



APHIS Native American Notebook

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

Vol. 3, No. 1—Summer 2011

Welcoming our WINS Interns to APHIS

Every spring, the APHIS Native American Working Group (ANAWG) reaches out to the APHIS Management Team in hopes that the AMT will support the sponsorship of Native American summer interns for the Washington Internships for Native Students (WINS) program. As budgets tightened this spring, the agency fell back on the generosity of Associate Administrator **Kevin Shea**, who agreed to fund all costs for up to six WINS students.

WINS is organized through and run by American University, here in Washington, DC. The program is open to Native American students regardless of where they're going to college, from tiny 1994 tribal land-grant schools (most of which are junior colleges) to enormous State universities to the Ivy League. Selected students live in the dormitories at A.U. and commute on Metro (the local subway system) to Federal agencies all around town for an 8-week work-and-learning experience.

The big bonus and a unique feature of WINS is the educational benefit. All WINS interns go to night school at A.U. and receive, at the end of their 2-month commitment, six college credits that transfer back to their home institution. No other Federal summer internships include free college credit.

USDA has traditionally sponsored more WINS interns than any other Department. APHIS generally hosts about a half-dozen WINS students, though actual numbers go up and down from one year to the next.

Here are APHIS' WINS interns for summer 2011:



Left to right, Hillary Hullinger (Chickasaw), Anita Tanewasha (Yakama), Julia King (San Carlos Apache), Brittany Anderson (Ojibwe), Chelsea Francis (Saint Regis Mohawk), and Alexandrea Haggerty (Prairie Band of Potawatomi), captured by Wildlife Services' Maryland State Director Kevin Sullivan during the annual "goose roundup" in late June.

Of course, hosting an intern requires a commitment to properly supervise the individual. Hats off, then, to the following headquarters employees who agreed to provide day-to-day supervision to a WINS student. The supervisors are listed in the same order as the interns they supervised, above:

Phillip Washington (BRS), Natalia Weinsetel (BRS), Jose Ceballos (PPQ), Steven Patrick and Vivian Keller (both LPA), Richard Pacer and Jessica Mahalingappa (both IS), and Michelle Gray (WS).

The ANAWG has no official mandate to support WINS: the Group is all about program delivery, not civil rights per se or Special Emphasis Program Managers' work (which includes recruitment and retention). However, the ANAWG enthusiastically contributes to the students' overall experience by enriching their 8 weeks with several special activities that go beyond the interns' normal work life. Also, we want them to have exposure to all the different APHIS line and support programs, not just the one they're assigned to. So the ANAWG-sponsored WINS activities always include a spectrum of APHIS employees not working directly with the ANAWG itself.

Wildlife Services takes the students on a “roundup” of Canada geese every June, when the birds drop their long wing feathers and lose the ability to fly away. The newsletter described this event twice in detail, so we’ll just include a few photographs from the 2011 renewal of this popular day trip.



Using portable aluminum fencing, the WINS students help Maryland Wildlife Services employees corral excess Canada geese at a posh condominium complex in Montgomery County, MD. The condo's board of directors hires WS every year to remove about 50 birds, leaving more than 100 in their resident flock. (APHIS photo by Maryland WS State Director Kevin Sullivan.)

In the photo below, also by Kevin Sullivan, **Chelsea Francis** takes the handoff perfectly from wildlife biologist Robert Fey. A frightened Canada goose can jump ugly, and experience has taught WS that the best way to pick one up is by the base of its wings. Behind are the colorful plastic cages used to transport the excess birds to a poultry-processing plant on Maryland's eastern shore, where they are euthanized. The meat is distributed to homeless shelters.



Clients pay WS \$18 per bird removed, a figure that just covers the costs involved. Clients also specify exactly how many birds they want taken. Population reduction is carefully monitored by WS management. Their goal is to bring Canada goose numbers into better balance with available and appropriate habitat—not wipe out the species.

The ANAWG sends a special thank-you to **Kevin Sullivan** for going far out of his way to include the WINS students in the roundup process. **Shelley Gray**, WS' voting representative on the ANAWG, coordinated the outing.

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Biotechnology Regulatory Services' tribal liaison **Gwen Burnett** and **Plant Protection and Quarantine** former ANAWG field rep **Fred Mann** (who remains active with the Group despite having been replaced officially) join forces to coordinate a trip to the Port of Baltimore every year. There, the WINS students see cargo inspections and meet with agricultural inspectors working now for the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection unit. (While APHIS–PPQ still provides policy for this activity, the actual employees doing the work transferred from APHIS to DHS–CBP when it was formed in 2003.)

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Gwen also arranged a new site visit this year: a trip downtown to see the Smithsonian Institution's famed butterfly collection. She got PPQ's butterfly expert, **Dr. Wayne Wehling**, to join us at the Museum of Natural History and lead the group through the Insect Zoo and the live-butterfly exhibit—a multimillion-dollar facility that lets small groups of people interact with freely flying butterflies from all over the world. Wayne works with the Smithsonian to get nonnative butterflies into the United States following PPQ importation protocols. Since the insects are short lived, helping the Smithsonian repopulate the exhibit collection is a consistent part of Wayne's job.

Inside the tropical garden in the exhibit, intern **Julia King** caught a great closeup of a citrus swallowtail (*Papilio xuthus*) feasting on porterweed. This butterfly, a citrus pest, is established in Hawaii but not on the mainland. So Wayne won't allow it to go on exhibit in the Continental United States below the 37th parallel.



When the idea of going to the Smithsonian surfaced, **Shelley Gray** offered to broker a visit to the Museum's feather collection. And then **Joan Sills** (PPQ), vice chair of the ANAWG, set up a visit with a Smithsonian entomologist who often works with APHIS to identify unknown insects found at the ports. All these experiences were clustered on July 11.

In the next picture, **Phillip Washington** had few problems working with the ambient light while Dr. Marcy Haecker (back left) showed various desiccated (not stuffed) bird specimens from the Smithsonian ornithology collection to Janet Wintermute (back right) and the WINS interns. The display boxes of American birds sit under an extremely bright fixture positioned about 4 feet above the tabletop to facilitate scientific examinations. In the center back, a stuffed bald eagle keeps watch.



Haecker explained how bird eggs (center left) and bodies are handled and stored. The brightly colored parrot lying right in front of the big egg died in the 1890s; the species has been extinct for a long time. The tag attached to every bird lists its provenance—an absolute requirement for a newly donated specimen to make it into the permanent collection.

In the box in front of the parrot are three large, mostly black woodpeckers, including a specimen of the ivory-billed woodpecker, thought to be extinct since the 1930s. Sightings of what might be that species in Arkansas 5 or 6 years ago caused a flurry of excitement in the birding community but could not be confirmed.

Haecker also helps APHIS' Wildlife Services program by identifying feathers or bits of tissue from birds that have flown into jet airplanes. Remember the 2010 crash landing of a passenger jet on the Hudson River just west of Manhattan? DNA evidence allowed Haecker to identify the birds responsible as migratory, not resident, Canada geese.

After lunch, the interns checked out the Smithsonian Systematic Entomology Laboratory's fantastic collection of pinned insects. Our guide, entomologist Dr. John Brown, actually enlisted friends and family members to count all the individual

specimens in the museum's collection. They have 2.8 *million* insects from all over the world, catalogued and arranged in display devices for the use of taxonomists and other investigators.

Taking pictures inside the Laboratory's huge collection storage area was difficult because of the harsh overhead fluorescent lights and many reflective surfaces on the metal storage cabinets. Below, intern Julia King is trying to solve the flash-bounce problem by shooting the glass-covered butterfly case Dr. Brown is holding at a sharp angle.



Entomologist John Brown explains that all the butterflies in this case are the same species. The purpose of having so many is to document the variation seen in populations from different places. The brighter specimens on the right are males. Many insect species demonstrate the same color patterns found among mammals: males are brighter, to attract the females' attention for breeding advantages. (APHIS photo by Phillip Washington.)

Like ornithologist Haecker, John Brown works on APHIS-related projects all the time. Every workday, overnight delivery services bring him dozens of insect specimens, straight from the port inspectors all over the country. Brown has to make time-sensitive species identifications for the inspectors from Customs and Border Protection and APHIS-PPQ.

The pinned insects in the main collection are not stuffed or altered to preserve them. Each is simply pinned in place and allowed to dry out naturally. But, Brown explained, for larger-bodied specimens like big spiders and scorpions, letting them dry out doesn't work. The critters just curl up in a ball as they desiccate. Those specimens are stored in preservative liquid in glass jars. Intern **Alexandrea Haggerty** took a close look at a scorpion in the Systematic Entomology Laboratory collection.



(APHIS photo by intern Julia King.)

All three of our featured presenters at the Smithsonian were wildly enthusiastic about what they do. They're living proof of that old saying that, if you're working at what you love, you'll never work a day in your life.

When the **American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES)** opened a meeting of its Government Relations Council to Federal employees on July 14 at the Goddard Space Center in Greenbelt, MD, the ANAWG encouraged our WINS students to participate as well.

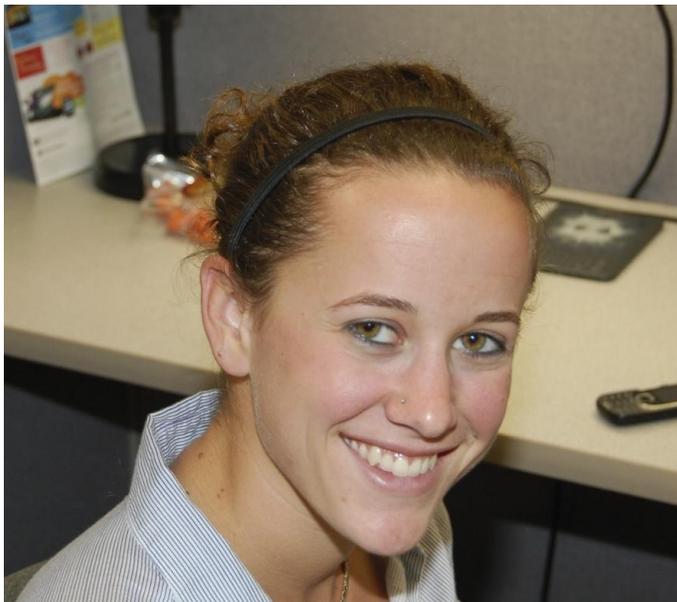
AISES is the premier organization for tribal students majoring in the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). There are more than 100 very active AISES chapters at mainstream and tribal colleges and some high-school chapters as well. The ANAWG exhibits at AISES' big annual meeting every fall in hopes of

attracting some of the country's best and brightest Native youth into the agency as employees when they graduate.

It's a good thing we took three of our WINS interns to Goddard. An afternoon panel discussion featured various groups that collaborate with the AISES internship program, including WINS director Jack Soto and Amy Morrill Bijeau, A.U.'s assistant dean for experiential learning. After the AISES interns present got to speak, the emcee invited any WINS interns onsite to talk. The only three in the room were from APHIS!

Finally, the ANAWG reinstated a popular practice from prior years that got overlooked in 2010: the brown-bag lunch in Riverdale, where the WINS interns get to make brief presentations about themselves, their tribe, and their work activities with us. The luncheon was held July 26 in front of an audience of roughly 80.

There is a movement afoot within the agency to reduce support for the WINS program because its relatively high cost (\$10,500 per intern) has not led to the acquisition of Native American employees. However, PPQ's weeds specialist, **Dr. Al Tasker**, managed to reverse that trend all by himself. Al was so impressed by his 2009 WINS intern, **Kelsey Branch** (Citizen Band of Potawatomi), that he converted her to a Student Career Employment Program (SCEP) intern for her last 2 years in college and, in July 2011, hired her as a full-time PPQ employee.



Kelsey Branch in her cube in Riverdale. American University invited Kelsey to address all the summer 2011 WINS students at the program's closing ceremonies the last week of July. (APHIS photo by Anson Eaglin.)

For the record, the transition from WINS summer intern to full-year internship slot will be hard to replicate. A SCEP appointment was feasible for Kelsey because she attended a university in Virginia—William and Mary College in Williamsburg—which put her within easy reach of PPQ supervision during the academic year. Most WINS students come to DC from far-away schools, so their connection to their summer supervisor is necessarily time limited.

But Kelsey’s qualities of intelligence, creativity, and initiative led AI to conclude that she deserved a long-term place in the agency family. And he undertook all the approvals and personnel paperwork to make it happen.

Successful completion of a SCEP internship entails a permanent, full-time job offer. Kelsey is presently occupying a Plant Health Specialist billet in Riverdale at grade 5 with noncompetitive promotion potential to grade 9. She’s a prime argument for the idea that, while other alternatives for accessing Native American talent exist, the WINS program should not be overlooked in the future.



Update on Tribal Consultation

USDA’s Office of Tribal Relations (OTR) prepared a tribal consultation game plan in 2010, and the Office of General Council (OGC) reviewed it this past February. But although OTR expected to promulgate the resulting regulation in the *Federal Register* by late spring, the text remains in clearance.

In response to OTR’s direction that all agencies develop a parallel directive to cover the same ground, **Kevin Shea** asked PPD Deputy Administrator **Christine Zakarka** and Civil Rights Enforcement and Compliance Director **Myra Young** to form a Tribal Consultation Team to work on this issue.

Young and Zakarka handed off day-to-day responsibilities for this work to NAPDM **Janet Wintermute** and Environmental and Risk Analysis Services’ branch chief **Ken Seeley**. Shea asked that the Team use the Lean Six Sigma methodology to develop the process, so PPD assigned **Anna Rinick** to be the Team’s “green belt” Six Sigma specialist. **Michael Tadle**, also of PPD, signed on as co-facilitator in May.

The first order of business was for the Team to develop an actual tribal-consultation process that could be followed by all the line programs.

The team met weekly and sometimes more often throughout the spring and summer. Members developed a “process map” to capture all the steps in setting up and preserving the results of a tribal consultation. (This kind of map, which resembles a flow chart, is central to Six Sigma activities.)

During the week of July 25, the team met face to face in Riverdale to finalize the process map and make a concerted stab at writing the APHIS directive on tribal consultation even though the USDA regulation is not finalized yet.

ANAWG participants include **Caffilene Allen** (Animal Care), **Terry Clark** (Veterinary Services), **Bob Baca** and **Carl Etsitty** (PPQ), **Gwen Burnett** (BRS), **Shelley Gray** (WS), **Hallie Zimmers** (Legislative and Public Affairs), and PPD's own voting rep to the ANAWG, **Phillip Washington**. Field-based ANAWG reps on the committee were **Jason Suckow** (WS), **Sheryl Shaw** (VS), and **Kerry Bryan** (PPQ). PPD staffers **Tracy Willard** and **Cynthia Howard** volunteered to participate also.

With the consultation process firmed up, the Team turned its attention to getting today's consultants (high-level management personnel from the line programs) trained on how to do a tribal consultation effectively. Plus, the Team recognizes the need to train the next incumbents in those positions as well. Because one in three APHIS employees is eligible to retire right now, it's imperative that next-generation consultants be prepared to take over this important responsibility smoothly.

NAPDM Wintermute put forward a set of training options that Kevin Shea reviewed in late July. She has contracted with Larry Keown, a retired Forest Service consulting official, to put on a **1-day training event this fall in Riverdale and Fort Collins**.

To minimize travel costs, both trainings will be pushed live via videoconference to the State Plant Health Directors' equipment nationwide. Of course, the target trainees—everybody high enough in the agency to consult—will need to show up at the SPHD offices in their State if they cannot take the training in person at headquarters or the Colorado hub. But in many places, all APHIS field leadership is collocated in one building regardless of program.

The exact training dates will be publicized as soon as the APHIS Management Team's best availability is known.

Every trainee will receive a copy of Larry Keown's new book, ***Working in Indian Country: Building Successful Relationships With American Indian Tribes***. A copy is already in the library in Riverdale, available to all employees.



PPQ Creates a Virginia Flag

Do Pocahontas and the Powhatan Confederacy, an early cradle of democracy among American Indian tribes in Colonial America, still seem important today? PPQ employees in Virginia say Yes.

In the late spring, Virginia State Plant Health Director **Bernetta Barco** gathered her troops for the semiannual all-hands meeting of PPQ employees in Virginia. With a nod to her own work as the ANAWG Field Coordinator for Virginia, Bernetta invited **Valaree Lund**, the Emerald Ash Borer Coordinator stationed in Manassas, to give a PowerPoint™ presentation on the tribes of the State. Val, in turn, invited meeting attendees to look at the authorized flags of the 11 Virginia tribes, posted in the conference room, and then design their own Virginia PPQ Flag.

Six employees got crafty and emailed photos of their contest flags to Bernetta for judging.

Here's the winner, fabricated and photographed by Supervising Safeguarding Specialist **Karen Williams** (Norfolk):



These are the tribes Valaree talked about:

Cheroenhaka (Nottoway), Chickahominy, Eastern Chickahominy, Mattaponi, Monacan Indian Nation, Nansemond, Nottoway, Pamunkey, Patawomeck (origin of our word “Potomac”), Rappahannock, and Upper Mataponi. The Piscataway Conoy deserve special mention because they’re *partly* in Virginia. This tribe historically occupied both the Virginia and Maryland banks of the Potomac River, about 35 miles south of Washington, DC. But now their government is split with two different chiefs—one in each State—claiming to be the one legitimate government for the whole tribe.

None of these tribes has Federal recognition, yet. But five of them have joined together to make one application to Congress for recognition. For that application to proceed, the tribes were required to stipulate that they will not build any casinos if they receive recognition. This is a unique turn of events and certainly might not stand up to a court challenge after the fact, there being 243 gambling casinos in the country so far, most of which are on reservations.



Hails and Farewells on the ANAWG

Michelle Gray, WS’ very active voting representative, accepted a new position in PPD in mid-August. Fortunately for the ANAWG, her new supervisor, **Ken Seeley**, agreed that we can hang onto Shelley. She will join **Phillip Washington** on the Group. And thanks go out to WS management for replacing Shelley right away. **Janean Romines**, a wildlife biologist in Riverdale, becomes WS’ newest voting member.

John Eisemann, a scientist at the National Wildlife Research Center in Fort Collins, left us in late spring. Thanks to John for his many years of service and his mild, soothing demeanor. We depended on him a lot during negotiations about the ANAWG’s strategic plan. The NWRC director selected **Dan Gossett**, a supervisory animal health technician at the Center, as John’s replacement. Dan and Jenean are both voting reps.

Biotechnology Regulatory Services assigned Fort Collins-based scientist **Douglas Grant** to fill the voting slot that opened up after **Carl Etsitty** left BRS to take the PPQ tribal liaison position.

Welcome and many thanks to Jenean, Dan, and Douglas for taking on their ANAWG roles.

There has been no movement from VS on naming replacement reps for **Washington/Alaska** or for **Oregon** or **South Carolina**. Other programs are invited to submit names of volunteers (or conscripts!) to serve as field coordinators from those States. The Pacific Northwest has many tribes, so it’s particularly important to fill in behind the departed representatives from that part of the country.

Georgia, Kentucky, New Hampshire, Vermont, and West Virginia still have no field coordinators. Volunteers working outside of headquarters who want to take up ANAWG representation as a collateral-duty assignment, particularly in these States, should check with their supervisor and then contact Janet Wintermute directly (301 734–6336 or by e-mail to janet.s.wintermute@aphis.usda.gov).

What To Look for in Our Next Issue

“Safeguarding Natural Heritage: Our Land Our Future” moves to the tribal college in Santa Fe.

How the tribal-consultation training for our top managers went.

The black-on-black pottery of the Southwest (postponed from this issue due to space).

An update on APHIS’ tribal-consultation directive and details on the consultation process.

On the road again: We take the ANAWG exhibit to the major Native American organizations’ annual meetings every fall.

And more *if you send Janet newsworthy items.*

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).