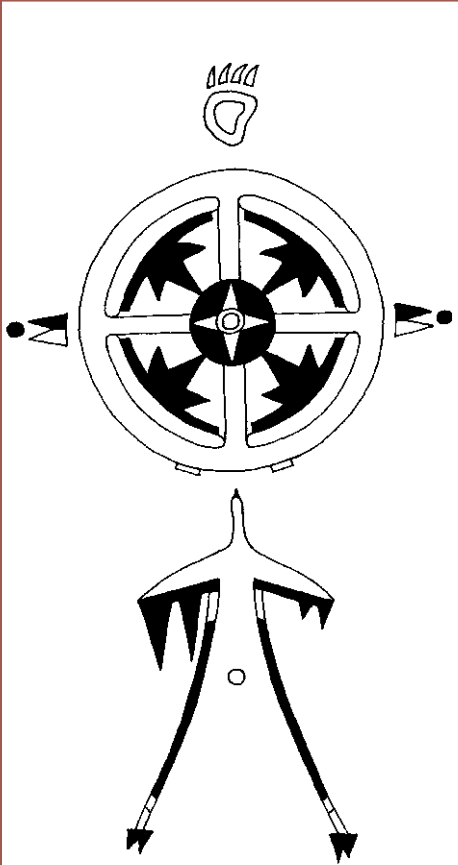


# EARTH MEDICINE



**December  
1995**

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

## HERS Advisory Board discusses future funding issues

The Haskell Environmental Research Studies Center (HERS) Advisory Board convened on October 11-13, 1995, at Haskell Indian Nations University, to discuss the funding of research, technology transfer and training proposals, the election of Board officers, and the expansion of the Board's membership. During its meeting the Board and a campus-wide audience were addressed by representatives from the Oglala Lakota Nation's Natural Resources Regulatory Agency, the Council of Energy Resource Tribes and the Wind River Associates.

Kim Clausen and Emma Featherman-Sam from the Oglala Lakota Nation's Natural Resource Regulatory Agency opened the Board meeting on the evening of October 11, with a campus-wide presentation on the Bad Lands Bombing Range Project. The Natural Resources Regulatory Agency is involved in remediating 350,000 acres of land belonging to the Pine Ridge Reservation that was used as a bombing range during World War II.



*Emma Featherman-Sam and Kim Clausen are working to remediate 350,000 acres of Oglala Lakota land.*

Mervyn Tano, environmental programs director for the Council of Energy Resource Tribes, gave a campus-wide address on the impact of federal funding on tribal environmental programs. Tano views the possible effects of impending federal budget cuts on tribal programs in three ways—bad, good and better. Proposed budget cuts could negatively impact tribal environments as they will force tribes to make fundamental changes in the way the environment is protected. Proposed budget cuts could also have positive impacts on the way that tribes protect the environment. The best possible outcome is that the tribes will survive because tribes predate the EPA.

Wes Martel, president of the Wind River Associates, a Ft. Washakie, Wyoming, consulting firm, also gave a campus-wide presentation during the HERS Advisory Board meeting. Martel discussed the importance of protecting tribal environments and suggested several ways of achieving protection. Martel cited recent political attacks on treaty rights and explained that native people have to use other strategies to do business with the state and federal government. He believes that tribal sovereignty is the key for tribes to effectively develop laws and policies that will protect the environment. Martel stressed the importance of education in being able to

■ continued on page 3

### On page...

- 2 ..... HERS Profile
- 4 ..... NAOMI Seminar Program

# Aragon defines Native American roles in environmental protection

by Patterson T. Yazzie, Haskell Indian Nations University

**D**on Aragon (Shoshone) was recently re-elected to serve as the chair of the Haskell Environmental Research Studies Center (HERS) Advisory Board. This will be his second year serving the board in this capacity. This is one of a series of profiles of people who are involved in the HERS program and mission. These opinions do not

necessarily reflect the views of *Earth Medicine*.



*Aragon works toward environmental clean-up without cultural conflict.*

## What is the function of the Wind River Environmental Quality Commission?

The Wind River Environmental Quality Commission is a regulatory agency that develops policies and environmental codes for the Shoshone and Arapaho tribes to protect the natural environment of the Wind River Indian Reservation. The environmental commission investigates and checks on the development of natural resources such as the oil fields where we go out and check on their discharges and make sure

that they are in compliance with their contracts with the tribes on protecting the environment.

## What are your responsibilities as director of this commission?

My main responsibility as executive director is to make sure that all of the programmatic and managerial functions are adhered to and making sure that we are in compliance with the rules and regulations of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grants. I also work on the development of the natural resources personnel, to make sure that there's adequate funding for their training and that they take the necessary training type programs. I work with both tribal councils of the Shoshone and the Arapaho tribes, and the state Department of Environmental Quality and with the EPA making sure that all of the environmental standards and codes are in compliance.

## How did you get involved in the environmental field?

I've been working now for five years in the environmental arena. My main interest in working with the environmental programs stems from the fact that I was a medical technician for almost 15 years and I worked ten years at the University of Washington. While I worked with the Seattle Indian Health Board, I repeatedly saw Indian people with illnesses that were related to the contamination of their environment.

I developed a very strong interest in preventive measures and try to make the quality of life a little bit better for Indian people. One of the main things that I did while I was working in the health arena was to take a look at people's environment[s] and see who is responsible for sanitation and clean water and those type of things and work with those agencies to try to bring about a better lifestyle for the Indian people.

I felt that the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Indian Health Service were lacking in their overall development of environmental protection for the people. I think that the main thing that the BIA was concerned about was the sale of the natural resources, which are timber, coal, gas, oil, uranium. It was these leftover economic development problems that were the ones fouling up the water and the air, and those type of things can make the people ill. Today, I'm still concentrating on working with the cleanup of these same type of problems because they continue to cause illness for Indian people. I think to have a strong preventive health program is to also have a clean environment.

## What is your educational background?

I went to Southwestern in Texas where I worked on a bachelor of science in Medical Technology. Thereafter I went to the University of Washington and worked there in medical and dental research. While I was working at the University of Washington I was able to attend Western Washington University where I received my bachelor's degree in business administration. I felt that with my health background and my bachelor's degree, I would be an excellent person to work with health administration. As I worked with tribes I got further away from health and got into the business aspects.

■ continued on page 3

# Advisory Board makes recommendations

■ continued from page 1

address tribal environmental issues.

The HERS Advisory Board discussed two proposals that had been submitted for its review. Dan Burns, Northwest Indian College, in collaboration with Bill Doucette, Utah State University, submitted a proposal titled, "Evaluation of the Role of Rye and Orchard Grasses in the Bioremediation of Surface Waters Containing Agricultural Pesticides." Recommendation on this proposal was tabled until the Board reconvenes in January, with the hope that the NAOMI (Native American and Other Minority Institutions) Program's funding situation will be clearer. HERS Advisory Board member, Benjamin Whiting, Sinte Gleska University, in collaboration with Bruce Dvorak and Mohamed Dahab, University of Nebraska, submitted a proposal titled, "Environmental Analysis Training for the Native American Nations in Nebraska and South Dakota." The Board recommended that funding be committed to this proposal with the understanding that it will be revised for the Board's review by January 1996 to give Sinte Gleska University a stronger role in

the project.

Don Aragon, Wind River Environmental Quality Commission, and Karl Burgher, Montana College of Mineral Science and Technology, were reelected to one-year terms as chair and vice chair, respectively. Kim Clausen, Oglala Lakota Nation Natural Resources Regulatory Agency, was elected to a one-year term as Secretary/Treasurer, creating the Board's third elected office.

The board also decided to expand their membership from 12 to 14 members and created a subcommittee to review membership nominations.

The HERS Advisory Board will convene again in early January 1996 at HINU. They will begin establishing board guidelines; make recommendations on research, technology transfer and training proposals, summer research cooperation applications, and conference attendance assistance applications; and welcome new board members. ■

## Aragon strives for balance between culture and technology

■ continued from page 2

**What kind of impacts has your involvement with HERS had on the work that the Wind River Environmental Quality Commission is undertaking?**

The primary things that HERS has offered is a forum to meet with other people who are working within environmental programs or as environmental educators. I think that sharing knowledge and experiences with these individuals has been very helpful to me and extremely helpful in focusing on what we should be doing here on the Wind River.

I have talked to some other board members: for instance Dr. Steve Semken who has put me onto some excellent things. We are now working with the University of Wyoming on bringing about some forms of epidemiology research here at the reservation.

I have learned a lot from Dr. Karl Burgher, who has done a lot with water programs. HERS is an excellent place to come together and share knowledge, and is a forum that I feel is very beneficial to all of us.

**Is there anything else that you would like to add?**

Litigation brought upon Indian tribes by states and other governmental entities contesting Indian authority to regulate themselves forced tribal officials to better qualify themselves in the areas of environmental and Indian law. I feel that if we are not confident enough to rule and regulate our own environment, control our own destiny, then maybe these people are right.

I think by bringing us all together at one point in the future we all are going to be talking the same language and be able rule and control our own destiny because Indian reservations have unique environments. One of the problems that we have with EPA and state agencies working on environmental problems is that they don't understand the culture and the sensitivity of the people towards the environment. I think by having our own people trained in these arenas and working with it, they will have a better understanding how the Indian culture is related to the environment and how to go about accomplishing various tasks without being in conflict with religious and cultural beliefs. ■

## Upcoming NAOMI seminar

The NAOMI Seminar Program will broadcast its first satellite uplink program from the campus of Haskell Indian Nations University in April 1996. The satellite program will focus on water quality issues in Indian Country and will feature footage and interviews shot by HERS staff during Summer 1995. Focus areas will be Mole Lake, Wisconsin (Chippewa, Menominee and Forest Band Potawatomi), Arizona and New Mexico (Hopi and Navajo), Pine Ridge, South Dakota (Oglala Lakota) and Oklahoma (Kiowa). The satellite program will be moderated by George Tiger, a Native American radio and television commentator and will include a panel of water quality experts, who will comment on the issues raised by the footage from each area.

## 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**

**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.



### Center Directors

George Godfrey and Dan Wildcat

### Supporting Faculty

Carol Bowen, Bill Curtis, Tom Dixon  
Chuck Haines, Dennis O'Malley, Mike Tosee

### Editors

Wendy Griswold and Patterson T. Yazzie

### Grants Administrator

Helen Gee

### Medicine Wheel Graphic

Leslie Evans

### Advisory Board Members

Don Aragon, Les Benedict, Karl Burgher,  
Kim Clausen, Ray Haner, Rose Main, Jerry  
Pardilla, Steve Semken, Bill Tallbull, John  
Trottier, Benjamin Whiting, Roderick Yeahpau

*Earth Medicine* is published bi-monthly by the Haskell Environmental Research Studies Center to serve as a means of communication for members of the center's consortium and the public. The Office of Research and Development, U.S. EPA, under agreement #R-819653, through the Great Plains-Rocky Mountain Hazardous Substance Research Center, provides \$1,101,757, or 70 percent, of the funding for this program and publication. The content of this publication does not necessarily represent the views of that agency. No official endorsement should be inferred.



Printed on recycled paper.



Haskell Indian  
Nations University

Kansas State University



**EARTH  
MEDICINE**

Haskell Foundation  
Haskell Environmental Research Studies Center  
Haskell Indian Nations University  
155 Indian Ave., Box 1247  
Lawrence, KS 66046  
913-749-8498

Please send a free subscription of *Earth Medicine* to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone and FAX \_\_\_\_\_

Bulk Rate

U.S. Postage

**PAID**

Lawrence, KS 66044

Permit No. 187