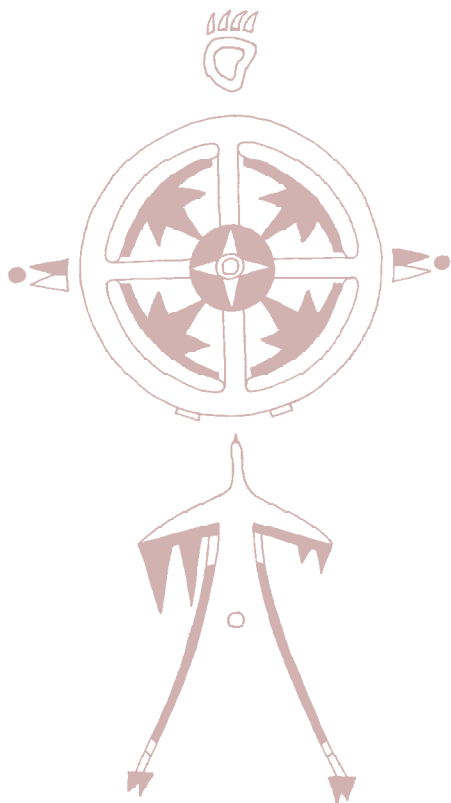


EARTH MEDICINE

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On page...

- 2.....Director's Corner
- 3.....Navajo Mine Closures
- 4.....ITEP Air Quality Training
- 5.....Shoshone Elder
- 6.....HERS Profile
- 7....NAOMI Seminar Program
- 8.....Announcements

Laduke speaks at HINU and KU

On November 5, 1997, Winona LaDuke (Anishinabeg) spoke at the Lied Center on the campus of the University of Kansas (KU). She talked about her Native American community and shared some of the stories told to her by Native Americans throughout the country. LaDuke also shared her stories at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas, the following afternoon. LaDuke talked about her community, environmental issues, and how individuals make a difference. She is often described as an environmental and community activist, but she considers herself a concerned parent. "I am someone who wonders why there is so much sugar in my son's breakfast cereal more than about how much Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are in his tissues." She said she works on environmental and health issues because of her concern for her children and the future of her community.



HINU student Nicole Johnson speaks with LaDuke after her presentation.

LaDuke has served as co-chair of the Indigenous Women's Network and she is now the environmental program officer for the Seventh Generation Fund, a Native American foundation supporting grass-root initiatives in environmental justice and community restoration. She also served on the board of directors for Green Peace and in 1996 LaDuke ran as a vice presidential candidate on the Green Party ticket. She recently published her first novel, *Last Standing Woman*.

"I work on the land issue because if you don't control your land base, you do not control your destiny," said LaDuke referring to the White Earth Reservation losing control of over 90% of the reservation land. LaDuke believes the consequence of losing control of their land is that three generations of people have been born into poverty. She said conditions such as chronic diabetes, alcoholism, and an Indian arrest rate six times greater than that of non-Indians in northern Minnesota are all associated with chronic poverty. "It is my belief that the future of our community is tied to our land. Because we are a land-based people and a land-based culture, that is what nourishes our spirit," stated LaDuke.

In 1986, the judicial system recognized that the White Earth Reservation land was taken illegally, but the statute of limitations had expired. Therefore, the courts did not return the land. "The court said that my grandmother, who is legally a ward of the federal government, who could not read or write in English, was supposed to have gone out and procured an attorney in 1920," said LaDuke.

The White Earth Recovery Project was formed to facilitate the return of reservation land to Indian people. LaDuke explained that out of the 837,000

■ continued on page 2

Environmental Justice and the HERS Center

by Daniel Wildcat, Haskell Indian Nations University

In the last year, George Godfrey, co-director of the HERS Center, and myself have attended two national environmental justice conferences. In both cases the conferences have been sobering and invigorating. Sobering is the only way to describe one's experience when confronted with evidence of the enormity of the problems facing rural and urban minority communities in the United States and throughout the world. One also comes away reinvigorated: renewed, in a sense, with a dedication to finding creative ways to solve environmental problems we human beings have produced.

Research, technology transfer, and providing good reliable information is what the HERS Center is all about. By exploring bioremediation technologies, providing community services, and using the HERS video seminars, the Center has accomplished those ends. But on a recent visit to a sister institution something struck me as we watched a demonstration of a state of the art technology developed to address accidents involving the release of deadly airborne chemicals. Much of what we do is related to environmental clean-up activities—essentially reactive. This is a central feature of the Center's original charter. George Godfrey has talked often about the creation of a cadre of American Indian environmental scientists and engineers who would achieve a status and success comparable to the highly praised American Indian "smoke-jumpers" in the U.S. Forest Service. We have plenty of environmental "fires" to put out in our Native communities and we need well-trained Native professionals to do so.

However, our real challenge is to avoid creating environmental problems altogether. Environmental justice expresses the concept that in the pursuit of life and liberty, we cannot forget a fundamental right to health. To create obstacles to the attainment of all three is injustice, and recently many seem to have

realized that one cannot pursue life and liberty fully unless one lives in a healthy environment. Environmental justice has taken center stage because there is no question that ethnic minorities and the working-poor have had precisely such obstacles created for them.

Environmental justice, like many principles, is hollow unless one has the power to fulfill or exercise their rights. Tribal sovereignty, self-determination, community empowerment, economic development and entrepreneurship—tribal leaders constantly speak to these concepts. I would propose we add environmental justice to the list. As the HERS Center matures, it seems appropriate that we examine ways to proactively avoid the creation of unhealthy environments in our communities. Knowledge is a prerequisite to the responsible exercise of power; unfortunately, human beings often know what is right and still choose to do the wrong thing. It is debatable whether or not that problem is solvable. However, the problems that we Native peoples now face because our past leaders did not have the knowledge and/or the power to avoid environmentally unsound, unhealthy activities from occurring within our communities should not repeat themselves.

In the big picture, all of our activities should be about environmental justice. Let's encourage our young Native women and men to become scientists, engineers, teachers and even entrepreneurs working for the creation of environmental justice. Can we realize sovereignty, community empowerment, and economic development without environmental health and wellness? Let's not be fooled by those who would separate technical and professional knowledge, skills and abilities from issues of justice. In the big picture, that is what it is all about—environmental justice. ■

Recovery project increases reservation land base

■ continued from page 1

acres that comprises the White Earth Reservation, one-third is held by government agencies. Through the White Earth Recovery Project, she is asking for the return of public land holdings to her people. They are also requesting that people who want to sell their land sell it to the project. To date, the project has purchased 1300 acres of land for the White Earth Reservation.

LaDuke also discussed the passage of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1997. The passage of this legislation allows the transport of nuclear waste

from 108 nuclear power plants in the U.S. to Yucca Mountain in Nevada. She said that in Kansas there would be an estimated 347 truck shipments and 605 rail transports annually from nuclear power plants in Florida and Pennsylvania.

She said that to build one nuclear waste dump in the country raises major ethical questions. She questioned why it was sited in Yucca Mountain, a traditional homeland to the Western Shoshone. She also questioned why the public is enabling the

■ continued on page 4

Navajo Nation closer to reclamation goal

by Michael Tosee, Haskell Indian Nations University

In July 1997 Haskell Environmental Research Studies (HERS) staff visited the Navajo Nation in Arizona and New Mexico. The purpose of the visit was to follow-up on the progress and lend support to the concerns expressed to HERS staff as the Navajo Nation's priority environmental issues during an initial visit to the area in 1995.

While visiting the Navajo Nation in 1995, tribal environmental officials discussed their efforts to identify, assess, and remediate more than 1100 abandoned uranium mines of various sizes. The largest was the Moonlight mine which was 800 feet long, 600 feet wide, and 126 feet deep with the smallest measuring a few feet in diameter. Once the uranium was extracted from the ore, residual material, normally referred to as tailings, was left. These tailings contained small concentrations of naturally occurring materials that radioactively decay to radium and produce radon, a radioactive gas. Some Navajo Nation members, not realizing the complications and hazards of exposure to this radioactive material, used the tailings to build their hogans. The Navajo families that utilized this material for building their traditional earth dwelling (hogan) were afflicted with sickness, birth defects, and, in some cases, premature death.

According to tribal personnel at the Navajo Nation environmental office, their uranium mine problems began during the 1950s when uranium was needed for the development of nuclear energy and national defense systems. Many Navajo uranium mine workers became casualties of overexposure to radiation from these mining operations. Over the years miners contracted cancer and other health related ailments associated with this exposure.

In 1990 Congress passed the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act to help uranium miners and others by providing \$100,000 to each underground uranium miner who could attribute one of six lung diseases to radiation exposure. The problems for establishing eligibility for compensation have been compounded for Navajo miners because of the language barrier. Many older Navajo speak their language fluently, but don't understand English very well. Appropriate documentation needed by Navajo miners to establish that they worked in the mines is difficult to obtain. Navajo women whose spouses have died as a result of illness caused by exposure to radiation are unable to get compensation due them because tribal marriages are not recognized by the agencies reviewing these matters. The Navajo Nation is offering assistance to tribal members in

overcoming some of these difficulties.

It was established by HERS staff during the 1997 visit that the Navajo Nation was making significant strides in remediating the abandoned uranium mines on the reservation. The impetus behind the tribal movement to act on these issues was established in 1978 when Congress passed the Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act (UMTRCA) to clean up 24 abandoned sites located in the United States, four of which were located in the Navajo Nation. These four locations in the Navajo Nation were at Shiprock, New Mexico; Tuba City, New Mexico; Monument Valley, Arizona; and Mexican Hat, Utah. These four areas represent where the uranium ore processing sites were established. At these sites tons of mill tailings were left exposed above ground, leaving the Navajo people and the landscape vulnerable to varying degrees of radiation exposure.

The purpose of the Navajo Nation's remedial action is to minimize or eliminate potential and real health hazards resulting from exposure to residual radioactive materials at the former processing sites. Most abandoned uranium mines in the Navajo Nation were located in the vicinity of these uranium processing sites.

At the end of 1996, 411 uranium mines have been reclaimed. The Navajo Nation is planning for the complete closure of all 1100 mines by the year 2002. The plan is ambitious, but tribal environmental officials believe it can be done. Melvin H. Yazzie, Reclamation Specialist for the Shiprock Abandoned Mines Lands Reclamation Department, allowed HERS staff to accompany him to the field. He showed how the tribe reclaims the land and the methods used to close mines of various sizes.

In the two years since HERS staff first visited the Navajo Nation, it is apparent that they have made considerable strides toward realizing their goal of closing the mines and are doing so with the utmost regard and consideration for the environment and tribal traditions. ■



This closed mine was once a deep excavation site for uranium mining in the Navajo Nation.

Tribal environmental staff attend workshop at Haskell

by Patricia Ellsworth, Northern Arizona University

Haskell Indian Nations University (HINU) hosted an "Introduction to Air Quality Management" tribal workshop November 18-21, 1997. This was the second time the workshop was presented at HINU. The Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) at Northern Arizona University developed and delivered the 4-day training workshop. Pat Ellsworth and Virgil Masayesva (Hopi) from ITEP, and Lewis McLeod from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, facilitated the workshop. Leland Grooms, from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7, Kansas City, demonstrated air sampling equipment. Participants represented 22 tribes and most geographical areas within the United States.

Major topics included: the concept of pH; the criteria pollutants, their sources and effects; National Ambient Air Quality Standards; Air Toxics; the use of a PM10 air sampler; major provisions of the Clean Air Act and its application to tribes; and components of a tribal air quality program.

This entry-level workshop is part of ITEP's American Indian Air Quality Training Program (AIAQTP) which began in 1993 with funding from the U.S. EPA. The AIAQTP seeks to fulfill the mandate of the 1990 Clean Air Act to offer Native American tribes full partnership in the management of air quality on tribal lands.

The core of the training program is a series of three workshops: "Introduction to Air Quality

Management," "Air Pollution Technology," and "Air Quality Program Administration." Tribal staff who complete the series are prepared to enroll in specialty courses. ITEP facilitated the first specialty course, "Title V: Operating Permits," in May 1996 and a second specialty course dealing with environmental data analysis and management in August 1997. Two more specialty courses are planned for August 1998; their topics will be: Emissions Inventory and Ambient Air

Monitoring Network Design.

All ITEP training courses have a workshop format, incorporating hands-on work and small group activities. This approach encourages group interaction so that participants get to know one another and share concerns and ideas. Hopefully, this will lead to networking after the workshop. The instructional team for each workshop includes experienced tribal environmental managers who can speak to the day-to-day needs

and problems tribal staff will encounter.

For more information about ITEP and the American Indian Air Quality Training Program, call or send email to: Virgil Masayesva (520-523-9651, virgil.masayesva@nau.edu) or Pat Ellsworth (520-523-6721, patricia.ellsworth@nau.edu). ITEP also has a web page at <www.cse.nau.edu/~itep>. ■



Workshop participants Nancy Rae and Clarence Mojado learn about the effects of sulfur dioxide on the pH of water in HINU's chemistry lab.

Laduke questions policy decisions

■ continued from page 2

process and asserted that the liability for the policy is transferred to the American people. She views the legislation as a public policy question. "I feel that public policies should be made not for the richest people in the country, but for the poorest people in the country. Consider the needs of the poorest of the country over the longer term." She believes that decisions are increasingly being removed from the American people and decisions are determined by special interest groups which creates a political

challenge. She asked, "Who would determine our destiny, the special interests groups or the American people?"

LaDuke's visit was sponsored by the Hall Center for the Humanities and filmed as a part of the Haskell Environmental Lecture Series. To obtain a videotaped copy of Laduke's presentation at KU, please contact HERS at the address on page 7 of this issue. ■

Shoshone elder criticizes nuclear waste policy act of 1997

Corbin Harney, a Shoshone spiritual leader from Nevada, was at Haskell Indian Nations University in September 1997 to share with the students his opposition to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1997. Corbin Harney is a national as well as an international speaker on Native American issues and topics.

Harney emphasized that the Native Americans of Nevada, California, Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana will all suffer as a result of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act. Harney expressed his disagreement with the decision to store nuclear waste on or near the Western Shoshone's reservation. According to Harney, once this happens they may be told (by the federal government) that the area is dangerous to live in and be told to move. He suggested that this was something Native Americans need to discuss, and added "Let's not forget something like this."

Harney also discussed the fact that today some water in the area is unusable. He added that his tribal people get their water supply from a local grocery store, because their water has been contaminated. Upset with the situation he told the group of students, "Let's wake up! Let's get up and have our voices heard together. If we don't do these things nobody will do it for us. We will continue to suffer. The situation is going to get worse, it's not going to get better."

Harney shared with the students the experiences of the people of Harlen, Nevada, a mining town. Today they complain of headaches, dizziness, stomach problems, bone aches, stiffness and other

ailments. He went on to say the only way these experiences can be eliminated is to unite. Harney feels that the nuclear waste should be left where it is. Harney also expressed his concern regarding the danger of the waste being transported on major highways and railroads in order to get to the designated repository. Harney related an example of a disaster that could possibly happen again. This particular disaster was the Feather River Canyon derailment. He continued to say nuclear waste accumulates every day, and nuclear waste continues to be transported on the nations major highways. Harney told the group of students that 460 spills that have already occurred and are widely discussed. He also strongly suggested that the students do their own research to find out the truth about the matter.

He also stated that Native Americans are viewed as the lowest class of society, when in fact they should be proud that "we are connected to the earth." He encouraged the students to live cleaner lives, stronger lives, and to not let our Mother Earth down. He also suggested that we teach one another about why we are here. He urged the students to, "think about what we can do together to protect the younger generation, the unborn. Everything relies on us, we are put here with our voices, we are to protect every living thing out there. Our forefathers have done this." In closing he said, "we are on one earth together, we drink this one water, we breath the same air. Let's do our duty that was given to us."

To obtain a video copy of Harney's presentation at HINU, contact HERS at the address on page 7. ■

Summer opportunities for geoscience exploration

The Keck Geology Consortium (KGC) would like to invite students from ethnic groups underrepresented in the sciences to participate in its summer research groups. All applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents and have a faculty sponsor who agrees to supervise their work during the academic year. Additional information and application materials can be obtained from the World Wide Web at www.carleton.edu/curricular/GEOL/resource/keck/keck.html or from Cathryn Manduca at (507) 646-4425, e-mail: cmanduca@carleton.edu.

KGC is also seeking two geoscientists who can

provide research expertise and mentor students in our undergraduate research groups. The first opening is on a project applying GIS to geoscience problems in Texas. The second opening is for either a process sedimentologist to work with Precambrian clastic rocks in Arizona, or for a person with expertise in hydrology, water chemistry, or stable isotope geochemistry to work on a watershed analysis in Massachusetts. Candidates may be employed in academia, industry or government. Interested persons should contact Cathryn Manduca at the above listed number or address. ■

HERS profile: John Waconda—BIA area forester

by Barbara Cornelius, Haskell Indian Nations University

Isleta in Spanish means “Little Island,” but Isleta Pueblo’s fortitude is hardly little. The people of Isleta Pueblo, which borders the city limits of Albuquerque, New Mexico, asked the U.S. Supreme Court, “How pure is our water?” The Pueblo of Isleta was the first sovereign American Indian nation recognized by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to have equal status as a state in determining its water quality standards. The traditional connections of the Isleta Pueblo and its community have always been strong and shall remain connected to their water.

John Waconda is a member of Isleta Pueblo. He graduated from Colorado State University, Ft. Collins, Colorado, with a Master’s Degree in forestry. He is devoted to helping define and accomplish forest management goals for various tribes. Waconda is also a two-year member of the Natural Resources Advisory Board at Haskell Indian Nations University, Lawrence, Kansas.

“It is important to recognize traditional uses and values of tribes, while applying comprehensive scientific principles to forest management.”

For the past two years Waconda has been the area forester for the BIA-Albuquerque Area Office. By his account, he oversees the management of “total area forestry” programs for 22 Indian nations, including the Jicarilla and Mescalero Apache tribes, 19 Pueblos, and the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain tribes in New Mexico and southern Colorado. The BIA-Albuquerque Area Office provides technical assistance to agency and tribal forestry programs that involve projects such as timber sale contract review, reviewing project compliance, management of fire programs, forest management planning, and timber revenue accounting.

Isleta is the southernmost of the existing pueblos in the Rio Grande Valley, with lands located adjacent to the city of Albuquerque, New Mexico. The pueblo itself is 13 miles south of Albuquerque proper. The Rio Grande River flows past Albuquerque and downstream is the reservation community, including Isleta Pueblo. As with most metropolitan

areas, Albuquerque’s sewage treatment plant discharges treated sewage water into the Rio Grande and that water impacts the Isleta community.

The Clean Water Act allows states and authorized American Indian tribes to set anti-pollution standards more restrictive than those spelled out in federal law, as translated by the EPA. Since the Isleta Pueblo’s standards were enforced, the city of Albuquerque has spent close to \$60 million upgrading their sewage plant for the removal of nitrogen. The residents of Albuquerque are incurring cost increases of over 15 percent for water and sewer privileges to offset the upgrade expenses. Waconda’s philosophy is simply stated. “High standards come with a price for the people of Albuquerque.” Costs for Albuquerque residents are not an issue for the people and community of Isleta Pueblo. Water is significant in the traditional life of the pueblo. “The people and its community are entitled to clean water,” stated Waconda. Water is utilized for domestic uses and the irrigation of crops. Most importantly, water is a vital part of ceremonial activities. Waconda firmly believes, “Water is an integral part of a society and strengthens one’s commitment to that society.” Water revives the ties and reassures the responsibilities of the people. The river comes with it all. The traditional practices that involve farming, agriculture and ranching still hold importance among Isleta culture and remain sustainable. Therefore, it is imperative that resources such as clean water always be available to enable the sustainability of Indian people.

With 12 years of forestry experience, Waconda’s most enjoyable and professional forte is the direct one-to-one communication with the individual tribes. Communication among American Indian people is important when there are issues involving projects such as forest management planning. Waconda believes that, “It is important to recognize traditional uses and values of tribes, while applying comprehensive scientific principles to forest management. This is my personal goal and objective.”

The people of Isleta Pueblo remain strengthened and united with a strong sense of family and community. How to maintain pure water and secure its relationship to American Indian people remains a challenge; yet the American Indian nations will continue to uphold that inherent right to the traditions of pure water. ■

Available Videotapes

These tapes are available through interlibrary loan from Kansas State University's Hale Library formerly Farrell Library. You may also request copies by contacting HERS by phone at 785-749-8498; by e-mail at hers@hsrv.nass.haskell.edu; or by mail at HINU, 155 Indian Avenue, Box 5001, Lawrence, Kansas, 66046.

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Basin Creek Mine Closure Reclamation Techniques

Topics in Pollution Prevention—Vehicle Maintenance

PCBs in Our Environment—The Legacy Continues

Environmental Impacts of Gold Mining Operations Near the Fort Belknap Reservation

The NAOMI Program and HERS: New Opportunities in Environmental Research

Announcements

■ continued from page 8

DOI internship opportunities

The Haskell Indian Nations University Natural Resources Program is seeking applications from American Indian and Native Alaskan students for its 1998 Department of Interior Minority Intern program. All federal agencies offer a variety of possible job placements. All disciplines are encouraged to apply. Some internship areas include: accounting, civil engineering, environmental science, history, public administration, Native American studies, natural sciences, sociology, and wildlife biology.

All applicants must have a minimum 3.0 GPA, have completed their freshman year of college by June 1997, be a U.S. citizen, be a currently enrolled student, and be a member of a federally-recognized Indian nation.

To obtain an application or for further information regarding the 1998 DOI Minority Intern program, please contact the Natural Resources Program at HINU, 155 Indian Avenue, Lawrence, Kansas, 66046, 785-749-8409, FAX 785-832-6610.

Erratum

The October 1997 issue incorrectly listed the telephone number for Redhorse, LLC's Illinois office. The correct number is 630-963-7341. ■



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Announcements and upcoming events

TOSNAC coordinator

The Haskell Environmental Research Studies Center is seeking a coordinator for its Technical Outreach Services for Native American Communities (TOSNAC) Program. The TOSNAC coordinator will provide university educational resources to individuals, community groups, and environmental programs in tribal communities affected by hazardous substance contamination issues by making assessments of communities' technical needs, coordinating technical assistance to communities, developing and adapting workshops and informational materials to the community being served, and by presenting workshops to communities on basic scientific concepts. Qualifications for this position include: demonstrated experience at effectively communicating with Native American communities, knowledge of Native American cultures, and strong verbal and written communications skills. Extensive travel to tribal nations is required. This position is guaranteed for one year. Continuation will be contingent on available funding. For more a complete job description, please contact HERS at the address listed on page 7 of this issue.

NTEC deputy director

The National Tribal Environmental Council (NTEC) announces a vacancy in the position of deputy director. Responsibilities of the position include implementing NTEC's mission and strategic

plans, performing administrative and program oversight, conducting policy and legislative analysis, assisting in program development consistent with national tribal priorities, and fund development. The successful candidate must have an exceptional record of personal commitment to national tribal issues and a reputation of accomplishment in tribal environmental affairs. An attorney is preferred. The position is open until filled. From more information, please call NTEC at 505-242-2175.

BIA internship opportunities

The Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Trust is seeking applications from American Indian and Native Alaskan students for its Cooperative Education program. Students interested in a career with the BIA or a tribe and who are pursuing degrees in natural resource fields will be considered. This is a work/study program with chosen applicants attending school during the academic year and working for the BIA or a tribe during the summer.

Applications will be accepted from January 1 through February 15, 1998. Selections will be announced in March and appointees will be expected to report to work during the 1998 summer period. For more information, please contact Gail Sloan, National Center for Cooperative Education in Natural Resources, Haskell Indian Nations University, 155 Indian Avenue, Box 5018, Lawrence, Kansas, 66046, 785-749-8427.

■ continued on page 7

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