



# APHIS Native American Notebook

[an e-update on Native American Program Delivery in APHIS]

Vol. 1, No. 3—September 2009

## Washington Internships for Native Students (WINS) and APHIS: Summer 2009

Summer interns come to APHIS from several different sources, but the WINS program run by American University offers its participants something unique. Not only do the students chosen for this competitive experience get to spend 8 weeks working at a Federal agency in the greater Washington, DC, area, but they earn 6 hours of college credit at the same time.

A.U. program personnel make sure that each student's home institution will accept the A.U. credits toward a bachelor's degree. Then the university creates two special, tribally oriented classes that the WINS participants take in night school. No other internship program pays that kind of dividend. We believe the takeaway credits make our \$10,500-per-student investment especially attractive.

APHIS has sponsored WINS interns every summer since the mid-1990s, and in most years, the APHIS Native American Working Group (ANAWG) has played a peripheral role. ANAWG members typically encourage their programs to hire interns and in some cases offer to supervise the individuals selected from the WINS pool of candidates. But this summer, the ANAWG decided to elevate its commitment to the visiting students by putting on some special enrichment activities.

**Denise Ruffino**, Wildlife Services (WS) ANAWG representative, worked with **Kevin Sullivan** of the Maryland WS operational program to arrange for the WINS students to take part in a "goose roundup." Every year, WS helps local homeowners, condominium associations, and business entities deal with overpopulations of Canada geese by rounding up set numbers of birds and taking them to a local poultry plant, where the geese are euthanized. The birds are dressed out, and the meat is then given to local food banks.

One of the tricks of this trade is timing: it's only possible to round up geese when they can't fly away. Here in the Mid-Atlantic region, that happens just once a year, for about 2 weeks in June, when the birds are grounded because they've shed their big wing feathers.

On roundup day, Denise could not join the crew. But **Janet Wintermute** and **Joan Sills**, chair and vice chair of the ANAWG, popped into a WS van with the WINS students and Sullivan and headed out for the hunt. Kevin had lined up three requesters in the most posh suburbs of Montgomery County, Maryland, for us to visit. In each case, the requesters had specified how many geese they wanted taken.

The first stop was a large condo neighborhood with its own big lake and a population of more than 200 resident geese. The condo association only wanted the population to go down, not be eliminated entirely. They authorized the removal of 50 birds.

WS operations personnel parked a flatbed truck with multiple open-air cages beside the lake. The geese figured something was up and paddled slowly away from shore. Meanwhile, the WS operatives distributed portable "fence" sections, about 5 feet square, to some of the WINS interns. These would be used to concentrate the target group of geese before picking up individual birds and putting them into the cages on the truck.

Two WS employees then launched out onto the lake in canoes to begin "rustling" enough geese from the main group to fill the association's request. The canoeists herded the birds up onto the grassy shore near the truck, and not coincidentally near the WINS students with their fence sections.

Once the 50, now honking and flapping, were surrounded by the moving fence, Kevin directed the students to walk slowly toward the center of the circle. When the geese were densely packed together, the operational folks showed how to pick up the big birds by their wings and carry them to the cages. Only two of the six WINS students volunteered to actually touch the geese, and both were females.... The rest, including both the male interns, stuck with fenceline duty.



*The condo association in this sylvan area northwest of Washington, DC, asked WS to help them keep the population of resident Canada geese on their lake at a reasonable size by removing 50, and only 50, birds. Here the WINS interns have herded the geese into a compact group prior to moving individual birds into plastic cages on a flatbed truck for removal. (Both goose-roundup photos were taken by WS Maryland State Director Kevin Sullivan.)*



*Nobody really wanted to grab the geese very much. But Keshia Burnett took the plunge and agreed to carry this goose, honking and wriggling, to the transport truck.*

WS carefully counted the birds and released the extras after the target of 50 was reached. Then the truck and our van drove to venue #2.

The second customer was an individual homeowner who had used WS' services in previous years. He lived in a neighborhood of what we call "McMansions," posh, huge brick houses on relatively small lots. Between his house and the next in the subdivision was a half-acre lake, nicely landscaped, and outfitted with a small population of Canada geese. This homeowner was also looking for population control, not eradication.

But nothing happened that day. The geese from the condo activity had obviously activated their species' early warning system. All the resident geese at the individual homeowner's property had vanished. After a thorough search, we moved on to venue #3.

This was a more conventional condominium development of perhaps 40 units in 3-story brick buildings that may have started their life as ordinary rental apartments in the 1960s. Another very nice lake in the middle of the complex had become a year 'round home for a family of 11 geese. The condo association asked that all these geese be removed.

Working with only one canoe, WS personnel still managed to convince the entire family of geese—Mom, Pop, and nine goslings—to leave the water and climb the banked shore

area near the WINS students and their fence sections. And that capture completed our roundup for the day.

At the first and third locations, we had the chance to chat with interested onlookers. A few people were not in favor of what WS was doing. But at both condo complexes, all the onlookers understood that the activity was voted on and paid for by the homeowners' association, and they could all see how humanely the birds were being handled.

Both the students and chaperones Joan and Janet learned a lot about goose ecology and wildlife damage control that day.

APHIS' second WINS enrichment activity was a tour of the U.S. Botanic Garden at the foot of the Capitol building downtown. PPQ's national noxious weeds manager, **Dr. Al Tasker**, himself a WINS student supervisor, arranged with the Botanic Garden to offer the all the WINS students, not just the ones assigned to APHIS, a chance to see this interesting glass house full of tropical and desert flora from all over the world. Janet tagged along as she had not seen the inside of the glass house since a complete refurbishment took place about 3 years ago.

Our first stop was an enormous pair of cycads—prehistoric plants that look like palms but are actually from another genus entirely. Those two are said to be the biggest in the world outside of one specimen at Kew Gardens in London. Our docent told us that moving the cycads to a temporary home during the rebuilding process was almost impossible. The trees are more than three storeys tall with very thick, heavy trunks.

Late June is a good time to visit the Garden because many of the orchids and other tropical plants, and some of the cacti, are in bloom then. But the heat and humidity were also cranked way up. It was about 90 degrees Fahrenheit outside, and it felt cool when we left the glass house.

**C. Fredric Mann**, former State Plant Health Director for Maryland and at that time an ANAWG State outreach rep, continues his work with the ANAWG unofficially. We took advantage of Fred's enthusiasm by accepting his offer to arrange a visit to his old stomping grounds, the Port of Baltimore, so the WINS students could learn about cargo inspection and related PPQ activities. Because the inspection work has been taken over by U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel, Fred had to liaise with CBP for permission in advance and help with identification badges, etc., at the port.

We sweetened the itinerary by telling the WINS students that after the port tour, everybody would be taken to a great local Italian restaurant not far from the docks.



*PPQ's Fred Mann (left) got a port employee to snap this shot of himself and BRS tribal liaison Gwen Burnett, standing next to Fred, plus the five interns who were able to make the trip to Baltimore. The sixth WINS intern, John Brooks, could not attend. The students, from left to right, are Alex, Kelsey, Keshia, Crystal, and Betsy. Their full names and tribal affiliations follow below their formal group portrait.*

Perhaps now is a good time to admit that Government agencies do have an “interior” motive in supporting the WINS program. In the coming years, a significant number of current employees will retire, and all agencies will be looking for lots of new workers to replace them and rise up through the system to occupy leadership positions in the future. In APHIS, we take our commitment to diversity very seriously. We want to ensure that our workforce includes Native Americans in roughly the same proportion that tribal people occupy in the overall civilian workforce.

What we need are qualified, motivated employees, especially individuals with scientific backgrounds and bachelor's degrees. Enter onto our stage the WINS program: a unique source of tribal students working on their undergraduate degrees and willing to come to the Nation's Capital and try out a cultural milieu completely different from home.

Because American University permits each hiring agency to examine résumés of all students accepted into the WINS program and choose the ones with backgrounds most closely related to the work of the agency, it's easy for APHIS to find candidates likely to be a good fit with our mission and daily activities. Over the years, there have been several WINS interns we wanted to hire, and 2009 was no exception.

But getting young people up to speed on *how* they could become Federal employees has always been a challenge. Not for PPQ's **Robert Baca**, though. Bob decided to put on a half-day seminar for the APHIS WINS students on how to get a civil-service job.

Late in July, Bob showed the students how to use the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Web site "USAJobs" to ferret out positions all over the country that would be suitable for entry-level applicants with new bachelor's degrees. The geographical search capability of the USAJobs site is particularly appealing to Native Americans because many of them want to live and work near where they grew up. While most Federal jobs are not on or close to reservations, using the software to narrow down the options is a valuable time saver for candidates who know, for instance, that they might be willing to move half a State away but would not consider a job clear across the country.

All in all, APHIS found this year's crop of WINS interns to be an especially bright, engaging lot. Although we have had students from many academically rigorous colleges over the years, 2009 brought us our first Ivy Leaguer—Alex Speir, who worked for Legislative and Public Affairs' executive communications unit before returning to Amherst. Janet asked Alex to give us a brief article for the Native American Notebook about the WINS experience from the students' point of view. That piece follows directly after the group portrait.

In their last week with us, the interns put on a brown-bag lunch seminar to talk about the work assignments they had completed and tell us more about their own tribes and what's coming up next in their academic lives. This event attracted about 75 people to the training rooms in Riverdale, certainly evidence of APHIS' high level of interest in the WINS program and this year's students as well.

APHIS photographer Anson Eaglin took this portrait of the whole group:



*Back row, left to right: Keshia Burnette (White Mountain Apache), John Brooks (Cherokee), Alex Speir (Cherokee), and Kelsey Branch (Potawatomi). Front row: Crystal Starkel (Ponca) and Elizabeth Trent (Chickasaw). Only two of the interns had any connection to the Federal Government before their WINS summer. Betsy Trent's father works for the Federal Aviation Administration, and Kelsey Branch's dad is an admiral in the U.S. Navy.*

# One WINS Intern's View From Inside the Program

By Alex Speir

In the fall of 2008, I received a postcard advertising the Washington Internships for Native Students (WINS) program. The card said the program was open to American Indian college students interested in working in Washington for a semester or summer. Room and board, two classes through American University, and a small stipend would be provided to people accepted into the program. I applied during the spring 2009 semester and did not hear anything else for several months. Then, in early May, I was surprised by a call from **Mandi Frederick**, a writer/editor with Legislative and Public Affairs' Executive Communications (EC) staff. "Would you be interested in interviewing for an internship with our office?" she asked. I had a brief conversation with Mandi about the position and a followup interview with EC's assistant director and director, **Kim Taylor** and **Christina Myers**. And as suddenly as Mandi's surprise phone call, I found my summer plans had solidified. I would be working with APHIS.

When I first heard what the EC staff does, it seemed relatively straightforward. The process of responding to the agency's controlled correspondence sounds simple: you analyze an incoming letter, contact staff sources and interview them for technical or policy information, draft an answer that addresses concerns in the incoming letter, and incorporate changes to your draft as suggested by your editor. I soon realized I was mistaken: the job of an EC writer is a lot more complicated than these steps suggest.

Trying to understand the seemingly infinite number of APHIS offices and programs—which are known primarily by their acronyms—is only the first step. You also need to know what questions to ask to get all the pertinent information, how to integrate the material into an appropriate response, and how to effectively communicate with your editor.

In addition to interning 40 hours a week with APHIS, I attended two classes at American University, where I learned about Federal American Indian policy and about ways to share my tribal experiences with others. I have shared my experiences with fellow WINS interns and with every part of the agency with which I interacted. At the end of July, my fellow WINSers and I gave presentations on our tribal cultures. At the end of the session, we fielded questions on tribal life and history. Few feelings are more powerful than that of helping other people learn more about the world in which we live.

My time with APHIS has been fantastic. I have gone to countless meetings, met a multitude of people, and made great friends. But what I am most thankful for is learning how much APHIS' work touches my life. I now realize that many things I take for granted—like protection from rabid animals, the safety of our plant health, and the welfare of animals—are all things in which APHIS plays a major role. I have been "in the field" and seen how APHIS' rules and regulations are implemented by Customs and Border Protection at the Port of Baltimore, how Wildlife Services controls the resident Canada goose population, and how Animal Care inspects zoological facilities. I even learned that the safety of our Nation's cattle, including those on my family's cattle ranch, is overseen by APHIS.

My eight weeks at APHIS are now over, and I have greatly enjoyed my time here with the agency's many programs. I have made wonderful friends through the WINS

program, gotten a better understanding of how our government works, and even managed to get a few hours of college credit. I cannot express the depth of my gratitude to all the people who made this internship possible. And I'm grateful for the people who, among other things, made it (theoretically) possible to begin letters with phrases like, 'As an experienced goose culler, ...'

**About the Author:** Alex Speir is currently a junior at Amherst College in Amherst, MA. He studies English and history and is the president of the College's Glee Club, a 147-year-old all-men's singing group. He is an enrolled member of the Cherokee Tribe and lives in Bristow, OK.

## Update on Native American Training in Raleigh

As promised, Native American Program-Delivery Manager Janet Wintermute ported the 1.5-day training event she put on in Riverdale and Fort Collins to the Eastern Region in Raleigh near the end of August. On the first afternoon, Janet showed a video custom-prepared for APHIS by a professor at the University of Oregon Law School concerning the legal relationships between the tribes and the Federal Government. Then on day two, Janet turned the microphone over to visiting trainer Larry Keown of LDK Associates, Sheridan, WY.

The video earned mixed reviews, but Larry's presentation was universally applauded.

Even more fun was the free lunch provided by ANAWG State reps **Deborah Stewart and Phil Bell**, both from PPQ in Raleigh. Deb made a couple great dessert sheetcake items around cornbread and blueberries. And Phil went clear over the top with two venison-based entrée items—a stew with veggies and a dish that looked pretty much like "pulled" pork barbecue, but without sauce. Phil didn't just buy the venison, either. He killed the deer and dressed the meat out! Janet's contribution of bison meatballs and plum ketchup, both based on Crow recipes and served at the previous two trainings, was tame by comparison.

Now is a good time to acknowledge the tremendous support furnished by PPQ secretary **Cathy Wood** from Vic Harabin's office. Cathy helped everybody with getting I.D. badges adjusted to work in the Raleigh building, offered advice about local hotels, and made sure that attendees' course completion was documented within AgLearn. Maybe even more important, Cathy saw to it that all attendees received the master MRP-13 form so they could upload it to their GovTrip travel authorizations well in advance of the class. Thanks again, Cathy, for everything you did to make the training work out so well.

In a happy example of synchronicity, VS' Eastern Region Civil Rights Action Committee was meeting one building over the same week. One of the reps to the ERCRAC, **Michael Weeden**, had helped staff the ANAWG exhibit at a tribal convention last October and knew Janet from there. When he found out she was in town for the training event, he asked her to make a short presentation to the ERCRAC. Janet had a chance to connect with Michael, old friend **Dr. Delorias Lenard** (Veterinary Services' Area Veterinarian-in-Charge [AVIC] for South Carolina), and several new friends from the Region during this side meeting.

As further proof of the Six Degrees of Separation theory, one of the ERCRAC participants was **Pam Hart**, a new APHIS employee. But Pam had met and worked with Janet last spring when Pam's former agency, USDA's Rural Development, was paneling an evaluation committee to rate several hundred grant applications in DC. Neither of the women knew they'd be together in Raleigh.

If you missed out on the field-based trainings Janet hosted during fiscal 2009, check future editions of this newsletter for information on upcoming events. WS' Western Region management has invited Janet to talk to their State Directors and Admin staff at a meeting next February. Delorias Lenard has asked Janet to come to South Carolina to provide training to VS employees down there, and **Dr. Reed Macarty**, AVIC in Michigan, extended a similar invitation in August.

## What Are These Teens Doing and Why?

Remember the quiz from the June issue? **Julie Orr**, a PPQ identifier in Atlanta, was the first reader to correctly answer the question and identify the animals in the first photo below. **Melissa Arnold**, who works at WS' Aviation Training and Operations Center in Cedar City, UT, filed her answer the next day. That's it: nobody else entered the contest!

The teenagers—students from the Tohono Land Connections (TLC) Program—are scratching two rhinoceroses at the Tucson Zoo. Julie said they were white rhinos (*Cerathotherium simus*) while Melissa suggested they were black rhinos (*Diceros bicornis*). AC veterinarian **Laurie Gage** confirmed that Julie was right: the animals are white rhinos. Melissa mentioned in her e-mailed entry that rhinos really love being scratched. Especially on their bellies, according to Dr. Gage. Readers will learn more about her in the feature on the TLC Program immediately following the rhino photos.

The “really inconsequential prize,” which both women will receive for playing our game, was one of the ANAWG's ballpoint pens, a giveaway item used when the group's exhibit goes on the road.



(This and all other photos in the TLC Program coverage were taken by Janet Wintermute unless otherwise credited.)

Here's what the "mystery animals" were doing before they realized the students were ready to entertain them:



## And the Rest of the Story: "Safeguarding Natural Heritage: Tohono Land Connections" Convenes for the Third Year

At the end of May, APHIS sponsored the third renewal of the Tohono Land Connections (TLC) Program, a 2-week summer session to help teenagers learn about agriculture and related sciences and stimulate them to attend college. PPQ employee **Jose Ceballos** invented the TLC idea in late 2006 and modeled the program after the popular Ag-DISCOVERY sessions offered through APHIS' Civil Rights Enforcement and Compliance unit. While the Ag-DISCOVERY courses are put on (with two exceptions) at historically black colleges and universities, the TLC program is hosted by one of the tribal land-grant colleges. Students from all ethnic backgrounds are welcome to apply to the program.

TLC was funded entirely by PPQ for 2007 and 2008. But this year, PPQ asked that the Native American Program-Delivery Manager take over the TLC project and find other APHIS programs willing to help shoulder the financial burden of putting on the event. Animal Care (AC), WS, International Services (IS), and Biotechnology Regulatory Services (BRS) contributed along with PPQ.

Our partner in the cooperative agreement (the funding mechanism for TLC) is the Tohono O'odham Community College, in Sells, AZ, about 60 miles from Tucson. TOCC, in turn, brings into the mix additional cooperators from the University of Arizona (UA), the State's original land-grant institution, with its main campus in Tucson. This summer, students spent week one of the TLC schedule on the reservation and stayed during

week two in the dormitories at UA. Both colleges furnished classroom space for the indoors educational modules as well as faculty members and graduate assistants to help with the instruction itself. APHIS also furnished behind-the-scenes help on organizational issues and curriculum development. **Christina Jewett** (PPQ tribal liaison) and **Joel Floyd** (Domestic Diagnostics Coordinator for PPQ's National Identification Services staff) have provided on-the-ground support and curriculum-development expertise all 3 years of the program. Joel furnished beautiful course-completion certificates for the students, too. **Tess Acosta Williams** and **Glen Ball** (both Arizona employees of PPQ) went the extra mile to be sure the availability of the program was publicized at schools in Phoenix and Yuma, respectively, not just in or near Tucson. Tess also guided the educational modules put on at Nogales and Phoenix, about which more later.

In addition to their funding for the cooperative agreement, five APHIS line programs supplied instructors from all around the country. BRS' **Carl Etsitty**, an enrolled member at Navajo, came from his office in Fort Collins to show the students how scientists test tissue samples to find out if the plant they came from has been genetically engineered. Carl held his class in the science labs at TOCC and furnished special test-kits for the students to use.



TOCC photo by Paul Buseck; reproduced by permission.

Similar testing methodology came into play when the students visited **Dr. Clothi Tate's** high-security lab at the PPQ Pink Bollworm Rearing Facility in Phoenix. Clothi demonstrated how lab personnel check individual larvae to see if they have been sterilized (in the facility) or are in their natural, fertile state. He helped the students crush live pink bollworm larvae in small test tubes holding a special clear liquid. Cells from the sterilized pink bollworms turn that liquid pink while cells from natural bollworms leave the liquid colorless.

With PPQ's **Tess Acosta Williams** leading the crew, the students toured the entire Pink Bollworm Rearing Facility and found out all the steps involved in rearing pink bollworms from eggs to adults. Here the students examine some cardboard "cells" where the eggs reside until they hatch and become larvae:



The student in the center background is wearing a mask to diminish the bad smell in the air. The rearing lab is stinky because of the diet fed to the growing insects. That diet is cooked up onsite in big vats equipped with electric mixers exactly like the one in your kitchen, but humongous.

The sterile-insect technique is applicable to many different species, including the Mediterranean fruit fly. When sterilized insects are released in the wild, they mate with ordinary insects but no offspring are produced. The technique is good for population reduction without the use of pesticides. APHIS maintains fruit-fly rearing facilities in Mexico and Hawaii to crank out the millions of steriles needed every year to suppress Medfly populations that sneak into the continental United States in fruit shipments from Hawaii and other countries. But all the sterilized pink bollworms needed every year for U.S. control efforts are grown at the Phoenix facility.

Bugs also figured in two other activities during the program. TOCC facilitator **Josh Garcia** taught the students about the traditional Tohono O'odham names for local

insects during week one and UA Ag School admissions officer **Frank Santiago** taught a basic entomology lesson. Then in week two, UA entomology professor **Dr. Carl Olson** showed the students his enormous collection of Arizona insect species and talked with everybody about the role insects play in desert ecology. Modules like these are partly about teaching science to the participants and partly about demonstrating the many kinds of science-related jobs they might aspire to, with proper academic credentials. Getting the TLC students fired up about going on to college is priority #1 for the program.



**Dr. Laurie Gage**, AC's big-cat specialist, flew down from northern California to assist with the educational module at the Reid Park Zoo. She gave a slide presentation on several interesting zoo-vet procedures, like how to do a root canal on a tiger and how to keep an elephant's feet healthy. [We were all glad to see that the rhinos pictured earlier had perfectly groomed feet. Tucson Zoo personnel earned kudos from Laurie on that point.]

Laurie also showed some inspiring shots of the team she worked with after Hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana. When the hurricane flooded southern Mississippi and Louisiana, one unforeseen result was that many eight dolphins from one facility were washed right out of their pools and into the Gulf of Mexico! These animals were ill equipped to find food in the open ocean. When rescue workers spotted a pod of dolphins that were looking emaciated and swimming around aimlessly, they realized the team had located some of the escapees. The workers used specialized floating panels and, with help from the dolphins' trainers, convinced the animals to swim right up onto the rafts so they could be taken back to dry land for veterinary treatment and returned to a safe environment.

During the zoo trip, the TLC students got a behind-the-scenes tour that included information on what zookeepers do all day. Participants learned specifically how keepers create the dozens of different meals needed every day by the various species on display.



*Jennifer Stoddard, an education specialist with the Reid Park Zoo in Tucson, shows the TLC students what tigers at the facility eat. The three-ring binder in the foreground contains recipes for all the species at the zoo that need custom-made chow. Sometimes the keepers hide treat foods inside the rest of the diet or place treats in unexpected spots in the animals' enclosures so they have to hunt for them. This is a form of "environmental enrichment" that keeps the animals from being bored in captivity.*

During the group's trip to the Port of Nogales, on the border with Mexico, the students learned how to identify noxious weed seeds hiding in a shipment of other seeds. The visit was facilitated by PPQ port director **Tom Giles**, who has helped with all three TLC programs.



*This student is learning how to identify seeds of onionweed under the microscope at PPQ's Nogales port facility.*

This is the kind of work PPQ inspectors used to do every day at the ports, but since 2002 those workers have been part of the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Fortunately, APHIS maintains cordial working relationships with CBP port personnel. That made it possible for Tess Williams to take the TLC students to a truck-inspection facility in Nogales to learn how CBP inspects incoming shipments of fruits and vegetables for pests not native to the United States.



*CBP inspector Lacey Proffitt shows samples of plant material that can usually come into the country without much fear of pest introductions. Note that there is no citrus on the table, however.*

While the group was in Nogales, they took a side trip to watch cattle entering the port on the hoof. VS veterinarian **Kerry Forsyth** described how large numbers of steers are shipped from Mexico into the United States to put on weight before slaughter. But because Mexican cattle sometimes carry the cattle-fever tick and we do not have cattle fever anymore in the U.S.A., all the cows get sprayed or dipped with insecticides right before they step across the border. Then the steers are rushed down a hillside in a narrow chute that deposits them in big fenced corrals, where they are fed and watered and allowed to relax before being put onto trailers for the trip up north to finishing facilities.



*That white binder in the hands of Dr. Kerry Forsyth contains detailed information about every shipment of cattle entering the country from Mexico through Nogales. In the background you can see the orange fencing that forms the sides of the running chute. Just over the top of the hill in the background is Mexico.*

This year marked the first time that International Services has participated in the TLC program. **Dr. Martha Chavez**, a veterinarian working in an agricultural specialist billet at IS' Mexico City office, came a long way to share information about jobs students might aspire to if they want to work outside the country. Martha even developed a little spiral-bound brochure to give the students in the program. She gave her talk just after the Nogales steers had reached the resting corral, which is bordered by the orange fence in the background on the next photo.



*CBP inspector Profitt stuck with the tour group and watched as Dr. Martha Chavez distributed her IS brochures.*

WS operational personnel took the students into open country and showed them how to use radio telemetry equipment. This setup comes into play when field crews need to locate an animal wearing a radio collar.



(TOCC photo by Paul Buseck.)

*Wildlife diseases biologist William Sparklin demonstrates how to use radiotelemetry equipment to track animals.*

Back at the UA campus, the students visited the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) computer lab and learned how to use Google Earth™ in order to create a single map showing where each student came from. In the next photo, the young man in the red shirt is **Casey Kann-Thornbrugh**, a graduate student at UA who has worked with the TLC students all three summers. Casey is a member of the Wampanoag Tribe of Massachusetts. Casey and TOCC science professor **Paul Buseck**, who took the picture below, are the on-the-ground managers of the TLC Program.

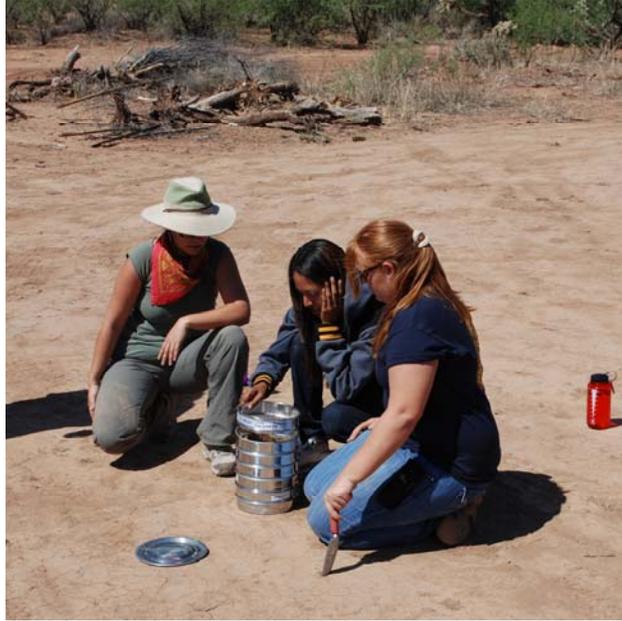


Not everything during the program centered on academics, however. On the first day, students walked around the TOCC campus blindfolded in a trust-building exercise.



*Chance Gregorio, a student who took the TLC course the first time in 2008, is led around by another participant on Day One in a trust-building exercise. (TOCC photo by Paul Buseck.)*

Participants visited two farms on the Tohono O'odham Nation to learn about tribal agricultural traditions. Tribes in the desert Southwest have been growing crops with very little water for millennia. They either plant species that thrive in dry heat or selectively breed into ordinary species of plants the qualities needed for such crops to survive under local conditions. The Hopi are famous for some of their corn lines. Hopi corn grows only about 3 feet tall but still has one or more ears per stalk! In this picture, the students visiting the Cowlic Farm are learning how to sieve soil samples in a module on soils and agriculture surveying.



(TOCC photo by Paul Buseck.)

Also in the early going, TLC students went to “horse camp.” This 2-day event offers participants the chance to learn about horses, tack, and themselves. **Silas Johnson**, an adjunct faculty member at TOCC, is the facilitator. Si works with his adult sons to bring a group of saddle horses to the students and teach them how to mount and ride, how to rope, and how to take care of a horse and keep it healthy.

Horse camp used to be right at the end of the TLC course. But last summer, Si suggested that it be moved to the front end of the curriculum because of its value in helping the students find themselves and form a cohesive group. This change was effected in 2009 and will be repeated in the future as well. Here are some shots from horse camp, all taken by Paul Buseck.



*Not everybody gets things right the first time. This participant is mounting from the wrong side of the horse. You can tell by the animal's ear position that it knows something unusual is going on....*



*Si's hand-tooled saddle drew a lot of admiring glances.*



*Horse camp is not all fun and games. Here the boys carry logs supplied by Si to form a circle. Participants will sit on the logs while Si builds a small ceremonial fire and tells stories about what it means to be an Indian and a man. Si often works with at-risk teenagers, but the students in the TLC class don't fit that description. Note the hair on Bobby Narcho in the foreground. Yes, it's been painted mint green....*

On the last day of the program, the students visited the Hikdan riparian restoration project on the San Xavier district of the reservation, about 15 miles from Tucson. First they saw the Santa Cruz riverbed, which is now totally dry.



*In the plaid shirt is Frank Santiago, admissions officer for the Agriculture Department at UA and another of the behind-the-scenes cooperators who help put on TLC every year. In the very back at the left, the woman in the bright blue cap is PPQ tribal liaison Christina Jewett. Christina, who lives outside Tucson, works with the students every day during the program. She also helps organize it and sits on the curriculum committee, which is made up of personnel from TOCC, UA, and APHIS. In the center, Lorinda Harvey, who manages the restoration project, lets some sand run through her fingers. She is explaining how the Santa Cruz River used to actually exist, before the populations of Phoenix and Tucson began siphoning it off for their drinking water.*



*Lorinda proudly shows off the pond that the restoration project created. The vegetation growing around the pond was typical in the area before the Santa Cruz dried up. A well and hydraulic pump power a short artificial stream that keeps water levels stable.*

Post-program evaluation forms from the students indicate that every participant found things to like about the curriculum and overall experience. For many, the highlight was horse camp. Here's a group photo, again by Paul Buseck, showing all the students,

assistants, TOCC and UA cooperators, and, near the center in the long braids, Si Johnson himself.



*The tallest of the jagged mountains toward the left in the background is Baboquiviri Peak. Near the top is a cave where the Creator brought the Tohono O'odham people into being. Baboquiviri is the most sacred spot on the reservation and a site of religious pilgrimage for tribal members. (TOCC photo by Paul Buseck.)*

On the final day of the program, Janet gave out course-completion certificates, and each student also received a T-shirt. Here she is, joking with Bobby about his green hair:



*Si Johnson (extreme left) and Casey Kann-Thornbrugh (red shirt) look on as Janet gives Bobby Narcho his certificate. (TOCC photo by Paul Buseck.)*

So, where do we take the “Safeguarding Natural Heritage: Tohono Land Connections” from here? In mid-September we received word that for 2010, the Office of the

Administrator would be furnishing the funding required to put on the program. This is good news for Janet as it takes her out of the fundraising business. But even more important, the Administrator has agreed to let her start a second “Safeguarding Natural Heritage” course for teenagers next summer, at another tribal college.

Janet will be publicizing the availability of this program to presidents of the other 31 tribal colleges and universities and, with help from the APHIS Native American Working Group, selecting the second venue and getting the new program started right. Everything the agency learned in 3 years of working on the TLC Program will help us organize, develop curriculum for, and put on the second course. But it is the tribal college—and the sponsoring tribe behind the school—that determines the particular character and content of the new course. Just as the Tohono O’odham Community College did in working with APHIS to create the TLC Program.

*[USDA News, the Department of Agriculture employee newsletter, featured a piece on the TLC Program in their most recent issue. The author was Legislative and Public Affairs’ writer Greg Rosenthal. To check out that story, which features only the USDA employees involved in the program, go to [http://www.usda.gov/documents/usdanews\\_jul\\_aug\\_09.pdf](http://www.usda.gov/documents/usdanews_jul_aug_09.pdf) on the Web.]*

## Hails and Farewells on the ANAWG

Four significant changes have taken place in our roster of representatives since the June issue. We mentioned then that Kansas had no ANAWG outreach rep, and that stimulated **Erin Stiers** of PPQ to take on that role for us. But Erin warned that she might be a short-timer: a new State Plant Health Director was due to be named for Kansas, and that individual might want to put another employee in the ANAWG role. Sure enough: **Wendy Beltz** arrived in August and promptly saddled up to be the Kansas rep herself.

Among the voting members of the ANAWG, most of whom work out of headquarters in Riverdale, we had a change just before press time. **Denise Ruffino** had been the WS rep for around 18 months, but she is leaving APHIS at the end of September for a position with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Texas, near her family. Denise’s replacement on the ANAWG is wildlife biologist **Shelley [Michelle L.] Gray**.

Thanks very much to Erin and Denise for their dedication and to Wendy and Shelley for stepping up to the plate.

Right before press time, two new volunteers to act as ANAWG State representatives presented themselves to Janet Wintermute on their own initiative. **Andrew Hubble**, a wildlife biologist working at Los Angeles International Airport for WS, found his way into the fold via the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES). Andrew wanted to attend the AISES meeting at the end of October, and his supervisor asked Janet for advice about that. Turns out that Andrew is a member of the Shoshone Bannock tribe of Idaho, and when he met face to face with Janet at the ANAWG booth at The Wildlife Society’s meeting in September in Monterey, CA, the deal was struck. Not only will Andrew support ANAWG reps Bob Clement and Vicki Moore (both from northern California) by covering tribal activities in the southern part of the State, but he will help the ANAWG staff its booth at the AISES meeting!

The official WS contingent at The Wildlife Society included **Dr. Paige Schmidt**, a newly hired scientist working at the National Wildlife Research Center's Sandusky, OH, field station. She sought Janet out at the ANAWG booth and offered to join the ANAWG on the spot. Paige is an enrolled member of the Potawatomi Tribe, which is now based in Oklahoma.

Volunteers are a good thing all by themselves, but to find two new volunteers who are also tribal is an extra plus for our group. Welcome aboard, Andrew and Paige.

These States still have no outreach reps: **Georgia, Kentucky, New Hampshire, and Tennessee.**

Readers who work in those States and are interested in helping Native Americans are encouraged to contact Janet Wintermute (301 734-6336) about becoming involved with the ANAWG. Naturally, supervisors must concur. Numerically, more reps come from PPQ than from any other APHIS program. But we are happy to work with employees from all line and support programs in this effort.

## What To Look for in Our Next Issue

Managing "excess" feral horses in the Pacific Northwest. Five tribes discuss the problem and work with Congress on finding a solution before all the salmon streams in Washington and Oregon are ruined by silt. [We promised this article for the current issue but ran out of space.]

The new ANAWG exhibit and stories about where we send it every fall.

Advance notice about the ANAWG's biennial training event for voting members and State outreach representatives.

And more.

## Questions or Comments?

To reach out to your own State's ANAWG rep, get contact info from <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/anawg>. In the white box at the right-hand margin, click on the "Contact a State Representative" bullet.

To get in touch with Janet Wintermute, phone (301) 734-6336 or send her an e-mail through Lotus Notes or the Internet ([janet.s.wintermute@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:janet.s.wintermute@aphis.usda.gov)).