

Summary Report  
2006 Joint Employee Training Conference



American Indian Alaska Native Employee Association  
Asian Pacific Islander Organization  
Conference  
August 14 – 18, 2006  
Anchorage, Alaska

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## Summary Report 2006 Joint Employee Training Conference

### Introduction

The 2006 Joint Employee Training Conference, held in Anchorage, Alaska, from August 14 through August 18<sup>th</sup>, was the first joint employee training conference held together by two Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employee associations. The American Indian Alaska Native Employees Association (AIANEA) and the Asian Pacific Islander Organization (APIO) demonstrated their effective planning and partnership skills to produce an excellent joint training conference for NRCS employees.

The joint training conference offered NRCS employees the opportunity to network with other NRCS employees to learn more about NRCS conservation work being implemented across the Nation. NRCS employees received training that will help them improve their career advancement. Employees learned more about NRCS programs; received training that provided them with tools to improve their communication skills; cultural awareness training; information and training through workshops and poster and general session presentations that demonstrated successful NRCS partnerships, delivery of conservation to all populations, diversity of the conservation work; and the effectiveness of NRCS services. The AIANEA and APIO worked effectively with the National Employee Development Center (NEDC) to offer NRCS employees the opportunity to receive additional training through certified NEDC training courses; in conjunction with the training conference. On August 14, the AIANEA and APIO, partnered to deliver Special Emphasis Program Manager (SEPM) training to NRCS employees. In addition to training at the joint conference; the agenda included evening activities such as; live auction to fund diversity scholarships for student seeking degrees related to NRCS careers; association business meetings; awards banquet to honor each association's finest and scholarship winners and networking socials.

### Attendees

The 2006 Joint Employee Training Conference attendees were approximately 185. Attendees included NRCS employees from across the Nation, AIANEA and APIO members, AIANEA Elders, NRCS partners, other federal agencies and conference speakers and presenters.

### Networking

Networking opportunities were an important training element for this training conference. Networking sessions provided the opportunity for attendees to share their accomplishments with others, exchange questions and answers and gain insight on how to accomplish a work related task that may be presenting obstacles. Networking opportunities were provided to conference attendees throughout the conference and began when registration opened. On Monday, August 14, 2006, from 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM a networking session was held for conference attendees. On Tuesday, August 15, 2006, from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM, Sarah Braasch, Assistant Chief, West Region, facilitated a networking session with NRCS State Conservationist and NRCS employees. This session was followed by a Networking Social to all conference attendees from 6:30 to 8:00 PM on August 15<sup>th</sup>. On August 16<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 to 7:50 AM networking occurred at the mentoring breakfast, as well as from 7:00 to 10:00 PM at the live and silent auction. On August 17<sup>th</sup> the networking continued from 7:00 to 10:00 PM at the awards banquet and during the NRCS Alaska conservation training tour from 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM on August 18<sup>th</sup>.

## Workshops

The conference workshops offered to NRCS employees and conference attendees included; *Career Training*, *DISC-Personal Profile System*, *Outreach Strategies for Success & Working with Cultural and Ethic Differences*, *Achieving Balance in the Information Age*, *Innovative RC&D Project Ideas for Implementation*, *New NRCS Engineering Technology*, *Alaska's Environmental Changes*, and *Grants and Agreements*. The *Career Training* session presenters were NRCS employees that provided firsthand experience on how they chose different career paths and their recommendations on how to advance your career with the ever changing NRCS career opportunities. The *DISC-Personal Profile System* workshop provided information to attendees on how to understand yourself and your environment; the differences of others; and how to maximize productivity and team work. *Outreach Strategies for Success & Working with Cultural and Ethic Differences* workshop presenters provided their view of the world and how they interact with others; how they conduct outreach; and identified strategies on how to conduct outreach more effectively. *Achieving Balance in the Information Age* workshop focused on the information age overload and provided tips on; time efficiency, getting the most out of your day without sacrificing your sanity, how to manage your stress level, and three key steps to re-balancing and de-stressing our lives. *Innovative RC&D Project Ideas for Implementation* workshop was presented to attendees so they could learn more about the innovative RC&D projects around the country. *New NRCS Engineering Technology* workshop provided updates on how the Science and Technology Division, Conservation Engineering Division and the National Technology Support Centers are working together to implement cost saving initiatives for the implementation of conservation tasks. The session also provided training on how to use the latest software developed for NRCS personnel in the field. The *Alaska's Environmental Changes* workshop focused on how the changing weather patterns in Alaska is causing flooding, riverbank erosion, coastal erosion, less abundant sea ice, changing the behavior of wildlife and impacting Alaskan Natives hunting and food sources. *Grants and Agreements* workshop provided information on how to leverage funds to increase conservation achievements in your conservation District or RC&D.

## Cultural Awareness Training

One of the main highlights of the training conference was the cultural awareness training that was provided to NRCS employees. Cultural awareness training for attendees at this conference was not always taught in a concurrent session or through a presentation; rather through a cultural experience, verbal exchange of traditions, ceremonies, dancers, music and story telling. The opening ceremony provided a cultural experience for attendees; songs were played and sung by the AIANEA drum group, a cultural presentation of AIANEA Eagle staff and presentation of Colors by AIANEA and APIO veterans. The Alaskan Kicaput dancers performed their traditional dances during the opening ceremony so attendees could experience part of Native Alaskan culture. On August 14<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, NRCS employees received Special Program Manager training. The morning program on August 17<sup>th</sup>, from 8:00 AM to 12:00 noon, entitled *Cross Cultural Communications*, provided attendees with the opportunity to gain firsthand cultural awareness through a question and answer session with the AIANEA Elders. This session provided the attendees with the opportunity to learn more about tribal traditions, experience the wisdom and stories of the AIANEA Elders. Father Michael Oleska presented an excellent cultural awareness session entitled *Your culture, my culture; Can we talk?* On August 17<sup>th</sup>, during the opening ceremonies of joint Awards Banquet, the Filipino Company performed their Asian traditional dancers and the AIANEA drum group closed the conference with traditional songs and retiring of colors.

### General Session Presentations

General sessions presentations at the conference provided the opportunity for NRCS employees to hear from the acting Chief of NRCS, NRCS employee's organizations Presidents, National Tribal Relations Coordinator, AAPI and AI workforce, and the NRCS National Civil Rights Committee. Attendees heard presentations on the diversity of the conservation work being done across the Nation. NRCS California presented on *Farmer's Market in Stockton California*. Alaska NRCS employees presented presentations on *Alaska Geography* and *Conservation in Alaska*.

### Poster Presentations

The poster presentation at the conference provided NRCS employees the opportunity to display and share their successful NRCS partnerships; the delivery of conservation to all populations; the effectiveness of NRCS services; and showcased diversity conservation practices being implemented across the Nation. There were 27 poster presentations presented during the conference from August 15<sup>th</sup> through August 17<sup>th</sup>. NRCS poster/displays from Alaska, Colorado, Iowa, Indiana, Minnesota, Montana, Oklahoma, and Wyoming showcased; conservation practices being implemented in their states, their strong partnerships, successful delivery of NRCS programs to all populations, special projects, outreach success and illustrated how their state is *Helping People Help the Land* in Indian Country and for future generations. Other poster/displays were presented by the NRCS National Water Management Center, National Civil Rights Committee, NARFE, Alaska RC&D, Information Security, and the APIO and AIANEA associations.

### Training Tour: NRCS Programs

Alaska State Conservationist, Bob Jones, arranged for a bus tour so NRCS employees could gain firsthand experience and observe the diversity of conservation practices being implemented in Alaska. The tour included a tour of the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) Salmon Habitat Restoration Project and Environment Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) project at the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center. The tour included a lunch at the Alaska Native Heritage Center.

### National Employee Development Center (NEDC) Training

The AIANEA and APIO worked effectively with the National Employee Development Center (NEDC) to offer NRCS employees the opportunity to receive additional training through certified NEDC training courses; in conjunction with the training conference. NEDC training courses included; Instructor Training (Application) from August 9<sup>th</sup> through August 11<sup>th</sup>, Instructor Training (Introduction) on August 14<sup>th</sup>, and Managing for Excellence from August 21<sup>st</sup> through August 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### Special Emphasis Program Manager (SEPM) Training

On August 14, the Civil Rights Division partnered with AIANEA and APIO, to provide Special Emphasis Program Manager (SEPM) training to AA/PI and AI/AN Emphasis Program Managers and other NRCS employees from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. The training was provided by Virginia Lewis and Jerry Rouse, both National Emphasis Program Managers. Training provided was directly related to the Special Emphasis Program Managers' duties and responsibilities. The attendees were also provided training on How to Develop an Effective AEP Report and a Recruitment Plan.

The 2006 Joint Employee Training Conference between the American Indian Alaska Native Employees Association (AIANEA) and the Asian Pacific Islander Organization (APIO) provided NRCS employees with excellent training so they could be better informed when they returned to their job duties. Conference agenda and summary report may be viewed at the AIANEA website at [www.aianea.com](http://www.aianea.com) or the APIO website at [www.apio.org](http://www.apio.org).

Conference  
Photos

Opening Ceremony\*AIANEA Eagle Staff\*  
AIANEA and APIO Veterans\*Presentation of Colors



Cultural Awareness exchange  
between NRCS employees and  
Alaska Kicaput Dancers

AIANEA Elders Panel

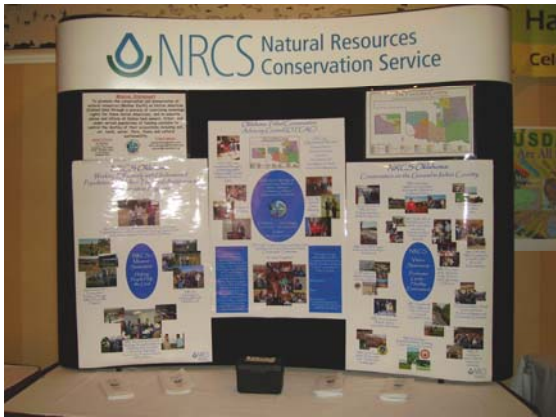


Conference  
Photos:

Closing Ceremony with: AIANEA Drum Group  
AIANEA Elders & NRCS Employees



Filipino Dancers



Conference  
Poster  
Presentations



Conference Photos

Conference Workshops & Presenters



Scholarship Fund Raisers

Live Auction



Training Tour  
Alaska WHIP & EQIP Projects &  
Alaska Heritage Center



Live Auction



Special Emphasis Program Manager  
(SEPM) Training

Silent Auction

