

Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (WTCAC) Meeting

October 15, 2001

Oneida Nation Representative Patrick Pelky welcomed everyone to Oneida and asked for introductions. WTCAC President Jean Buffalo-Reyes (Red Cliff Representative) welcomed everyone to Wisconsin and to the Oneida Nation. Discussed the importance of the WTCAC and the needs of the Tribal people. Important to continue to build the relationship with USDA to meet Tribal needs. Ability to partner is very important to meet Tribal needs such as aquaculture and community gardens. In days past she had approached the RC&D Council with a need and was rudely received. Does not feel that cultural needs were considered. Times have changed.

Tribal Presentations

Ho-Chunk Representative Richie Brown opened the Tribal presentations. Concerned with the farm bill and how it affects the use of tribal lands. Previous farm bills did not consider Tribal needs. Tribal communities are not the typical farming operations and educational programs need to be developed to meet the needs of smaller operations and producers who grow cultural crops.

Oneida Nation Representative Patrick Pelky gave the Oneida presentation. It's important to make programs more flexible to meet tribal needs. Congressional consultation with Tribes is needed to have their needs addressed in the farm bill and in program policy development. Tribes are governments with laws and policies and many times USDA programs don't consider the complexities of meeting the needs of two governments.

St. Croix Representative Aaron Colson gave the presentation for the St. Croix Tribe. The St. Croix Tribe is a small government that is spread thin. The NRCS District Conservationist is also spread too thin, by having other responsibilities besides just the Tribe. The St. Croix are trying to participate in USDA programs, but need more educational and technical assistance.

Bad River Representative Rae Ann Maday gave the presentation for the Bad River Tribe. Showed how the Bad River Tribe used the IRMP process to develop a watershed approach to developing their Conservation Plan with USDA NRCS. Have identified areas where resources must be conserved and where development can proceed.

Menominee Representative Doug Cox gave presentation for the Menominee Tribe. Tribes are stewards of the land and must protect the resources. Menominee are hunters and gatherers and not farmers. In 1960 the U.S. Government terminated the Tribe and the reservation was divided up. Hydropower came to the reservation and they built dams that flooded out and destroyed the wild rice beds. Due to NRCS Tribal Liaison being on reservation was able to be made aware of USDA programs and to do a restoration. Have also undertaken a lake sturgeon restoration project. Sustainable managed approach is very important.

NCRC Chairman Ken Kanishiro gave presentation on what the National Civil Rights Committee does. The Committee works on behalf of USDA NRCS Chief Pearlie Reed. The Committee consists of 14 to 16 people who gather Civil Rights concerns from across the United States and gives advice to the Chief. Works as sounding board for employees for civil rights, human resources, training, and better use of workforce.

GLIFWC Representative Jim Thannum gave presentation as a member of the State Technical Committee. The Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission consists of 11 tribes of the three states of WI, MN, and MI. Has used EQIP to educate about, and control invasive species such as purple loosestrife. Provide educational materials, community presentations, slide shows and interactive web site with University of Wisconsin with these funds. The WHIP program has been used by tribes to build important relationships with other agencies, such as with the BIA Circle of Flight Program, and for reseeding wild rice areas. Have used EQIP to do aquaculture projects to control effluent. Aquaculture is becoming more important to the State and Tribal economy. The NRCS project helped draw a \$3 million project to the Red Cliff reservation. Gardening is important for the health of Native Americans because of diabetes. Leading cause of death for Native Americans

is heart disease. Traditional diets can help improve the health of Native Americans. NRCS is supporting traditional gardening initiatives. Why does NRCS work? Because they have taken a broad based look at agriculture. Willing to work out of the box and willing to listen to Tribes. Having Harmony training on Nations is important for the education of the government officials. EQIP and WHIP provide the structure of bottom up process that allows for flexibility of the consensus process of tribes. Important for the cultural aspects of tribes to have this process. It is also important to have the direct NRCS Liaisons to provide technical assistance to tribes. Agencies need to listen to tribes and determine needs, and then see how the programs can help. Important to have the STC hold meetings on the reservations. Increases cooperation and communication. Problems: No ability to 638 some program responsibilities. It's important to have funding to maintain the NRCS Tribal Liaisons. Forest Incentive Program has limitations that prohibit tribes from participating.

Business Meeting

Jean called for nominations for Officers. Ritchie asked clarification for standing officers. Jean Buffalo-Reyes (Red Cliff) nominated for President and Paul Ninham (Oneida) nominated for Vice President. 2nd by St. Croix. Approved by voice vote. Ritchie Brown (Ho-Chunk) nominated for Secretary. 2nd by Oneida. Approved by voice vote. Doug Cox (Menominee) nominated for Treasurer, 2nd by Ho-Chunk. Approved by voice vote.

Jean passed out the letter and materials that was sent out to the Congress and Senate. Discussion ensued about the components of the Tribal Title to the Farm Bill. Additional items were added before being sent out. Package went to every member of the Senate and Congressional agriculture committees.

Pat Leavenworth gave an update on the Farm Bill version that has passed the house. The "Kind" version failed after long discussion. The administration has finally released their ideas for the next farm bill. Two major items were changed at the last minute to put EQIP back to NRCS and to increase funding. For this fiscal year no appropriations have been confirmed, so WHIP, WRP and other programs currently are not funded.

Need to draft resolutions for Tribal Title to Farm Bill from the WTCAC and from the individual tribes. Individual tribes can provide testimony to state officials through the local offices to bring forth individual Tribal needs. Jean will contact Kind, Obey and Feingold to work with them on farm bill issues. She will fly to DC at her own expense if needed.

WTCAC to NRCS: What are expectations? Main purpose to provide Pat Leavenworth with insights as to what is and isn't working. WTCAC is a vehicle for NRCS to bring new programs to the WI tribes to educate and begin implementation. Development of Tribal Title is a big start. Should look at establishing a MOU between WTCAC and NRCS. Pat Pelky suggests a sub-committee to look at drafting a strategic plan for the group.

Meeting with USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Mark Rey: He's coming to WI to get an education about NRCS. Jean will meet with Pat and Mark on November 13th, in Madison.

WTCAC Membership

Red Cliff: Jean Buffalo Reyes – reyes@ashland.baysat.net Judy Pratt-Shelly – rctribal@mail.ncis.net

Oneida: Paul Ninham – pninham@oneidanation.org Pat Pelky – ppelky1@oneidanation.org

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Menominee: Douglas Cox – dc Cox@itol.com

Bad River: Michelle Conners – mickicon@badriver.com Rae Ann Maday – madayrae@badriver.com

St. Croix: Aaron Colson – acolson@sirentel.net Beth Greiff – stcrxnrdsirentel.net

Lac Courte Oreilles: Dan Tyrolt – ddtyrolt@cheqnet.net

Sokaogon (Mole Lake): Roman Ferdinand – roman@newnorth.net

Stockbridge-Munsee: Greg Bunker – gbunker@frontiernet.net

Lac du Flambeau: Larry Waukonowicz – DIR253@aol.com

GLIFWC Advisor: Jim Thannum – jthannum@glifwc.org