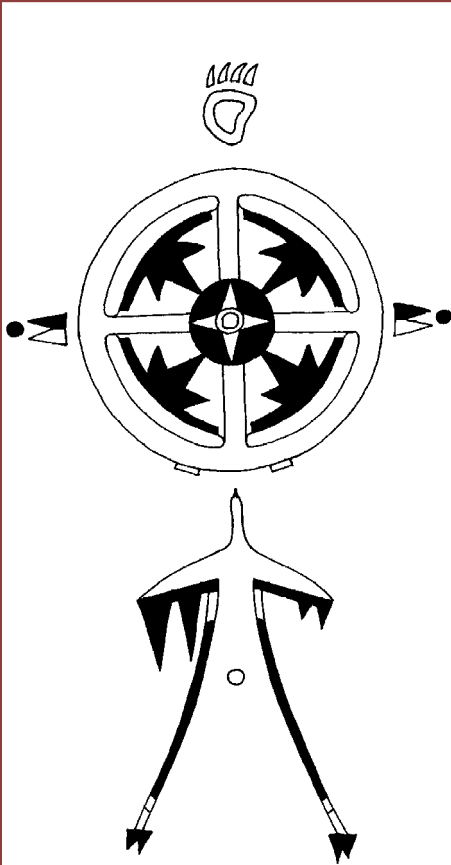


EARTH MEDICINE



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

Educators share views on Native cultures and environment

by Patterson T. Yazzie, Haskell Indian Nations University

During a recent roundtable discussion, four educators shared their views on the impacts of Native cultural philosophy on life, views of creation, integrating Native views in today's educational system and the way that American society views nature in addressing environmental issues. This roundtable was the fourth part of the "Comparison of Native American and European Worldviews" series, sponsored by the NAOMI (Native American and Other Minority Institutions) Seminar Program. The discussion's moderator was Venida Chenault-White (Prairie Band Potawatomi), professor of Social Welfare at Haskell Indian Nations University. Joining her were Dr. Ray Pierotti (Comanche), professor of Systems & Ecology at the University of Kansas (KU); Bill Welton, professor of Natural Resources, HINU; and Maggie Necefer (Navajo), professor of Elementary Teacher Education, HINU.

Dr. Pierotti talked about the different ways in which Native and European cultures view the relationships between organisms and their environment and



Panel Members Bill Welton, Venida Chenault-White, Maggie Necefer, HINU and Ray Pierotti, KU, during the recent roundtable discussion.

evolution. Pierotti pointed out that Native people believe that all things are connected and related. Coincidentally, "the idea that all things are related is the central tenet in the science of evolution."

Pierotti teaches a course in which HINU and KU students examine and share how they look at the world and its inhabitants. He shared how Native people use animal figures as part of their creation

and teachings. For example, the Comanche view the wolf as their creator and teacher who taught them how to be people. Conversely, Europeans tend to view their creator and teacher as a human figure. Pierotti believes that this is the major difference in how Native Americans and Europeans grow up perceiving the world.

"Native people by definition are not immigrants," said Pierotti, explaining that Native Americans did not experience immigration to North America. He explained that North America is the land where Native Americans have always been and that is where their sacred places exist. Pierotti believes that Europeans experience sacredness in

Europe as they travel abroad. Pierotti is convinced that North America does not have the spiritual resonance for people of European descent as it does for Native Americans. "As a consequence, they don't respect it in quite the same way. I suspect that they

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HERS Advisory Board makes 1996 programming recommendations

The Haskell Environmental Research Studies (HERS) Advisory Board met at Haskell Indian Nations University on January 11-12, 1996. The Board convened to make recommendations on full proposals, summer cooperation and conference attendance assistance applications and board membership.

Research and Training Proposals

The HERS Advisory Board reviewed a revised training project proposal submitted by HERS Advisory Board member, Benjamin Whiting, Sinte Gleska University (SGU). The Board recommended funding for this proposal, "Environmental Analysis Training for the Northern Plains American Indian Nations," using funds from the NAOMI (Native American and Other Minority Institutions) Program. The proposal, a cooperation between SGU and Navajo Community College, will provide science faculty at SGU with the equipment and the knowledge to provide training in water quality and other environmental analyses on tribal lands to tribal environmental workers. The HERS Advisory Board continued to table action on a proposal submitted by Dan Burns, Northwest Indian College, in collaboration with Bill Douchette, Utah State University. Action on this proposal, "Evaluation of the Role of Rye and Orchard Grasses in the Bioremediation of Surface Waters Containing Agricultural Pesticides," is pending due to the uncertainty of the NAOMI Program receiving continued Federal support.

Summer Cooperation Program

The HERS Advisory Board also recommended that NAOMI Summer Cooperation applications be approved from the following individuals:

Jamison Bear, Haskell Indian Nations University
Mark Peacock, Cheyenne River Community College

Kamala Devi Sharma, Navajo Community College
Miranda Salt, Navajo Community College

The NAOMI Summer Cooperation Program will fund these individuals to work on research projects at Hazardous Substance Research Center (HSRC) consortium universities for up to eight weeks during Summer 1996. The goal of this program is to expand the research capabilities of NAOMI Consortium faculty and students.

Conference Funding

The HERS Advisory Board also made recommendations on assistance to attend the HSRC/Waste-management Education and Research Consortium Joint Conference on the Environment. This confer-

ence, "Creating a New Path on the Santa Fe Trail," will take place in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on May 21-23, 1996. The HERS Advisory Board recommended that the following individuals receive NAOMI funding to attend this conference:

Patricia Atkins, Salish Kootenai College
Lawrence Baker, Fort Berthold Community College

Jamison Bear, Haskell Indian Nations University
Dan Burns, Northwest Indian College
Steven Chischilly, Crownpoint Institute of Technology

Jeff Desjarlais, Turtle Mountain Community College

Charmane Disrud, Turtle Mountain Community College

Ruth Hall, Fort Berthold Community College
Kerry Hartman, Fort Berthold Community College

Kimberly Haukaas, Sinte Gleska University
George Kills Plenty, Sinte Gleska University
Kathy Knife, Sinte Gleska University
Alex Lunderman, Jr., Sinte Gleska University
Priscilla Marshall, Sinte Gleska University
Dale Morigeau, Salish Kootenai College
Frank Novotny, Adams State College
Mark Peacock, Cheyenne River Community College

Truman Plummer, Salish Kootenai College
Gabriel Renville, Salish Kootenai College
Kamala Devi Sharma, Navajo Community College
Julie Weber, Salish Kootenai College

In addition, Nagalingam Balakrishnan, United Tribes Technical College, was recommended to receive funding to attend the Great Environmental Saftey Trainer Institute in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Board Membership

The HERS Advisory Board decided to expand their membership to a total of 20. Membership will consist of 16 regular members, two of whom will be students, and 4 ex-officio, non-voting members. Applicants whom the board recommended for regular membership are Shelia Crawford (Sisseton-Wahpeton), Sisseton-Wahpeton Environmental Office and Gerald Wagner (Blackfeet), Blackfeet Environmental Office. Sharon Crowley (Alaska Native), United States Geological Survey, and Ella Mulford (Navajo), Department of Energy, were recommended as ex-officio, non-voting members.

The next meeting of the HERS Advisory Board will be in May 1996 in concert with the HSRC/WERC Joint Conference on the Environment. ■

World War II activity still affecting Native lands

by Wendy Griswold, Kansas State University

The Pine Ridge Reservation is the site of the only bombing range wholly within the boundaries of a reservation. Pine Ridge, home to the Oglala Lakota Nation, is also the site of the Badlands Bombing Range Project (BRRP), which is funded through a grant awarded to the Natural Resources Regulatory Agency (NRRRA) by the Department of Defense. The BRRP funds are used to research the area used as a bombing range by the Department of War during World War II. Emma Featherman-Sam (Oglala Lakota), director of the BRRP, and Kim Clausen (Oglala Lakota), environmental specialist for the NRRRA, discussed the project during an October 1995 visit to Haskell Indian Nations University.

In 1942, the US Department of War acquired 341,725.61 acres of the Oglala Lakota Reservation from the Bureau of Indian Affairs for use as a bombing range. The acquired acreage represents one-quarter of the land base of the Oglala Lakota Nation and its use as a bombing range displaced approximately 250 families. The NRRRA discovered environmental problems when one of their water quality experts discovered water samples with increased levels of metals. The main source of water

for Pine Ridge runs directly through the impact area of the bombing range.

The Department of Defense made attempts to clean-up the area. Their progress was recorded in Range Clearance Reports, which have been researched by the NRRRA. According to these reports, a total of 200 workdays were spent cleaning up the bombing range in three separate attempts. These documents report that workers cleaned 31.39 acres per day per person. According to Clausen, it is impossible to even walk that much acreage in a day, little less remediate the area. The majority of the areas that were cleaned-up were turned into the Badlands National Park. Much Tribal land remains uncleaned, although it was returned to the Oglala Lakota for unrestricted use.

The Oglala Lakota Nation is responsible for determining what the acceptable level of contamination is for the area. Citing an example from a Canadian tribe who cleaned up a 2000 acre bombing range in five years, Featherman-Sam concluded that, "Its going to take us 215 years to clean up our range, if we clean it up the way we want it cleaned up." ■

Roundtable discussion touches on many issues

■ continued from page 1

would not allow some of the things they allow to happen in this country to happen in those countries."

Bill Welton pointed out some reasons why American society has difficulty valuing Native American views and values in the science field. Welton believes that Europeans do not have honor for the land and do not respect it as being sacred. He states that the European view of land is to be conquered, developed and managed as they see fit.

Europeans have difficulty accepting that there are values other than their own that identify the land as Mother Earth. The other conflict is the idea of manifest destiny; that man has dominion over all things. "To tell people that as an individual they have no more rightful place on this earth than the winged being or the creepy crawlers causes some real problems in some people's minds." He believes this is a result of earlier teaching or through religious orders that state that man is superior over all things.

Traditional Native Americans adhere to the natural laws rather than the man-made laws. Welton views man-made laws as political voices speaking without hearing from natural laws.

Maggie Necefer talked about the role of women in society, balance and creation. She explained how

Navajo culture views both genders as equal forces. Necefer mentioned the concepts of female rain, male rain, mother earth and father sky as some examples of how Navajo people view their surroundings. Maintaining gender balance is important today because Navajo people believe in this balance in creation stories and medicine. From her life experience, she perceives the male as having a dominant role in European society. She believes that the practice of dominance in European society creates conflicts in how they view the world.

"Balance between both genders in the religion and belief system are part of everyday life. If you take, you give. We cannot separate that," stressed Necefer. For example, during a Navajo healing ceremony, different parts of female and male plants are gathered to create a medicine for healing.

All the panelists suggested consulting with tribal elders and people who have experienced living successfully in both Native and American society to help resolve confusion or for directions. They stressed the importance of respecting Native teachings and integrating Native values in American education. ■

Available videotapes

These tapes are available through interlibrary loan from Kansas State University's Farrell Library.

Comparison of Native American and European Worldviews: A Roundtable Discussion, Part II

The Badlands Bombing Range Project

Basin Creek Mine Closure Reclamation Techniques

Comparison of Native American and European Worldviews: A Roundtable Discussion

Topics in Pollution Prevention—Vehicle Maintenance

PCBs in Our Environment—The Legacy Continues

Comparison of Native American and European Worldviews: A European Viewpoint

Environmental Impacts of Gold Mining Operations Near the Fort Belknap Reservation

Comparison of Native American and European Worldviews: A Native American Viewpoint

The NAOMI Program and HERS: New Opportunities in Environmental Research

Hózhó Kéyah (Environmental Harmony in Business)

Hózhó Hooghan (Environmental Harmony at Home)

Team America: A Strategic Plan for the 1990's

Bold print indicates that a seminar was sponsored by the NAOMI Seminar Program.



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