

Indigenous Students Video Conference
Russia (Ufa-Shigiri) – Malaysia (Sarawak) – USA (Kiowa and Kialegee)
March 14/15, 2007

Summary of Discussion Notes

Introductory Remarks – Chairman Dan Jones, Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma

Introductions – Dr. Jonathan Hook

Student Introductions and Cultural Background presentations

What traditional stories from your culture illustrate the connection between humans and the environment?

Russia – Legend of how Ufa-Shigiri got its name

Malaysia – Story of humans learning from animals how not to cause harm to themselves

USA – Legend of “Mrs. Ant” learning that all decisions have consequences

What do your elders tell you about the connections between your culture and natural resources?

Russia – Legend views local natural resources as the bones of ancestors, so they must be protected. The Earth is the Father; the Water is the Mother of Life

Malaysia – Natural resources are given to us for free; we must ensure they are there for the next generation to utilize

USA – We should not waste anything – only use what is necessary

Describe any recent environmentally related projects with which you have been involved.

Russia – 1) Ecological camp held each year to teach children to respect and love nature, and to discourage polluting, 2) banners, and 3) cleaning river banks. Teach community to respect nature

Malaysia – Reuse, Reduce and Recycle program and composting

USA – 1) Trash pick up twice a year, and 2) recycling projects

What is the greatest environmental challenge in your area? How can you as students address these threats?

Russia: Water pollution - Students can inform others about pollution, ask and teach people how to save the river and contact the appropriate officials

Malaysia: Wide usage of plastics and rapid/over-development – Students can intertwine traditional and modern lifestyles to preserve natural resources

USA: Global Warming – Students can “get the word out,” drive less and carpool

What would you like to see happen next, after this conference?

Russia – 1) Invited delegates to their village, 2) create an international ecological camp, 3) launch an exchange program, 4) communicate frequently and more effectively

Malaysia – 1) Stay in touch: share knowledge and information on the environment through mail, email and blogging, 2) a future DVC, 3) visits to each country

USA – 1) Establish an exchange program to share information on environmental issues, 2) keep in touch through emails and blogging.