

# AIANEA

## The Four Winds

JANUARY 2020



### ELDER QUOTE

"The first time you meet someone, the impression you leave with them is everlasting."

~ Elder James  
Billy Smith

### Message from the President

#### Halito and Afummi himona na yukpa!

(Hello and Happy New Year!) It's a new year and a new beginning. As the incoming President of AIANEA, I want to thank you for your time and past involvement with AIANEA. But, I really want to welcome you to what I hope is a fresh beginning for AIANEA.

AIANEA has such a unique and critical role in our agency and helps our employees provide services to our clientele. We (AIANEA members) were the first Tribal Liaisons before there were official Tribal Liaisons employed in NRCS.

AIANEA has served as the cornerstone for development of training for NRCS employees so they are informed and better equipped to meet the needs of our Historically Underserved clientele. Years ago, the Harmony Cadre met a critical need and began a journey to teach and empower our employees. Today, the Working Effectively with American Indians training course continues the legacy. In fact, this course has served as a model for development of other national-level training courses. There is no greater acclamation than that achievement.

But, a true testament to AIANEA's legacy and vision is our AIANEA Elders! In this first issue of *The Four Winds* in 2020, we feature two of our AIANEA Elders, and in our next editions, we will again share their wisdom. With some of our Elder Family traveling on, we truly value the time we have as each of our Elders is so very important to each member, our entire

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AIANEA family and people around the country!

Let's work collaboratively and make 2020 the year to further develop AIANEA partnerships and collaborations. Just as no one person can do it alone, no one organization can do it alone. AIANEA has a unique opportunity to be seated at the table with Tribes, other stakeholders and USDA Leadership as we work to improve services and outreach in Indian Country, especially with the momentum under way with the new Farm Bill.

I feel that AIANEA will continue to be the true "Tribal Liaisons" that bridge the pathway between tribes and USDA leadership as we work to improve delivery of Farm Bill Programs and provide outreach in Indian Country.

I hope you will join me on this journey of discovery and enrichment—we need you to help make AIANEA stronger and better.

If you have a desire to make a difference in Indian Country, then there is a home for you with AIANEA!

*Yakoke!*  
(Thank you)  
I appreciate the opportunity to serve my AIANEA family as this year's President.



*Melissa*

## Elder Ted Herrera—It's time to let the Indian Out!

Following my retirement from the Department of Defense in 1998, I felt I had become invisible and had no voice.

However, all that changed after my involvement with the Buffalo Nation in 1998. Then in 2007 my life was once again redirected to another very gratifying path when I was privileged and honored to be invited to join the AIANEA Elders Circle.

AIANEA gave me a presence and a voice once more. Over the last 12 years my wife JoAnn and I have traveled and met many extraordinary people throughout Indian country through this Organization.

I thoroughly enjoy meeting NRCS employees who are at different stages of their careers. I am always glad to share my own life experiences that hopefully will help them with decisions that they are dealing with at the time.

I believe that many NRCS employees are called to this caring for our Mother Earth path because of their ancestral influence.

Over time I have had many people tell me that they have always felt Indian but were not provided with any family history. I explain to them that our American past was not always friendly to native people and so many of our ancestors hid that information from their loved ones in order to spare them the difficulties and hardships (sometimes it was a matter of life and death) that they endured.

I share with them some of the things I have learned about Genealogy (my latest hobby).

For example, every individual on this planet was created by two people; those two people were created by two other people so for every past generation before you the numbers double.

On average there is a new generation every twenty-five years (4 generations in every 100 years) In ten generations you will have 1024 direct ancestors. That's 512 grandmothers and 512 grandfathers!

Since the year 2019 marked the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Spanish European invasion of the new world that means that there have been at least twenty generations of intermingling of indigenous with Europeans, Africans and others.

That means that if you keep doubling the number of ancestors for every generation you go back for 500 years you will have One million forty-eight thousand five hundred seventy-six (1,048,576) Ancestors.

So, unless you are a first generation to the Americas there is a pretty good chance that there is an Indian in your bloodline.

And so, I tell people that  
"It's time to let the Indian Out,"  
give him or her life,  
give them a voice.





AIANEA would like to welcome our newest members:

**Stephen Bell  
 Angela Biggs  
 Catherine Cannon  
 Cynthia Cuellar  
 Ryan Gerlich  
 Katy Greene**

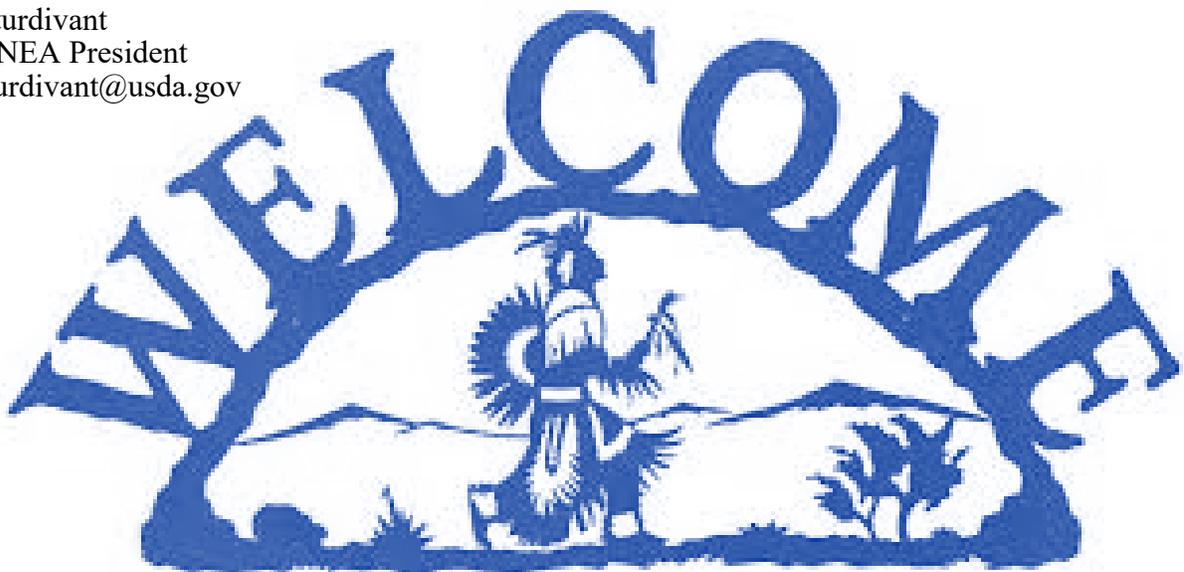
**Kristi Harper  
 Amber Herz  
 Jennifer Johnson  
 Sally Timmons**

*Halito and Afummi himona na yukpa!* (Hello and Happy New Year!)

AIANEA has lots of opportunities for you to showcase your leadership and technical skills, and we need your help. We need you to help us make AIANEA stronger and better. What is your area of expertise? Where is your niche – communications, outreach, technology, graphics? Do you want to work with our AIANEA Elders? Do you want to mentor youth? If you have a desire to make a difference in Indian Country, then there is a home for you with AIANEA.

I truly welcome your involvement. Please feel free to contact me directly or any one of the National Council members with your comments and suggestions on how to continue to build a strong AIANEA community. Blessings to each of our AIANEA family members and the communities we serve, and *Yakohe and Afummi himona na yukpa!* (Thank you and Happy New Year)

Melissa Sturdivant  
 2020 AIANEA President  
 melissa.sturdivant@usda.gov



## Elder Billy Smith—Doing More for Our Tribal Communities!



When asked recently about what he wants to work on in order to improve life within his community, Elder Smith shared that there are several things he would like to see accomplished on the Poarch Band of Creek Indians (PBCI) Reservation, but he feels that the growing issue of addiction is probably his number one priority.

Elder Smith went on to share that he worked to develop the **“War Path on Drugs”** Program many years ago and wants to see the program become stronger and cover a wider area. Elder Smith traveled to local schools and educated kindergarten through fourth grades on the detrimental effects of drugs and alcohol. When he spoke to the children, he would wear his traditional dress and encouraged the youth to participate in friendship dances and other activities which they thoroughly enjoyed. The youth would be presented shirts with logos that read “War Path on Drugs, Say No to Drugs.” Elder Smith, speaking from his heart, shared “I have a special place in my heart for kids and hope in some way, I can be a role model for them. You don’t have to allow the peer pressure to get you into things that are extremely bad for you.”

Elder Smith stated that the tribe is working hard to address and eradicate drug and alcohol abuse occurring with their Tribal members as well as in their local area. “The enormous impact that drugs and alcohol has on families and communities is astronomical. I’ve seen first-hand the impact within my own family and continue to deal with the consequences of these addictions. The PBCI offers many avenues to help those addicted and has seen some success but there is a need for more.”

Since this is a national problem that affects every Tribe, State, Community and many families, Elder Smith stated, “I would like to see the PBCI build a State of the Art facility on our Reservation to provide the counseling, staff, support system, job training and care to help people that are caught up in these addictions so they can become functioning citizens. This would be an awesome way that we can address this major problem.”



Elder Smith has been involved with the conservation of our Natural Resources for all his life. The Poarch Band of Creek Indians (PBCI) works daily to protect, enhance, and maintain our natural resources. They utilize USDA programs and work closely with USDA leaders and staff as well as other federal and State Agencies to access programs and funding to assist in their efforts to get conservation practices on the ground.

Elder Smith shared, “The success story of the PBCI is outstanding in that I, and the Tribe have won every conservation award in Alabama as well as in the Southeast Region and Nationally. I am very proud of what we have been able to accomplish on the Reservation.” Some of the awards include: Helen Mosley Treasured Forest Award; Alabama Treasured Forest Award; and, the Alabama Stewardship Forest Award.

Elder Smith serves on the following conservation committees, boards, and advisory groups as the representative for his Tribe and includes: Alabama NRCS State Technical Advisory Committee; Alabama Gulf Coast RC&D Council; USDA-NRCS Southeast American Indian Workgroup; USDA-NRCS AIANEA Elders’ Advisory Committee; and, the National Park Service Park and Recreation Advisory Council. By serving on these conservation groups, Elder Smith has been enabled to become more knowledgeable of natural resources issues and this has allowed his Tribe to partner with many organizations to address conservation issues within the Reservation, State, Region and National levels. The Poarch Band of Creek Indians looks forward to becoming more active in the conservation efforts to address natural resource concerns across the Country.

The Poarch Creek Indians are descendants of a segment of the original Creek Nation that once covered almost all of Alabama and Georgia. Unlike many Eastern Indian tribes, the Poarch Creeks were not removed from their tribal lands and have lived together for almost 200 years in and around the reservation in Poarch, Alabama. The reservation is located eight miles northwest of Atmore, Alabama in rural Escambia County, about 57 miles east of Mobile.

The Poarch Creek Indians have fought hard to preserve their proud heritage while moving forward into the mainstream of today’s modern society. The Tribe’s determination to maintain both their identity and inherent right to self-govern is evident by their continued efforts to preserve their Tribal culture and improve their community.

The Poarch Creek Indians are the only federally recognized Indian Tribe in the state of Alabama, operating as a sovereign nation with their own system of government and bylaws.

The Poarch Creek Indians are an active partner in the state of Alabama, contributing to economic, educational, social and cultural projects benefiting both Tribal Members and residents of local communities and neighboring towns.

## Vacant National Council Positions

There are 5 VACANT positions on the 2020 AIANEA National Council. Please consider stepping up and helping lead our organization.

Vacant positions: 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Southeast Region Rep., Midwest Region Rep. & Secretary.

# GET INVOLVED!

### Position Duties

#### First Vice President

The major duties of the First Vice-President shall be to:

1. Assist the President in the conduct of activities of the Association.
2. Perform the duties of the President when the President is temporarily absent.
3. Complete the remaining term of the President in the event that a vacancy occurs.
4. Assume the duties of the President when the incumbent's term expires.
5. Serve as an official member of the National Council.
6. Act as liaison between the National Council and the Chairpersons of committees.

#### Second Vice-President

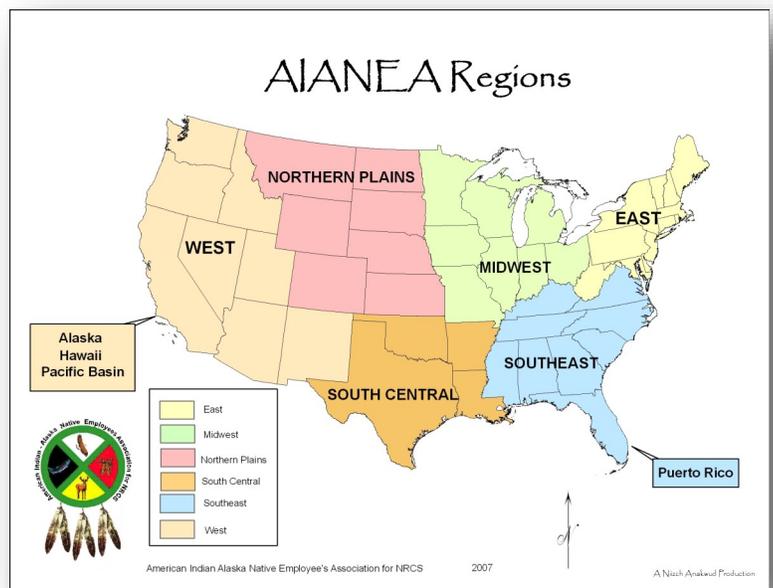
The major duties of the Second Vice-President shall be to:

1. Assist the President and First Vice-President in the conduct of the activities of the Association.
2. Serve as a member and Chairperson of the Audit, Budget/Finance, and the Constitution and Bylaws committees. Provide for an annual financial audit prior to the annual training conference.
3. Serve as an official member of the National Council.
4. Assume the duties of the First Vice-President when the incumbent's term expires.

### Regional Representatives

The major duties of each Regional Representative shall be to:

1. Serve as an official member of the National Council.
2. Represent membership in their respective administrative regions at general and special meetings of the Association.
3. Inform membership in their respective administrative regions of general and special meetings of the Association.
4. Present issues and concerns from members within their administrative regions, including amendments to the Association Constitution and Bylaws.



# AIANEA Member Spotlight—Getting Stuff Done in Indian Country



(Photo Above)

While attending the American Indian Science and Engineering Society's (AISES) National Conference held in Milwaukee, WI in October 2019, AIANEA Member, Angela Biggs, accepts the prestigious Circle of Support Award presented by AISES Leadership to USDA-NRCS for the Agency's continued support of AISES and AIAN youth development as a Lapis Sponsor of AISES. AISES Board Member *Emerti* Rick Stephens and AISES CEO Sarah Echohawk present the award to Angela, who serves as the NRCS State Conservationist in Wisconsin. Angela was very moved by the AISES event, and plans to keep the momentum going in her state of Wisconsin promoting AIAN youth development in partnerships with the Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council and tribal communities in Wisconsin. Way to go, Angela, and welcome to the AIANEA and AISES families! Photo credit: Catherine Cannon

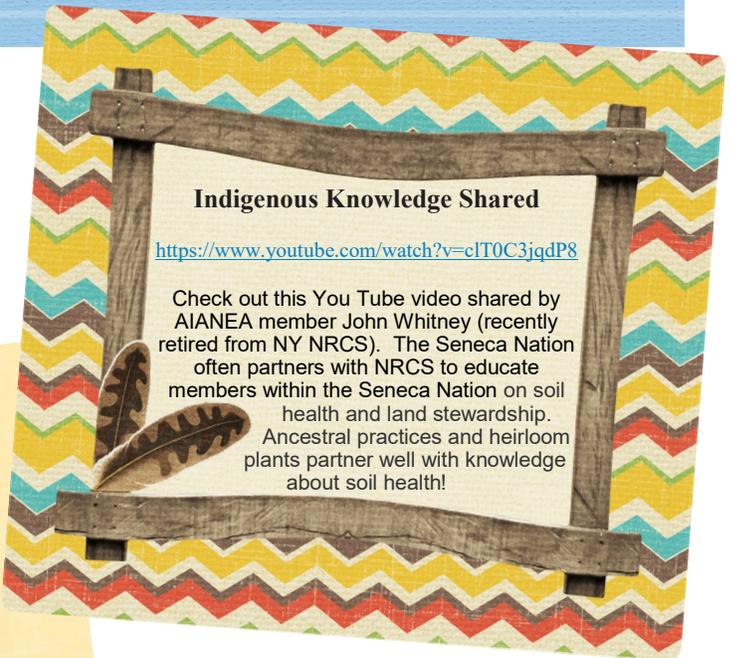
## GETTING STUFF DONE

State Tribal Liaisons and NRCS State Leadership Team meets with NRCS Chief Matthew Lohr during the Tribal Liaison Training conducted at the Intertribal Agriculture Council's Annual Meeting held in December 2019. See a familiar face? Many AIANEA Members are featured in this photograph. Photo credit: USDA-NRCS

(Photo Below)



## Roundtable with NRCS Chief!



(Photo Left)

AIANEA Members Felix Nez and Millie Titla, both with NRCS Arizona, work with their group to discuss resource concerns affecting tribal communities and strategize conservation methods to address the problems. Group members included: David Lopes (far left), Felix, Kent Curley, Millie and Ken Gishi—all working for Arizona NRCS. This Group Session is a popular and effective teaching tool used in the Working Effectively with American Indians (WEWAI) training course. Everyone learns from each other by sharing success stories and methods to effectively deliver Farm Bill Programs in Indian Country. Photo Credit: Melissa Sturdivant



AIANEA

COMMITTEES

volunteer

WE NEED YOU!

WE NEED YOU! If you have an interest and have wanted to get involved in AIANEA, we have several Committees that could use your help.

Listed here are several current operating committees, a short description and the Point of Contact (POC). Please take a moment to reach out to the current Committee Chair and get involved. Of course, this is not a complete list, but it's a start and will help us develop an outreach initiative, involve our AIANEA membership, get the word out in Indian Country and help lift up our employees, our customers and AIANEA!

**Awards Committee, Chair Athena Cholas—**

This committee coordinates and recognizes contributions and the primary duties are:

- a) Receive annual nominations in each available category from AIANEA members.
- b) Review nominations and select the award winners, which will be presented at AIANEA events, as appropriate.
- c) Choose appropriate recognition items and submit to the National Council for approval.



**Communications Committee, Chair Yvette Dulle—**

This committee coordinates efforts of other groups and organizations to enhance development and dissemination of newsworthy information that relates to or would be of interest to American Indians and Alaska Natives in agriculture.

- a) Encourage news media, including trade journals to carry and identify more information that relates to positive roles of American Indians and Alaska Natives in agriculture.
- b) Enhance awareness of the role of American Indians and Alaska Natives in agriculture through improved communications.
- c) Prepare the official programs for all of the Association sponsored events that require program formats, speakers, presenters, etc.
- d) Prepare the official publications of the Association.

THIS IS HOW WE DO  
**FAMILY**  
**SERVICE** GIVE  
 TRADITION  
 amazing to inspire  
 memories  
 together  
 Community





CHECK THIS OUT!

Join  
Your  
Team

WE ARE  
**HIRING**

## USDA FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION (FPAC)

Farm Service Agency; Natural Resources Conservation Service;  
Risk Management Agency; and FPAC Business Center

### JOB FAIRS IN 2020

### LIST OF POSITIONS

Fresno State University	Jan. 30, 2020
Washington State University Career Expo	Feb. 4, 2020
New Mexico State Career Fair	Feb. 4-5, 2020
Prairie View A&M University Career Fair	Feb. 12-13, 2020
Society of Range Management Annual Meeting 2020	Feb. 16-17, 2020
Montana State University "Almost" Spring Job and Internship Fair	Feb. 20, 2020
University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez	Feb. 21-22, 2020
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Career and Internship Expo	Feb. 26, 2020
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff	Feb. 26, 2020
University of Rhode Island Spring Job and Internship Fair	Mar. 4, 2020
Langston University Career Fair	Mar. 4, 2020
National Career Fair (Washington, DC)	March 11, 2020
National Career Fair (Raleigh, NC)	March 11, 2020
MANRRS (Minneapolis, MN)	April 3, 2020
National Career Fair (Kansas City, MO)	April 08, 2020
Delaware State University/University of Maryland – Eastern Shore	Early April

- Accountants
- Engineers
- Farm Loan Assistants
- Farm Loan Program Technicians
- Human Resources Specialists
- Loan Program Technicians
- Management Analysts
- Soil Conservationists and Technicians
- Soil Scientists
- Statisticians
- Rangeland Management Specialists and
- Other positions

Bring your resume and transcripts!  
For more information, contact Keisha Jones at [keisha.jones@usda.gov](mailto:keisha.jones@usda.gov).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

AIANEA Newsletter Committee & Contributors

Yvette Dulle, Missouri  
Melissa Sturdivant, Texas

Catherine Cannon, Washington  
David Elliott, Alabama  
Elder Ted Herrera, New Mexico  
Elder Billy Smith, Alabama

FIND US  
ON THE WEB



<https://www.aianea.org/>

Have information to share with our membership  
and AIAN community?

Please send your article or photos to:

[aianea.nrcs@gmail.com](mailto:aianea.nrcs@gmail.com)



TEAM  
WORK

the only  
way  
to do great  
work is  
to love  
what  
you do

### LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK!

AIANEA is now on Facebook! AIANEA wanted to take advantage of the most popular social media tools to stay connected. This will give AIANEA the opportunity to stay connected not only with our membership, but with partners, friends, students and associates. AIANEA and Friends can use Facebook to post pictures of our events, share activities with tribes, share our journeys and participate in discussion forums. Please take advantage and stay connected!

<https://www.facebook.com/aianea.org/>



like US



# be A member

## 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

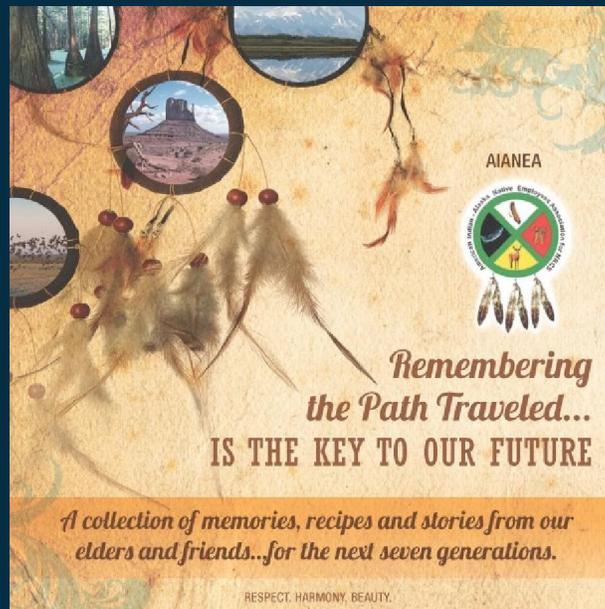
installments of

\$65/year

Please mail payment to:  
Pam Crow  
Treasurer  
101 So. Main Street  
Temple, TX 76501

## 2020 AIANEA National Council

Melissa Sturdivant – President  
VACANT – 1st Vice President  
VACANT – 2nd Vice President  
Derek Kelso – So. Central Region Rep.  
VACANT – Southeast Region Rep.  
Kristi Harper – West Region Rep.  
VACANT – Midwest Region Rep.  
Cassius Spears – East Region Rep.  
Kelly Barkell – Northern Plains Region Rep.  
VACANT – Secretary  
Pam Crow – Treasurer  
Bill Parrish – Co-Treasurer



AIANEA Cookbook is now available directly from the publisher's webpage. Our business account is now setup and we can receive payments from the publisher for books that are purchased and this will be in the form of royalty payments to our Association checking account.

This is a link to the hardcover edition, and it sells directly to the public for \$65.60 - \$7.50 from the sale of each book is returned to the Association in royalties to fund scholarships. [http://www.bookemon.com/book\\_read\\_flip.php?book\\_id=439549](http://www.bookemon.com/book_read_flip.php?book_id=439549)

Here is the link for the soft cover edition. It is available for purchase for \$55.60 and \$7.50 is returned to the Association as described above (to a scholarship fund). [http://www.bookemon.com/book\\_read\\_flip.php?book\\_id=442656](http://www.bookemon.com/book_read_flip.php?book_id=442656)