

Newsletter of the American Indian Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS (AIANEA)



"I am the Earth and the Earth is me. What's done to the Earth is done to the Indian." *Louie Dick, 8/12/08*

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Please send articles on what is happening in your area. News stories, articles of interest, gatherings, pow wow's, whatever you want to share! Email to <u>membership@aianea.com</u>

2009 AIANEA Conference Update Green Bay, Wisconsin: July 13 –17, 2009

The 2009 American Indian Alaska Native Employee Association (AIANEA) Training Conference, was held in Green Bay, Wisconsin, from July 13th through July 17th. The training conference brought many NRCS employees together from across the Nation to receive excellent training.

The training conference offered NRCS employees the opportunity to network with other NRCS employees to learn more about NRCS conservation work being implemented across the Nation in Indian Country. NRCS employees received training and had an opportunity to be mentored by members of the National Leadership Team to help them improve their career advancement. Attendees received training that provided them with tools to improve their communication skills; cultural awareness training; information and training through workshops and concurrent sessions; poster and general session presentations that demonstrated successful NRCS partnerships; delivery of conservation to all populations; diversity of the conservation work; how to effectively deliver NRCS services and one-on-one cultural awareness training from the AIANEA Elders. The AIANEA National Council and planning committee worked effectively with the National Emphasis Program Manager for American Indian Alaska Natives to provide a certified training course for NRCS AI/AN Special Emphasis Program Managers(SEPMs). A special training opportunity was offered during the training conference this year; Working Effectively with American Indian Tribes: Executive Session, which was developed by NRCS cadre members, for NRCS State Conservationists and NRCS leadership. This executive training session also provided hands on insight to etiquette and protocol in Indian Country. In addition to training at the conference, the agenda included evening activities such as; live auction to fund diversity scholarships for native students seeking degrees related to NRCS careers; association business meetings; awards luncheon to honor the association's finest members and their student scholarship winners; tours of conservation on the ground in Wisconsin and Indian Country; and networking social events.

The success of this training conference could not have happened without the individuals who dedicated their time and energy to serving on the AIANEA planning committee and the local planning committees which included the following; NRCS employees in Wisconsin and from across the Nation and most importantly the support of NRCS Wisconsin, Pat Leavenworth and conference co-sponsors, the Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (WTCAC), Wisconsin NRCS Civil Rights Committee and hosting tribe, the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin.

2009 AIANEA Award Recipients

Award of Excellence

Dr. Carol Crouch

Outstanding Member

Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen

Leadership

Crystal Leonetti

Mentoring

Ann Whitebird Perales

Recognition

Herb Webb

Tony Bush

President's Awards

Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen,

Nels Liljedahl

Ciro Lo Pinto

Elder Loretta Metoxen was honored with the presentation of the American Indian Science & Engineering Society Sequoyah Fellowship.

Ivan Dozer, Assistant State Conservationist Programs, IL Employe AIANEA Past President

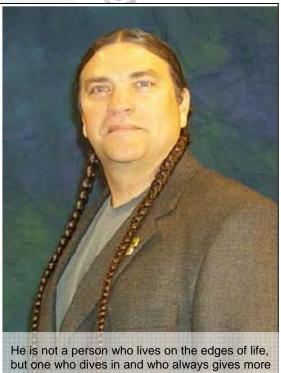
Maybe it's his calm exterior, broad shoulders or long brown braids that make Ivan Dozier look the part of a true conservationist and a steward of the land. Perhaps it's his commitment to quality, to conservation planning, or to NRCS' technical standards. Perhaps it's his pride in what NRCS stands for or his knowledge of agronomy, crops, and engineering. No matter what aspect you want to examine about NRCS products or services. Ivan has a history with it, a commitment to it, and a love of it.

Having held various field office level positions and State Leadership roles for SCS and NRCS, Ivan has a broad and interesting perspective of the agency and an uncanny appreciation for every natural resource works to protect. Having a Native American heritage makes Ivan's connection to the land even stronger, as his ancestors and family have a pure and respectful attitude towards the natural wonders of this world.

Ivan is a believer in doing things right, whether it's how to treat customers or how to till the soil. He is a natural negotiator, a valuable skill he uses for his staff as program manager for the agency and an agency representative for natural resource partners. He is a story teller, a writer, an artist, a Father, a healer. He speaks and teaches lessons in a manner that allow his students to learn more than the facts, but the powerful, simple logic and the history behind a concept. His words are carefully selected, skillfully delivered, and usually always linger with the listener.

Ivan's beliefs are based in fact, in science, and in living the ethic that he stands for. He is not a person who lives on the edges of life, but one who dives in and who always gives more than he receives. He works well with landowners, with staff, and with partners of NRCS. Well educated in natural resource management and with 20 years of hands-on experience with the only federal agency that best matches his personal and professional values, Ivan has let NRCS make an impact on his life and he has had an impact on the agency's successes here in Illinois.

If conservation can be 'in your blood,' then Ivan has it in his. "I try to understand the role people play in managing and assisting our natural world and



than he receives.

whether I'm on or off the job you can bet I'm doing something that will have a positive effect on soil or water or wildlife resources within my area of *control*," says Ivan. He speaks to students on a regular basis, sharing stories and opening minds about resource issues or historical perspectives on our country. He inspires the conservation ethic in others, lighting the way to new ideas, new dreams, and new solutions.

While Ivan manages NRCS conservation programs, he not only creates his conservation legacy which will be a testament to his own family, but his leadership in NRCS helps Illinois NRCS staff, partners, and private landowners achieve their own conservation goals. Ivan Dozier's purpose and passion for natural resources is alive and well and living in Central Illinois.

Elder James W. "Billy" Smith

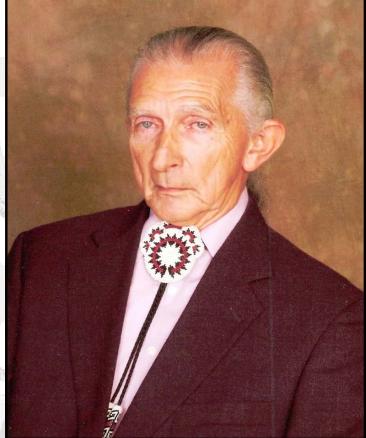
By David Elliott, Tribal Liaison, Alabama

Billy comes from humble beginnings. He was born in 1938 to a full-blooded Creek Indian mother named Nunie McGhee Smith in the very small town of McDavid, Florida. He is one of nine children born to his mother. He is a member of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, a federally recognized tribe located in Southwest Alabama. Billy has been an active member of the Tribe for 42 years. He served 18 years on the Tribal Council and as Vice-Chairman for 10 of those years.

He now serves on the PCI Gaming Authority which oversees the Tribal Gaming sites at Atmore, Tallapoosa and Wetumka, Alabama. He also serves on the Environmental Protection Board of Directors which investigates complaints at construction sites or other enterprises on the Reservation.

Billy is General Manager for the Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve which was established by the Tribe in 2004. The Reserve consists of 4700 acres devoted to recreation that includes camping areas, canoeing and kayaking, tubing, horseback riding, fishing, hunting and hiking trails that are dedicated to educating and enhancing the significance of native plants and wildlife species important to the American Indian culture. There are currently 39 complete RV hookups, 15 improved primitive and 19 primitive camping sites, 3 covered pavilions for picnicking, one large shower house with laundry room and 50 lakes for fishing. The creek that runs through the campground is ideal for swimming with large sandbars and picnic tables. A separate campground has been established with a bathroom, camping sites and horse stables and trails for riding.

Billy established a "Warpath on Drugs" Program in the 1970's. He went to schools and educated kindergarten through fourth grades on the detrimental effects of drugs and alcohol. He presented the participants with shirts with logos that read "Warpath on Drugs" and "Say No to Drugs" with a picture of a little Indian Boy waving a tomahawk. He is still invited to local schools and the public library where he speaks about American Indian culture, saying "no" to drugs, while wearing traditional Indian dress. He beats



a drum and is usually accompanied by a Creek Indian Fancy Dancer. The kids love to participate in the "friendship" dance and have their pictures taken together with Billy and other Tribal members. Billy has a special place in his heart for kids and hopes in some way he can be a role model for them.

Billy is a special person that loves his family: Faye, his wife of 44 years; son, Darrin; his three grandchildren, Makaya, Dakota, and Dustin; and one great grandchild, Kayden.



The Old Family Shotgun, By Elder Bill Smith

Elder Smith as most Tribal Elder's seldom put down their stories on paper. The following story is one of survival, which Tribal people can relate too, but not only is it a story of survival, but a personal story of how his family made it during hard times. This is one story of many that he has shared with me over the years that I have been associated with him. I have the upmost respect for Elder Smith and all of our Tribal Elders. I hope I will listen, learn, and pass on the knowledge, wisdom, and teachings that they have shared with me. I hope you enjoy the story. - David Elliott

This story came to mind recently when I saw my grandson getting ready to go turkey hunting. He brought out this fancy, camouflage colored shotgun. My mind went back to my family's only shotgun which had some green on it, but it was an army green tape that held the forearm together and some tape was wrapped around the stock to hold the gun together. It was an old sawed off shotgun which had about 4" sawed off it. It was what they called a "Long Tom". It was cut off to about a 30" barrel. There were no sights on it, you just aimed down the barrel. It's an heirloom that I still have today in my closet. I took ownership of it after my father died.

When we were growing up in McDavid, this old gun was our only means of providing meat for our family. My first hunting experiences were with my older brother, Buddy, and sister, Margaret, who were twins. We would go up to the local general store and buy a couple of shotgun shells for 5 cents each. Mr. Parker, the store owner, would put the shells on Momma's bill until the welfare check came in at the first of the month. Every time you fired the old shotgun you were expected to bring home something to show for it, like a squirrel or rabbit or something. By today's standard, the old gun was dangerous to use, as it was held together by an old bolt that was driven through it so you could open and close it, and you could see the brass of your shotgun shells down in it. That's what we had and so that's what we used.

I still remember helping my mother skin the squirrels. She would take the knife and cut the skin just behind the neck and pull the skin down to the feet being very careful not to let the fur touch the skin as it was very hard to get it off the meat if you did. She always cleaned the head too as it was her favorite part of the squirrel. She would cook the squirrel up in gravy and serve it with biscuits. Boy that was good eating back then. You probably couldn't get me to even taste it today.

We really had a scare one day while I was helping my momma clean the squirrels. This was one time we were glad the knife she was using wasn't very sharp. As she was trying to cut off the squirrel's feet, the knife slipped and it hit me across the face and eye. I wasn't hurt too bad, because the next morning I headed out to hunt squirrels again.

As I traveled to the swamp, I had to cross the railroad track. There was an old pine tree with a lot of pine straw collected under it. The base of the tree was where my dad hid his bottle of moonshine. He sold moonshine to a lot of people back then. Since it was against the law to have moonshine, he wouldn't bring it in the house. Of course, he drank his share of it too.

There was an old boat landing as you crossed the railroad tracks where just about everybody kept a boat to hunt in. The water stayed up just about all winter during hunting season. All of us in my family, girls and all, learned to skull a boat. The boat landing was called "Lucky Landing" because the boats leaked so much you were lucky to get back to the landing. The boats all had bailing cups in them which were usually old turpentine cups. Each boat had a paddle or oar which was usually made of ash because it was light weight. My dad would make the paddles so they would have a good wide blade, 6 or 7" so you could get some good whip action when you were sculling. We could ease out through the trees hunting in the boat and would hardly make a sound. When you shot a squirrel out of an old gum or cypress tree, you would have to get there in a hurry or it would sink to the bottom.

We brought home a lot of squirrel, rabbit, coon, turtle, fish, etc. but never any deer. We seldom heard about any deer in our area. The first memory I have about hunting deer was with my brother, Buddy. We had heard someone had seen deer at a place called "Horseshoe" Lake on the river. We stayed out of school that day and packed our lunch which consisted of 4 or 5 sweet potatoes. We skulled the boat to Horseshoe Lake, but we never saw a deer that day.

I always had to skull the boat for my Dad when he went fishing, so I think that's why I never really liked to go fishing much after I became an adult. It was more like work than enjoyment.

My Dad always liked to go hunting, and it wasn't always during hunting season. I remember the Constable bringing him home lots of times with a warning that he really shouldn't be killing game out of season, but he would end up letting him keep the game because he knew we needed it for the table. Sometimes my Dad would come home and get the squirrel dog, Pooch, to tree the squirrels for him. Sometimes the dog would even grab a vine and shake the tree limbs to make the squirrel move. Sometimes we would have to use a bamboo vine to run in a

squirrel hole and twist the squirrel's tail to get him out of the hole.

Thanks for letting me share some of my memories with you. The old sawed-off shotgun might not have been fancy like the ones today, but it was very important to our family and put a lot of food on the table. Just seeing the gun brings back a lot of childhood memories.



Indian center starts garden to promote traditional tobacco, fight use of commercial product By ALAINA ABBOTT for the Missoulian

Three Native American teenagers beat hand drums while singing a prayer Monday during the groundbreaking ceremony for a tobacco garden, where ingredients for traditional tobacco will be grown as a way to reduce the number of Native youths who smoke commercial tobacco.

The Missoula Indian Center, an organization that offers health care and a chemical dependency program for Native Americans, is building a garden to educate its community and youth about the sacred role of traditional tobacco, said Dana Kingfisher of the center's Alcohol



Two-year-old Shailynne Rishel helps her mother and others prepare a garden Monday afternoon after a groundbreaking ceremony for a community garden behind the Missoula Indian Center at Fort Missoula. The garden will be planted with ingredients of traditional Native tobacco, including sweetgrass, sage and kinnikinnick, and will be used to teach Indian youth the difference between the sacred tobacco of their culture and popular tobacco products. Photo by KURT WILSON/Missoulian

Substance and Tobacco Abuse Prevention program.

"It's like a religion to our people," Kingfisher said.

About 30 people attended the ceremony at Fort Missoula, and then helped chop some of the sod out of the designated plot, which measures 15 by 10 feet.

Employees of Native Yards, a landscaping business, also dug into the turf with vigor. Owner Giles Thelen said they are providing labor, materials and guidance in the garden's design.

Shovels, wheelbarrows and other tools from Native Yards were piled near a small hill of dirt ready for the garden.

The Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program, a state organization, is providing funds for the garden, which will cost about \$4,000, Kingfisher said.

Kingfisher sees the traditional plants as a way to promote culture as much as prevent commercial tobacco use among Montana's Native American youth, 39 percent of whom smoke commercial tobacco, according to the Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program's 2008 progress report.

Traditional tobacco differs from commercial tobacco Native Americans pray to the Creator, Kingfisher said.

in its purpose. People simply pick up a cigarette and smoke it, Kingfisher said.

When Native Americans use traditional tobacco, though, they ask the Creator to watch over them, and when they offer tobacco as a gift to Mother Earth, they are asking for nourishment for their bodies, Kingfisher said.

Also, they do not inhale traditional tobacco, she said.

"(It was) never meant to be abused," said Debbie Tatsey, a community member.

The tobacco plant will not be put in the garden, but other traditional plants, such as red willow, kinnikinnick, bearberry, sweetgrass and sage, will be sown. A small vegetable garden will occupy the center of the plot, Kingfisher said.

"We're urban Indians," said Sharon Fortner of the behavioral health department at the Missoula Indian Center. "(The garden) culturally will show how things are done with the Native American plants."

In addition to working on the garden, youths will build a sweat lodge on private land in the next month. A sweat is similar to a church - it's a place where Native Americans pray to the Creator, Kingfisher said. As part of its youth program, the Missoula Indian Center plans to rebuild the sweat each summer to give youths hands-on experience with a traditional structure. They will also use plants from the garden for ceremonial purposes, although it will likely take two or three years for the plants to grow to a size suitable for harvesting, Kingfisher said.

She said the program will be open to the Missoula Indian Center's adult community as well.

"Kids need to be in touch with where they came from to know where they're going," said Joe Wetzel, a Blackfeet Indian who volunteers with the youth program.

His son participated in the groundbreaking ceremony as one of the drummers.

"Elders have the knowledge," Kingfisher said. "Youth are the future."

Alaina Abbott is a senior studying print journalism at the University of Montana who is interning at the Missoulian this summer. She can be reached at 523-5251 or by e-mail at <u>alaina.abbott@lee.net</u>.

Good news from a couple of our training partners!!

We just learned through some stealth Googling and Yahooing at DOJ that the GoLearn Course "Working" Effectively with Tribal Governments," a multi-agency effort (including attorneys and historic preservation staff from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Department of Justice's Office of Tribal Justice, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (Science and Technology), the Environmental Protection Administration's Office of American Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Small Business Administration, the Department of the Army (Historic Preservation), and others) is on line and FREE for use. You can thank the NRCS Deputy Chief for Science and Technology and for Management (especially our patient MSD specialists) and the SBA Associate Administrator for getting the training back on line and free to all users (public and private) for the next year (at a minimum).

The training is slated for some minor editing (adding photo credits, other audio fixes, and clarification of

such terms as "allotment") but it is ready for use if you want to access it. We shall provide a link from our Cultural Resources Home Page in the near future.

In the meantime, if you want to try out your Google/ Yahoo skills, go out hunting; this will soon be corrected through a National Bulletin from NHQ. OR, you may simply try <u>http://tribal.golearnportal.org/</u>. It worked for me and a number of folks outside of NRCS. Also (this will be one of the editorial fixes, as well) if you register and stop within the course, just click on the buffalo and you can return to the place you stopped.

Sarah T. Bridges

Federal Preservation Officer/

National Cultural Resources Specialist

Ecological Sciences Division

USDA/NRCS

PO Box 2890

Washington, DC 20013

202 720-4912 phone; 202 720-1814 fax

sarah.bridges@wdc.usda.gov



The Best Ways to Apply For a USDA/NRCS Job Position By

Deborah Clairmont- NRCS Soil Conservationist/AIANEA Leadership Team Leader/ Colorado Area 2 Civil Rights Advisory Committee (CRAC) Advisor-Brighton, Colorado

At the 2009 American Indian Alaska Native Employee Association (AIANEA) Conference in Green Bay, Wisconsin; employees learned Career Development and how to write a Knowledge Skills and Abilities (KSA's) when applying for another position in the USDA/NRCS. Roylene Rides at the Door, Washington State Conservationist, led the presentation she outlined on the criteria she looks for when selecting a person for a position.

When applying for a position found on the USA Jobs website: http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/; there are several tips for a successful application. Just because you apply does not necessarily mean you will make the panel and be a "Qualified Candidate" for the position. Roylene states; "Never assume that the person evaluating knows your job." And your application "Must pass Human Resource evaluation before making a list of eligible candidates (the panel) to even be considered by a selection official." One of the most important things I found out is to make sure your education transcripts meet with OPM requirements for the position you are applying for. Each state may interpret your college transcripts differently. Example: Soil Conservationist GS-457 series http://www.opm.gov/ qualifications/standards/IORs/gs0400/0457.htm. http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/standards/groupstds/GS-PROF.asp

Roylene explained in her presentation the definition of KSA; "Knowledge, Skills and Abilities that are needed to perform a job and demonstrate through qualifying experience, education and training." You need to write about what skills you currently posses and the training you have received and how it relates to the job you are applying for. In addition Roylene states; "Read the vacancy announcement thoroughly, highlight key words or phrases which describes the position; find the right balance between providing information versus too much information; give examples that show initiative, innovation, leadership, complexity, scope and teamwork." You want to state a problem and how you solved it as briefly as possible showing the steps you took and the end results. This is very important and is what the qualified professional (selection official) is looking for in their selec-

tion process; to see if you fit with the offered position.

When you start writing a KSA, Roylene suggests you keep things brief, simple and to the point by "....writing down all the things you have experienced, and done" that relate to the position you are applying for. If you have room, you can put additional things you have learned, but its best to keep it brief with as much detail as possible. Roylene continues; make sure you "Eliminate the everyday tasks and the items that you did just to complete the task"; "Narrow the list for five to eight things you did your best and feel very good about." The key ingredient in writing your KSA is taking five or eight things you feel good about and tell a story of the beginning, middle and the end. Highlight the problem of the project and tell how you solved the problem and how your efforts made a difference. Include any awards you may have received for all your efforts. The most important thing to keep in mind while writing your KSA is to keep each topic to one or two paragraphs only, reminds Roylene.

Finally, after you complete your KSA have someone outside the agency proof read and make sure your content, spelling, and grammar are correct. Roylene says; "Things to Remember"

- You only get two pages per KSA
- You are not bragging if you are stating what you did, this is a fact!
- Provide the selecting official enough documentation to defend selecting you
- Don't be afraid to demonstrate your personality
- This is the only chance you get to show yourself so you can move to the next stage

When you submit your application to the Human Resource person make sure you include an Official copy of your college transcripts, copies of awards or other pertinent information. Make yourself a copy of the KSA for future reference. Once you apply, you will receive either an email or letter stating that you have made the panel or not. Don't get discourage if you are not selected for a panel, just keep trying and refining your KSA.

Indiana NRCS

1st Annual Cultural Diversity Awareness Day

Sponsored by the Indiana Civil Rights Advisory Committee

Indiana NRCS held its first annual Cultural Diversity Awareness Day on Tuesday, September 15, 2009 at Prophetstown State Park and Historic Prophetstown. Over 100 Indiana NRCS employees from across the state joined in this celebration that the Indiana NRCS Civil Rights Advisory Committee sponsored. The committee proposed an Annual Cultural Diversity Awareness Day, highlighting the history and culture of one of the special emphasis groups making up the diverse heritage of our Indiana NRCS workforce. With Indiana's NRCS Leadership Team's full agreement, plans moved forward for the event. The focus of the annual event will rotate among the various groups, with the site locations being in areas with cultural significance to the specific group that is hosting the event. The Indiana Civil Rights Advisory Committee believes that the annual Cultural Diversity Awareness Day demonstrates the efforts being made in Indiana to improve diversity and cultural awareness among our employees, thus strengthening our workforce.

This year, Indiana NRCS celebrated the American Indian. Prophetstown State Park and Historic Prophetstown was selected as the location because of its unique Indiana history in the Wabash River Valley Region. The park reflects the prairies of earlier times, American Indian settlements, and early farmsteads.

NRCS State Conservationist Jane Hardisty kicked off the successful day with her opening remarks. Guest speaker Mark Parrish, tribal member and environmental coordinator for the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi, held the audience's attention with his presentation. Currently, the Pokagon Band is in its initial stages of rebuilding its nation. Parrish is working on improving water quality standards and fish and wildlife habitat on tribal lands, and he is also involved with land use planning. Parrish has worked with Indiana NRCS on a Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) site for the Potawatomi. His detailed presentation provided data on the project's progress. Parrish said he looks forward to a continued partnership with Indiana NRCS.

NRCS District Conservationist Deb Knepp, of St. Joseph County, spoke briefly of the NRCS partnership with the tribe and working with Parrish. Knepp agreed that the WRP project has been a successful learning experience and stated she looks forward to a continued relationship with the tribe, helping the tribe reach its environmental goals.

Jason Wesaw, a Potawatomi, Turtle Clan tribal member, gave a heartfelt presentation to the group. Wesaw worked as the Cultural Associate for the tribe until 2007, when he left to follow a new path. He spoke on the history and cultural significance of the tribe, but emphasized the importance of his tribe moving forward in a respectful and thoughtful manner in its great time of change. He also took the time to thank all of the Indiana NRCS employees for their work to help the land. Wesaw then played a song on his hand drum that his grandfather had made and explained that the beat of the drum signifies the heartbeat. He then sang while playing the drum, entertaining the audience with a moving performance.

Lunch time, a brown bag special, provided all attendees the opportunity to network with employees

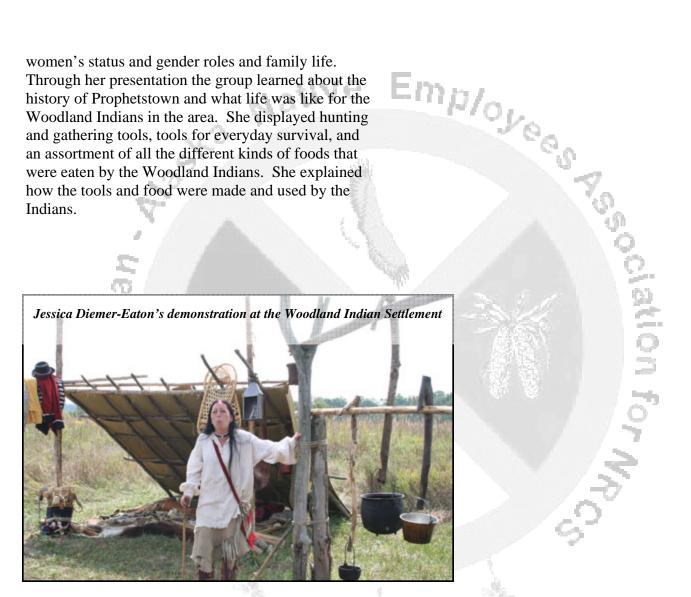
from across the state; meeting some for the first time and getting reacquainted with others.

The afternoon session started at Prophetstown's historic farmstead with a short walk to the Woodland Indian Settlement where Jessica Diemer-Eaton awaited the group. Ms. Diemer-Eaton has been working as an historical interpreter since she was 17 years old. She is currently an anthropology student at Indiana University where she studies Native



Jason Wesaw and hand drum demonstration

women's status and gender roles and family life. Through her presentation the group learned about the history of Prophetstown and what life was like for the Woodland Indians in the area. She displayed hunting and gathering tools, tools for everyday survival, and an assortment of all the different kinds of foods that were eaten by the Woodland Indians. She explained how the tools and food were made and used by the Indians.





Civil Rights Committee Member/Soil Conservationist Brianne Lowe, Mark Parrish, State Conservationist Jane Hardisty, Jason Wesaw, and American Indian Special Emphasis Program Manager/Soil Conservationist Kelley Barkell,

Membership Form

American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS

"Respect, Harmony, and Beauty"

www.aianea.com

Please make checks payable to AIANEA and mail your membership form and dues to:

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Student -\$10.00 full-tin	ne high school or college st	udents	
Lifetime - \$250.00 or p	ayable in 4 installments of	\$65/year	
Enclosed is paym	ent # 1 2 3	34	-
Tribal College-\$100.00			

The 2009 AIANEA National Council

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