Issue 5
October 2013

AIAN SEPM Newsletter

Inside this issue: Page:

2013 AIAN Heritage Month Poster	1 & 2
Wild Rice	3 & 4
USDA 1994 Land-Grant Program	5
Links of Interest	6
Choctaw Fresh Produce Success	7 & 8
Inter-Tribal Environmental Council Conf.	8
Navajo Nation getting new Livestock wells	9
Wild Rice Recipes	9
Working Effectively with Amer. Indians	10-12
Creation Story—Iroquois	13
Men's Northern Traditional Dance	14
Recruitment Videos	15
Ted Herrera awarded Sequoyah Fellowship Medallion	15
Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers	16
Careful Gathering & Stewardship of Edible Mushrooms	17& 18
Three Sisters Peoples Garden—Connecticut	18
Feathered War Bonnets/Headresses	19
Utah AISES helps w Native Amer. Summit	20
Training on Butterfly Farming	20
New York AISES conf.	21

2013 AIAN Heritage Month Poster

By Sandy Penn, Michigan AIAN SEPM and Outreach Coordinator

On September 5, Michigan State Conservationist, Garry Lee unveiled the NRCS 2013 American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month Poster in a ceremony at the tribal headquarters of the *Little River Band of Ottawa Indians* in Manistee, Michigan. Tribal Ogema, Larry Romanelli and Tribal artist Shirley M. Brauker were on hand to discuss the painting and the importance of Manoomin or "wild rice" in the culture and diet of the Anishinaabe (or Ojibwe.) Prior to the presentation at the tribal headquarters, artist, Shirley Brauker, spent the morning with Mr. Lee, and some NRCS and Tribal staff, at one of the Tribe's wild rice sites where we learned the techniques used to harvest wild rice.

Larry Romanelli, Shirley Brauker and Garry Lee

This project started in the fall of 2012, when Michigan NRCS was honored to be selected to create the AIAN Heritage Month Poster for 2013. In March, we sent letters, flyers and news releases out to Tribes and tribal communities asking artists to submit original paintings for the poster competition. Shirley M. Brauker answered our request to create a painting that provides the artists' interpretation of American Indian Culture and Heritage, keeping in mind the theme we selected for the 2013 poster. Our theme is *Land of Great Water – Sustainer of Life.* Michigan is translated in Anishinabown (the language of the Anishinabek) as "Land of Great Water" and, at NRCS, we recognize that clean water is crucial for sustaining life.

Garry Lee and Shirley Brauker in canoes with rice beaters at the ricing site

Continued on page 2

2013 AIAN Heritage Month Poster Competition, Cont.

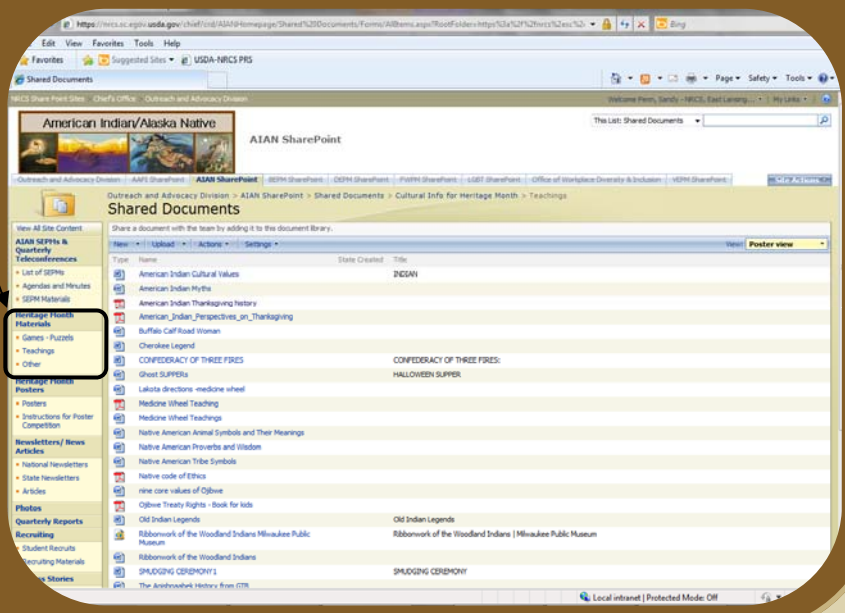
All the artwork created in the competition was amazing, giving the judging team difficulty in selecting a winner. However, the painting by Ms. Brauker of three American Indian women harvesting wild rice really showed us an important aspect of Tribal Heritage in the Great Lakes region and was chosen overwhelmingly by the team. The acrylic-on-canvas painting, "The Rice Gatherers" depicts three Native American women harvesting wild rice with "beaters" in a birch bark canoe, while the "rice spirit" (whose hair is wild rice) looks on from the surface of the water.

Members of the Michigan team that created the theme and judged the paintings include: Jacob Swaney, Soil Con; Sandy Penn, Outreach Coordinator, Jim Marshall, Area Biologist, Scott Hughey, DC, and Joanna Senske, Area Admin Coordinator

Heritage Month Materials are available on the AIAN SEPM SharePoint site at

https://nrcs.sc.egov.usda.gov/chief/crd/AIANHomepage/default.aspx

Click on "*Heritage Month Materials*" to get games, puzzles, teachings and other materials to share with your staff during American Indian/ Alaska Native Heritage Month.



Manoomin— Wild Rice

From MANOOMIN.COM

Wild Rice plays a major role in the lives of Ojibwe People. Known as manoomin, which translates into 'the good berry,' wild rice is an historic staple in the Ojibwe diet. According to oral tradition, centuries ago the Ojibwe were instructed to find the place where "the food grows on the water." This led to a long migration from the East coast to the shores of the Great Lakes and the northern inland lakes of the Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota where flowing fields of manoomin were found in abundance. Seen as a special gift from the Creator, manoomin became a healthy staple in the Ojibwe diet. When finished correctly, wild rice could be stored for long periods of time to be available when other foods were not. Besides being basic to the traditional diet, manoomin also developed importance culturally and spiritually and remains an important element in many feasts and ceremonies today.

The description of the traditional Ojibwe harvest of wild rice that follows is based on an account written by Lac du Flambeau high school students, Jeff Allen, Raelle Allen, Gabrielle Poupart, and Bill Eckerstorfer, regarding the gathering of manoomin.

Harvesting & Processing

Traditional methods used by the Ojibwe people to harvest manoomin are still used today. The same is true for finishing the harvested rice,

Manoominike ~ Wild Ricing

Manoomin, called "wild rice" outside the Ojibwe culture, has played a central role in tribal life. It has spiritual attributes, and its discovery is recorded in legends. It is used in ceremonies and as a major food source. Traditionally, its harvest promoted social interaction in late summer each year. In August our people moved to their manoomin camps for harvest. Once manoomin ripened most energy was focused on harvesting. Manoomin was our main food source.

Manoominikewin (Making Rice)

Harvesting wild rice is also called knocking the rice. Canoes are the best watercraft to use because their shape and smoothness causes the least harm to the rice plant. The only tools needed for harvesting manoomin are those required to move the canoe through the plants and ricing sticks to thresh the kernels into the canoe.

Harvesters used canoe paddles to get to the wild rice beds, but long poles were used to move through the rice beds. These traditional forked poles were used because they protected the plants' root systems. Every harvester owned a pair of ricing sticks, also called knockers. The sticks measured about three feet in length. Lightweight wood was necessary for making the knockers so the ricer's arms would not tire, and the plant would not be damaged. A very smooth and light stick, hardly noticeable in the hand, was desired.

The technique used for knocking was simple: the sticks were held in each hand, and the harvester reached to the side and pulled in as many stalks as he or she could over the edge of the canoe and knocked the kernels into the bottom of the canoe. Special care was taken to clean the canoe and wear clean clothing prior to and while harvesting manoomin. The same method and implements are used today.

Drying

Freshly harvested rice must be dried almost as soon as it comes off the lake. If not, it tends to mold quickly. Rice was carried to the campsites in bark trays where it was to be spread out to dry. Freshly harvested rice continues to ripen, but must have air, sun, and sometimes heat to rid it of moisture before

Continued on page 4

Manoomin— Wild Rice, continued

roasting. Rice was dried on woven mats, animal skins, layers of grass or sheets of birch bark, sewn together, called apakwaan. While spread out, the rice was picked over to remove pieces of stalks, leaves, and insects. If all the rice could not be dried immediately, it was preserved in its green state by keeping it in water for up to a week. Holes were dug in the soil by lakes, and rice stored this way in earlier times.

Parching

Parching or roasting the kernel was an important step in preserving this food for later use. This process served several functions: it reduced the amount of moisture in the grain so it could be preserved; it destroyed the germ so it would not re-sprout, and it loosened the hull from the grain. The grain can be left unparched for a while, although our ancestors preferred it parched as soon as possible after harvest.

Our ancestors originally parched rice using woven rush mats and scaffolds. A stick scaffolding that spanned the fireplace supported the mats. The rice was turned constantly until roasted brown. The mats were woven tightly, making it difficult for the rice to fall through. It is said that these mats would glow red in this process. As the kernels separate from the seed shells in parching, the grain takes on a golden, then brownish yellow hue, and then changes to a glossy, dark brown to black color.

After European contact, large cast iron kettles acquired through trade were used for parching. The kettle was placed over a kindling wood fire, and the rice added to the kettle. Once over the fire, it was stirred constantly so it would not scorch. The rice would pop like popcorn if it was not stirred.

Hulling

After parching, the manoomin was hulled to remove the tight fitting chaff from the rice kernel. The traditional method for this involved hard labor. A small pit was dug in the earth, and the manoomin was "danced" with special moccasins. An average treading pit measured about 18 inches in depth and two to three feet in diameter. The sides were lined with wooden slats, and a block of wood was placed at the bottom. In Ojibwe the pit is called a bootaagan. After European contact, wooden and then metal buckets were used in this process. The pit was lined with deer hide. The moccasins had no beadwork on them. The bottom of the moccasins could not touch the ground because they were involved in processing this food. The moccasins were knee high to protect the huller's legs from the sharp barbs that are on the hulls. Proper treading required great strength and was difficult. To assist in this process, two poles forming a V-shaped railing were erected for the huller to hold onto while he or she danced on the rice, preventing too much weight from being placed on the rice.

Winnowing

Hulled manoomin was cleaned of its chaff before being stored or cooked. Traditionally, the rice would be taken to high ground or a rock outcropping near a lake so the wind could aid in this process. For winnowing our people used a birch bark tray called nooshkaachinaagan. The birch bark was heated, cut, folded, shaped then sewn with basswood fiber. The rim was made of ash and lashed to the edge of the tray. A covering was placed on the ground, and the rice gently tossed in the air. With the action of the tosser and the aid of the wind, the chaff was blown away and the rice kernels fell back in the winnowing basket. This method also helped grade the rice. The chaff blew away, the broken rice fell on the covering on the ground, and the full kernels remain on the tray. Once cleaned the rice was ready for storage.

USDA 1994 Tribal Land-Grant Colleges and Universities Program

From the USDA webpage

The USDA and AIHEC Leadership Group is comprised of nine USDA Mission Area decision-makers and nine 1994 tribal land-grant college and university president members of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC). The leadership group meets face-to-face two times yearly to ensure that USDA programs and services are accessible to the 1994 land-grant Institutions. Further, this group meets ensure that USDA Mission Area representatives understand the uniqueness of and issues affecting the Nation's thirty-two 1994 Land-Grant Institutions, most of which are tribally-controlled. The USDA and AIHEC Leadership Group meets face-to-face twice yearly.

to

This Memorandum of Agreement establishes a cooperative framework between USDA and the AIHEC to conduct programs and activities that will enhance the capability of American Indians/Alaska Natives to attain educational excellence and to contribute positively to the fulfillment of the USDA's mission. To obtain more information about the Memorandum of Agreement or the activities supported by the Memorandum of Agreement, contact the USDA/1994 Tribal Land-Grant Colleges and Universities Program.

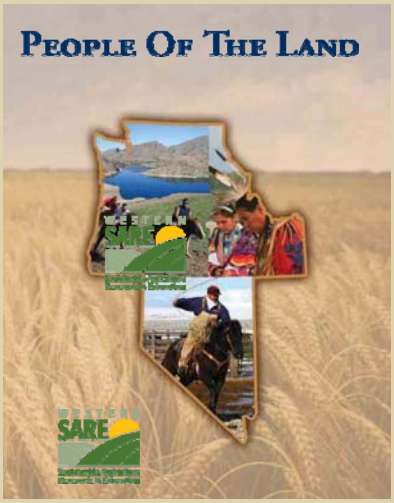
2010 Memorandum of Agreement between USDA and American Institute Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC)

2013 AIHEC Leadership Group with Secretary Vilsack

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack speaks during the U.S. Department of Agriculture and American Indian Higher Education Consortium Leadership Group Winter Meeting

USDA and American Indian Higher Education Consortium

Links of Interest

	***People of the Land: Sustaining American Indian Agriculture in Idaho, Oregon, Nevada and Washington*** (Emm & Singletary, 2009) focuses on successful strategies for increasing the adoption of sustainable practices on reservation lands. The purpose of the curriculum is to strengthen the capacity of agriculture and natural resource professionals to work more effectively with American Indian tribes and individual producers on Indian reservations.	http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Project-Products/Western-SARE-Project-Products/People-of-the-Land
	Apache Youth Grows Food for His Community.	http://blogs.usda.gov/2013/06/04/apache-youth-grows-food-for-his-community/
	Flag Songs: Honoring Sovereign Tribal Nations on Independence Day While the U.S. exuberantly celebrates its adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, asserting independence from the United Kingdom, many across Indian country will instead reflect upon the sovereignty of each of our many tribal nations. In honor of our nations and peoples, here is a short list of just a few American Indian nation's flag songs, with video performances to enjoy.	http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2013/07/04/honoring-our-sovereign-tribal-nations-us-independence-day-150251

Choctaw Fresh Produce—a Tribal Success

In the Choctaw community of Conehatta, Mississippi, excitement abounds with the promise of fresh fruits and vegetables for this small community, and the schools and businesses linked with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

Dick Hoy, the new General Manager for Choctaw Fresh Produce, is on a personal mission to bring better food choices to the Tribe, and to hopefully do something about the high rate of diabetes among Tribal members. "This is a whole new adventure for me," Hoy says. "I'm so excited about a totally new challenge at this state of my life."

In early April 2013, Hoy was responsible for the building of three seasonal high tunnels in the Conehatta Community. USDA-NRCS Tribal Liaison, Timothy Oakes, who works hand-in-hand with Choctaw people, assisted with the conservation resource management plan for this project, and also the development of farm related plans and agreements between the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Choctaw real-estate program. "A farm management plan must be in place to receive a long-term lease agreement for the use of agricultural lands held in trust by the Tribe," stated Oakes. "There are plans to include additional houses in field locations on Tribal land."

"Diabetes affects nearly 40 percent of the Choctaw population, mainly caused by poor food choices as a life style," stated Hoy. "Getting the children to start eating fresh produce is one of my main goals. Apparently it's working because already there has been a dramatic improvement since the Choctaws began a Farmers' Market and producing their own food. It will only get better with the use of seasonal high tunnels!"

Another plus is that there is no "middle man" to drive up prices, as the produce goes straight from the farm to the restaurants, homes and businesses. The cost of the produce is kept at a minimum. Hoy hires day laborers at minimum wage who are responsible for planting, maintaining, and harvesting. These projects will be creating job opportunities as well as health opportunities. Putting local Tribal people to work, as well as providing a source for fresh produce for local businesses, such as their restaurants and casinos, is a much needed enterprise in this area.

Another goal for Hoy is starting gardens to help educate the children about vegetable gardening, as well as cattle and agriculture as a whole, aiming towards the schools being self-sufficient. He wants them to learn where their food comes from and intends to develop curriculum for the schools that will include basic botany, horticulture, cooking, marketing, and the process of growing food. What a set of goals!

The tunnels will be fully automated and many functions will be handled by phone; such as motors and timers for raising and lowering the sides of the tunnel. A perimeter fence will be constructed to keep out deer and other destructive animals. A greenhouse has also been established where transplants are being raised. An old Ford property will be used to wash and strip produce before they carry it to the Farmer's Market.

Cover crops planted inside the tunnels will be hairy vetch and clover, speckled peas, and legumes to increase nitrogen. They are keeping use of chemicals to a bare minimum. "I'm learning a lot from my experiences of failure and success," Hoy said.

Continued on page 8

Choctaw Fresh Produce, continued

Vegetables planted in the tunnels include Bok choy, a variety of peppers, eggplant, tomatoes, squash, peas, cucumbers (coming in the fall), okra, and one entire tunnel house of tomatoes.

In Tucker, an older and smaller Choctaw Community, there are three more seasonal high tunnels managed by Facility Coordinator, Tim Comby. He will be putting 60 day laborers to work to assist in growing the produce for the local restaurants and casinos. Comby spends a lot of time giving briefing sessions to the workers (General Agriculture 101) and documenting every phase of the plantings. From the time you plant, fertilize, or do anything to the plants themselves, you have to document it as regulated by the new FDA Food Safety Modernization Act recordkeeping requirements for traceability of possible food contaminants.

Conservation Commission and NRCS Participate in the 18th Annual Inter-Tribal Environmental Council Conference

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission (OCC) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) participated in the Inter-Tribal Environmental Council (ITEC) Annual Conference July 23 and July 24, 2013, in Catoosa, Oklahoma. The agencies partnered with the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (OTCAC) to sponsor the two-day conference and display an informational booth.

The ITEC annual conference provided the opportunity for Tribal representatives, tribal environmental specialists, and other conservation professionals to obtain a firsthand view of various products, training materials and conservation opportunities. Such resources are necessary to enhance Tribal environmental land conservation programs that protect Tribal lands for future generations.

Dr. Carol Crouch, NRCS tribal liaison and district conservationist for the NRCS, presented on the success that NRCS and USDA agencies have had in developing strong partnership relations between the Tribes and tribal members of Oklahoma. Co-presenters were Doyle Bacon and Shane Sparks, Choctaw Nation ranch managers, and Kathleen Welch, Wyandotte Tribe environmental director. Their presentations focused on conservation success stories on tribal lands and how to access USDA resources to help improve and preserve their lands. They also told the audience of other resources available to help build a variety of infrastructures through programs offered by USDA agencies.

"It is critical to USDA's mission to improve communication of USDA programs that are available through USDA agencies to Tribal leaders and tribal members," said Crouch. "Being selected to present at the ITEC conference provided the opportunity to increase awareness of all USDA programs and how Tribes and tribal members can access USDA programs and agencies."

Choctaw Nation ranch managers visit the partnership booth.

Darrel Dominick, OCC Tribal liaison, and Dr. Carol Crouch, NRCS, partnered to have a conservation information booth at the conference that provided information about the conservation opportunities to Tribes, tribal representatives and tribal members during the two day tribal conference.

Navajo Nation Getting New Livestock Wells

Two chapters of the Navajo Nation in Utah are getting new livestock wells, thanks to NRCS. Members of the Teec Nos Pos and Red Mesa Chapters use wells drilled deep into the desert floor to water their 1,000 or so cattle. (A chapter is both a rural community and a unit of local government in the Navajo Nation.) But in the 2000s, the Navajo Nation Water Code Administration found, through testing, that these wells had high levels of arsenic, uranium and E. coli, rendering them non-potable for both humans and livestock.

After the discovery, ranchers had to truck in water from up to two hours away for their livestock because they could not afford to drill new wells. Despite their best efforts, because of the harsh desert conditions, some of the cattle died. Over the past year, through USDA's StrikeForce for Rural Growth and Opportunity initiative, NRCS was able to partner with the chapters and the Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture to dig two new wells and safely decommission the contaminated wells. StrikeForce addresses high-priority funding and technical assistance needs in rural communities in 16 states, including Arizona, with a special emphasis on historically underserved communities and producers in counties with persistent poverty. NRCS was able to contribute 90 percent of the cost of digging the new wells and closing up the old wells.

The Navajo Nation, which is about 27,000 square miles—the size of West Virginia—has one of the highest poverty levels of any area in the United States. More than 173,000 people live on the reservation..

Now that the new wells have been drilled, NRCS is helping the Teec Nos Pos and Red Mesa Chapters install pipeline and troughs to provide multiple access points for cattle to drink from. Because of the success of this project, Fred White, Executive Director of the Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources, is now exploring more opportunities to enhance and protect the natural resources of Tribal lands with NRCS and other USDA agencies.

Wild Rice Recipes
from Manoomin.com

True wild rice does not require pre-soaking or extended cooking times like its paddy-grown counterpart. It needs to be rinsed and then cooked, normally adding about four cups water or liquid per cup of rice. Cooking until tender may take about 20 to 45 minutes, depending on the desired texture of the final product.
Wild rice can be used either as a side dish or a main course; it can be served straight or as an ingredient in many possible combinations. Meat and manoomin mixtures make delicious casseroles. It is also a tasty component in many soup recipes and can be served cold with a selection of meats, veggies and/or fruits to compose sumptuous salads. Used in breads, pancakes, muffins and popular as a dressing for the Thanksgiving turkey, leftover wild rice is rarely wasted because it's a marvelous addition with so many culinary possibilities.

Basic Cooking Method

Wash the rice thoroughly by running it under cold water in a strainer. Add 1 cup of raw rice to 3 cups of boiling water in a heavy sauce pan or pot. Bring to boil then reduce heat and simmer until rice is tender and has absorbed the water. This will take 35-45 minutes. Makes approximately 3 or 4 cups of cooked rice.

Wild Rice Casserole

2/3 cup wild rice (uncooked) + 2 cups of water to cook
1 lb. ground beef
1 large onion, diced
1 cup celery, sliced
1 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
1 can mushrooms and liquid
1 can mushroom soup
1 can water chestnuts, sliced

Brown meat, onion and celery until beef is partially cooked. Add chestnuts. Add mushrooms and soup. Let simmer for a few minutes; add salt and pepper. Cook rice until it opens, about 30 minutes. Drain rice and combine with meat mixture. Place in buttered casserole and bake 350° for 45 minutes. Serves 5-6.

Creamy Wild Rice Soup

1/2 cup finely chopped onion
6 Tbsp. butter
1/2 cup flour
4 cups chicken broth
2 cups cooked wild rice
1/2 cup grated carrots
1 cup cooked, cubed chicken or turkey breast
3 Tbsp. slivered almonds
1/2 tsp. salt
1 cup half & half
2 Tbsp. dry sherry

In large saucepan, sauté onion in butter. Add flour, stirring until bubbly; gradually stir in broth. Add wild rice, carrots, chicken, almonds and salt; simmer 5 minutes. Add half & half and sherry; Heat through.
Serves 6.

Working Effectively with American Indians
The NEDC Course

There have been several *Working Effectively With American Indians* (WEWAI) trainings this year. This is a week-long NEDC course put on in various places across the country in conjunction with local Tribes. This course is recommended for all NRCS employees who have responsibilities for assisting American Indian people and governments. To get some idea of the breadth of the course, take a look at the pre-course reading assignments http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/nedc/?cid=stelprdb1047291.

NRCS works with Federally-recognized Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Tribal Entities. When a Tribe is "recognized," it is recognized as a sovereign nation with its own government within the boundaries of the USA. Going back to treaties made with Indian Tribes, there often were agreements of assistance to Tribes upon their ceding claims to land. Thus, even though the Tribes are sovereign nations, the Federal government also has obligations of giving assistance to Federally-recognized Tribes.

Rhode Island NRCS Hosts "Working Effectively With American Indians" Workshop To Provide Spiritual, Cultural, and Intellectual Awareness of American Indians

Walter Marshall, Public Affairs Specialist, USDA-NRCS-RI

The workshop was hosted by RI-NRCS with the Narragansett Indian Tribe. NRCS American Indian instructors included Roylene Rides-at-the-Door, State Conservationist Washington State; Tim Oakes, Conservation Program Analyst-Liaison; Nathaniel Todea, Civil Engineer; and Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen, Area Easement Specialist. The objective of the workshop was to provide spiritual, cultural, and intellectual awareness of the American Indian in order for NRCS to effectively work, interact, and provide technical assistance to American Indians in the use and care of our natural resources.

Chief Sachem Matthew Thomas welcomes workshop attendees at a luncheon and tour of the Narragansett Indian Reservation in Charlestown, RI.

Cassius Spears, AIAN SEPM, RI NRCS Soil Conservationist and Narragansett Tribal member explains American Indian customs to workshop attendees on a tour of the Pequot Museum in Mashantucket, CT.

To help USDA/NRCS employees have successful relationships with American Indians and Alaska Natives, this course provided attendees with an understanding of this land's history, the political complexities, government-to-government fiduciary responsibilities, and most importantly an understanding of the cultures and life from an American Indian and Alaska Native perspective. In addition, the course enhanced attendees' skills pertaining to NRCS and American Indian tribal policy and procedures.

Continued on page 11

Rhode Island NRCS Hosts "Working Effectively With American Indians" Workshop, con't.

The Narragansett Indian Tribe guest speakers included Chief Sachem Matthew Thomas; Dawn Dove, Tribal Elder; Hiawatha Brown, Tribal Elder; Doug Harris, Assistant Director of Historic Preservation; Randy Noka, Ambassador and Councilman; Dinalyn Spears, Director of Planning and Natural Resources; and Cassius Spears, Councilman. Additional guest speakers included James Sappier, Tribal Historian and Former Chief of the Penobscot Nation; Loretta Metoxen, Tribal Historian of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, Brian Patterson, president of United South and Eastern Tribes (USET); Elizabeth Hoover, Assistant Professor of American Studies at Brown University; and Endawnis Spears, Cultural Anthropologist.

James Sappier (Penobscot Tribe) speaks to workshop attendees

The workshop also included a field trip to provide hands on interactive training and educational insight. Attendees visited the Pequot Museum in Mashantucket, CT where Cassius Spears, AIAN SEPM, NRCS Soil Conservationist and Narragansett Tribal representative, provided a tour and explained historical facets of American Indian culture. Additionally, attendees visited the Narragansett Indian reservation for a luncheon of traditional Narragansett foods and tour of the reservation. Chief Sachem Matthew Thomas of the Narragansett Indian Tribe welcomed attendees at the luncheon which was followed by a tour of Longhouse and a visit to the grounds surrounding the Narragansett Indian Meeting House. Attendees learned about the history of the Narragansett Tribe and participated in a tribal round dance lead by Cassius Spears.

The training was effective and successful to provide attendees an understanding of the trust responsibility of USDA employees in working with American Indians and Indian Nations. In addition, attendees gained a better understanding of basics Indian laws and treaties and how they impact relationships policies, and activities. This was supplemented by gaining an understanding of American Indian culture, history, and traditions in order to work more effectively with American Indians. Ultimately, attendees were able to recognize the government-to-government relationship between NRCS and Indian Nations along with the appropriate protocol and procedures that govern and guide NRCS to effectively work, interact, and provide technical assistance to American Indians in the use and care of our natural resources.

The Rhode Island *Working Effectively with American Indians* workshop included representatives from several Tribes and NRCS staff from nine states throughout the nation.

Attendee's Perspective

Rhonda Foster, District Conservationist, USDA-NRCS-AR

I found it very important to be able to work government to government. We as conservation planners need to be able to understand and respect the traditions and governmental policies of the tribes we are working with. It is important that these are researched well before the time that we make the initial visit (be prepared). I was also made aware each tribe has their own set of traditions so if working with more than one tribe, make sure you understand the different traditions. I feel it is important as a group of individuals working with Tribes that we need to be aware of these things before we approach the tribes to discuss conservation measures that might work for them.

WEWAI attendees working in groups for federal responsibilities training exercise
photo by N. Todea, USDA- NRCS-UT

Cadre Member's Perspective

Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen, Area Easements Specialist, USDA-NRCS-Iowa

I received the honor to be asked to serve on the Working Effectively with American Indians (WEWAI) training cadre earlier this year and participated in the Warwick, RI session as an "instructor in training". It had been many years since I attended a WEWAI (Harmony workshop) as a student, 18 years to be exact, so I was anxious to see what the current session looked like in comparison. There were many similarities and many, very positive changes.

I learned much from the Rhode Island session, not only as an incoming trainer but also as a student. I presume I will learn at each future session as well. We were honored to have a tremendous number of tribal leaders present at the session throughout the week, as many as five Tribal Councilmen! The portion of the session that really opened my eyes was to witness the honest, open sharing of tribal leaders regarding culture, their tribe, and also issues and conflict. This was shared as a way to really provide an open book of learning to the students. Some of it was uncomfortable, but so very effective.

This sharing then paved the way for the segment of the training in which students learn and experience their federal responsibilities and also work through an exercise that allows them to use what they've learned in relation to a real scenario. I witnessed a great example of hands on learning and application.

We were blessed with the presence of several tribal Elders throughout the week. As an added bonus to my role as the Chair of the American Indian Alaska Native Employees Association (AIANEA), an Elder from the Penabscot Nation accepted my invitation to join the AIANEA Elders Council. This is very exciting, as there has never been an Elder on the Council from the northeast states!

Native American Creation Story Attributed to the Iroquois

In the beginning, the world was not as we know it now. It was a water world inhabited only by animals and creatures of the air who could survive without land. Up above, the Sky World was quite different. Human-type beings lived there with infinite types of plants and animals to enjoy. In the Sky World, there was a Tree of Life that was very special to the people of the Sky World. They knew that it grew at the entrance to the world below and forbade anyone to tamper with the Tree. One woman who was soon to give birth was curious about the Tree and convinced her brother to uproot the Tree. Beneath the Tree was a great hole. The woman peered from the edge into the hole and suddenly fell off the edge. As she was falling she grasped at the edge and clutched in her hand some of the earth from the Sky World. As she fell, the birds of the world below were disturbed and alerted to her distress. The birds responded and gathered a great many of their kind to break her fall and cradle her to the back of a great sea turtle. The creatures of the water believed that she needed land to live on, so they set about to collect some for her. They dove to the great depths of the world's oceans to gather earth to make her a place to live. Many of the animals tried to gather the earth from the ocean floor, only the muskrat was successful. With only a small bit of earth brought onto turtle's back from his small paws, Turtle Island began to grow.

The Sky Woman soon gave birth to a daughter on Turtle Island. The daughter grew fast. There were no man-beings on Turtle Island, but a being known as the West Wind married the daughter of Sky Woman. Soon the daughter of Sky Woman gave birth to Twins. One was born the natural way, and he was called the Right-Handed Twin. The other was born in a way that caused the death of the mother. He was called the Left-Handed Twin. When their mother died, their grandmother, Sky Woman, placed the fistful of earth that she grasped from the edge of the Sky World, and placed it on her daughter's grave. The earth carried special seeds from the Sky World that were nourished by the earth over her daughter. So from the body of her daughter came the Sacred Tobacco, Strawberry and Sweetgrass. We call these Kionhekwa. The Life Givers.

The Right and Left-Handed Twins were endowed with special creative powers. The Right-Handed Twin created gentle hills, beautiful smelling flowers, quiet brooks, butterflies and numerous creatures, plants and earth formations. His brother the Left-Handed Twin made snakes, thorns on rose bushes, thunder and lightning and other more disturbing attributes of today's world. Together, they created man and his many attributes. The Right-Handed Twin believed in diplomacy and conflict resolution. The Left-Handed Twin believed in conflict as resolution. They were very different, but all that they created is an integral part of this Earth's Creation.

Their Grandmother, Sky Woman, now came to the end of her life. When she died, the Twins fought over her body and pulled it apart, throwing her head into the sky. As part of the Sky World, there her head remained to shine upon the world as Grandmother Moon. The Twins could not live together without fighting. They agreed to dwell in different realms of the earth. The Right-Handed Twin continued to live in the daylight and the Left-Handed Twin became a dweller of the night. Both of them continue their special duties to their Mother the Earth.

Source: www.firstpeople.us

Men's Northern Traditional Dance: Flowing Native American Dance Style

The regalia worn by Northern Traditional dancers is a modern evolution of tribal regalia from the tribes of the Northern Plains such as Sioux, Blackfoot, Crow, Omaha and others. Northern traditional dancers demonstrate a style of dance that evolved from the old form of war dance. The dance depicts the telling of a war story or hunting expedition. .

Each Plains tribe had several warrior societies, and these societies had similar but contrasting ceremonies, regalia, and songs as each other. For many tribes, these dances were ritualistic, and pertinent to success for the warrior society members. Dances were considered property of specific tribes, and if another tribe wished to perform the dances without issue, they would buy or barter for the right to learn and own the dances as well. Included into the mix of pieced together warrior society dances, Men's Northern Traditional dancing can also include elements of the Omaha or Grass Dance. The dance steps at one time were done to mimic war deeds, or hunting tactics. But due to changing times, the steps are left to be interpreted and executed by the dancer. The flashier the dancer can move, the more impressed judges, spectators, and other dancers will be.

Historic Roots Lead to Contemporary Interpretation

The first time a person sees a Traditional Dancer, they may ask, "How can this dancer, with super glue, colored tape and bright outfits, be called traditional?" Today, traditional means not strictly adhering to the past, but instead it refers to a style that developed from the original dance many years ago. Around the late 1800's, only a few dignified warriors were entitled to wear the articles of the traditional dancer, the roach and the bustle. As the dance progressed from tribe to tribe and went northward, tradition changed and more dancers began to put on a bustle and roach. The Lakota tribe is usually credited for the birth of this dance as a true style in which everyone participates.

Men's Northern Traditional Dance Regalia

Many male powwow dancers choose the Northern Traditional Dance category due to the freedom a dancer can have in designing their regalia. The basic makings of a northern traditional dancer includes either fully or partially beaded moccasins, leggings or pants, dance bells, breechcloths or matching aprons and side tabs hooked to a belt. Moving up the dancer, ribbon shirts or a plain dress shirt are worn, covered by a full or partially beaded, or ribbon appliqued vest. On top of that, some dancers wear one to two bandoliers from one shoulder to the opposing hip. A bonehair pipe breastplate may be worn, or some dancers wear a loop necklace. On their lower back, dancers where feather bustles, and a wide belt. Atop the head, a traditional dancer has numerous choices, ranging from the usual selection, a porcupine hair roach. However, some dancers can be seen wearing different varieties of headdresses, otter turbans, full animal skins or even military berets. A feather fan is carried in one hand, and the opposite hand can have a dance stick, old style weapon, gun, or shield.

Source: Adapted from Crazy Crow Trading Post gallery. The photo gallery represents Men's Northern Traditional Dance outfits, mostly taken at Gathering of Nations Pow Wow in Albuquerque, New Mexico. We thank Derek Matthews of GatheringofNations.com, and Le Andra Peters of NewMexicoPowWows.com, and others who have

NRCS Recruitment Videos
A Day in the Life @ NRCS

The Office of Talent Management has some materials on the national NRCS website that can help in planning our careers and in recruiting staff to join the NRCS family. The webpage is found by selecting "Careers" on the website index. The link is: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/careers/

Of special interest to SEPM's are the "Day in the Life @ NRCS" videos. As the name suggests, these short, well made videos follow an employee as they describe the type of in-office and in-the field work they do each day. There is a video for:

⇒ Soil Conservationist-8.48 min.
⇒ Engineer—5.42 min.
⇒ Soil Scientist-7.43 min.
⇒ District Conservationist—4.42 min.
⇒ Soil Con Technician-5.04 min.
⇒ General Introduction to NRCS—5.12 min.

SUGGESTION: Print the web address (along with other recruitment information) on a business card so that recruits can go home and view all of the videos.

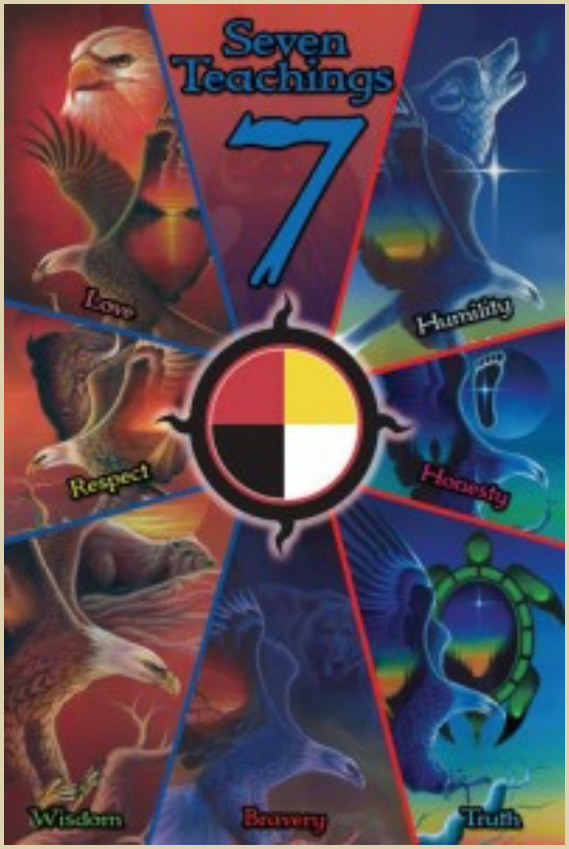
Ted Herrera Presented with the Sequoyah Fellowship Medallion

Dave Wise, Past President of the American Indian Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS (AIANEA) and NRCS Tribal Liaison from Minnesota, presents Ted Herrera, AIANEA honorable elder from the Coahuilteco Nation, with the Sequoyah Fellowship medallion, an AIANEA award of lifetime Sequoyah Fellowship membership to the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES). Ted was chosen by the AIANEA for the Sequoyah Award because of his special wisdom and dedication as traditional elder, mentor, and role model.

Photo: Laura Broyles

Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers

Published on November 10, 2010 by John



Among the Anishinaabe people, the Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers, also known simply as either the Seven Teachings or Seven Grandfathers, is a set of teachings on human conduct towards others.

Background

According to the aadizookaan (traditional story), the teachings were given to the Anishinaabeg early in their history. Seven Grandfathers asked their messenger to take a survey of the human condition. At that time the human condition was not very good. Eventually in his quest, the messenger came across a child. After receiving approval from the Seven Grandfathers, the messenger tutored the child in the "Good Way of Life". Before departing from the Seven Grandfathers, each of the Grandfathers instructed the child with a principle.

Teachings

Nibwaakaawin—Wisdom: To cherish knowledge is to know Wisdom. Wisdom is given by the Creator to be used for the good of the people. In the Anishinaabe language, this word expresses not only "wisdom," but also means "prudence," or "intelligence." In some communities, Gikendaasowin is used; in addition to "wisdom," this word can also mean "intelligence" or "knowledge."

Zaagi'idiwin—Love: To know Love is to know peace. Love must be unconditional. When people are weak they need love the most. In the Anishinaabe language, this word with the reciprocal theme /idi/ indicates that this form of love is mutual. In some communities, Gizhaawenidiwin is used, which in most context means "jealousy" but in this context is translated as either "love" or "zeal". Again, the reciprocal theme /idi/ indicates that this form of love is mutual.

Minaadendamowin—Respect: To honor all creation is to have Respect. All of creation should be treated with respect. You must give respect if you wish to be respected. Some communities instead use Ozhibwaadenindiwin or Manazoonidiwin.

Aakode'ewin—Bravery: Bravery is to face the foe with integrity. In the Anishinaabe language, this word literally means "state of having a fearless heart." To do what is right even when the consequences are unpleasant. Some communities instead use either Zoongadikiwin ("state of having a strong casing") or Zoongide'ewin ("state of having a strong heart").

Gwayakwaadiziwin—Honesty: Honesty in facing a situation is to be brave. Always be honest in word and action. Be honest first with yourself, and you will more easily be able to be honest with others. In the Anishinaabe language, this word can also mean "righteousness."

Dabaadendiziwin—Humility: Humility is to know yourself as a sacred part of Creation. In the Anishinaabe language, this word can also mean "compassion." You are equal to others, but you are not better. Some communities instead express this with Bekaadiziwin, which in addition to "humility" can also be translated as "calmness," "meekness," "gentility" or "patience."

Debwewin—Truth: Truth is to know all of these things. Speak the truth. Do not deceive yourself or others.

Source: wikipedia.org

Careful Gathering and Stewardship of Edible Mushrooms: A Conservation Strategy

By Dr. Kat Anderson, Ethnoecologist, East National Tech Center

When Native Americans harvest mushrooms in California's forests and woodlands for foods, medicines, and technologies, they follow certain methods that add up to stewardship. Called traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), this body of practices is based upon the direct witness and relationship with biological and physical phenomena in nature that Native Americans have experienced—day after day, year after year, generation after generation.

Mushrooms played an important role in the traditional livelihoods of many California Indian Tribes as medicines for healing the body, a medium for making and carrying fire, pigments for painting the face and body, and for food. These mushrooms grow in the soil and included chanterelles, morels, boletes, common field mushrooms and many others. They also occurred on the trunks and branches of live and dead hardwoods and conifers such as oyster mushrooms and giant sawtooths. They were often dried in large quantities and throughout each winter provided an important accompaniment to acorn, venison, elk meat, and other dishes. Today Indian households still harvest mushrooms mainly for food. Traditionally, mushrooms were kept whole, sliced, or shredded and cooked in various ways: baked on hot stones, roasted or broiled on live coals, or made into a mush by boiling and some mushrooms were also eaten raw. Today mushrooms are good boiled or fried with onions and eaten with tortillas or they flavor soups, steaks, macaroni, or spaghetti.

Figure 1. Selective harvesting of willow or oyster mushrooms (*Pleurotus cornucopiae*), leaving the stump behind, on dead willow (*Salix* sp.). Photo Credit: M. Kat Anderson/NRCS.

Figure 2. Tillie Lewis, Mono, showing fluted black elfin saddles (*Helvella lacunosa*) that are harvested for food under oaks growing on Big Sandy Rancheria near Auberry, California. Photo Credit: M. Kat Anderson/NRCS.

There are certain ancient rules adhered to when picking mushrooms. Contemporary Tribal mushroom harvesters use appropriate technologies: knives, scissors, trowels, sticks, or hands to gather mushrooms. And they recognize that shovels and rakes can be destructive methods of harvest and purposefully do not practice such harvesting methods on particular mushrooms. The cap and part of the stipe are removed and the remaining stipe is covered back up. Care is taken so as not to disturb the fine threads (mycelium) under the ground. Gatherers must also spare some for tomorrow and leave some for the other animals. At least one Tribe deliberately disperses spores for reproduction, and some Tribes traditionally burned the woodland and forest understory

Continued on page 18

to enhance size, number and types of useful mushrooms. Mushrooms that grow on downed wood or snags must also be gathered with care such as the willow or oyster mushrooms. They are cut with a knife leaving stumps so that the mushrooms will regenerate. These rules are rampant up and down California and still remembered today.

California NRCS recognizes the important stewardship role that American Indian people have played in maintaining the health, biodiversity, and productivity of the state's woodlands and forests for millennia, including fostering useful mushrooms. Learning about these sophisticated and complex indigenous conservation practices will help NRCS provide better support and assistance to our Tribal partners to help them meet their conservation priorities of restoring culturally significant native mushrooms and plants for food and fiber.

Figure 3. Melba Beecher, Mono, holding fried chicken mushrooms (*Lyophyllum decastes*) in Sierra National Forest, 2006. Photo Credit: M. Kat Anderson/NRCS.

Three Sisters Peoples Garden in Connecticut

In Connecticut, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Farm Service Agency installed a pocket-sized People's Garden at the USDA office in Tolland. The purposes of the nationwide People's Garden effort are to provide food (to be donated), demonstrate sustainable practices, and provide wildlife habitat (including habitat for pollinators and insects beneficial to crop production).

The Tolland Office People's Garden is modeled on American Indian Three Sisters gardens. The Three Sisters work together to help make the garden a success. The first sister, Corn, is planted before the other two sisters and serves as a support pole for the beans. Beans, the second sister, have nitrogen-fixing nodules on their roots and contribute to soil fertility around the nitrogen-hungry corn. The vines of Squash, the third sister, cover the space between the hills of corn and beans, holding down weeds and discouraging animals. A row of pollinator plants was included (with Calendula in place of the traditional annual Sunflower). A light covering of straw mulch was put down to protect the soil until the squash vines grew large. After harvest, a cover crop will be planted.

Feathered War Bonnets/Headdresses

Feathered war bonnets (also called war bonnets or headdresses) are worn by honored Plains Indian men. In the past they were sometimes worn into battle, but most often worn for ceremonial occasions as is the case today. They are seen as items of great spiritual and magical importance. The eagle is considered by Plains tribes as the greatest and most powerful of all birds, and thus the finest bonnets are made out of its feathers.

Its beauty was considered of secondary importance; the bonnet's real value was in its supposed power to protect the wearer. The bonnet is still only to be worn on special occasions and is highly symbolic.

The bonnet had to be earned through brave deeds in battle because the feathers signified the deeds themselves. Some warriors might have obtained only two or three honor feathers in their whole lifetime, so difficult were they to earn. The bonnet was also a mark of highest respect because it could never be worn without the consent of the leaders of the tribe. A high honor, for example, was received by the warrior who was the first to touch an enemy fallen in battle, for this meant the warrior was at the very front of fighting. Feathers were notched and decorated to designate an event and told individual stories such as killing, capturing an enemy's weapon and shield, and whether the deed had been done on horseback or foot.

After about ten honors had been won, the warrior went out to secure the eagle feathers with which to make his bonnet. In some tribes these had to be purchased from an

individual given special permission to hunt the bird; a tail of twelve perfect feathers could bring the seller as much as a good horse. Some tribes permitted a warrior to hunt his own eagles. This was a dangerous and time-consuming mission and meant that he had to leave the tribe and travel to the high country where the bird could be found. When the destination had been reached, ceremonies were conducted to appeal to the spirits of the birds to be killed.

A chief's war bonnet is made of feathers received for good deeds to his community and is worn in high honor. Each feather would represent a good deed. A warrior's war bonnet, such as the famous war bonnet of Roman Nose, the Cheyenne warrior, was said to protect him during battle. In several instances, Roman Nose, wearing his war bonnet, rode back and forth before soldiers of the United States Army during battles of the Indian Wars and, despite being fired upon by many soldiers, was unscathed.

Chiefs and honored warriors still often wear war bonnets for ceremonial occasions.

From Wikipedia

Utah AISES helps with Native American Summit

Professionals with the Utah American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) participated in the 8th Annual Governor's Native American Summit Youth Track on August 14 at the University of Utah. This year students participated in breakout sessions that emphasized science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Approximately 50 K-12 students from 13 Utah school districts attended the summit.

Sessions included AISES professionals providing workshops that featured hands-on activities, information on STEM majors at the University of Utah, and mentoring/tutoring information offered by AISES chapters. A multitude of health care careers available to students at all levels were also discussed. Representatives from the University of Utah discussed how the school is home to a vast array of research opportunities and programs. Students were also provided with educational resources, information about funding opportunities, and scientific demonstrations. Finally, NRCS Engineer Nathaniel Todea presented an interactive session on natural resource conservation tools and careers. The accompanying photo shows Nathaniel demonstrating engineering tools.

The professionals in attendance were all part of AISES. Since 1977, AISES has worked to substantially increase American Indian and Alaska Native representation in STEM fields — as students, professionals, mentors, and leaders. AISES employs a "full circle of support" model that begins with pre-college programs, progresses into collegiate life, then into the professional years of members, and on into retirement.

AISES is the only professional society established by and for American Indian and Alaska Natives that specifically emphasizes lifelong learning and educational achievement by utilizing cultural aspects with the study of science, math and engineering. For more information about AISES, visit http://www.aises.org.

NRCS Partners to Provide Training on Butterfly Farming

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) partnered with the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (OTCAC) and the Euchee Butterfly Farm to provide training and information to Tribes and tribal members on how to start a butterfly farm. The butterflies of the Euchee Butterfly Farm are raised on site by tribal members, using ecologically sustainable methods, and sold to butterfly exhibits throughout North America and Europe. The workshop was sponsored by the OTCAC and hosted by the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, on their Tribal Traditions Grounds, in Shawnee, Oklahoma. The workshop was held on Thursday, August 29, 2013, from 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM.

Jane Breckinridge and staff member provided butterfly kits to attendees at the Native Butterflies for Native People and Native Pride workshop.

The focus of the workshop was to provide attendees with the information on the importance of Native Butterflies for Native People and Native Pride and how to start a butterfly farm or to create a Native butterfly garden on their traditional grounds. Jane Breckinridge, director of Euchee Butterfly Farm, provided information on benefits native butterfly farming offers: employment in rural communities; conservation and reintroduction of indigenous plant species to provide host plants rearing native butterfly species; and an opportunity to return to native methods of agriculture and provide a sustainable crop that is completely organic and eco-friendly in every possible way. Those attending the workshop were provided a butterfly kit to take home.

NRCS / NEW YORK Participates in Region VI American Indian Science and Engineering Society Conference (AISES) held at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)

On April 13th William Printup and John Whitney of the New York Natural Resources Conservation Service participated in the AISES Regional Conference held at RIT. A table was set up to give out Agency and Job Recruitment Information. Several AISES member students showed interest in NRCS and several applied for temporary Engineering positions in NY. William and John both presented workshops on Indigenous Stewardship Methods and NRCS Conservation Practices. The workshops were just part of the busy activities available to members. Members also took a local tour of the Ganondagan State Historic Site with a walkthrough of an onsite Iroquois Longhouse, and a workshop discussing the Ganondagan (ga·NON·da·gan) Iroquois White Corn Project. The site was once home to a Seneca Village where thousands lived some 300 years ago.
http://iroquoiswhitecorn.org/
http://www.ganondagan.org/

Please submit articles and tips for future editions of this newsletter to:

Northeast Region:
Charlotte.pyle@ct.usda.gov

Southeast Region:
Sandy.penn@mi.usda.gov

Central Region:
Melony.sikes@tx.usda.gov

West Region:
Tina.barker@id.usda.gov

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers. If you believe you experienced discrimination when obtaining services from USDA, participating in a USDA program, or participating in a program that receives financial assistance from USDA, you may file a complaint with USDA. Information about how to file a discrimination complaint is available from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex (including gender identity and expression), marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)