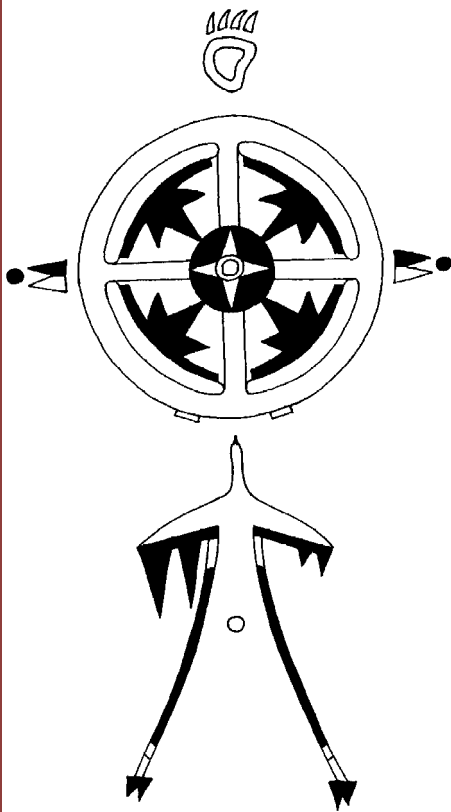


EARTH MEDICINE



**April
1996**

Haskell Environmental
Research Studies Center
and
Great Plains-Rocky Mountain
Hazardous Substance
Research Center

HERS makes Haskell history with uplink program

by Wendy Griswold, Kansas State University

History was made at Haskell Indian Nations University (HINU) on April 11, 1996, when the first satellite program was broadcast from HINU's television production studio. The program, "An Environmental Legacy For Our Grandchildren," was also the first live teleconference sponsored by the NAOMI (Native American and Other Minority Institutions) Seminar Program. The program focused on water quality issues facing several nations throughout Indian Country. Areas of focus included the Menominee, Forest Band Potawatomie, and Sokaogon Chippewa in the Mole Lake, Wisconsin, area; the Kiowa Nation of Oklahoma; the Navajo and Hopi Nations of New Mexico and Arizona; and the Oglala Lakota Nation of Pine Ridge, South Dakota.

The program featured a live panel of Native American environmental professionals and telephone links to on-site tribal environmental representatives. The program also provided viewers with the opportunity to call in questions and comments to the studio and on-location participants. The program was moderated by George Tiger (Muscogee/Creek), who is the host and producer of *Inside Native America*, broadcast on CBS affiliate KTOK TV. Joining Tiger in the studio were Wes Martel (Shoshone/Arapaho), vice president of the Wind River Associates; Ella Mulford (Navajo), environmental specialist; Russell Qualls (Jamestown Klallam/Yakima), professor of hydrology at the University of Colorado-Boulder; and Kim TallBear (Cheyenne/Arapaho of Oklahoma), environmental policy specialist from the Council of Energy Resource Tribes.

The program began with a taped segment from the Mole Lake, Wisconsin, area. Three tribes view a proposed zinc and copper mine as a potential for environmental harm. In this area, the harvesting of wild rice is a staple for the tribes and the wildlife that live in the region. Area tribes, the Menominee, Sokaogon Chippewa and Forest Band Potawatomie, are concerned that tailings containing sulfur from the mine and the amount of water needed for mining activity will alter the environmental balance, destroying the wild rice beds and potentially polluting the water and land.

Jerry Goodrich, a representative from the Crandon Mining Corporation, explained that tailings would be stored using a geoplastic containment system to prevent any waste from contaminating groundwater.

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Wes Martel, Ella Mulford, Russell Qualls and Kim TallBear offer environmental expertise with Native cultural relevance.

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Water quality: a common concern among Native Americans

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Kim Menominee, director of community service for the Menominee Tribe, explained that while the Crandon Mining Corporation was planning on using the most sophisticated and advanced technologies to prevent groundwater pollution, one hole in the system the size of a pinprick can become a large tear. Menominee also explained that for several years during the construction and development of the mine, 12 million gallons of water would be used per day. In comparison, the city of Milwaukee uses 5 million gallons per day.

Kim TallBear noted that this was a good example of why “tribal technical experts need to be equipped to participate in scientific debates, to participate in policy debates, to participate in economic debates. We need to train our youth to be environmental scientists, to be mining engineers, to be policy analysts, economists. In this way, as sovereign nations we can exercise our sovereignty, because in addition to just having sovereignty on paper, you have to have the capacity to exercise it.”

The second segment featured environmental issues facing the Kiowa Nation of Oklahoma. There are several sources of contamination in this area. The Apco Refinery of Surreal, Oklahoma, has been designated as a Superfund Clean-up Site by the Environmental Protection Agency. The refinery operated in Surreal from 1920 until 1984 when it closed due to bankruptcy. Hydrocarbons from the petroleum have seeped into the groundwater. Gladys Creek runs along the refinery and also has become contaminated. Several homes sit along the creek, which is also used by local residents for fishing and swimming activities.

Another issue facing the Kiowa Nation is the illegal dumping of trash. Hazardous wastes, such as oil containers, paint cans, Clorox bottles and chemical spray drums have been found in a dump near Cedar Creek. Hazardous materials from these sources have washed into the creek, which is a source of drinking water for cattle that graze in the area. There are also 54 homes within a 4-mile radius of this dump that depend on well water. The Cedar Creek dump also potentially threatens the area groundwater. There are approximately 150 illegal dumps in the area, half of them on trust lands.

William Hensley, a research analyst with the Kiowa Tribal Environmental Office, joined the program via telephone to provide an update on the environmental issues in the area. Hensley reported that the illegal dumping was an ongoing problem.

However, the Kiowa Nation is working on a plan to address the solid waste issues facing the Kiowa, other area tribes and the non-Indian community. The Kiowa Nation hopes to build a transfer station to solve the solid waste issue and potentially continue funding their environmental program.

Wes Martel believes that as sovereign nations, tribes need to develop environmental codes to show how Native Americans want their environment and natural resources protected. Martel noted, “these codes will pertain to everybody, we will have to have stiff fines and penalties in place.”

The third segment featured environmental issues facing the Navajo and Hopi Nations of the Four Corners area. The Navajo Nation’s EPA estimates that there are 1100 abandoned uranium mines on Navajo lands. The mines are mainly family mines that were opened during World War II to support the manufacture of nuclear weapons. The Navajo Nation has received Federal funding for the reclamation of these mines. 314 of these mines (670 acres of land) have been reclaimed using funds from the Uranium Mill Tailings Reclamation Control Act. In addition to reclamation activities and tailing containment systems, the Navajo Nation is also beginning to deal with the groundwater contamination that has resulted from uranium wastes.

Peabody Western, a coal mining company and the largest employer of Native Americans in the U.S., operates a mine in the Navajo Nation. In addition to providing a source of stable employment, Peabody Western also cooperates with the Navajo Nation on a variety of reclamation projects. Peabody Western uses the Navajo Aquifer to pump coal 273 miles from the Black Mesa mine to the Mojave Power Plant in Nevada. The Hopi Nation, which is located within the borders of the Navajo Nation, has asserted that Peabody Western is pumping water from this aquifer at a higher rate than it is being recharged. While Peabody Western’s research shows that their activities are not the source of the Hopi’s water problems, they, along with the Navajo Nation, have entered into negotiations with the Hopi to seek alternate sources of water.

Ella Mulford stressed that people need to go through a culture change so that they don’t have a great demand on resources. “Anytime we turn on the light, we need to think about the resources that we are impacting,” said Mulford.

The final segment of the program featured the
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Tallbull's life journey completes its circle

Editor's Note: Information from The Billings Gazette (March 9, 1996) was used for this article

Bill Tallbull, Northern Cheyenne, was born 75 years ago in Muddy Creek, MT. He led an active life as a spokesman and ambassador for Native Americans.

As a young man, Tallbull served in the Air Force during World War II as a radio operator. He also served the British Air Ministry, the Royal Air Force as an air traffic controller. He also served as a weather and radio man with the American 9th Air Force, 37th Fighter Group, 366th Fighter Squadron in the European theater. After he was honorably discharged he returned home to the Cheyenne Indian Reservation.

He held many positions with the tribe such as security guard for Busby Boarding School, truant officer for the Cheyenne tribe, and Cheyenne Tribal Councilman. When he retired in 1972 after 30 years of civil service, he immediately started looking for another job because he missed the people. In 1986, he became an assistant professor of Oral Traditions and Ethnobotany at Dull Knife Memorial College. During that time he co-founded The Medicine Wheel Alliance to preserve spiritual integrity of a medicine wheel on Medicine Mountain when it was threatened

by the timber industry. After nine years, the fight to preserve the medicine wheel is ongoing.

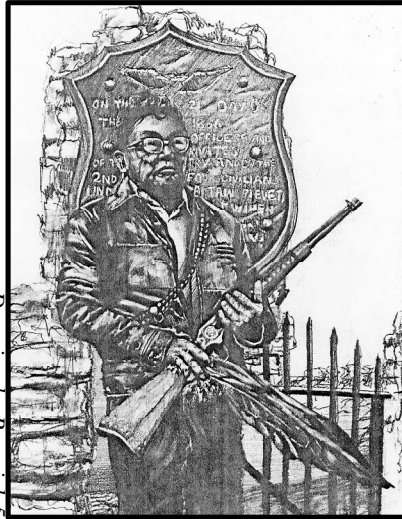
His goal has always been to bring awareness about Native cultures and beliefs. Tallbull played a vital role in helping write the draft for the Native American Grave and Repatriation Act with Senator Melcher from Montana. When the Act was passed,

he was appointed by former Secretary of Interior, Manuel Lujan to write the regulations. President Clinton appointed Tallbull as the first Native American to serve on the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in 1994.

Also in 1994, he became a member of the Haskell Environmental Research Studies Center Advisory Board at Haskell Indian Nations University. He served as an elder and spiritual advisor.

Tallbull passed away on March 7, 1996, in Billings, MT. To honor the life of Bill Tallbull as a father, elder, Ambassador for Native Americans and a friend, a

memorial scholarship fund has been established in his name. Memorial Contributions can be sent to the Bill Tallbull Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 101, Busby, Montana, 59016. ■



Tallbull depicted in front of Ft. Fetterman Battle Fight Memorial.

Cooperative measures seek to solve environmental problems

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Oglala Lakota Nation of Pine Ridge, South Dakota. Environmental concerns facing this nation include the reclamation of a WWII bombing range and leaking underground storage tanks. The bombing range, which comprises over 341,000 acres of land, contains unexploded ordnance below the surface. Potential environmental threats from the bombing range include unintended explosions and groundwater contamination as the ammunition breaks down. The Oglala Lakota Nation's Natural Resources Regulatory Agency (NRRA) is researching the area and working with a variety of Federal agencies to remediate the area so that it can be returned to the tribe. NRRA is working to research the area using Geographic Information Systems (GIS). According to panel member, Russell Qualls, the use of GIS technology "is an important step in understanding the situation in order to reclaim the land."

Representatives from the NRRA are not certain how long underground storage tanks in the city of Pine Ridge have been leaking. A monitoring well is bailed each week to test the area groundwater. For the past year, testing has revealed that pure free product (gasoline and diesel fuel) has contaminated the groundwater. Underground storage tanks from a local gas station were replaced, but this has not effected the level of free product in the groundwater. This is an indication that the real source of the contamination has not yet been identified.

"An Environmental Legacy For Our Grandchildren," was the first of a series of programs that will focus on environmental issues on Native American lands. This series will target faculty and student audiences at Native American and other minority academic institutions throughout the U.S. ■

Satellite downlink survey

Please take a few moments to complete and return this survey on the NAOMI Live Teleconference, "Environmental Legacy For Our Grandchildren," broadcast via satellite on April 11, 1996. This information will be used in planning future satellite programs. Your input is very valuable to HERS. Thank you.

Name _____ University/Organization _____

1. Did your university/organization downlink the April 11 broadcast?

Yes.

No. If no, please state briefly why you didn't downlink the program.

2. Please evaluate the program on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the worst and 5 being the best.

effectiveness of panelists	1	2	3	4	5
informative, up-to-date information	1	2	3	4	5
adequacy of publicity	1	2	3	4	5
effectiveness of telephone link-up	1	2	3	4	5

3. Approximate number of people who attended the downlink at your location

4. Please use the space below for written comments. Use additional paper if necessary.



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