



APHIS Native American Notebook

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

Vol. 1, No. 4—December 2009

President Obama Welcomes Tribal Leaders to Washington

On November 5, 2009, the President hosted a historic meeting that heralds a new relationship between the Federal Government and Tribal Governments. The President invited the leader of each federally recognized tribe to meet with him and senior Cabinet officials at a tribal leaders' conference in Washington, DC. More than 450 tribes were able to send their elected leader to the event, which was videotaped and fed live to the Internet from www.whitehouse.gov. In Indian country, both the invitation and the meeting itself generated a great deal of interest. Attendees met with the President at the Department of the Interior because the White House does not have a room large enough to accommodate such a big group.

The President spoke frankly, acknowledging past failures on the part of the Federal Government but emphasizing that, in his administration, things were going to be handled differently. He executed a Memorandum on Tribal Consultation during the event that reaffirmed his administration's adherence to the principles of tribal consultation as previously incorporated into Executive Order 13175, promulgated during the Clinton administration. The President reiterated the importance of meaningful and early consultation and collaboration with tribes as a hallmark of effective programmatic and regulatory activities that could have impact on tribal governments, communities, and individuals.

The mandate for tribal consultation is not new. But it has been largely overlooked in the past. The principles of consultation can be found in numerous Federal laws, regulations, Executive Orders, court rulings, and related legal pronouncements. When an agency plans to begin any activity (actions, rulemaking, policy interpretations, etc) that might

“substantially affect one or more federally recognized tribes,” the agency must offer consultation to those tribes.

Planning face-to-face consultation opportunities takes time and costs money, but it cannot be ignored.

At the November 5 event, President Obama told the audience he was mandating that “all Cabinet-level agencies” submit, within 90 days, an action plan addressing tribal consultation and collaboration and the principles enumerated in EO 13175.

How Is USDA Responding to This Challenge?

While the Department’s consultation directive (#1350-001) is quite recent, having been published in September 2008, it lacks the specificity and scope to fulfill the President’s mandate. The USDA Native American Working Group (NAWG) began to work on the required action plan immediately. **Janie Hipp, J.D., LL.M. (Chickasaw)**—the recently appointed Senior Advisor to the Secretary, Tribal Affairs, and head of the new USDA Office of Tribal Relations—chairs the Working Group. At her request, the Group has formed three subcommittees to assist the Department in drafting proposed regulations, identifying reporting and accountability frameworks, and assessing education and training needs and opportunities.

APHIS’ Native American Program-Delivery Manager (NAPDM), **Janet Wintermute** (the agency’s representative to the USDA NAWG) is participating on the Policy and Education and Training subcommittees. NAWG members attending the recent annual symposium of the Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC) and Indian Nations Conservation Alliance (INCA) met with Janie and her counterparts from the U.S. Departments of Commerce and Education and the Army Corps of Engineers. These four Federal agencies combined to seek consultation input from tribes in attendance at the symposium concerning what new consultation policies at the Federal level should include.

Details on USDA’s new tribal-consultation policy and upcoming training events will be publicized in early 2010.

How Have Native Americans Reacted to the President’s Mandate?

If the responses of attendees at the IAC / INCA meeting are typical, Indian country is extremely enthusiastic about the President’s initiative. Some tribes have worked proactively with the Federal Government for a long time. Others have been less well engaged. Similarly, some Federal agencies have worked well with tribes, some have not worked well with them, and some have no history of working with tribes at all.

Tribal consultation does not lessen APHIS’ ability to promulgate necessary regulations. Consultation offers us the chance to seek and establish effective working relationships with tribal governments, which is required in the government-to-government context. Tribes are sovereign nations. The President’s Memorandum will place APHIS and USDA in better relation with tribes as we move forward to address the Nation’s challenges.

To Find Out More About the November 5 Meeting,

Click on this hotlink to get to the White House coverage of the event:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2009/12/14/tribal-input-and-agency-plans-implement-executive-order-tribal-consultation>

APHIS Takes the Show on the Road

Most tribal organizations hold their biggest meetings in the fall, and APHIS' tribal liaisons and members of the APHIS Native American Working Group (ANAWG) go on the road every year to spread the word about agency programs and services that may be of interest to individual Indians and representatives of tribal governments. For fall 2009, we commissioned a new ANAWG exhibit structure. By the end of the season—the annual convocation of IAC and INCA—the exhibit was joined by our made-to-match tablecloth. Kermit the Frog may think it's hard to be green, but we don't agree. Here's what the new exhibit looks like:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

APHIS protects the health and value of American agriculture and natural resources.

APHIS:

- Keeps foreign animal and plant pests and diseases out of the country.
- Controls pests and disease outbreaks.
- Responds to animal and plant health emergencies, as well as "all-hazards" emergencies.
- Minimizes damage caused by wildlife.
- Protects regulated animals from inhumane treatment.
- Facilitates international trade and regulates the importation, production, and transportation of genetically engineered organisms.

Partnerships Across Nations

We bring APHIS' animal and plant health programs to Indian country.

The APHIS Native American Working Group (ANAWG) promotes communication with tribal nations and facilitates the delivery of APHIS programs to tribal governments and organizations.

For more information about APHIS programs, please contact us at anawg@aphis.usda.gov or visit the agency's Web site at: www.aphis.usda.gov

Consider a Career with APHIS

- Controlling agricultural pests
- Looking for evidence of the emerald ash borer
- Improving animal traceability
- Preventing pest outbreaks
- Surveying wildlife populations for diseases
- Preventing the spread of rabies
- Regulating traits of genetically engineered crops
- Minimizing damage to livestock caused by predators
- Genetically engineered cotton
- Suppressing invasive weeds with releases of biological control agents
- Protecting against citrus pests and diseases

APHIS oversees a diverse range of agricultural issues, and we're looking for a diverse pool of candidates to fill our available positions. Take a look at APHIS' job announcements, and see for yourself what opportunities await.

Visit www.aphis.usda.gov and click on "Find a Job in APHIS."

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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The exhibit made its debut at **The Wildlife Society's** annual meeting in Monterey, CA, in September. TWS is America's major organization for professional wildlife biologists. APHIS **Wildlife Services** (WS) is a long-time supporter of the Society and sends representatives to attend the conference and speak on the formal agenda. The Native American Program-Delivery Manager (NAPDM) fluffed up WS' cooperative agreement with additional dollars earmarked for underwriting the attendance costs for TWS members active in its Native People's Environmental Working Group.



Eleven tribal students received Professional Program Development Grants to participate in The Wildlife Society's Native People's Environmental Working Group sessions at the Monterey, CA, meeting in September 2009. Here, Janet Wintermute talks with Spusmen Wilder, a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation in Washington State. Spus [pronounced Spoons] is studying at the Salish and Kootenai College on the Flathead Reservation, in Montana. Behind them, Janet's predecessor, Rick Wadleigh, chats with Robert Boyd, of the Tlingit Tribe of Alaska. Robert is a student at the University of Alaska Southeast in Ketchikan. Rick—who was a wildlife biologist before taking on tribal liaison duties full-time in APHIS—is also a longtime cooperater with TWS and served on its board of directors for years. *(Photo taken by Heather Stricker of The Wildlife Society and reproduced by permission.)*

Among other APHIS speakers, the National Wildlife Research Center's **Dr. Lowell Miller** shared research results that suggest immunocontraception (birth control via shots of contraceptive vaccine) may be a viable population-reduction technique for use with feral horses. This will be welcome information for tribes struggling to handle the roughly 20,000 wild horses roaming on five reservations in southern Idaho and eastern and central Oregon and Washington.

Janet Wintermute and **Bob Clement**, ANAWG California representative from Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ), staffed the booth all week. At WS' own booth around the corner, **Andrew Hubble**, a wildlife biologist stationed at Los Angeles International Airport, met the public. Andrew is a member of the Shoshone Bannock Tribe of Idaho but has been living in L.A. for several years. Janet got Andrew and his boss, WS State Director Jeff Ostergard, to agree that Andrew could become an ANAWG State rep serving southern California.

Janet also cooked up a panel of booth-staffers from other Government agencies to help her give a seminar on how to get a Federal job. This session was the highlight of the Society's career fair and featured a live Internet hookup so the panel could teach the attendees—many of whom are about to graduate from college or are in the early years of their professional life—how to navigate the Office of Personnel Management's USAJobs Web site and find employment opportunities. More than 70 people attended the seminar, and many stopped by the APHIS booth later for more information on agency-specific employment opportunities.

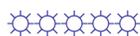
TWS has invited Janet to put on the seminar again at their October 2010 meeting. Opportunities like this are extremely important to the Federal sector because almost a third of current civil servants can retire right now. Attracting the best and the brightest is not enough: we have to help them find our good opportunities and work the application process in the smartest ways.



Also in September, Janet made a quick trip to North Dakota to meet with the **American Indian Higher Education Consortium's** (AIHEC) leadership group and other USDA representatives. AIHEC is made up of the presidents of the 32 tribal colleges (the "1994 schools," so named because they received their land-grant status in that year). USDA also furnishes representatives to the leadership group. **Dr. Joe Leonard** (Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights) and **Mary McNeil** (Deputy Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights) spoke on the agenda. **Lawrence Shorty**, who runs USDA's 1994 Tribal Scholars Program, described the status of that initiative.

The purpose for Janet's visit was to pitch to AIHEC the results of APHIS' 2-week summer program for teenagers, "Safeguarding Natural Heritage: Tohono Land Connections." You read about this program in the fall 2009 issue of this newsletter. The big change for 2010: **APHIS Administrator Cindy Smith** has agreed to provide funds to repeat the session at the Tohono O'odham Reservation in Arizona *and* to institute the program at a second tribal college in summer 2010.

AIHEC members present at the meeting in North Dakota were enthusiastic about the expansion idea. The president of the school hosting the meeting, Cynthia Pala of the Cankdeska Cikana Community College in Fort Totten, ND, offered her institution as our second venue.



While everybody else was enjoying the 3-day weekend around Columbus Day in mid-October, tribal liaisons **Dr. Terry Clark (VS)**, **Christina Jewett (PPQ)**, and **Gwen Burnett (Biotechnology Regulatory Services, BRS)**; ANAWG State rep **Vicki Moore (VS, California)**, and NAPDM Wintermute carried the agency flag at the annual meeting of the **National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)** in Palm Springs, CA. Animal Care's **Dr. Jeanie Lin** and BRS' ANAWG representative, **Dr. Carl Etsitty**, also made the trip, taking turns at staffing the ANAWG booth and attending various content sessions during the meeting.

NCAI celebrated its 65th anniversary in 2009. Tribes that are members of NCAI account for 72 percent of the Nation's 1.5 million Native Americans, making it the largest and most politically influential intertribal organization in the country. Last June, NCAI moved from rented offices in Washington into its new headquarters, which will serve as NCAI's "Embassy of Indian Nations."



The annual meetings of two major organizations—the **United South and Eastern Tribes (USET)** and the **American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES)**—overlapped at the end of October. So we split up our representatives to provide coverage at both events.

USET met in Hollywood, FL, and **Terry Clark** attended for us. Terry has been working very closely with USET management to create numerous cooperative agreements around animal-health and emergency-preparedness issues. USET, a consortium of 24 tribes east of the Mississippi, offers a mechanism for reaching out to a couple tribes that have, and want, no direct relationship with any part of the Federal Government. Terry also brokers agreements with individual USET member-tribes to perform chronic wasting disease surveys in several States.

AISES offers us a unique opportunity to reach out to Native American college students majoring in the sciences and engineering for recruitment purposes. The annual 3-day AISES convention was held in Portland, OR, in 2009, and attracted about 3,000 attendees. The middle day in the program is devoted exclusively to a career exposition with hundreds of exhibits from Government agencies, universities with Native American Studies programs, and for-profit companies.

ANAWG representatives typically volunteer to staff our exhibit regardless of the fit with their own particular educational background and interests. But for the AISES event, we make sure to send employees who are scientists or engineers themselves. Accordingly, **Phillip Washington (PPD, a civil engineer)**, **Andrew Hubble (WS, a wildlife biologist)**, and **Carl Etsitty (BRS, a biotechnologist)** made the trip to Portland. APHIS recruitment specialist **Cohila Gray** joined our booth staff and gave out information on positions currently posted to USAJobs.

In previous years, Recruitment and the ANAWG sent separate exhibits to AISES. From now on, we plan to collocate using the ANAWG display, which has a distinct recruitment tilt on panel #5, and invite Recruitment to help us staff the exhibit.



In many years, November is also a heavy travel month, but not for 2009. ANAWG State rep for Maine, **Kirk Shively (WS)**, kept busy, however. He was on the agenda development committee for the **Native American Fish and Wildlife Society's (NAFWS)** Northeastern Region, helping them get APHIS speakers for their 2-day event in Portland, ME, around Veterans' Day.

Patty Douglass (PPQ), an ANAWG rep for Connecticut and Massachusetts, also helped the organizing committee. **Dr. Paul Egrie (VS)** went up from Riverdale to present on aquaculture, a particularly important topic for NAFWS members in New

England. Kirk himself spoke on wildlife diseases training, and Patty talked on northeastern insect pests.

APHIS and NAFWS have a long history of collaboration. Former Administrator Bobby Acord signed an open-ended Memorandum of Understanding with NAFWS in 2001, and the ANAWG has collocated its biennial training event with NAFWS' annual meeting several times. Both the PPQ and VS tribal liaisons have attended regional NAFWS meetings as well.



December marked the final outreach trip for the calendar year—the annual joint meeting of the **Intertribal Ag Council** and the **Indian Nations Conservation Alliance** in Las Vegas. Despite the state of the economy, the event attracted more than 600 Native Americans and a ballroomful of exhibitors and vendors. USDA was well represented.

The newly appointed **Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, Edward Avalos**, spoke briefly and attended APHIS' 1-day working session on the animal traceability initiative. USDA's **Assistant Secretary for Administration, Pearlle Reed**, gave a long and highly personable speech to the general assembly. **Janie Hipp**, recently moved from the Risk Management Agency to the post of Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Tribal Relations, appeared at the podium several times. APHIS political appointee **Karen Grillo** stood in for Cindy Smith and summarized the agency's program-delivery and outreach work in Indian country. (Technically, Ms. Grillo is attached to Under Secretary Avalos' team and works with all three Marketing and Regulatory Programs agencies, but she is stationed in APHIS.)

Working the APHIS booth were the usual suspects (Janet Wintermute, Gwen Burnett, Christina Jewett, and Carl Etsitty). To beef up coverage and hold down travel costs, Janet enlisted help from **Frankie Cervantes (PPQ)**, the ANAWG State rep for Nevada living closest to Las Vegas.

Months before the meeting VS offered to put on a full day's training on the National Animal Identification System. In the intervening months, after Secretary Vilsack went to a dozen or so listening sessions with livestock producers, it was decided that NAIS needed to change its focus and implementation plan. For a while, it looked like the new plan would be launched by the Office of the Secretary right before the IAC / INCA meeting, but the announcement was postponed just days before we all flew to Vegas.

VS turned the training day into a combination presentation, by **Dr. John Wiemers**, the lead veterinarian for the animal-identification initiative, and listening session. **Policy and Program Development (PPD)** provided facilitators **Deb Millis** and **Denise Page** to smoothe the way for tribal attendees to speak at the microphone. Just as at the Secretary's similar sessions last summer, everything was tape recorded and transcribed by a court reporter for the record.

Because this session took place on Monday, before the main conference opened officially, the audience built up during the day as more and more tribal members got to the convention hotel. By the end of the workshop, nearly 100 people were in the meeting-room. Dr. Wiemers described this event as "the best listening session yet," and he's been at all of them.

Janet came and went during the workshop because she was speaking in another room on the subject of grantwriting. This year, specialists from Washington State University's grants shop organized the all-day workshop and Janet gave just one presentation. She provided copies of a full Request for Proposals package, downloaded from www.Grants.gov, and stepped the audience through some of the hidden pitfalls in that RFP. Janet also shared some of her experiences from serving on interagency panels evaluating stacks of competing proposals. About 40 people attended the grantwriting seminar, and several of them came to the APHIS booth for more information later in the week.

APHIS has been sending the ANAWG booth to IAC meetings every year since the mid 1990s, and the Office of the Administrator made a financial contribution to organizers of the 2009 IAC / INCA meeting as well. IAC is the only nationwide tribal organization devoted solely to helping Indian agricultural producers across the board, both ranchers and farmers. INCA serves tribes by promoting the development of water-conservation districts, an activity particularly close to the work of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Besides departmental speeches from various agencies, the meeting agenda included several excellent presentations from producers themselves. One of the best was a talk from the managers of the Arapaho Ranch in Wyoming. This 595,000-acre outfit is USDA Organic certified and produces all the organic beef sold at Whole Foods stores in the Front Range (Colorado and nearby States). ANAWG rep **Rod Krischke**, WS' State Director for Wyoming, reports that the Arapaho have been working with WS on predation-control projects right along. Nevertheless, he was pleased to get new contact information for the Arapaho Ranch itself. Rod will be reaching out to Ranch management to explore opportunities for more collaboration in the future.



Now, why did we give you all this information about our travels when everybody knows APHIS is on a huge "travel diet" across all programs? Because we need you to understand why we're traveling all the time! We cannot improve the agency's program delivery to the federally recognized tribes unless we develop relationships with tribal officials in advance. If a potentially disastrous outbreak of a foreign animal disease, like foot-and-mouth disease, happens at a tribally owned cattle ranch, for instance, APHIS will need to get permission to go onto the affected reservation to do traceability work or depopulation to stem the outflow of infection. Getting that permission *quickly* is key.

When APHIS makes itself and its work familiar to tribes over time, by appearing at meetings of tribal organizations, the agency has a better chance of forging significant alliances with tribal governments. These alliances are a good idea in general but become crucial if APHIS is going to deal with an animal or plant emergency on tribal lands in a timely way.

Can You Do Something for Indians Without Being on the ANAWG?

What if you're interested in helping Native Americans, but your State's slots on the ANAWG are already occupied? Or maybe your supervisor can't spare you enough to take on a full collateral-duty ANAWG Field Coordinator role. PPQ Botanist Identifier **Margaret Smither-Kopperl**, who works in Seattle, found herself in the former position. [The official ANAWG slots in Washington State have long been held by one of Margaret's colleagues, **Clinton Campbell [PPQ]**, and **VS veterinarian Gary Brickler.**] Margaret figured out a way to work around this problem by combining her interest in tribal culture and her educational expertise to help at Muckleshoot Tribal College, a satellite campus of Northwest Indian College (NWIC).

In addition to her full-time work for APHIS, Margaret is a part-time faculty member at NWIC and for the last 2 years has taught two classes, Northwest Plants and Introductory Plant Biology, at Muckleshoot.

Last spring, one of Margaret's students asked if she would be interested in helping with the Muckleshoot Tribal School summer program. The school is located on the Muckleshoot Reservation in Auburn, WA, and serves the needs of the children on the reservation in grades kindergarten through 12. The school has been moving toward a culturally based curriculum, and Margaret's student-friend suggested that Plants be the subject for the summer 2009 program.

Margaret put her Ph.D. to good work by volunteering to help the teachers plan the summer session. She visited the elementary and middle schools on Day One in her official PPQ capacity to talk about invasive weeds and the damage they do to native plants and ecosystems.

She found that the pupils were already aware of many uses for native plants. They were especially interested in the weeds that are common to their part of Washington. With the middle-schoolers, Margaret discussed what makes a plant a weed. For instance, nettles have been important food plants to the Muckleshoot Tribe and were also previously used as a source of fiber for textiles, yet nettles can be problematic in some areas. Invasive blackberries are very common and take over disturbed areas and prevent the growth of native plants. Yet everyone loves the berries.

Here's a photo of Margaret with a couple students, who are getting ready to make botanically accurate drawings of the plants she's carrying:



Margaret believes that increasing the students' and teachers' knowledge about the threats noxious weeds pose to the local environment will lead to greater knowledge in the wider tribal community.

If *you* have been doing some non-ANAWG-related work in Indian country, please send your story to Janet Wintermute via Lotus Notes so she can include it in an upcoming issue of the *APHIS Native American Notebook*.

Hails and Farewells on the ANAWG

Membership on the ANAWG remained stable since our last issue, until the end of December. Longtime Minnesota representative **Dr. John Piehl (VS)** is handing over the reins to area epidemiologist **Dr. Sheryl Shaw**. John promises to continue working with tribes, particularly in the northern part of the State, where he lives (Grand Rapids). Sheryl is more centrally located, in St. Paul. Thanks to John for his many years of service to the ANAWG, and welcome to Sheryl. We also extend our thanks to Area

Veterinarian-in-Charge **Michael Stine** for providing support to the ANAWG from his workforce.

Dr. Gary Brickler (VS) has been the ANAWG Field Coordinator for Washington, Hawaii, and Alaska for years. But the first week of January, he transferred into the Area Veterinarian-in-Charge job for California. Terry Clark will be working with VS management to find new employees in those States who might be interested in taking over Gary's ANAWG responsibilities. Of course, if Gary wants to join **Vicki Moore, Bob Clement, and Andrew Hubble**, he's more than welcome to share in ANAWG activities for California.

PPQ tribal liaison **Christina Jewett** officially announced her retirement just days in advance of its effective date of January 2, 2010. Christina had been serving in that capacity since 2005 following nearly 30 years in various operational and management assignments within the program, most recently in California and Alaska.

Christina worked actively to educate PPQ employees at all levels on the importance of developing proactive relationships with tribes and was a tireless supporter of tribal consultation during an era when that term was only beginning to come into wide use in APHIS. She made especially valuable contributions to the ANAWG, in the last 2 years, in developing the Group's strategic plan and performance elements and standards for both voting and State-level members.

No summary of Christina's achievements would be complete without acknowledgment of her role in setting up and facilitating the 2-week summer program "Safeguarding Natural Heritage: Tohono Land Connections." From the beginning of that effort, when **Jose Ceballos** created the first TLC program in 2007, Christina worked to help APHIS collaborate with the sponsoring tribal college in developing the curriculum. She believed that the program really belonged to the Tohono O'odham Community College and should be run to meet tribal expectations rather than agency needs. This attitude was particularly helpful in setting up a relationship with the Tohono O'odham, a tribe that APHIS knew very little about before the TLC program came into being.

By attending almost every educational module during the program given in the summers of 2007–09, Christina provided invaluable on-the-ground collaboration and continuity.

For all her good works, Christina received an ANAWG achievement award at the group's biennial training event in 2008.

Christina and her husband will continue to reside just outside of Tucson in retirement.



The following 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

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

A photo essay from a California PPQ employee on petroglyphs—cliffs with Indian artwork from ancient times.

Updates on the Department's tribal-consultation policy development and training work.

A profile of Eugenia Tashquinth, the Tohono O'odham student who won APHIS' first 1994 Tribal Colleges Scholarship.

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 blue 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).