



APHIS Native American Notebook

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

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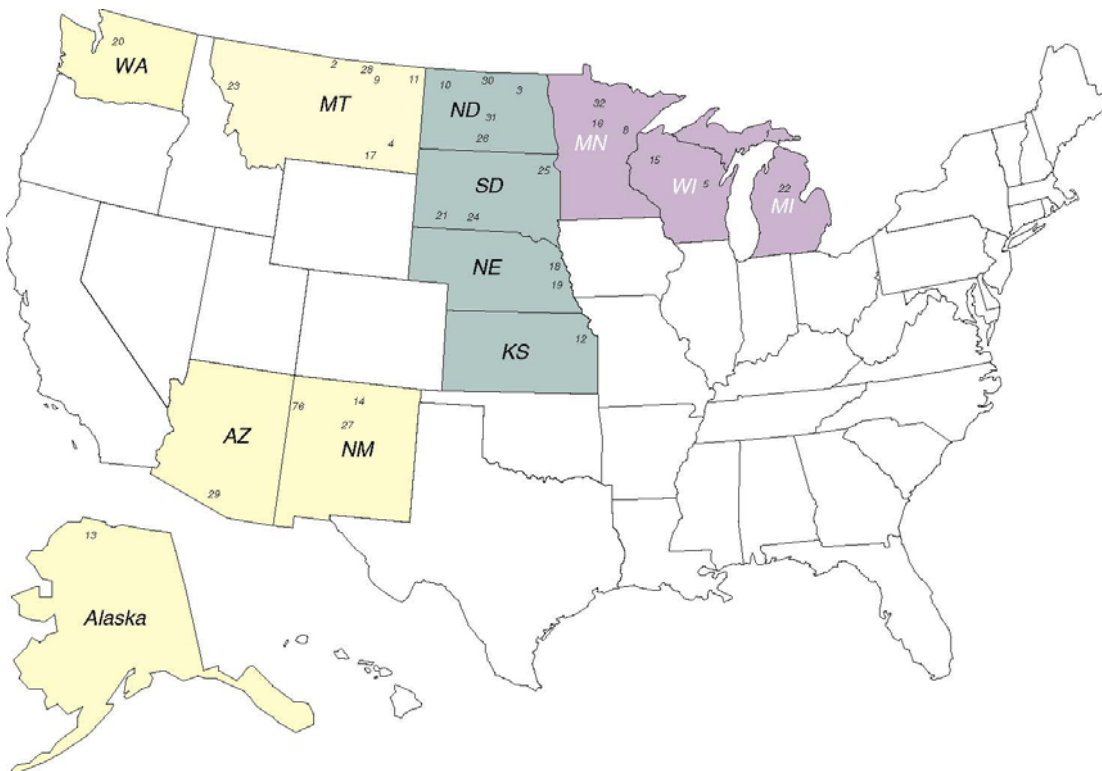
USDA Launches a New Tribal Scholarship Program

Following in the footsteps of the Department's long-established scholarship program for students attending the Historically Black Colleges and Universities, USDA introduced a new program in spring 2009 offering agency-funded scholarships to students attending the Nation's 32 tribal colleges and universities (TCUs). All 32 are Land-Grant schools, having received that status by congressional action in 1994. They are often referred to as the "1994 schools" for that reason. Eight of the 32 institutions offer 4-year bachelor's degrees; the rest offer 2-year associate's degrees. All are tribally sponsored and run.

The TCUs share one mission: to provide tribal youth high-quality, low-cost postsecondary educational opportunities in a culturally appropriate setting. Because most tribes have agricultural activities, it is more than apropos for USDA to reach out to these small, underfunded colleges and help them attract and retain qualified students.

The USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program will help young Native Americans get a start on their college careers at virtually no cost. Winners of the scholarships will receive free tuition at the TCU of their choice, money to cover books and fees, the loan of a USDA laptop with printer and software while they're in school, and a stipend for transportation. If the school they select is a 2-year college, the scholarship will follow them to the Land-Grant university in their home State, where they can finish a bachelor's degree.

But that's not all. The 1994 Scholars will also work for the USDA agency sponsoring them during school breaks, all summer, and after graduation. This scholarship leads directly to a noncompetitive appointment to a permanent, full-time job!



This map shows where the 32 TCUs are located. Names preceded by an asterisk in the list below are 4-year institutions. The colors delimit the regions managed by the three USDA Tribal College and University Liaison Specialists. The text explains how to get in touch with these specialists. [Graphic by Legislative and Public Affairs' Michele Williams.]

- 1 Bay Mills Community College, Brimley, MI
- 2 Blackfeet Community College, Browning, MT
- 3 Cankdeska Cikana Community College, Fort Totten, ND
- 4 Chief Dull Knife College, Lama Deer, MT
- 5 *College of Menominee Nation, Keshena, WI
- 6 *Diné College, Tsaile, AZ
- 7 *Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, Cloquet, MN
- 8 Fort Belknap College, Harlem, MT
- 9 Fort Berthold Community College, New Town, ND
- 10 Fort Peck Community College, Poplar, MT
- 11 *Haskell Indian Nations University, Lawrence, KS
- 12 Ilisagvik College, Barrow, AK
- 13 *Institute of American Indian Arts, Santa Fe, NM
- 14 Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College, Hayward, WI
- 15 Leech Lake Tribal College, Cass Lake, MN
- 16 Little Big Horn College, Crow Agency, MT
- 17 Little Priest Tribal College, Winnebago, NE
- 18 Navajo Technical College, Crownpoint, NM
- 19 Nebraska Indian Community College, Macy, NE
- 20 Northwest Indian College, Bellingham, WA
- 21 Oglala Lakota College, Kyle, SD

- 22 Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College, Mount Pleasant, MI
- 23 *Salish Kootenai College, Pablo, MT
- 24 Sinte Gleska University, Mission, SD
- 25 Sisseton Wahpeton College, Sisseton, SD
- 26 *Sitting Bull College, Fort Yates, ND
- 27 Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, Albuquerque, NM
- 28 Stone Child College, Box Elder, MT
- 29 Tohono O'odham Community College, Sells, AZ
- 30 *Turtle Mountain Community College, Belcourt, ND
- 31 United Tribes Technical College, Bismarck, ND
- 32 White Earth Tribal and Community College, Mahnomen, MN

For every year of assistance the scholars receive, they incur an obligation of 1 year of service to USDA. Their job assignments may be in the National Capital area or in field offices throughout the country. This means that scholarship winners must agree to be assigned away from home if the sponsoring agency has no suitable employment opportunities on or near their reservation.

The benefits for the Department will be huge. USDA wants to attract talented and diverse employees but needs them to be academically prepared so they can fill critical positions during the next 10 years, when at least half our current employees will be eligible to retire.

Recipients of the 1994 Scholar awards must study fields related directly to agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, or related disciplines. The Department is confident that, when these young people graduate, they will be more than ready to take on professional careers with our agencies.

You can learn the details about the Tribal Scholars Program in a brochure that will be mounted online at <http://www.ascr.usda.gov/1994programs.html> early this summer. In case that URL is not finalized, you will be able to locate the brochure by using the built-in search engine on the USDA homepage.

You can also address questions to the three regional liaisons [see the map for regional boundaries]:

Western Region: Ms. Velma Real Bird
(406) 638-3194, Velma.Realbird@ascr.usda.gov

Central Region: Ms. Lisa Yellow
(701) 854-8130, Lisa.Yellow@ascr.usda.gov

Eastern Region: Ms. Stephanie Koziski
(202) 205-4490, Stephanie.Koziski@ascr.usda.gov

APHIS management supports the USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars Program. Future issues of this newsletter will let you know who has won the scholarships for fall 2009 under APHIS' umbrella. Then stand back: in 2 or 4 years, these winners may show up in an office near you!

The ANAWG Publishes Its Strategic Plan

The APHIS Native American Working Group is pleased to announce that its strategic plan is available to you at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/anawg>. The ANAWG plan is aligned with the overall agency strategic plan and the overarching USDA plan as well.

The group has been working on the plan intermittently since 2001. And we might never have reached the finish line without the help of Policy and Program Development's stratplan guru, Matina Sawicki.

If you've been wondering what the ANAWG is all about, check the plan online or contact the Native American Program-Delivery Manager, Janet Wintermute, at (301) 734-6336.

APHIS Line Programs Deliver in Indian Country

Wildlife Services (WS) has been delivering its goods and services to the 562 federally recognized tribes for years. Like all other customers, the tribes have to share the cost of the work. But WS employees have come up with some creative ways to help Native Americans, help that goes above and beyond the call of duty.

For instance, take the river otter (*Lontra canadensis*), an animal native to many riparian habitats in the West. This species, the largest member of the weasel family, used to be part of the natural landscape even in the dry Southwest. The otters had completely disappeared from New Mexico by the early 1960s, however. But up in the Pacific Northwest, river otters have been doing very well, in fact, *too* well. High populations near Puget Sound cause habitat damage there, and property owners have begun calling WS for help.

WS employees try hard to find nonlethal solutions to "problem" animals. Not every species is a candidate for relocation, but since river otters used to be part of the natural ecosystem in New Mexico, WS biologists decided to try moving some of the "excess" otters from Puget Sound to that State. The biologists knew that riparian zones on the 99,000 acres of tribal lands managed by the Taos Pueblo Indian Tribe would furnish suitable habitat. Could transporting river otters south to Taos turn a problem animal into a desirable species? WS wildlife biologist Darren Bruning decided to find out.

Of course, species-reintroduction work could not be undertaken without the full support of the tribal government at Taos. So WS engaged tribal officials in dialogue and agreed on the parameters of the transfer. The first set of otters was shipped in three batches late last fall. So far, Bruning and his cooperators have captured and safely transported 10 river otters from Washington State down to Taos, 72 miles from Santa Fe. The longrange plan calls for relocating as many as 30 otters.

This work involved cooperation between the WS scientists at the National Wildlife Research Center field unit in Olympia, WA, and WS operations personnel in Washington. **Veterinary Services (VS)** veterinarians in Oregon examined the otters to be sure all candidates for relocation were healthy. Beginning last October, WS

personnel packed the otters into wooden crates, shipped some by air, and drove the rest to New Mexico in vans, a journey of some 1,500 miles.



Purpose-built plywood crates used in transporting river otters to New Mexico. (Photos above and below were supplied by Darren Bruning, WS, Washington State.)

Below: This male otter takes a first look around at its new surroundings in the semiarid lands of the Taos Pueblo in northern New Mexico.



Besides coordinating the relocation effort, Bruning also checked up on the animals after they had settled into their new environment. Evidently this first restocking cycle went well: Darren says, “It’s quite a testament to the resilience of wild animals to see them healthy and acting like wild river otters in their new environment.”

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If you work in the **VS** side of the house, you probably already know about chronic wasting disease (CWD)—a close relative of “mad cow” disease (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) that affects deer and elk. Although many of us living east of the Mississippi feel there are way too many white-tailed deer munching on our garden plants and ornamental shrubs, in Wisconsin these deer are not only part of the wild landscape but also a desirable species for several Indian tribes. That’s because of the tourist dollars brought into Wisconsin by hunters who pay for the privilege of stalking deer on private lands. That revenue means a big boost to the local economy. But CWD is making Wisconsin deer sick.

How sick? And where? VS has funded cooperative agreements with several Wisconsin tribes—working through the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society—to help APHIS

check on the health of white-tailed deer and find out what parts of the State have deer populations affected by CWD. VS tribal liaison Dr. Terry Clark manages those coop agreements. And **WS** personnel under Wisconsin State Director Jason Suckow have helped tribal employees do the actual survey work.

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Grasshopper control is not an every-year, every-location thing for **Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ)** personnel Westwide, but hoppers and their relative, the Mormon cricket, are no respecters of political boundaries. When populations build to levels where their feeding causes significant agricultural damage, Congress generally directs APHIS to work with the affected States on suppressing these native insects. This year, PPQ extended its treatment work to the San Carlos Apache Reservation in Arizona.



A single grasshopper suns itself on a stalk in the Great Plains. This file photo comes from the archives of PPQ's Grasshopper Integrated Pest Management Program, a multiyear effort in the 1990s.

In mid-May, PPQ initiated ground-level spraying with carbaryl using reduced area agent treatment (RAAT) protocols against the rangeland grasshopper on 240 acres of the reservation. A second treatment area received carbaryl in the Sevin™ XLR Plus formula. In all, 1,600 acres were treated using RAATs over a 2-day period. On 600 of those acres, field crews used a new pesticide-delivery system designed by PPQ's Center for Plant Health Science and Technology. This system is designed to reduce the treatment time per acre.

During June 2009, PPQ personnel will check the treated areas to assess insect mortality as part of the process of determining the relative effectiveness of the new delivery system.

The San Carlos Apaches provided 2,100 gallons of water for the treatments and were pleased with how fast PPQ responded to the request for help in suppressing the grasshopper populations on the reservation.

News FLASH: Native American Training Comes to Raleigh in August

Just before press time, the Native American Program-Delivery Manager, Janet Wintermute, finalized details to port her 1.5-day training to Raleigh in order to reach managers and supervisors in the Eastern Region who deal with tribal officials. The session was originally given in Riverdale last September and repeated in Fort Collins in February 2009. The course has two parts: a half-day video and discussion of the legal history of the relationship between the American tribes and the U.S. Government, and a full-day training session facilitated by Mr. Larry Keown, a retired Forest Service official from Sheridan, WY.

Larry learned how to consult with tribal officials when he headed up a multiyear tribal consultation on how the Forest Service should manage the Medicine Wheel, an ancient, manmade rock formation of religious significance to several tribes in the Rockies. He will be sharing what he learned about how to build rewarding relationships with Native Americans in the government-to-government context when they worked together on this extremely sensitive issue. Larry's presentation is sparked by the inclusion of videotaped conversations held after the fact with many of the people who participated in the negotiations.

With help from a couple Raleigh stalwarts, PPQ's Deborah Stewart and Phil Bell, Janet plans to kick off day one of the training with a free lunch for participants. Deb, Phil, and Janet will cook Native American recipes and serve buffet style in the Raleigh meeting-room. There's no charge for lunch, but participants do need to bring their own drinks.

The dates are Wednesday and Thursday, **August 26 and 27**.

The cost of the training itself is being paid by Civil Rights Enforcement and Compliance. But participants must cover their travel costs. Now is the time to get those supervisory permissions in motion.

Employees from anywhere in the United States can take the training in Raleigh. We have room for 50 participants and look forward to meeting all of you on the 26th.

If you have any questions, contact Janet on (301) 734-6336 or via Lotus Notes.

Spotlight on PPQ's Tribal Liaison

Since 2005, Christina Jewett has been serving as the first tribal liaison for the Plant Protection and Quarantine program. Her position was established to help Plant Health staff meet their responsibility to delivery plant health programs and activities in Indian

Country. Christina brings to the position field experience in both domestic and port-of-entry programs and managerial experience as a regional program manager and State Director. Her primary responsibility is to provide program leadership, policy advice, and counsel to both field staff and PPQ's Executive Team.

PPQ has a long-standing history of interactions with tribal nations. For example, PPQ and tribes have worked together for many years to protect tribal lands from voracious grasshoppers and invasive weeds and to establish the use of biological control agents, rather than pesticides, in culturally sensitive areas.

Under Christina's guidance, PPQ has established six principles (see bulleted list below) that shape its work in Indian Country. PPQ is focusing its attention on enhancing employees' understanding of tribal sovereignty, trust responsibility, and the government-to-government relationship.

Christina has been a focus for change in encouraging management to incorporate tribal activities into regional and headquarters-level operational plans, to assess tribal impacts in developing emergency-preparedness plans, and to include information on tribal law and building relationships with tribes in the training given new plant health officers. Also, Christina emphasizes the role that tribal consultation plays in planning for and rolling out new programmatic activities when they may significantly affect the federally recognized tribes. She makes sure that key managers and staff get training on consultation and are held accountable for meeting the requirements to offer that consultation to potentially affected tribes.

Christina travels extensively nationwide, meeting with and speaking before tribal governments and organizations. She regularly gives presentations to APHIS audiences on such topics as "Taking Regulatory Action in Indian Country—A Primer," "APHIS Agreements in Indian Country," and "The Indian Civil Rights Act." She also spends a significant amount of time working with managers to plan consultation and communication strategies related to pending PPQ actions.

Readers can contact Christina Jewett at (520) 822-5440 or via Lotus Notes.

PPQ's Guiding Principles for Tribal Relations

- Protect and enhance Native American agricultural and natural resources through protection of plant health in Indian Country.
- Establish a plant health presence wherever tribes have significant plant resources impacted by PPQ regulations or programs.
- Commit to help build tribal capacity to respond to plant health emergencies and manage plant health programs in Indian Country.
- Ensure that tribes have a voice in decisions that affect the plant health of their agricultural and natural resources and support the principles of tribal sovereignty and self-governance.

- Ensure that PPQ's trust responsibilities to federally recognized tribes are carried out by working with tribes on a government-to-government basis.
- Operate on the basis of consultation and cooperation between PPQ and tribes and among tribes, other Federal agencies, and State and local governments.

WINS Interns Arrive June 1

APHIS is hosting six Native American college students during this summer's Washington Internships for Native Students (WINS) program. USDA is sponsoring 30 interns in total, believed to be the highest number in the Department since the program began in the 1990s.

American University runs the WINS program, processing the applications, helping agency supervisors pick the most appropriate candidate for their vacancy, housing the students on the A.U. campus in Northwest DC, and offering the winners 6 hours of college credit for night-school attendance during the 2-month summer session.

The next issue of this newsletter will carry a full feature on the WINS students. They are working in PPQ (2), Legislative and Public Affairs (2), International Services, and Biotechnology Regulatory Services (BRS).

The APHIS Native American Working Group (ANAWG) has planned several agency-related outings for the group, and those activities will also be covered in the WINS feature in our next edition.

Hails and Farewells on the ANAWG

Membership on the ANAWG changes infrequently, but we did lose a very important member in May. Rebecca Stankiewicz-Gabel, Ph.D., the BRS representative here at headquarters, has come to the end of her 3-year term on the committee. (BRS is the only program with an established duration for this collateral-duty assignment.) Rebecca has given the group a great deal of support throughout her term, particularly in helping us think our way through the strategic planning process this past spring.

The ANAWG is extremely lucky that BRS could find a super replacement for her: Dr. Carl Etsitty, who works in Fort Collins. Carl is an enrolled member at Navajo. Even before his appointment, he agreed to fly down to Arizona and give a module of biotechnology-related instruction to the teenagers in the Tohono Land Connections summer internship. Details on Carl's presentation will be given in the TLC article in our next issue.

Welcome to Carl and thanks, again, to Rebecca for all her help since 2006.

Animal Care representation on the ANAWG changed at the beginning of 2009 because of the retirement of Dr. Jerry Depoyster. Jerry, a veterinarian based in Riverdale, was on the ANAWG since it began in 1994 and managed our Web site. He also really enjoyed staffing our booth at Native American conventions and interacting with tribal people in that context. Jerry helped set up spay/neuter clinics at Navajo and Poarch Creek (Alabama) over the years, too.

When Jerry felt his retirement date was approaching, he brought to the ANAWG his successor, Dr. Caffilene Allen. Cathy, who holds a Ph.D. in English, backed Jerry up for more than a year to learn the ropes, and she's following this good pattern herself. She has recently introduced *her* backup, veterinarian Jeannie Lin, to the group. Congratulations to AC for extending the concept of succession planning down to the committee level!

With reference to the ANAWG's State-level contact representatives, PPQ's Dusty Grant moved from Texas to Idaho several months ago. Fortunately for us, he was able to convince his boss, Idaho State Plant Health Director Brian Marschman, that he should remain on the ANAWG in his new venue. Katie Hough has replaced Dusty in that role in Texas.

The following States have no contact reps now: **Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, New Hampshire, and Tennessee.**

Readers who work in those States and are interested in helping Native Americans are encouraged to contact Janet Wintermute 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 Are These Teens Doing and Why?

Make a guess and be sure to specify the animal species shown. E-mail your conclusions to Janet Wintermute through Lotus Notes or via the Web (janet.s.wintermute@aphis.usda.gov). Janet will give a really inconsequential prize to the person whose correct reply arrives first.

The answer, plus a photo of the animals involved, will appear in our August 2009 issue.



Students from the summer 2009 Tohono Land Connections Program visited the Reid Park Zoo in Tucson, where one of the zoo's educators offered them the chance to do this. Figure out what the teenagers are really doing and name the animal species (extra credit for its Latin name) to get a prize. (APHIS photo by Janet Wintermute.)

What To Look for in Our Next Issue

The Tohono Land Connections summer internship for teens ended June 5. Janet will report on how it went, with lots of photos.

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.

Spotlight on BRS' tribal liaison, Gwen Burnett.

The Summer '09 WINS Program in APHIS

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.