

# The Four Winds

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



## Elder Quote

“Cold, clean, pure, healthy, sacred water.”

**Louie Dick**

Winter - Niibin 2011

Respect, Harmony, and Beauty

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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@aiana.com](mailto:membership@aiana.com)

## Message from **Ciro LoPinto**

Hello to All. I would like to thank everyone that helped me to manage the Presidency of the American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association (AIANEA) during 2011. The year was a bit challenging for all of us. We lost two of our respected Elders. First we lost Leland Debe and then we lost Louis Dick. They will both be dearly missed and have contributed selflessly to the AIANEA for many years. We also did not have our yearly gathering, for the first time since our inception. It's kind of funny that I've served on every conference planning committee since 2001, then I don't get to "conduct" one as president...and the world never stopped turning...imagine that?



Please, let us look at our accomplishments. Not having a conference encouraged us to think and act more creatively. We held our first Association business meeting as a teleconference. The Association will be sending each participant a small thank you gift for participating. It will be a surprise. We seemed to have just as many participants as when we hold it live, and it probably took just as long. The only thing missing was the snacks.

The annual business meeting planning process produced the idea of holding Regional AIANEA Meetings/Trainings. We are encouraging all Regional representatives to begin exploring, with their regional members, the possibility of attending other meetings that are pertinent to our mission and then making time to meet as a group. We also thought about organizing small, overnight gatherings to exchange information and ideas. We believe the AIANEA can help to support the cost of such meetings. I would encourage everyone, when you have more than three AIANEA members in the same place, to hold a brief meeting, take some notes, and present some ideas to National Council. If you order a pizza, let us know and maybe we can help with the cost. Maybe I'm thinking a bit too far out of the pizza box, but you get my drift.

The AIANEA is also strongly considering the creation of a body of information that we, as AIANEA members, would be solely qualified to deliver to NRCS and our partners. The information could include such items as Tribal Consultation, Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Indigenous Stewardship Methods. We should all be doing our best to make opportunities to distribute our knowledge and our message to others.

The AIANEA, with the help of the Office of Outreach and Advocacy, created the first survey to collect data regarding the skill sets of our American Indian/Alaska Native employees and their willingness to serve on a work detail with the Agency or the Department. The participating groups are busy compiling and evaluating the information to widely distribute.

The AIANEA has also begun a draft Memorandum of Understanding with the USDA, NRCS and the Office of Outreach and Advocacy. We will probably be asked, once again next year, to propose working agreements and projects to carry out with our focus groups. It's best not to wait until the last minute, so join this committee, which will be headed by our new 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Stacy Kimble from Michigan.

The AIANEA also joined the age of social media and now has a Facebook page. Please join us. The AIANEA has also distributed \$1000 worth of scholarships to deserving students. As a final note (but I am sure I've forgotten some of our accomplishments) we have also created an "Elders Memorial Scholarship Fund" to be used when people would like to donate wealth for the cause of remembering our past Elders.

Thank you all, once again, for a fun and interesting AIANEA Presidency in the year 2011. I will probably see you soon...on some committee or at a Regional gathering in 2012.

Respectfully,

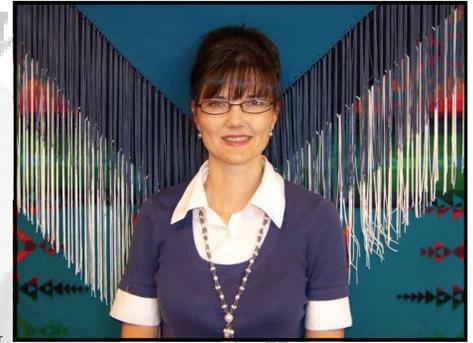
Ciro Lo Pinto

AIANEA President, 2011

## Message from Incoming President Gina Kerzman

“Oki” (Oh-Kee) AIANEA members!

As we get ready to begin our 17<sup>th</sup> year as an organization, I am humbled and excited as I prepare to serve as your 2012 AIANEA president. I have big shoes to fill, as so many who have gone before me have set the bar high. I want to thank Ciro LoPinto for his outstanding leadership during 2011.



I grew up on the northern plains on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Montana, and my family ranches on a portion of our original allotted land. I have been a member of AIANEA since its humble beginnings. It is exciting to say that I am not the first Blackfeet to serve as president. That honor belongs to Roylene Rides at the Door, who served as president in 1998. Again, big shoes to fill.

We face some new challenges and opportunities in 2012. Last year, we found ourselves without a national conference. We had to be resourceful and figure out alternative ways to communicate with members. This year, it is one of my goals to figure out alternative ways that our members can meet and continue to work towards our mission of growing leaders and making a difference in Indian Country. I will be looking for new partners to help us continue in our mission.

A new opportunity has been presented to the organization through the new Regional Tribal Conservation Advisory Councils. Each of these councils requires participation from an AIANEA elder and an AIANEA member. What an opportunity to speak on behalf of Indian Country! Please be watching for more information.

I'd like to extend a warm welcome to the new council members of the association: Stacy Kimble – Second Vice President; Samantha Lawien – Midwest Regional Representative; Athena Pratt – West Regional Representative; and Jack Lewis - Southeast Regional Representative.

I look forward to working with all of you, as well as our continuing members: Levi Montoya - Vice President; Harold Bryant and Bill Parrish, Co-Treasurers; David Pesicka - Northern Plains Regional Representative; John Whitney - East Regional Representative; Leota Burnett - South Central Representative; and Sherry Cosper – Secretary.

If change is the only thing that remains constant, we as an association have to move with the times. I hope to lead us proudly into a time where we'll embrace these changes and, as a result, emerge stronger than ever.

May 2012 be filled with blessings for you and your families!

Sincerely,

Gina Kerzman

2012 AIANEA President

## 2012 Elections Results

Please congratulate the newest members of the National Council representing the American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS

**Stacy Kimble – Second Vice President 2012** (to serve as AIANEA President in 2014)

**Samantha Lawien – Midwest Regional Representative**

**Athena Pratt – West Regional Representative**

**Jack Lewis as Southeast Regional Rep**

Ciro Lo Pinto, AIANEA President, 2011

### 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:

Harold Bryant  
Treasurer  
1510 29th Street  
Hondo, TX 78861

**PENALTY/  
FRANKED MAIL &  
OFFICIAL  
STATIONARY.  
YOU MAY NOT:**

Use official government envelopes (with or without applied postage) or official letterhead stationery for personal business.

## **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!

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/American-Indian-Alaska-Native-Employees-Association/160121254007738?sk=wall>

## Elder Louie Dick

Louie Dick: ‘Cold, clean, pure water’

-Reprinted from the Confederated Umatilla Journal, November 2011

When he liked something he’d say “neat.” He always wore suspenders and boots and braids. He spoke passionately, especially about natural resources, and people listened to what he had to say.

Recollections of how he talked about water vary, but for the most part people agree Louie Dick believed that “cold, clean, pure, healthy, sacred water” was the most precious resource and the key ingredient to a happy life.

Dick, who died at the age of 76 on Oct. 19, 2011, made huge impressions on so many people for his natural resource beliefs, but also during his years in the Marines, in the Forest Service and in the Longhouse.

Antone Minthorn, who met Sgt. Louie Dick, USMC, at Camp Pendleton in California, considered Dick a friend from his generation. Upon his return to the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Minthorn found Dick to be a committed part of a group re-establishing the Seven Drum religion.

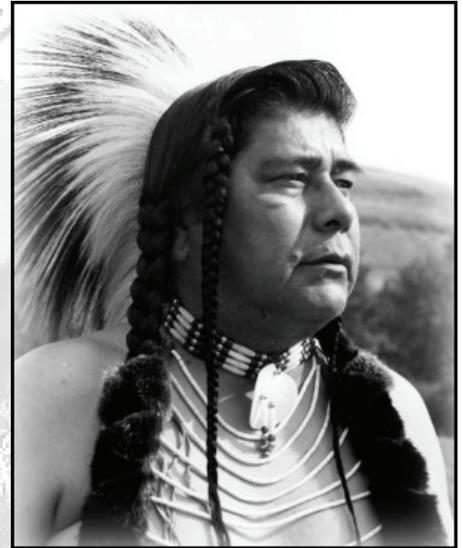
Said Minthorn, “Louie was a strong part of the cultural fabric that makes the CTUIR strong as a tribal nation.”

For all his life natural resources were his lifeblood, but water – ‘Cho’osh’ – was always the most important. He’ll forever be known for his dedication to clean water.

Jeff Blackwood, former Umatilla National Forest Supervisor, called Dick the “conscience” of the U.S. Forest Service and an anchor for our core values.” “His message of the importance of cold, clear water began during a time when the forests were being heavily logged, roaded and grazed,” Blackwood said. “I believe his message was at the heart of our agency change when more sustainable ways to manage the forests began to take hold.”

At his retirement party in 1985, Dick presented the Forest Service with a hand-painted elk hide stretched out on a pole frame he and his family had made. It was a reminder to protect traditional Indian cultural

values and provide – once again – “cold, clean, clear” water for generations to come. That elk hide, which hangs in the Forest Service office in Pendleton, likely will accompany FS employees when they make their new home on the Umatilla Indian Reservation next year.



Dick as much as established Tiicham Conservation District on his own and served as its chairman for several years. Terry Johnson from the Natural Resources Conservation District remembers when Dick was pushing for the District.

“He sat patiently with me for many hours by my desk while we worked on putting Tiicham together,” Johnson recalls. “I kept calling it the Tiicham Soil and Water Conservation District until he touched me on the arm, leaned forward and said, ‘You’re not listening to me. Tee-chum means the earth, the land, the country and ground, including all that is natural, historical, cultural and spiritual Tiicham is the whole earth and everything on it, not just soil and water. It should just be Tiicham Conservation District.’ He had finally gotten through to me and we changed the name.”

Johnson said Dick “walked the walk” when Tiicham took a gamble and used most of its savings, plus a loan, to purchase livestock and rent pastures. Indian Country Livestock was created and opened up to investors. “Louie put his money where his mouth is and invested \$15,000 of his own money plus most of his equipment into Indian Country Livestock and was its largest shareholder by far and became its chairman,” Johnson said.

Bev Kopperud from the Umatilla County Soil and Water Conservation District called Dick the “epitome of a Native American with his respect for the ways of

his tribe and his life's work in preserving the water and land for the future of his people."

In 2009, at the Oregon Association of Conservation District's annual convention, the Umatilla SWCD honored Dick for his work as a director for 12 years and for his role in founding Tiicham. He was presented with a mural painted by Marie "Butch" Dick, Louie's wife, on a deer hide attached to a walking stick.

"Louie was a man of few words. If asked what he wanted for the environment he always said 'cold, clean, pure, healthy water' and not much more but you knew what he meant," Kopperud said.

Still, said Gary James, manager of the Tribes' Fisheries Program, Dick had a "special skill in communicating traditional values, such as Indian Law (Tamunwit) and First Foods to both Indian and non-Indian people. For Indians, his actions strongly influenced the First Foods-based Department of Natural Resources mission statements and program actions that are implemented today. For non-Indians, his knack for telling stories and giving examples greatly increased their understanding and respect of Indian ways and values."

John Barkley, who also reveres water, said Dick was an inspiration. "He brought a significant traditional perspective that reflected a reverence and humility to use and manage water with diligence and sensitivity for all creatures of life," Barkley said. "I respected his words, compassion and devotion to this sacred resource and will truly miss him."

Dick was respected everywhere he went and not just for his stance on water. Longtime friend Ron Pond said a good example of the people's respect was when Chief Raymond Burke, before he died, asked the community who they thought should serve as a chief. The names of Dick and Pond were among four put up for consideration. Two others sought chieftainships and Dick and Pond took it no further.

Dick also was chosen to take a whip man's role but the elder who recommended him, Winnie Burke, passed away and out of respect Dick didn't take the position.



**Louie and Marie Dick participate in the Westward Ho! Parade at the Pendleton Round-Up.**

"That goes to show that people had respect for him and his family background – being from a warrior's family, the Red Elks on his mother's side and the Squeoch's family on his father's side."

Marcus Luke knew Dick from the Longhouse and respected his ways. "He always expressed traditional values at the Longhouse in our language, which is needed today. To some he was stern, but ones who had traditional teachings understood."

People understood Dick's vision for a sustainable, healthy world. He expressed it in many ways, not the least of which was in words that will live long after his death:

***"Water is life.  
Without water there is no life."***

## Elder Louie Dick by Gina Kerzman, Vice President, AIANEA

On October 19, 2011, the AIANEA lost a wonderful friend. Louie Dick was with us “under the tent” at the first AIANEA meeting in Chandler, AZ. He attended countless “Working Effectively with American Indians” workshops as an instructor and gave his presentation, “Introduction to Native American Culture,” all over the country to thousands of federal, state and county employees. He taught us that “choosh” is life. Louie also used to say, “The Indian is the earth. What’s done to the earth is done to the Indian.”

Even in his death, he was teaching. He was wrapped in nothing but buckskin and a Pendleton blanket (a gift from NRCS), as they laid him to rest in the earth. They threw dirt on him three times... just as he said they would; once for past, once for present, and once for future generations.

Bev Kopperud, former district manager of the Umatilla Soil and Water Conservation District, relayed a story shortly after the funeral. She said as they drove to the graveside, a herd of horses ran alongside the funeral procession. As the crowd gathered for the ceremony, the horses stood still and watched, as if they were listening to every word. When the ceremony was over, they quietly left.

Like Louie used to say. “Cool.”



**Louie is presented with one of the numerous awards he received from various agencies**

# Arizona Indian Living Treasure Award Recipients An-

Gila River Indian News

Submitted by Daryl Melvin , AILTA Board

The Arizona Indian Living Treasures Award (AILTA) committee announces four recipients of the 2011 Living Treasures Award. The 2011 AILTA will be presented to **Joseph Joaquin**, Tohono O'odham – language/cultural preservation; Chester Kahn, Navajo – painter; Thomas Nahsonhoya, Hopi – traditional weaver; and Herb Stevens, San Carlos Apache – fine arts buckskin dress and moccasin making. Awardees will be honored with a ceremony on Saturday, October 15, 2011 at 1:00 pm in the Steele Auditorium at the Heard Museum in Phoenix.

Herb Stevens, director at San Carlos Apache Cultural Center expressed his surprise upon learning of being a recipient. "It's such an honor to be recognized for doing something I love to do. I try to do what I can to teach the traditional Apache ways of working with buckskin, making dresses and moccasins needed for ceremonies, it keeps the traditional Apache culture alive within the Apache Tribal communities."

Howard Sice, board president and founding board member states, "The contributions of our native elders and their commitment to service in retaining traditional art and culture for all Indian people is an important calling."

Each year, the AILTA's board honors individuals who demonstrate a lifetime of achievement in the area of traditional arts and cultural preservation. AILTA recognizes individuals who serve their community by sharing their arts and traditions and passing them on to the next generation. The Living Treasure Award reinforces the mission of AILTA, which is to encourage the preservation of cultural traditions and artistic ideals, while providing education and awareness to the public about American Indian culture. During the ceremony, recipients are honored and presented with an embroidered Pendleton blanket and plaque.

About the Arizona Indian Living Treasure Award:



**Elder Joseph Joaquin**

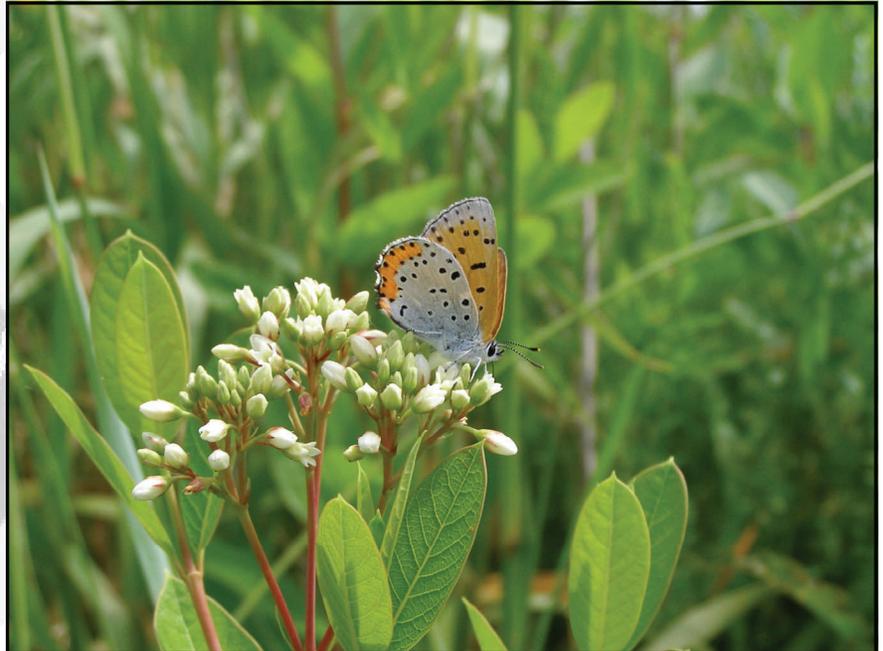
Arizona Indian Living Treasure Award, Inc. was formed in 1988 and recognized Hopi basket maker, Sarah Gashwytewa, the first living treasure recipient. To date AILTA has recognized 100 Arizona Native American living treasures. Their website is <http://www.ailta.ethos7.com/>. For more information, contact Daryl Melvin, PE, AILTA Board member at [darylmelvin@sprintmail.com](mailto:darylmelvin@sprintmail.com) or at 928-380-1807.

# Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin Restoration Project

by Tony Kuchma, Submitted by Elder Loretta Metoxen with the approval of Pat Pelky, Oneida Area Manager for the Environmental Department for the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin

## South Branch of the Suamico River Headwater Wetland

**Brief description of project:** The headwater wetlands of the South Branch of the Suamico River were degraded by decades of farming, nutrient rich runoff, and sedimentation. Restoration of these wetlands is providing much needed breeding and staging habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds using this corridor of the Mississippi flyway. A diversity of habitats including hardwood swamp, marsh, sedge meadow, and tall grass prairie are represented within the project area to accommodate the needs of numerous wetland dependent species.



The newly restored wetland filters sediment and runoff from a 2,000-acre agricultural watershed prior to releasing it into the South Branch of the Suamico River. Success of this project has been dependent upon involvement of our Partners, including the NRCS.

Several NRCS Best Management Practices (BMP's) have been implemented within the restoration area. These include grassed waterways, vegetated buffer strips, and access road construction. NRCS engineering criteria were used for the design of

earthen berms and properly sizing the hydraulic capacity of culverts and spillway structures which are critical for controlling water levels.

**Activities Completed:** Project construction took place during the fall of 2006 and summer of 2007. Over 65,000 cubic yards of soil used to build berms, basins, and spillways (3,250 dump truck loads) and 5,000 cubic yards of stone were placed (250 dump truck loads).

Sixty acres were planted with native seed mixes and 3,000 aquatic plants were hand planted. Over 6,000 tamarack, white pine, swamp white oak, and northern white cedar tree seedlings were planted in 2008.

Monitoring for invasive plant species occurs annually. Common reed grass (*Phragmites australis*), reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) and purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) are the focus of our monitoring and control efforts. Over 50 colonies of common reed grass and 900 clones of reed canary grass have been treated with herbicide. Several purple loosestrife plants were hand pulled.

Amphibian surveys have been ongoing since 2008. The most notable observation has been the



establishment and expansion of a population of spring peepers (*Pseudacris crucifer*). There were no indications of spring peepers at the site in 2008. In 2009 the call of a lone spring peeper was noted. As of the 2011 monitoring season they can be heard in full chorus in numbers too plentiful to pick out individuals. Wood frog (*Rana sylvatica*), leopard frog (*Rana pipiens*), and gray tree frog (*Hyla versicolor*) populations also appear to be expanding.

Many shorebirds, tundra swans, bald eagles, American white pelicans and numerous species of waterfowl have been observed using the site since its completion. A nesting pole was erected in 2010 to encourage an eagle or osprey to breed there.

**Future Plans:** The fall of 2011 marks the beginning of a three year project to establish kawh (wild rice, *Zizania spp.*). A single Manoomin plant was discovered growing there in the summer of 2010. It is thought that a seed hitch-hiked on a transient waterfowl. During the 2011 growing season, 17 individual rice plants were counted. This productivity has increased our hope for success. Our goal is to establish a 10 acre self-sustaining population of kwah (wild rice, *Zizania spp.*) by 2013.

The tall grass prairie is scheduled to be burned in the spring of 2012. The use of fire as a management tool should help reduce the need for herbicide by promoting native prairie vegetation adapted to periodic burns.

In 2012 we will begin a large scale stream restoration project directly downstream from the wetland. The goal is to restore floodplain wetlands and spawning habitat for northern pike (*Esox lucius*). Pike and other culturally important fish species will prosper from the improved habitat and provide additional opportunities for tribal members to utilize their natural resources. The establishment of this headwater wetland will improve water quality, moderate and sustain flows on the river system. These are key functions of a wetland, critical to success of the stream project.

Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin  
**Environmental, Health & Safety  
Division**



# WRP—Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians

Prior to European settlement, the Potawatomi Nation traditional territory extended from the southern shores of Lake Erie in Ohio west to the Mississippi River in Illinois, halfway into Michigan’s lower Peninsula to the north and south to the Wabash River. These territories were lost during the removal period and treaty making with the U.S. government in the late 1700s and into the 1800s. While most of the Potawatomi were removed west of the Mississippi River, chief Leopold Pokagon negotiated with the U.S. to allow the Pokagon Band and its allied villages to remain within the Great Lakes region. Beginning in 1996, the Band began to restore its land base for the benefit of the tribal government and its citizens. Included in its purchases were 1,450 acres of land along the current Kankakee River, and land which was within the former Kankakee River marshland area near North Liberty, IN. Historically, the former marsh provided hunting, gathering, and fishing areas for our ancestors. The Band is utilizing the USDA NRCS Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) to help re connect



to its ancestral cultural uses and activities.

## COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

Through the WRP program, NRCS staff recreated marsh areas and established vegetation patterns over 1,147 acres of the Band’s property to emulate the historic marsh and associated habitats.

Approximately 683 acres of warm season grasses and forbs were planted by Pokagon Band Environmental Department and Land Maintenance Department staff to establish mesic prairie conditions. The grasses include Big Bluestem, Little Bluestem, Indiangrass, Sideoats Grama, and Switchgrass. Wildflower species include New England Aster, Black eyed Susan, Purple Coneflower, Illinois Bundleflower, Partridge Pea, Purple Prairie Clover, and Canada Tick Trefoil. The planting was accomplished through valuable assistance presented by the St. Joseph County Chapter

of Pheasants Forever, the St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District, and



the St. Joseph County NRCS. Seed was ordered through Pheasants Forever, who also offered use of their seed drill and tractor. The SWCD also provided use of their seed drill as well as technical support, and both the SWCD and NRCS provided technical support concerning agronomy. In addition to the native grasses and wildflowers, Wild Rice was also established in this area. Wild Rice holds a cultural significance to the Pokagon Band as it will be utilized as a food source in tribal ceremonies.

## ENVIRONMENTAL GAINS

The experiences gained from the WRP activities offer conservation opportunities for the Pokagon Band. The planting and establishment of native vegetated prairies is transferable to the installation of conservation practices, such as filter strips, vegetated swales, and native vegetated prairies to protect water quality. These conservation practices can be integrated into agricultural practices and development projects to manage stormwater in ways that protect water quality. Demonstrating the Band’s increased capacity to protect water quality, the Band utilized funds from a US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant to purchase a Truax FLX II seed drill. Also, skills gained in wildlife habitat restoration/creation and management can be applied to other Pokagon Band properties in the future.



## FUTURE OF THE POKAGON BAND PROJECT

Over the long term, the restoration will provide a Tribal land preserve. The preserve is envisioned to offer recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities which can enhance the quality of life for Tribal citizens.

The WRP project provides benefits to the Band's local and regional neighbors by helping reduce the severity of flooding by retaining water on the Band's property that would have been conveyed to the Miller Ditch. The wildlife habitat created by the project provides a corridor link to surrounding State Conservation Areas, State Parks, and other private landowner efforts.

Article from:  
INDIANA'S CONSERVATION SHOWCASE

## AT A GLANCE

### PROJECT SCOPE

1,147 acres of recreated marsh areas and established vegetative patterns

683 acres of warm season grasses and wildflowers planted including:

Big Bluestem

Little Bluestem Indiangrass  
Sideoats Grama Switchgrass

New England Aster

Black eyed Susan

Purple Coneflower

Illinois Bundleflower Partridge  
Pea Purple Prairie Clover Canada Tick Trefoil

### NRCS PROGRAM UTILIZATION

Wetland Reserve Program

### PARTNERS INVOLVED

Pokagon Band

USDA NRCS

St. Joseph Co. SWCD

Pheasants Forever

US Environmental Protection Agency

# REGIONAL REPORTS—2011

## East Region Report

No response from any AIANEA members in the East Region to my request for highlights. With the move to SharePoint for internal postings, it is harder to monitor some of the state SEPM activity that used to be posting on the public websites.

As previously discussed, I represented NRCS & AIANEA at the National Congress of American Indians “Our Natural Resources” workshop in Denver, August 3 & 4. The report has been released and posted with some input on references to AIANEA and NRCS which could have been misinterpreted as lobbying or other Hatch Act/ethics conflicts.

Along with Stacey, I have regularly been contributing content to the AIANEA Facebook page. This is a handy way to exchange information. Members are encouraged to take advantage of the site.

NRCS New York has finally made good progress on inclusion of Indian Nations on State Technical Committee notices with representation from two tribes at the September meeting. Correspondence has gone out to New York tribal leaders concerning the new Regional Tribal Conservation Advisory Councils. This may reduce interest organizing a “State” Tribal Conservation Advisory Council.

Of course, this year’s posters were a big hit. The New York supply is fully distributed. I assume that is also true for the other states in the region.

This fall’s All Ivy Native Council meeting has not been scheduled and will likely not take place at this point in the academic cycle. I am looking into participating in the Spring meeting, perhaps with a presentation on the NRCS Indigenous Stewardship Methods report. Perhaps Ciro would like to be part of this if we receive a formal invitation.

I am attempting more regular “dialogue” with AIANEA members in the East. This began with solicitations for input in the ONR report and has continued with encouragement to complete the survey. I’m hopeful people will actually respond from time to time!

John

**John R. Whitney, District Conservationist &**

**NRCS-NY American Indian Alaska Native Special Emphasis Program Manager**

**AIANEA East Regional Representative**

**USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service**

50 Commerce Way

East Aurora, New York 14052

(716) 652-8480

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(716) 474-4387 cell

[john.whitney@ny.usda.gov](mailto:john.whitney@ny.usda.gov)

## Midwest Region Report

Mid West Members have assisted or supported AIANEA efforts this year with AIANEA Draft Document reviews, Comments on AIANEA changes and NRCS support. Mid West Members have assisted with the following projects.

**The Social Media Policy** - this is the current AIANEA policy in place for use of any web services and social media sites operated and maintained by AIANEA members/National Council. This document can be viewed at the AIANEA website. Any member with National Council support can contribute to these available forms of communications.

**AIANEA – USDA, NRCS MOU- DRAFT:** Mid West members were influential in the development of this document. Comments, Concerns and support were offered.

**Recruitment-** Several Mid West members are very active in recruitment and have taken it upon themselves to recruit and address the needs for a diverse workforce with NRCS. Although many states DN714-15 reports indicate a successful diversity of workforce, several Mid West members feel that the efforts to obtain more than what is needed by NRCS is insufficient. AIANEA can do more to help with this and I believe this is what we are doing by developing an MOU, working on the New Farm Bill, providing more to NRCS to in turn support Native People.

**Tribal Program Involvement-** Several reports have come in to support efforts on Tribal land. A couple include (but not limited too) are Nottawaseepi Band Of Huron and Potawatomi Indians hosted a Blessing Ceremony for a recently finished WRP project. Match-e-be-nagh-she-wish Band (Gun Lake Potawatomi) has made use of programs and technical support for sweet grass plantings, upland wildlife habitat and more. Members have participated in non NRCS activities with tribes for tree plantings, Sand Hill crane counts and assistance with Tribal gardens. The efforts of our Midwest members have been outstanding.

### **Several things the Mid West Region would like to see or have inquired about;**

NRCS support for our Annual Conference

If Annual Conferences are out of the question, Regional Meetings with support and guidance how to gain support from NRCS.

The development of a recruitment strategy and encouragement to past National Councils participation. The guidance is needed in the upcoming changes and we need the support and knowledge from our elders.

**Walking On-** With the loss of our elders we need to assist with our existing elders and provide a plan on bringing on additional elders.

**IDEA-** To include a member from each region to participate in the monthly National Council meetings. Maintaining a connection with our members without an Annual Conference will present a problem.

Strategies to get our members involved and to determine the needs of our members. A discussion or strategy is recommended.

Outside of investment earnings and an unforeseeable future for Annual Conference support AIANEA should discuss long term sustainability.

## Northern Plains Report

Environmental Quality  
Incentives Program  
(EQIP) to Indian Country  
1998-2011  
\$29,326,541  
2010 & 2011 \$6,348,321

### Tribal Advisory Committee

A Tribal Advisory Committee (a sub-committee to the USDA State Technical Committee) was formed in 2003 and provides technical assistance to the NRCS State Conservationist in identifying and addressing conservation issues and tribal needs on Tribal lands. The Tribal Advisory Committee was instrumental in the development of an EQIP American Indian Earmark Local Evaluation Worksheet in FY 2004 and continues to annually review the effectiveness of the worksheet.

### Special Projects

Tribal Lands Pond Initiative (\$671,392)  
Replace dams/ponds that have failed and  
Are beyond their original lifespan  
2010 – \$ 216,543 (18 contracts)  
2011 – \$ 454,849 (17 contracts)

Various outreach, see latest SD NRCS enews  
Dana V

I am going to give a presentation on November being America Indian Heritage Month at the US Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq. Patrick Broyles

Dave,

As far as accomplishments up here, I would have to say the dollars we put on the ground and contracted again this year was very good. Our cost-share goes almost all towards fresh water systems. This year Sioux county led the state in implementation dollars for EQIP, which is very good considering some of the challenges we have to overcome with trust land. Also, we had a very strong sign-up this year for more practices. The tribe is very supportive of our programs and we have a good working relationship with them. We are very proud of this in Sioux county.

Austin Lang Tribal Liaison Fort Yates, ND

## South Central Regional Report

The South Central Region has been pretty busy fulfilling needs for our cost share programs and the continued work with our local tribes. We have also been emailing back and forth on the possibility of having a regional meeting in a central location that would be feasible for all of us. Progress is moving slowly on this for now but I hope it will start picking up with the coming winter when things slow down. We have had very few responses and input. I feel it is largely due to the current workloads we all have.

Below is an article Carol wrote about the meeting we had at the Eastern Shawnee Tribal Complex near Seneca, MO. Our State Conservationist presented the Eastern Shawnee Chief with a framed copy of the artwork. The meeting was successful and the artist is very good.

### **NRCS Oklahoma Honors Artist and the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma for the 2011 NRCS American Indian Heritage Poster**

American Indian Heritage Month is observed from November 1 through November 30. American Indian Heritage Month is celebrated to recognize the intertribal cultures and to educate the public about the heritage, history, art, and traditions of American Indians and Alaska Natives. American Indian Heritage Month enhances our efforts to honor tribal sovereignty by working on a Government-to-Government basis with American Indians and Alaska Natives. We honor the rights of Indian tribes and work to protect and enhance tribal resources. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) creates a poster from the artwork to kickoff the 2011 American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month in November.

The 2011 NRCS American Indian Heritage title for the poster is, *Conservation: Preservation of Land for Future Generations* and the theme is, *A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers, but borrowed from his children.* This year's winner of the American Indian Heritage Poster contest is Carrie Silverhorn of Miami, Ok. Ms. Silverhorn is a member of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma and is of Eastern Shawnee/Wyandotte descent.

On November 8, 2011, NRCS Oklahoma and the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma hosted a reception to honor the winning artist, Carrie Silverhorn, for the NRCS 2011 American Heritage poster and kicked off American Indian Heritage month in Oklahoma. NRCS State Conservationist, Ron Hilliard, presented a framed copy of the artwork to Chief Glenna Wallace, of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe, to display in their Tribal museum. Artist, Carrie Silverhorn, attended the reception to autograph the poster for over a hundred attendees at the reception.

The reception was sponsored by the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (OTCAC), NRCS and the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma. The reception and presentation of the artwork to the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma was covered by local newspapers and TV stations. The reception was a huge success.



Presentation of winning artwork to the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma

## **South East Region Annual Report**

**David Elliott Chairman**

**Lee Reeves Vice Chairman**

**Debbie Henry Secretary**

**Dr. Bill Puckett Work Group Champion**

**Jack Lewis AIANEA SE Regional Representative**

Fiscal year 2011 has been both a busy and productive year here in the South East Region of Indian Country. Since our last business meeting we have had several of our Work Group members retire or move on in their careers and I would like to take a moment to recognize them for all the hard work and dedication they have shown to the work group over the years. John Harper EPM in Florida and AIANEA South East Regional Representative retired and Jason Bird has taken over as EPM in Florida. Pat Green EPM Kentucky retired and Tim Hafner has taken over as EPM in Kentucky. Randal East EPM Alabama has move on with the agency and Wendy Smith has taken over as EPM in Alabama. Cliff Eaddy EPM South Carolina has moved on with the agency and Daniel Cabaniss has taken over the duties of the EPM in South Carolina. The members of the work group would again like to say thank you for all your hard word and to the new members welcome aboard and we look forward to working with you in the future.

Listed below are just a few examples of things that have taken place in each of the South East Regional States.

### **ALABAMA: Wendy F. Smith EPM, David Elliott Tribal Liaison and Dr. William Puckett Workgroup Champion**

Dr. Puckett and David Elliott attended the Tribal Consultation Session in Nashville, TN, along with Poarch Band of Creek Indians (PBCI) Tribal Chairman; Buford L. Rolin, PBCI Creek Indian Enterprises Development Authority (CIEDA) President; James Martin, and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO); Robert Thrower.

NRCS worked with the Poarch Band of Creek Indians developing their 2011 EQIP contract. They are also preparing to implement the scheduled practices under their existing EQIP and CSP contracts. The Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Perdido River Farms and Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve EQIP contracts are on schedule and they are implementing their planned practices. The Perdido River Farms enterprise has just installed 90, 000 feet of fencing under their 2010 and 2011 EQIP contracts. Other practices are being designed and installation will be taking place in the next few months. MBWR enterprise completed 1400 acres of prescribed burning under their EQIP contract.

NRCS is working with PBCI staff and USDA agency staff to coordinate the development of a USDA program database for Tribal lands. This will be a beneficial tool in the Tribe's planning for future USDA program activities.

NRCS participated in the PBCI College and Career Fair events.

NRCS and CRAC Committee members of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. provided a tour for the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, of Perdido River Farms and Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve highlighting USDA program activities that have been completed on these two Tribal Enterprises.

### **Florida: Jason Bird EPM**

Jason Bird is the new EPM for NRCS Florida and is replacing John Harper who retired. Jason is a Dakota (Sioux) Indian from South Dakota and a tribal member of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribe. His tribe consists of approximately 12,000 members.

Cultural center in November.

Jason Bird has been sending out information about Indian Country with Florida NRCS employees for the American Indian Heritage month.

**Georgia: Lee Reeves EPM and Debbie T. Henry Tribal Liaison**

NRCS closed on a 283 acre WRP contract with a Native American Farmer in the southern part of the state.

On August 23<sup>rd</sup>, Frank Yancey, NRCS, Bryan Zulko, USDA Office of Advocacy & Outreach and Debbie Henry, NRCS met with Chief McCormick, Lower Muskogee Creek Tribe and discussed possible projects that the tribe may apply for as part of the Strike Force Initiative program. There were several possibilities discussed that the tribe expressed interest in.

In an effort to get the word out to all Native American Farmers, Debbie sent a copy of the Keepseagle Native American Farmer & Rancher Settlement paper informing them of the dates and locations of the claim form assistance meetings to all three Tribal Leaders in Georgia.

**Kentucky: Tim Hafner - EPM**

NRCS worked with Kentucky State Parks, to have their Annual Native American Weekend, the last weekend of January 2011.

NRCS participated in the two (2) largest Indian gatherings in KY. The Trail of Tears POW WOW, Hopkinsville, KY & the Shawnee Tribal gathering, London, KY.

Engineering position in KY filled by an American Indian.

Tim Hafner is the new EPM for NRCS Kentucky replacing Pat Green who recently retired.

**North Carolina: John McCoy Tribal Liaison**

NRCS worked on 5 new EQIP Contracts with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians for 2011

Finished 2 WHIP contracts this spring and developing EQIP contract on the Katuwah Farm Sites, and develop new access road system for Tribal Farmers access.

Published Keepseagle Loan Claims Request for Native Americans in local Paper set local meeting for Tribal members For October 18, 19,20th at Holiday Inn Express in Cherokee.

Finished Cultural Review and Environmental Assessment at Katuwah Land Tract, (Mother Town of the Cherokee).

**South Carolina: Daniel Cabaniss EPM**

NRCS had a recruiting/informational meeting with 2, tribes this summer, the Catawba and Wacamaw. These primarily deal with summer youth programs these tribes have. The goal is give information and encouragement to the youth to help them see the importance of natural resource conservation, and to make them aware of career/job opportunities in natural resources.

Distributed new posters to field offices, and sending out information for American Indian Heritage Month.

**Tennessee: Kelly Gupton**

Participated in the Middle Tennessee State University job fair.

Distributed new posters to field offices, and sending out information for American Indian Heritage Month.

### **Mississippi: Tim Oakes Tribal Liaison**

The Mississippi Choctaw have completed the first 4 practices required on three WHIP contracts. Practices included Permanent Forest Fire Lanes, Tree planting and Siva Cultural Burning. One Contract is on Historic Malmasion (Chief Greenwood Leflore Mansion). See related articles at [www.choctaw.org](http://www.choctaw.org)

Coming Full Circle September 2010 P17-19. Bolivian Delegation Visits NRCS Choctaw Tribal Field Office. A three hour meeting was held to discuss agriculture similarities and how the Bolivian government may pattern some USDA programs to assist agricultural producers. See: [www.ms.nrcs.usda.gov/news/SpecialEdition2011Newsletter.pdf](http://www.ms.nrcs.usda.gov/news/SpecialEdition2011Newsletter.pdf).

Mississippi Choctaw Field Office Assisted as liaison in a two year grant for location and logistical information about CESU/ Mississippi State University research work with Arundinaria Gigantea (River Cane) plant on Mississippi Choctaw lands. See: [www.rivercane.msstate.edu/](http://www.rivercane.msstate.edu/). New USDA plant information guide is being developed on Swamp Cane (Arundinaria Gigantea) The USDA publication will be out this summer authored by M Kat Anderson and co authored by Timothy Oakes. USDA, NRCS, National Plant Data Team c/o University of California at Davis Ethnoecologist The information will show the description, uses, adaptation, Tribal cultural use, establishment, and management and cultivars of the plant.

NRCS assisted in Choctaw Wildlife Jamboree 259 attendance.

NRCS Met to discuss the implementation of the (Ag-CEL) Agriculture - Choctaw Empowerment and Life. This is a program developed in partnership of MBCI Tribal Schools, MBCI Department of Natural Resources and Mississippi State University Extension Services Choctaw Agent, and our NRCS Choctaw Field Office. The program is for the Mississippi Choctaw Tribal Senior Class to promote agricultural environmental conservation based careers.

### **Virginia: Robin Smith EPM**

NRCS participated in the Drums of the Painted Mountain Pow Wow –September 16-18<sup>th</sup>; distributed Farm Bill information, seed packs with NRCS contact info, Keepseagle v Vilsack class action information and hundreds of Native American Heritage Poster.

Distribute information about Keepseagle v Vilsack class action to all state tribes.

Information was sent to Chief Kevin Brown, Pamunkey Tribe, about NRCS programs.

Distributed new posters to field offices, and sending out information for American Indian Heritage Month.

## West Region Report

I sent a request out by email requesting for accomplishment in their states for the West Region, few replied back.

The West Region covers a large part the United States. NRCS offices have been busy installing conservation practices throughout Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Pacific Basin, Utah, and Washington states. If I list a complete list of programs and practices, it will take a year of continuous compiling of information of what is being worked on. I know all of my friends and colleagues from NRCS are working all the time to improve program delivery.

I asked my colleagues to submit something that they have accomplished during the year that they are most proud of, besides EQIP. I am positive that my colleagues are proud of all the conservation practices implemented through EQIP contracts that are being worked on throughout Indian country in the West Region. There are a lot of success stories on conservation programs here in Arizona. During the planning process, our elders usually have a hard time understanding the decision-making process that pertains to their land. But as time goes by with planning and implementation, their faces will light up and they get excited since they were involved during the planning and construction. Usually at the end of the construction when people gather at the table for an appreciation lunch or dinner underneath a tree in a middle of home (not natives call this “no where”), the elders and landowners will say thanks to NRCS for being involved throughout the whole process. By the end of each construction, the contract holders will understand the overall federal and tribal programs and learn about how different federal and tribal departments work together to implement one conservation practice. Then the process starts all over with another contract.

Arizona NRCS has developed several Navajo brochures and a video for EQIP program delivery. Arizona has nineteen employees that are American Indian Employees and nine NRCS field offices that work directly with American Indian lands and the field offices located on the Indian lands.

Washington State has a female American Indian State Conservationist and has been the guidance and leader to our staff throughout the region, which she probably is not aware of. The Washington NRCS has Tribal Connection News articles that provide program delivery to Indian Lands. Many thanks to her and her staff for providing assistance to the Association.

If I start naming and listing projects and names of NRCS employees, I know that I am going to miss a name somewhere and that individual will feel left out. To my colleagues, members of the National Council, and Executive Officers, I feel this was a successful year with conservation implementation through various NRCS programs in the West Region. Enjoy your holidays. Thank you for support.

Ralph Goh

West Regional Representative

# Native American Legal Update

Posted at 12:31 PM on December 6, 2011 by Greg Guedel

## White House Tribal Nations Conference Progress Report Released

The White House has released a Progress Report detailing the actions and policies that have emerged from the Tribal Nations conference meetings conducted beginning in 2010. In his addresses relating to the conferences, President Obama made clear: "What matters far more than words—what matters far more than any resolution or declaration—are actions to match those words." The White House report states:



**The Administration's commitment to that standard of action is reflected in the many federal policies and programs discussed throughout this report that are being implemented by federal agencies in response to concerns raised by American Indians and Alaska Natives. These policies are focused on healthcare, education, public safety and economic development for American Indian and Alaska Native communities and protecting tribal lands and the environment.**

You can review the entire Progress Report [HERE](#).

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## New Executive Order

Updated December 5, 2011

By Rob Capriccioso December 5, 2011

President Barack Obama made news on December 2 when the White House announced his signature of an executive order, titled, "Improving American Indian and Alaska Native Education Opportunities and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities." The order is meant to improve educational performance and options for Native American and Alaska Native students from early education through college.

The signing was done in conjunction with Obama's third White House Tribal Nations Conference, which saw hundreds of tribal leaders gather at the Department of the Interior's headquarters to hash out Indian issues with administration officials.

"We're going to find ways to reduce the dropout rate," Obama said in his speech to the gathered leaders. "We're going to help students who've already dropped out re-enter the education system. And we're going to strengthen our tribal colleges and universities. They are cornerstones of their community and they deserve our support."

When Obama announced his action to the crowd, they applauded loudly. The order turned out to be the most significant executive commitment the president offered that day.

The order reads, in part: "It is the policy of my Administration to support activities that will strengthen the Nation by expanding educational opportunities and improving educational outcomes for all AI/AN students in order to fulfill our commitment to furthering tribal self-determination and to help ensure that AI/AN students have an opportunity to learn their Native languages and histories and receive complete and competitive educations that prepare them for college, careers, and productive and satisfying lives."

"My Administration is also committed to improving educational opportunities for students attending TCUs [Tribal Colleges and Universities]. TCUs maintain, preserve, and restore Native languages and cultural traditions; offer a high-quality college education; provide career and technical education, job training, and other career-building programs; and often serve as anchors in some of the country's poorest and most remote areas."

The order establishes a White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education, which the Secretary of Education and the Secretary of the Interior will co-chair. The initiative is then supposed to carry out efforts to affirm the federal government's commitment to Native education.

Reps. Ed Markey, D-Mass., the Ranking Member of the Natural Resources Committee, and Dan Boren, D-Okla., the Ranking Member of the Committee's Subcommittee on Indian and Alaska Native Affairs, were quick to praise the Obama administration for its effort.

"The Obama administration is stepping up efforts to keep more students in Indian Country from dropping out, and indeed thriving in educational settings," Markey said in a statement. "From Newtonian calculus to Native culture, the educational system in tribal communities must better serve the scholars of the future, and this initiative should help."

"I was very pleased today at the President's announcement that he will implement the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education," added Boren. "This is an important advancement in fulfilling our commitment to our tribal communities. This focus on tribal education is needed now more than ever. American Indian and Alaska Native students have a dropout rate higher than any other racial or ethnic group in America. This is a trend we need to reverse, and the new education initiative is a step in the right direction."

The ball now lands in Secretary of Education Arne Duncan's court. He is called for in the order to appoint an executive director to lead the initiative.

<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2011/12/05/obama-signs-executive-order-on-education-and-tribal-colleges-65644>

#### IMPROVING AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND STRENGTHENING TRIBAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/12/02/executive-order-improving-american-indian-and-alaska-native-educational->



# AIANEA Join Today

*Celebrate our rich culture which includes tribal government, food, native traditions, natural resources, education and family connecting with the Natural Resource Conservation Service employees, Diversity of Tribes and Tribal Elders from 100's of different tribes across the United States.*

- Who can join AIANEA? **Anyone**
- Are you required to be of American Indian or Alaska Native heritage to join this employee association? **No**
- What are the benefits of becoming a member?
  - \* Network with NRCS employees throughout the United States
  - \* Learn about diversity of American Indian Cultures and Traditions
  - \* Mentor or become a Trail Blazer (*protégé*) in the **Bi-Cultural Mentoring Program**
  - \* Educational Opportunities
  - \* Support Tribal Youth Activities
  - \* Leadership Opportunities

How to join the American Indian Alaska Native Employees Association  
<http://www.aianea.com/index.html>

You can also visit us on Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/American-Indian-Alaska-Native-Employees-Association/160121254007738?sk=wall>

# Membership Form

## American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS

“Respect, Harmony, and Beauty”

[www.aianea.com](http://www.aianea.com)

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

Harold Bryant  
1510 29<sup>th</sup> 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 20\_\_\_\_.

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

# The 2011 AIANEA National Council

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