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**American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS**

*“Respect, Harmony, and Beauty”*

**AMERICAN INDIAN / ALASKA NATIVE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION  
FOR NRCS  
NATIONAL COUNCIL TELECONFERENCE  
February 10, 2006**

**Those present:** Crystal Leonetti, David Elliott, Ciro LoPinto, Leota Burnett, Pat Broyles, Pat Green, Millie Titla, Nils Landin, Felix Nez and Yvette Dulle

President, Crystal Leonetti called the meeting to order at 11:15 am CST. She welcomed all and conducted the roll call.

**Opening Remarks from the President**

Crystal said she had to leave before the meeting was over and that David has agreed to chair the rest of it. She said Dick Gooby was in town and she has been designated as the NRCS person to work with their first tribal conservation district in Alaska on their Seven Generations Plan.

**Approval of Minutes**

Crystal talked with Julia and she was not able to get the minutes done in time for the meeting and could not be on the teleconference today. She apologized for not being able to commit her time like she thought she could and this is due to personal things that have come up. She asked if we were willing to find a new secretary. Discussion followed about the position. The secretary position does not have voting privileges. The lucky person must be an active member and willing to do the job. Leota said she thought Carol Crouch would be interested in the position. Leota will contact Carol to see if she would be interested and the council members will also look for someone to fill the position. January and February minutes will be approved at the next meeting.

**Treasury**

Crystal went over the treasury report that Tanya mailed out. The balance as of January 13, 2006 in the checking account is \$6,772.61. We had a total income (from dues, pin purchases and scholarship reimbursements) of 645.00 and then we had debits (stamps, P.O. Box rent and travel for the Debes) of \$853.42 which leaves a current balance as of February 10, 2006 of \$6,564.19. The Money Market, Scholarship and Conference CD are all on the treasurer's report as well. Crystal said we are still waiting the final reimbursement from 2 of the tribal scholars for the 2005 conference and we haven't received the bank statement for the January so no service charges are reflected in the treasurer's report.

Tanya wanted Crystal to mention how the audit was going. The constitution was amended to state that the audit would be done by February 15, 2006 and she wanted us to know that she does not have the audit for 2005 completed because she is waiting for the report from Lori Gottula for 2004 so she could use it as a model since she has never done one before. Lori did get the report for 2004 done but Tanya has not seen it yet and she is looking for that. Crystal is going to talk to Ivan to see if she can get the report from her.



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Pat said the audit needs to be done by someone besides the treasurer. David said the 2005 audit was supposed to be done by Lori and presented to Tanya so she can give it to the IRS. Tanya does not have to do the audit. He said we will have to get someone else to do it because Tanya can't do her own audit. If Tanya saw the 2004 audit, then she could organize the 2005 audit for whoever we get to do it so it will be easier for them to do. Felix asked Crystal if she could ask Tanya to look around her area for a local CPA that can do our audit. If we had a CPA to do our tax refund then we could probably get the CPA to do the audit at the same time. Ciro moved that we accept the treasurer's report. Pat Green seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

David Elliott brought up that the audit report and the audit dates had been approved by the National Council to be extended to February 15, 2006. He said they have not yet been updated in our Constitution and By-Laws so we need to follow up on that. Millie Titla is the chairman of that Committee and Crystal asked her if she could follow up on that to see that the changes are implemented and to let Yvette know so she can get it up on the Web page.

### **2006 Conference**

Crystal talked with Pooh, the APIO President, and they are really concerned about our budget. He is concerned with the cost of the conference in Alaska and he was wondering if we could have a Plan B. Crystal expressed these concerns to her State Conservationist, Bob Jones, and he doesn't really see that there is any reason for concern at this point because the Chief is supporting this conference. The Chief has told numerous people that he coming to the conference.

Crystal thinks this is the first time in the last 10 years that a Chief has been in their state. This is big news for Alaska and, if the Chief does come to the conference, then other State Conservationists will want to show support and will have someone from their state represented at the conference. Bob Jones has made it clear that this conference will provide training opportunities. Also, NEDC has agreed to hold a 3 day or week long conference on soil quality before our conference, as well as potentially another course right after our conference at the same hotel.

Pat Broyles made a really cool power point presentation to market our conference and she asked Bob Jones if he would be willing to make a pitch at the National Leadership Team meeting to the rest of the State Con's. Bob agreed and is willing to do that. Everyone thought that was a great idea and thought we should do this every year. Pat's power point targets NRCS employee's and will need more information added to it for marketing purposes.

A Plan B discussion followed and it was felt that Plan B would be necessary if Headquarters said we can't have it there period. A joint letter with dates and locations, cost comparison, a draft bulletin and an agenda will be sent to Headquarters. We are waiting on Pooh's signature to get this up and rolling. Crystal said Pooh will be able to do it on Monday.



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Ciro asked about paper work at the hotel and when we have to let them know if we are going to cancel. What happens if we cancel the conference? Is there a penalty? The contract says if it is cancelled less than 6 months in advance then 100% of revenue will be paid to them. We have until February 14th to decide. The heads of the Planning Committee will be meeting next Friday and will discuss conference attendance, budgets for the states and retribution fees should we cancel.

Crystal and Millie left the meeting at 12:20 and David chaired the meeting. There is still a quorum.

### **Regional Reports**

**Southeast** – Pat Green brought up David Howe, our member that passed away. An email was sent out to see if we felt the AIANEA should or could do something in David’s honor. It was suggested that we might put an existing scholarship in his name and send a letter to his family in South Carolina to let them know we had done this. (Buster joined us at 12:30 p.m. CST) David was a lifetime member and a tribal liaison for 9 years. Pat Broyles made a motion that we present a scholarship in David Howe’s name this year pending approval of David’s family. Hiro seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The Southeast work group met and firmed up the 2006 poster. This is the second poster coming from the Southeast and this year’s is coming from Alabama. They are also working on an action plan that is showing their accomplishments this year and the previous 4 years.

**Northern Plains** – Pat Broyles sent a couple of emails out to everyone. One was to encourage them to renew their memberships and the other was about our conference in Alaska.

**East** – Hiro LoPinto said they have a new State Conservationist. His last name is Alvarado and he is fairly young. Hiro is hoping to meet with him after he gets installed so he can get him on board about the Consultation Training from NEDC and some other things. He wants him to be aware of what is going on and is hoping he will get his support.

**South Central** – Leota Burnett emailed Manny Wei to find out who the Silent Auction contact was so they can get started on planning needs for it. She also talked with Kurt Cates about the Silent Auction and he wants to help her with it. This item will be discussed later as Herb’s committee suggestions has the Silent Auction as a sub-committee of the Scholarship Committee.

**West** – Felix Nez went to the Southwest Indian Agriculture Association and presented information on the EQIP application process. He said there were several good presentations given at the conference. He said they have three \$1,000.00 scholarships. He said a lot more Indian people are now aware of our programs and that he feels the word is now getting out. The University of Arizona gave a good presentation on irrigation systems. There were about 200 people in attendance. Felix has been sending out requests to his region looking for feedback on outreach projects they are working on and this year’s conference.



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**Midwest** - Buster Landin sent emails in his region. He got a response from Iowa that let him know NRCS has filled a Tribal Soil Conservation position in which 50% of their time will be to work with the Sac-N-Fox Nation. His duty station is only 10 minutes away from their land so he will be fairly available to them.

The Iowa Valley RC&D partnering with the Sac-N-Fox developed a grant to develop a wildlife cove for the tribe.

**NHQ Update**

Bill Yamartino was unable to be with us so this update has been postponed until the March meeting.

**Poster Committee Proposal & Heritage Poster -**

David said Herb was requested to put together suggestions for AIANEA committee recommendations and the Heritage Poster and we all should have a copy of them to review. These proposals need to be changed in our Constitution and By-Laws if the National Council likes them. If we do, then we need the By-Laws committee to get them typed into the Constitution and By-Laws after we vote on them. They will have to be posted on the web-site for 30 days for viewing after which time we can adopt them.

There are 2 areas with recommendations. David read the AIANEA committee recommendations and opened it up for discussion. We will write it up and send it to everyone and will also send it to Carol Crouch, Chair of the Poster Committee and to Millie Titla, Chair of the Constitution and By-Laws Committee for review to make sure we are going by our policy and guidelines. It will be discussed and voted on at the next meeting.

The Council discussed the 6 items listed and made suggestions on how to handle this. David will work with Leota on the council suggestions. After the Poster Committee reviews these, then they may present the following to the National Council for a vote: We may recommend states ought to be able to volunteer to do the poster but we need to stay in a rotation between the regions. A request will be sent to the National Council for an Amendment to the By-Laws on the Poster Committee Responsibilities and Guidelines.

Ciro LoPinto made a motion to table the poster committee guidelines and the committee proposals until the next meeting. Buster Landin seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously

**Other Items**

None



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**ACTION ITEM:** Crystal will check with Ivan to see if he can get the 2004 audit from Lori so we can give it to Tanya.

**ACTION ITEM:** Crystal will ask Tanya to look around her area for a local CPA that can do the 2005 audit.

**ACTION ITEM:** Millie will get with David or Leota for the wording on the Constitution and By-Laws to have it amended to “February 15” deadline.

**ACTION ITEM:** Leota will send the minutes to David to ensure the wording for this motion is correct before it is sent to the other National Council members.

**ACTION ITEM:** David will work with Leota on putting together Poster Committee guidelines and Committee recommendations.

**ACTION ITEM:** Leota will email David the guidelines presented and David will get them to the Poster Committee for review which will then be presented at the next National Council teleconference meeting.

**Next Teleconference**

The next teleconference will take place on March 10, 2006 at 11:00 Central Time. The call-in number and pass code will be the same.

**Adjourn**

Ciro LoPinto moved to adjourn the meeting. Pat Green seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by  
Leota Burnett, AI/AN SEPM