



# NEWS RELEASE

 **NRCS** Natural Resources Conservation Service

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## **Natural Resources Conservation Service Selects Native American Painting for 2008 American Indian Heritage Month Poster**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service chose a painting by Kathy Sturch, from Durant, Okla., and a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, for the NRCS 2008 American Indian Heritage Month Poster.

The painting, “Touch the Earth,” recalls the passion the Choctaw people have for creation and their kinship with the earth.

“The Choctaw people passionately love the earth. The ancient ones walked barefoot, sat and lay on the ground because it was good to touch the earth. The old Choctaw believed the Great Spirit created the earth and all the creatures that drink from her bounties and listen to her whispers. The Choctaw’s passion and kinship with all creatures of the earth, sky and water continues today. The earth nourishes and provides for man. Man must care for the earth and do it now harm. If the earth dies, man dies,” Sturch said about the story behind the artwork.

Sixteen thousand copies of the poster will be distributed to all NRCS offices nationwide. Distribution of the poster is part of the month-long event, held each November, to educate the public about the heritage, history, art and traditions of American Indians and Alaska Natives.

The painting will be unveiled at the National Association of Conservation Districts conference Aug. 22 in Hot Springs.

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