mother Earth 2006 Agricultural Symposium in Las Vegas, NV. National Council members can review/read the MOU on the NRCS home page. Under the heading "USDA Partners with Bureau of Indian Affairs for Conservation Programs on Indian Lands. This is an accomplishment of many NRCS individuals over the past few years. The Consultation Policy for the General Manual also has been signed and is working its way through management at HQ.

**Action item: David Elliott will follow up with Edith and extend an invitation for her to join our teleconference next month.**

### 2007 Conference Update

Crystal opened discussion regarding the location for the 2007 Annual conference. Recommendation was made not to hold the 2007 AIANEA meeting in AZ. Recommendation was made to hold a teleconference with the 2007 AIANEA planning committee to discuss and decide a site for the 2007 annual conference. Recommendation was made to post on the AIANEA web site that a site location for the 2007 AIANEA Annual conference will change; members will be notified when new site is selected and a notice will be drafted for the AIANEA representatives to email to their contact list regarding the site change.

**MOTION 12112006-3:** Motion was made not to hold the AIANEA 2007 Annual Training Conference in AZ.

Motion made by: David Elliott

Motion seconded: Leota Burnett

Motion passed: Motion passed with 2 abstaining votes

**Action item: Crystal will work with Yvette to get an announcement on the AIANEA website regarding the site location change for the 2007 AIANEA conference so general members will be made aware of the change.**

**Action item: Crystal will prepare a draft letter regarding the National Council's decision to seek a new site location for the AIANEA 2007 annual conference.**

### 2008 Conference

Tanya reported that the planning efforts were moving forward with SAIGE for the 2008 conference. The conference will be held at the Grand Traverse Hotel in Acme, Michigan (near Traverse City) the week of June 2, 2008 (date was determined after our AIANEA teleconference). The hotel is tribally owned and operated and is central to 40 tribal governments and many American Indian community centers in the Great Lakes Region. The view the site location go to; <http://www.grandtraverseresort.com/inspiring/>

### Standing Committee Chairs

David Elliott reported that he will be finalizing the Standing Committee report by the next National Council teleconference.

### Bylaws

Crystal advised the National Council that the by-law change to clarify membership voting in Article 10 Elections, Item F has been approved by the AIANEA By-Laws committee.

**Action Item: Crystal will work with David and Yvette to get the by-law change posted to the AIANEA web site for members to review for 30days.**

### Other Business

Crystal reported that the IAC and INCA conference was a success. Martin Bales gave an excellent presentation regarding the accomplishment of tribal conservation in his state.

### Review of Action Items

**Done**

### Adjourn and Next Meeting

The next meeting is on January 12, 2006. David Elliott reported that he is working on the phone number and conference pass code for the January teleconference.

### **MOTION 12112006: 4**

Motion was made that the December AIANEA meeting be adjourned.

Motion made by: David Elliott

Motion seconded: Felix Nez

Motion passed: Unanimously.

**Action item: David Elliott will advise AIANEA National Council members of the number as soon as they are made available to him.**

---

Respectfully Submitted by Carol Vallee Crouch, Secretary