

The Four Winds

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



Elder Quote

"To be healthy in every way. Body, mind, spirit, Mother Earth. I think that's what we need to go forward in our life for seven generations to come. We're all in the same canoe, and we all need to paddle with the same blade together."

Marie Meade, 8/13/08

Marie is a Yup'ik Elder from Nunapicuaq in Southwest Alaska



2017

Respect, Harmony, and Beauty

In this Issue

Teachings from AIANEA Elders	Page 2
2017 President's Message	Page 3
2018 Nominations and Elections	Page 3
2016 Past President's Message	Page 4
WEWAI in Florida.....	Page 5
Managing Feral Hogs and Native Pollinators Workshop	Page 6
American Indian Science and Engineering Society	Page 7
Strengthening Partnerships	Page 8
Pueblo Youth at Tribal Nations Conference... Page 9	
Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes	
Partner with NRCS	Page 10
Introducing Derek Kelso -	
So. Central Region Rep.....	Page 11
2017 AIANEA Dues Information	Page 12
Membership Form.....	Page 13
2017 National Council.....	Page 14



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@aianeas.com



Teachings from AI ANEA Elders— Connecting the Past with the Future

Great Spirit, you know my heart.
You know that I care for our Mother Earth.
You know that I want to keep the waters clean and the air clean.
To keep our Mother Earth healthy so that we can grow food.
We recognize that everything and everyone has their own responsibility on the Earth.
Creator, I ask that you help me with these tasks so that I can do my part to provide life for the next seven generations.

KEHKIKEMUWAKOM - TEACHINGS

The Sweat lodge is a sacred ceremonial tradition that varies from one tribe/territory to the next. The lodge is constructed as a place to conduct ceremony. Sweats vary in intent ranging from purification/cleansing to healing sweats. Other types of sweats include clan sweats and sweats based on male or female identification. The structure of the Lodge is a dome-shaped structure made from saplings. When people talk about the lodge they talk about entering the womb of Mother Earth. It is a sacred place to many indigenous people. It is believed that the sweat lodge ceremony acknowledges what the participants need. When you enter the sweat lodge you are seeking the help of the Creator, GheChe'Nawais, and the Spirit World. There are four rounds – East, South, West, and North. Our Sweat Lodge is a Prayer Lodge calling on all of Creation to help all our people.

Sweat lodge keepers are men and women who have participated and practiced in sweat lodge ceremonies for many years. The keeper is well versed in the history and capacity of their lodge. It is important to let them know of any health concerns before entering the lodge. When requesting a sweat an offering of tobacco is made to the sweat keeper.

"All Our Relations:"

Always sweat with a sweat lodge keeper that you know and trust.

It's always okay to leave the sweat if you are uncomfortable, too hot, or feeling unwell. Say, ***"All Our Relations"*** and leave.

Thank you, "Wabanaki Health and Wellness"



Wabanaki
Health and Wellness

Wabanaki Health and Wellness is an agency for tribally-enrolled Native Americans based in Bangor, Maine. The services include culturally sensitive case management; free HIV testing and screening; and health promotion.

Wabanaki Member Tribes of Maine:

Aroostook Band of Micmac Indians
Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians
Passamaquoddy Tribe, Indian Township
Passamaquoddy Tribe, Pleasant Point
Penobscot Nation

" OLDEST GOVERNMENTS ON OUR MOTHER EARTH"



Dr. Carol Crouch, 2017 President's Message

Greetings and Blessings! In this issue of Four Winds I am happy to share with you that nominations for the 2017 AIANEA awards will be released soon. To receive an award the awardee must not have received the same award from AIANEA in the past two years. Some awards are reserved for AIANEA members who have paid their annual dues or those who have a lifetime membership. Our AIANEA awards provide an opportunity to recognize our members who are dedicated to making a difference and keeping our Mission and Vision alive. An email with categories and nomination forms will be sent out soon.



I am proud to announce our scholarship committee is moving forward to finalize our scholarship application for the AIANEA and Harold Bryant scholarships. We are committed to awarding these scholarships before January 1, 2018. Our council is making huge process in updating our current by-laws. We released the announcement requesting nominations for 2018 National Council positions for the Northern Plains Representative, South Central Representative, Northeast (East) representative and 2nd Vice President. I deeply appreciate the time and commitment our members, Elders and AIANEA council dedicate to keeping the association running and functioning in a matter that is making a difference across Indian Country. You inspire me.

Respectfully,

Dr. Carol Crouch

"Everything on the earth has a purpose, every disease an herb to cure it, and every person a mission. This is the Indian theory of existence." Mourning Dove, Salish

Nominations are due October 25, 2017. The following are the 2018 National Council positions for which we are seeking nominations:

Northern Plains Representative – Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming

South Central Representative – Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas

Northeast (East) representative – Maine, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, New York and West Virginia

2nd Vice President

The election rules are as follows:

You must be a dues-paying member to nominate someone for a position.

You can only nominate a dues-paying member who is in good standing.

The person being nominated should be in agreement and accept the nomination, and submit a bio by the deadline. This bio will be provided to the membership as part of the ballot.

You can only nominate someone for a Regional Representative position if you work in one of the states represented by that Representative. The person being nominated must be able to reasonably represent that region, but does not necessarily have to work in one of the region states unless nominating themselves.

Any dues-paying member can nominate someone for the Second Vice-President position.

We will take nominations until October 25. Once nominations are submitted, a ballot will be prepared and forwarded via a subsequent email.

The election will conclude at the end of the business day on November 30.



Athena Cholas, 2016 Past President's Message

As I start to write this article I see a Facebook post from a dear friend. She writes, "My son died today. Please pray for us." Since I began my term as AIANEA President at the beginning of 2016 there have been many posts like this from our AIANEA family. "My husband lost the fight to cancer." "My dad passed away." "My mother is recovering from a heart attack." "My daughter has a serious illness."



Athena and Chee-ee (grandmother)

Our AIANEA membership is small. Those who have been able to commit time to the Association do so with humble dedication and with passion for Native American culture and values. I am very grateful to those individuals who keep the Association together. I am also grateful to the silent ones who are passing traditional values to future generations, who are protecting soil and water and who work without recognition. You know who you are and I thank you.

As I send my condolences to my friend whose young son just passed away I think of Mandy Harvey, a 2017 finalist on America's Got Talent. When she became deaf at the age of 18 she became severely depressed. One day she fell and as she lay on the ground she thought she could just stay there and die. Then she realized she had a choice. She decided to get up and live. We all have important choices every day. We get up and we live. We see that the pollinator populations are dwindling so we plant native shrubs and trees. We see the bee populations declining so we buy organic. We see that young people need mentors so we volunteer. We give. We share. We help. We get up as Mandy did and even if we are not able to thrive we can greet the morning with thanksgiving and start the new day with hope.

As members of AIANEA we have our motto to guide our decisions and choices. We live with Respect. We choose what we eat and what we buy with respect for Father Sun and Mother Earth, for our brothers and sisters above ground and below ground. We live in Beauty. With our work we create beauty. We live in Harmony. We strive for harmony with all races, all religions, and all ages. The knowledge of our Elders guides us and inspires us.

We are blessed to have this organization to bring us together. I encourage everyone to take the time during the upcoming Native American Heritage month to call another AIANEA member and have a short conversation. Say hi and get to know a little about each other. Join in the National monthly teleconferences. Volunteer on a committee if you are not already. Do the best you can.

Blessings to all,
Athena Cholas



Working Effectively with American Indians (WEWAI) in Hollywood, Florida



A traditional hunting camp exhibit at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum on the Big Cypress Reservation.

Approximately 55 NRCS employees attended the WEWAI training hosted by the Seminole Tribe of Indians in Hollywood, FL on August 7-11. In addition to NRCS staff, members of the Seminole Tribe staff attended as well as three FEMA employees.

The training took place at the tribe's Native Learning Center. The media production team recorded the training which was streamed live to other reservations in Florida so that tribal staff could attend. This was the first time the WEWAI training was recorded or live streamed. For those interested in viewing the recordings, click <https://livestream.com/accounts/4440812>.

Instructors for the course included; Levi Montoya, NRCS Colorado; Gina Kerzman, NRCS Washington; and Pedro Torres, NRCS California.



Participants tour the boardwalk outside at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum on the Big Cypress Reservation.



“Managing Feral Hogs and Native Pollinators”

A Workshop Hosted by Seminole Nation

Feral hogs are a veritable nightmare for land and resource managers trying to keep the numbers of these animals and the damage that they do under control. Realizing that managing feral hog growth, pollinators and soil health are topics Tribes and producers want more information on, the Seminole Nation partnered with NRCS, USDA agencies and conservation partners to host a workshop on May 18th.

The workshop focused on best management practices to address invasive feral hogs and eastern red cedar, approaches for planting critical habitat for pollinators and key soil preparation for gardens to promote soil health. NRCS, Farm Service Agency (FSA), Rural Development (RD), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) provided updates on their programs to evaluate awareness of USDA programs, technical assistance and services available to Tribes, tribal members, small and large producers.

NRCS provided an update on changes to the Conservation Stewardship Program and Conservation Client Gateway (CCG) website. The Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project (OBHRP) provided a solar pump demonstration. Partners for the workshop included the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (OTCAC), NRCS, FSA, RD, NASS, APHIS, OSU Extension Service, Seminole County Conservation District, and Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture and the Seminole Nation.



Assistant Chief Lewis Johnson, tribal members and local producers.



Feral swine in the U.S. cause more than 1.5 billion in damages and control costs every year. The largest populations are found in California, Florida, Oklahoma and Texas.

In 1957 the Seminoles became a federally recognized tribe with a modern cattle operation. The tribe today runs a 12,000 head herd on behalf of the tribe's 4,000 members. Sixty-seven tribal members and their families participate in a cooperative and raise 5,000 head. Every cattle-producing member of the Seminole Tribe signs a cattle raising agreement.

#Fridaysonthefarm Seminole Pride
Markets Success



NRCS Provides Travel Scholarships for Students of American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES)

April 27-29th, Chandler, AZ- AISES held their annual Leadership Summit bringing together students from as far away as Alaska and Hawaii. Deborah Clairmont, NRCS National American Indian/Alaska Native Special Emphasis Program Manager (NAIAN SEPM), met and congratulated the selected NRCS Travel Scholarship recipients:

Tanya Harrison-University of Hawaii at Manoa, majoring in Natural Resources,
Sara Kroening-University of Minnesota, majoring in Environmental Science,
Miranda Buckley- Cal Poly Pomona, majoring in GIS and Plant Science .

The 2017 American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) Leadership Summit was held this year at the Gila River Indian Community- Wild Horse Pass Hotel in Chandler, AZ. The Gila River Indian Community- Akimel O’otham (Pima), Pee-Posh (Maricopa) and Tohono O’odham people were some of the world’s premier basket makers and continue to be active today.

The three students were selected through an AISES and NRCS Sponsorship Agreement. All three of the students repeatedly explained to Clairmont: “Had I not been selected for the NRCS Travel Scholarship, I would not otherwise been able to afford to attend the conference.” While their experiences were all unique they had this to say: “I have learned more than I imagined about myself and how to be a better leader.”

Sara Kroening said, “Attending the leadership summit was a life-altering experience for me. I now carry with me the lessons I learned from professionals and experts on how to be an effective leader.

“The leadership methods I was taught explained how to view myself, others, and the problems I aim to address in a holistic way,” said Miranda Felix-Buckley.

Nathaniel Todea, NRCS Utah State Hydraulic Engineer, supported Clairmont with encouraging students and helping them with career choices and understanding the Pathways Program. “I am so thankful for the networking event because I was able to meet Nathaniel Todea who gave me insight as to what jobs are out there, and that I do have the potential to get an internship still even though summer is approaching quickly,” said Sara Kroening.

Tribal Students from across the nation met to learn leaderships skills and professional networking with corporations and government agencies during the three day Leadership Summit event. This event is a much smaller event compared to the AISES National Conference held September 21-23, 2017 in Denver, Colorado where 1200 attendees included American Indian high school and college students, educators, professionals, tribal nations, tribal enterprises, universities, corporations and government agencies.



(L to R) Deborah Clairmont, Tanya Harrison, Sara Kroening, Miranda Felix-Buckley



Strengthening Partnerships

National American Indian Agriculture Symposium

The 2016 American Indian Agricultural Symposium, “Where Do We Go from Here” was held in Las Vegas, December 5 through December 8. NRCS held three concurrent sessions focused on importance of conservation planning, managing grazing plans and technical service provider opportunities. On December 5, NRCS held a listening session to identify how NRCS can improve delivery of NRCS programs and technical assistance to American Indian Tribes. In addition to a jam-packed general agenda, a full youth conference was held. According to Dr. Carol Crouch, “This symposium provided the opportunity for over 575 attendees to network and collaborate on how we can work together effectively to improve, protect and preserve our land for future generations.”



Dr. Carol Crouch, NRCS, Doyle Bacon, Choctaw Nation and future farmer at IAC conference



Center: Earth Team volunteer, Kasey Jo Blevins, and six Mill Creek FFA members join Dr. Carol Crouch to work the USDA partnership booth.

Chickasaw Nation Festival

Earth Team volunteer, Kasey Jo Blevins, and Mill Creek FFA students assisted at the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and USDA partners’ informational booth at the 56th Annual Chickasaw Nation meeting and festival. Attendees had the opportunity to receive valuable information on NRCS programs and copy of the *Trees and Bees* poster. The Farm Service Agency and Rural Development also have grant and program information at the booth. The festival was held in Tishomingo, Oklahoma from September

Comanche Nation and Kiowa Tribe

Gary O’Neill, Oklahoma NRCS State Conservationist, and USDA leadership from Rural Development, Farm Service Agency, National Agriculture Statistics Service, Risk Management Agency and the Food and Nutrition Service meet with Chairman Nelson, Comanche Nation, and Chairman Komalty, Kiowa Tribe, to identify ways USDA agencies may strengthen their working relationship with these Tribes and their tribal members. The face to face meeting focused on the conservation and economic development needs of the Tribes and how they may better utilize USDA programs, resources and technical assistance. “Collaboration, consultation and communication with Tribal leaders and USDA leadership is key to successfully identifying the conservation concerns and needs of the Tribes to better serve and inform them of USDA programs and funding opportunities,” stated Carol Crouch, State Tribal Liaison NRCS.



Pueblo of Isleta Youth Shares His Experience

As a selected White House Tribal Nations Conference Youth Delegate, Alexander Smith, age 17, spent September 25-27, 2016 in Washington, DC, for the White House Tribal Nations Conference and Youth Gathering. Alex is a senior at Sandia Preparatory School in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He is from Isleta Pueblo and scored in the top 1% in the Nation on his SAT. Alex was one of 100 native youth selected from the National Native Youth Network 'Generation Indigenous Initiative' to attend the event.

Below is an excerpt from a paper Alex wrote on his experience at the White House Tribal Nations Conference:

"I don't know how many people fit in Mellon Auditorium, which is where the main conference was, but walking into a room six stories tall, packed with tribal leaders, some of whom took five planes from remote, Arctic tribes (while in the midst of preparing to be materially cut off from society for four months due to severe winters), put it all into perspective. Each one of the leaders that had shared the auditorium with me represented hundreds, or sometimes thousands of lives: struggles, prayers, and dreams.

It struck me then, sitting in a grand, Romanesque hall: Indian Country is big, hundreds of tribes big. It is so big, that for most of history, it has endured turmoil within a Tribe and between Tribes, but now it is clearly different. Now, Indian Country is working toward rising together, toward fighting for what is right. There are many associations, branches of government, and everyday, hard-working people, some native and some not, fighting for Indian Country.

A highlight of the Tribal Nations Conference was listening and briefly speaking with Secretary Sally Jewell. Being a high school student, authenticity is almost non-existent in my day-to-day experience so Secretary Jewell's compassion, deep understanding, and strong listening skills were admirable, to say the least. I particularly took interest in the panel discussion on the environment and sustainability that



2016 Pueblo of Isleta Governor, Eddie P. Torres, with Alex Smith at the White House Tribal Nations Conference

she participated in as these issues are of great importance to me. Another highlight was shaking President Obama's hand, but I don't like to brag. 😊

More information on the Generation Indigenous Initiative (Gen-I) can be obtained from the Center for Native American Youth, at the Aspen Institute, online at <http://cnay.org>. Find out about native youth Champions for Change, how to be a mentor to native youth and resources available for native youth.

The 2016 President's Tribal Conference was the eighth and final conference held by President Barack Obama. The annual conferences were fulfilment of a promise that President Obama made to the Crow Nation in May 2008 to ensure that tribal nations have a seat at the table when facing important decisions about their communities.



Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Partner with NRCS for Soil Health Workshop

On June 15th, the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes partnered with NRCS to hold a soil health workshop in Watonga, Oklahoma. According to Eddie Hamilton, Governor of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, “This workshop is part of the ongoing soil health partnership between the Tribe and NRCS.” The workshop provided farmers an opportunity to learn about some of the options they have for the application of soil health practices. Issues discussed at the workshop included grain and forage sorghum production following winter wheat as part of a soil health regime; ongoing research on new crop species and varieties being conducted by the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS); producer perspectives on planting and grazing summer cover crops; presentations from NRCS on soil health, the NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and the new Client Gateway initiative. In addition, the National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) discussed the importance and benefits of the agriculture census. There was also a solar pump demonstration and a soil health tour. Nathan Hart, Cheyenne & Arapaho Economic & Agriculture Director, provided an overview of the agriculture demonstration, education and outreach efforts being undertaken by the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribe in partnership with NRCS. Other partners for the workshop included Redlands Community College,

Blaine County Conservation District, Rural Development, Farm Service Agency, Risk Management Agency, Blaine County OSU Extension Service, Oklahoma Black Historically Research Project, Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council and the USDA Southern Plains Climate Hub.

Article was submitted by Carol Crouch.

The Cheyenne and Arapaho people formed an alliance together around 1811 to strengthen their presence on the plains. Like the Cheyenne, the Arapaho language is part of the Algonquian group, although the two languages are not mutually intelligible. The Arapaho were present with the Cheyenne at the Sand Creek Massacre when a peaceful encampment of mostly women, children, and the elderly were attacked and massacred by US soldiers. Both Cheyenne and Arapaho are split into northern and southern divisions. The Southern Cheyenne and Southern Arapaho were assigned to the same reservation in Oklahoma Indian Territory and remained together as the federally recognized Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes.



Introducing Derek Kelso - So. Central Region Rep.

Tell everyone a little bit about yourself and how you started working for NRCS.

Hello, my name is Derek Kelso. I am a native of Southeast Oklahoma and a member of the Choctaw Nation Tribe of Oklahoma. I was raised in McCurtain County, Oklahoma on a small agricultural operation. I started working as an Earth Team Volunteer in high school for a FFA Service Project out of my local NRCS Office which led to me looking into the internship field for the NRCS. I started as an intern the summer of 2007 and worked many areas in Oklahoma as a summer intern and also out of the Stillwater Field Office as a part time intern employee while completing my education.



the best job I can by getting good sound conservation on the ground to improve the quality of life of the land for my Tribe (Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma), my Agency (NRCS), my home (Southeast Oklahoma), and my country. The most rewarding part of my job is seeing where my contribution to conservation has had a positive impact on the ground.

Did you have a mentor or a person who had the most impact on you as an employee?

I have had a couple of different ones but probably the person with the biggest impact on me was the local District Conservationist Jim Green from my home county that got me started with the NRCS. Even though he is now retired he still acts as a mentor to me today.

I went full time as an employee upon completion of my Bachelor's degree. While working a dual office position for the Miami and Vinita Oklahoma Field Offices I was able to work with several of the Native American Tribes that call extreme Northeast Oklahoma home. I moved to the Hugo, Oklahoma Field office in the fall of 2011 and have served as the Soil Conservationist there to current date. In February of 2013 I took on the role of Tribal Liaison for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma along with my duties of being the soil conservationist of Choctaw County Oklahoma in the Hugo FO.

What is the most rewarding part of your current position?

In the time between 2013 and now I have seen many changes within the Choctaw Nation and NRCS, some good, some bad. But I continue to strive to do

What is your favorite saying or quote?

"You cannot plow a field by only turning it over in your mind." Unknown.

Thank you, Derek, for being the AIANEA South Central Region Representative.



2017 AIANEA Dues Information



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

**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>



Mural at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This mural portrays a ceremonial dance dedicated to rain-making spirits. Male and female dancers give thanks for the beauties of life, abundant rain and plentiful crops.



Membership Form

American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS

“Respect, Harmony, and Beauty”

www.aianea.com

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

Pam Crow, AIANEA Treasurer

101 So. Main Street

Temple, TX 76501

Date: _____

Click if ok to share Contact info with
AIANEA members

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

Donated Membership - \$25— please select:

This donation is for AIANEA to offer to an individual

This donation is for this individual: Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

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 2017 AIANEA National Council

Dr. Carol Crouch – President
Kirt Peterson- 1st Vice President
Cameron Clark - 2nd Vice President
Derek Kelso - So. Central Region Rep.
Melissa Allen - Southeast Region Rep.
Susan Looper - West Region Rep.
Debe Walchuk - Midwest Region Rep.
Cassius Spears - East Region Rep.
- Northern Plains Region Rep.
Melissa Sturdivant - Secretary
Pam Crow - Treasurer
Bill Parrish - Co-Treasurer

