

ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER ORGANIZATION



JULY 2008

President's Message



Happy Summer APIO members!

Seven months into the 2008 year and a lot has happened. The Farm Bill finally passed, and funds are being distributed as fast as you are able to implement the conservation on the ground. I am pleased by the excitement of the upcoming Conference. And we are piloting a mentoring program.

Congratulations on a very successful API Month. I appreciate every SEPM and member that sponsored an event or activity during the month of May. I want to especially thank our friends and members in the Pacific Islands for running a very successful fundraiser for our scholarship program. I am glad everyone had fun with the auction they held there.

Our organization is built on volunteers. I can not express my overall appreciation for the job the National Council, new recruits, and the long term dedicated members have taken on this year. I would be amiss to name all the people, activities, and processes taken on by our members. Thank you for the conservation enthusiasm and the passion behind the work you have contributed.

Have you checked out our website lately? It has grown leaps and bounds. We have created new areas and expanded the views. I also appreciate our members sharing their homeland travels and conservation work with us.

You will also notice on the website an invitation to submit nominations for APIO Awards. So, please take a minute and consider nominating your colleague(s) for an outstanding job or service. Please do it now because the deadline is July 11th: http://www.apio.org/forms/APIO_nomination_form_2008.doc. We have a lot of dedicated members toiling in the background that we need to recognize their hard work.

Also, please don't forget that the Bylaws and Constitution are being revised this year. If you have not gotten your input in the final draft, you will be missing the boat. I want to leave the Conference with an updated and effective Bylaws and Constitution, and your suggestions will be critical to improving our organization.

How is your career going? Have you developed your one and five year plan? Have you updated your KSA's lately? Are you ready for a change but you have not been making the "Best Qualified" panel? APIO is starting our mentoring program. Our goal is "Getting people in the right place at the right time!" Who will be the next API as State Engineer, Deputy State Conservationist, State Conservationist or even Division Chief? We need to build our own capacity and create the initiative to be the very best and bring about change in our Agency. My vision is to build leaders within our members. I am a strong believer in helping our cause, which is why we are bringing a new level of Mentoring into the system.

With that said, we are still lining out moderators for the Conference if you have not had an opportunity to get involved. You get to enhance your leadership and public speaking skills in a friendly environment, and have fun too. Keep your calendar marked for August 11th-15th. Washington State, here we come. I look forward to seeing you there! *Kent/APIO President*

Special Notes

- Our Pilot Mentoring Program is coming soon!
- Our Constitution and Bylaws will be posted on the web soon. Comments due July 22nd.

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Have you registered for this year's APIO Conference yet?

If not, it's time! This year's conference will be August 11th through August 15th in Spokane, Washington, and promises to be full of fun and informative activities. For one thing, the American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association will be holding their conference concurrent with the Asian/Pacific Islander Organization, so this is a chance to broaden your horizons and see friends from across the cultural aisle. And the conference itself will offer breakout sessions on Building Outreach and Recruitment Programs, Appreciative Inquiry, Persuasive Speaking, and Professional Business Writing (to name just a few!) plus field tours, a live auction, great entertainment, and much, much more!



And did we mention this is being held in Spokane? The town motto – 'Near Nature, Near Perfect' – says it all. This sprawling metropolis has all the amenities you'll want or need, but also has 50 lakes within 50 miles and offers a variety of great things to do after hours or on the weekend!

Take a look at the agenda, find out the latest news, learn about the Spokane area, and get yourself registered for this great event on the web at <http://www.apio.org/conference.htm>. Don't miss this opportunity to update your skills, network with others, and bring back fresh new ideas to help you further the programs in your state.

See you there!!



ALOHA KAKOU

Hello to everyone

I would like to share with all of you, a very nice success story for the APIO. As we were all preparing for May, our recognized time to raise awareness of Asian Pacific Islanders to our communities, I was concerned because I just hadn't come up with that "GREAT" idea yet. Then remembering back to our last APIO Conference and the success of the Auction to raise funds for the Scholarship Program, I decided that an auction would be the thing to do. So with support first from Larry Yamamoto, the Director for the Pacific Islands, the State Office held a silent auction/luncheon. Twenty-three wonderful items were donated for the auction. Because of so many generous contributions of auction items, food, and time, we were able to raise \$722.00.

There are a few key people that helped above and beyond that I would like to thank; Larry Yamamoto, for his generous donation of lunch, a beautiful story board from Palau among other items; Gail Ichikawa, who also donated many hand crafted pieces of Jewelry, and a great deal of her time, Dennis Kimberlin and Gregory Koob for contributing their talents with their Art. But let's not forget the people that did the actual buying, without which none of these efforts would have mattered. Congratulations to all of the participants. You are all winners!

By Cheryl Morton, API SEPM for Pacific Islands



APIO Conference After-Hours Activities

Welcome to Spokane! While you're here, you may want to check out some of the wonderful sites and activities Spokane has to offer!

- Visit Riverfront Park. Stroll through this downtown park with the beautiful Spokane River running through it. Ride the historic 1909 Looff carousel, see the famous Clocktower, or if you're not afraid of heights, try out the Spokane Falls Aerial SkyRide Gondolas, which can accommodate 6 each and move over the park and river up to 600 feet per minute. While you're downtown, check out the great restaurants and shopping, also!
- Visit the most famous scenic tourist spot in the county: the Bowl and Pitcher at Riverside State Park. These unique basaltic rocks are a geologic phenomenon resulting in spectacular scenery, complete with a swinging suspension bridge. Definitely a view to remember!
- Visit Greenbluff, a collection of orchards, farms, and ranches just north of Spokane. Pick fruit right from the tree, try some homemade apple cider or fresh peach pie, and browse the unique gift shops for one-of-a-kind treasures.
- Take a tour of our local wineries. There are 11 wineries within 20 minutes of Spokane. Find your own way, or arrange to take one of our local winery tours.
- Go golfing. There are numerous local options, but for a cut-above experience, visit the floating green at the Coeur d'Alene Resort. (Reserve at least 30 days in advance, though; this course fills up fast!)
- Visit Bing Crosby's boyhood home, tour the Crosbyana Room at Gonzaga University to see Bing Crosby memorabilia, or, for the serious fan, take a complete Bing Crosby tour that also includes Downriver Golf Course where he learned to play golf, the Bing Crosby Theater where he performed between vaudeville acts, and numerous other sites that figured prominently in his life.
- Visit the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture (the MAC). The MAC offers an exciting rotation of many unique collections, including items from America's largest collection of Northern Plateau Indian art and artifacts.
- Stop by the Davenport Hotel. This stunning 5-star hotel in downtown Spokane was built in 1914 and restored to its original splendor in 2000. The opulent architecture, woodwork, marble, and decorating alone is worth the trip, but also check out their spa, restaurant, and more.
- Stroll through Manito Park. Covering over 90 acres, Manito Park is one of Spokane's largest and most beautiful parks. It includes a Lilac Garden, the Nishinomiya Japanese Garden, Rose Hill, Duncan Formal Gardens, and the Gaiser Conservatory. The gardens are spectacular during the growing season and the conservatory is a wonderful stop any time of the year. A perfect way to spend a summer evening!
- Visit the Japanese Cultural Center at Fort George Wright. Fort George Wright, a former Calvary headquarters, figured prominently in the early settlement of Spokane and is now a branch campus of a university in Spokane's sister city, Nishinomiya, Japan. Visit the university's Japanese Cultural Center, featuring exhibits of traditional Japanese art, crafts, costumes, and traditional ceremonial dress.
- Explore Finch Arboretum. Stroll around this extensive botanical and tree garden, featuring more than 2,000 ornamental trees, shrubs, and flowers on 65 acres.
- Take a scenic cruise on Lake Coeur d'Alene, the St. Joe River, or the Spokane River. Day, Dinner, or Fun Fleet cruises of all kinds depart daily.

- Visit Cat Tales Zoological Park. Travel 25 minutes from downtown to Cat Tales, home to over 40 exotic and endangered cats. You may even have the opportunity to hand feed a lion or tiger!
- Try River Rafting on the Spokane River. Just minutes from downtown you can board a raft for a scenic trip down the Spokane River. Your guide will take you through some small rapids and point out the local wildlife. Paddle along or just sit back and enjoy the ride.
- Try Historic Spokane's 'Age of Elegance' Dine-Around Tour. Enjoy a great night of dining while learning the rich history and seeing beautiful historic homes of Spokane. Start with drinks and hors d'oeuvres at an 1889 Queen Anne Victorian Mansion, then view the famous architecture and stunning woodwork while having an elegant dinner at the Glover Mansion. Finally, stop at Hannah's Garden Inn, a beautifully-restored turn of the century Kirtland Cutter estate, for dessert and coffee. Now this is dining in style!

Have some extra time before or after the conference dates?

Check out these options for those who want to explore further afield!

- See the Seattle Mariner's play Tampa Bay at Safeco Field in Seattle (August 9th and 10th only)
- Go Jet Boating or Rafting in Hells Canyon. Arrange any number of excursions to and on the Snake River! Take a simple raft ride, or go all out and visit the Native American Teepee Camp for a hands-on experience taught by Native Americans. Learn the skills Lewis and Clark were taught in order to survive by native peoples who had an intimate understanding of the land and its natural resources, then take a trip in a long boat down the river. Add lunch and/or a jet boat ride if you like; either way this is an unforgettable trip through the beautiful and rugged country of the Northwest!
- Get a realistic glimpse of the old mining days by visiting Wallace, Idaho, the Silver Capital of the world. Stop at Cataldo Mission, the oldest building in the State of Idaho, built by the Coeur d'Alene Indian Tribe and Jesuit Missionaries, then visit the Crystal Gold Mine or ride the trolley up to the Sierra Silver Mine where you'll put on your hard hat, go into the mine, see veins of ore, and learn how the miners worked and lived.
- See the Grand Coulee Dam and Laser Light Show. Catch a tour bus in Spokane that will take you to the Grand Coulee Dam. Tour the Visitor's Center at this impressive landmark, then kick back and watch the laser light show projected directly on to the dam itself.
- Kids of all ages will enjoy Silverwood Theme Park and Boulder Beach Water Park. Located less than an hour away in beautiful North Idaho, Silverwood Theme Park has over 65 rides and attractions, including three roller coasters, the Boulder Beach Water Park, a steam engine train, live entertainment, restaurants, and more. Open 7 days a week from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., so visit on the weekend or after your conference during the week!
- Visit Fort Spokane, one of the cultural jewels of the Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area. For thousands of years, this area was a gathering place for native tribes fishing the rapids of the Spokane River. In 1880, the U.S. Army established a fort above the confluence of the Spokane and Columbia Rivers. In 1898, the military fort was closed, and the buildings were then used as an Indian boarding school and tuberculosis hospital. In many ways the Indian experience at Fort Spokane is a microcosm of the Indian experience across the United States.

Information on all of the above, and many, many more options available to you while you're in Washington State, is available at www.VisitSpokane.com, or contact Eileen Jackson, Chair, Washington State Civil Rights Advisory Committee, at (509) 323-2934.

National Bulletin 230.8.12

Action Required By: **JULY 31, 2008 – EXTENDED FOR ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER MALE NOMINATIONS**

Purpose. To request nominations for upcoming vacancy on the National Civil Rights Committee (NCRC).

- **Background.** The Asian Pacific Islander Male position on the National Civil Rights Committee (NCRC) will become vacant as of September 30, 2008
- **Explanation.** Candidates must be representative of the vacancy they are applying for and be a full-time Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employee.

NCRC's mission is to provide counsel and recommendations to the Chief on Civil Rights issues and concerns of employees and clients. The committee's vision is to be recognized as a guiding force, which strives for excellence in Civil Rights for all clients and employees of NRCS. Please consider this mission and vision of NCRC when responding to these vacancies. Committee members should be self-starters who are willing to volunteer to complete actions identified in the NCRC business plan. The business plan and bylaws are located on NRCS' Intranet Web site at <https://my.nrcs.usda.gov/nrcs.aspx>, in the NCRC folder. NCRC meets three times a year and the travel expenses are covered by National Headquarters. Line officers must concur in the nomination and agree to support the employee by granting up to 20 percent of their time for NCRC travel and work activities.

Please submit your nominations by June 9, 2008, to Steve Cashman, Chair of the Nomination Committee, via fax, at (207) 834-6435, or by e-mail at steve.cashman@me.usda.gov.



Please contact Joyce A. Swartzendruber, Chair, NCRC at (207) 990-9551, or Steve Cashman, Chair of the Nomination Committee, at (207)-834-3311, x3.

Volunteers Sought for the Scholarship Committee

With the scholarship application deadline approaching (June 30th), we are looking for volunteers to help review, rank, and award the applications.

Each year, APIO awards up to 5 scholarships worth \$1000 each to deserving Asian or Pacific Islander students who wish to pursue, are currently enrolled in, or are admitted to an accredited 2 year or 4 year institution. High school and college seniors are eligible only if they are admitted to an accredited 4 year or 2 year academic institution during fall of the scholarship year. One of the goals of the APIO scholarship is to introduce students to the NRCS and encourage them to consider NRCS as a potential employer. Only Asian or Pacific Islander students who are ***U.S. citizens*** are eligible for the scholarship.

If you have any questions or would like to volunteer for the Scholarship Committee, please contact **Terry Wang at (209) 472-7127 ext. 109 or terry.wang@ca.usda.gov**.

APIO AWARDS



Award Nominations

Due July 11

Now is your opportunity to recognize your colleagues for their contributions to APIO and the API Community. Please take a minute and review the categories on the website prior to submitting nominations.

Award Categories:

Leadership/Visionary

Award of Excellence in Natural Resources Conservation

Award of Excellence in Asian Pacific Islander Community Outreach

Outstanding Member Award

Special Achievement Award*

***All award categories, except the Special Achievement Award, require the nominee to be a current member.**

***Your input is needed for
Our New Mentoring Program!***

The APIO/AIANEA National Councils are exploring establishing a joint mentoring program for our members. We want this program to be from the ground up to ensure that it meets **YOUR** needs. Your input is critical to make this successful.

Below are 2 simple ways you can help.

Take the survey.

In July, click on the below site and fill out this quick survey. We will use information from the survey to develop the mentoring program. Results from the survey will be presented at the APIO/AIANEA Joint Training Conference.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=tIT4oO3u2sqq_2fFUNLHdwGg_3d_3d

Focus group. Attend the afternoon break-out session on Thursday, August 12 at the Annual Training Conference to learn about the survey results and participate in our focus group.

Questions? Please contact Hue Dang at hue.dang@ca.usda.gov or Kent Matsutani at kent.matsutani@ftc.usda.gov.



Spotlighting our API Employees



Phuc Vu is currently the State Design Engineer for NRCS in Oregon and is the outgoing API Male Representative for the National Civil Rights Committee (Committee). He is a licensed civil engineer with NRCS, and a Cal Poly Pomona alumni. With his lovely wife Trang, he has a 7 yr old daughter Anh' and a 5 yr old son Nha^n. He enjoys volunteering and the outdoors, especially spear-fishing. In the past few years, he's worked with the local chapters of Engineers Without Borders and Architects Without Borders designing schools.

Even though he's been to most of the States and a few continents and enjoyed them all, Sri Lanka intrigues him the most because he can relate to Buddhism and their curie cuisine. The buffalo curds are irresistible for him, and he highly recommends them if you ever make it there.

Having just completed his 15th anniversary with NRCS last month, Phuc continues to enjoy working with people and the technical challenges his position offers. As the State Design Engineer, he gets to work in all corners of Oregon, and design all kind of practices. What keeps him going, though, is the people that make his job special.

Prior to his current position, he was in California as a field engineer working in various field offices and areas. He came to the Soil Conservation Service as a co-op student, and became interested in the SCS/NRCS when he invited Gerry Gonzalez, USDA liaison, to give a presentation at the Cal Poly Ag Engineers' club. This shows how important and how effective the USDA liaisons and campus outreaches are for recruiting.

In addition to his busy work schedule, Phuc has a collateral duty as the API Male Representative on the National Civil Rights Committee (Committee). His term is expiring the end of this September. When he found out no one had applied, Phuc stepped up to the plate to represent with support from his supervisor. He's sure glad to be a part of the Committee; it has been a great learning experience for him. He highly recommends it to others.

Here's some of the accomplishments the Committee made in 2007:

- Compiled and Analyzed the 5 year workforce trend.
- Developed a concept paper for web based outreach library.
- Provided an opportunity for State CRAC members to attend "Roles and Responsibilities of EEO Advisory Committee" training in Indianapolis.
- Finalized and Distributed in the national bulletin the fact sheet brochure on Committee and Board Diversity.
- Revised the Committee By-laws.
- Completed the Final version of joint facility accessibility checklist for service center.

Spotlighting our API Employees (continued)



2007 Committee Accomplishments (continued)

- Obtained approval from the Chief on the Committee's issue paper on providing interpreters for field office customers via telephone
- Completed the two year protracts sign-up and participation data on race, sex, national origin, disability (RSNOD) for EOIP, WHIP, and CSP and compared to Ag census data.
- Finalized and submitted to the HR Division the Exit survey.
- Published Committee article on *NRCS This Week* webpage.
- Drafted career ladder proposal for mid level employees to meet Human Capital Strategic Plan.

As you can see, a lot has been accomplished by Phuc and the Committee.

You can be a part of this, too!

In summary, Phuc is ending his term with the NCRC this fiscal year and hopes that another API male would seriously consider applying for the position. It is a great career development and an opportunity to see what other States have to offer when you travel with the Committee. Please help thank and congratulate Phuc for standing up and for stepping up these past few years!

The extended deadline for the API Male Representative vacancy is **July 31st**.

For those of you who are eligible, please apply!

Starting with the April edition of our newsletter, we are spotlighting our NRCS employees. Some will be more familiar faces and names, such as the ones who are on the National Council, while others may be our members or future members. All in all, these folks are making great contributions in their fields, have great leadership, are interesting, or have stories to share... or all of the above. If you know of APIs or Members that you would like to see spotlighted or acknowledged, please forward relevant information to your local APIO Regional Representative or to the current newsletter editor.

We will only be able to continue if there are submissions.

Thanks!

Justin Ly/CA API SEPM

About Us

Asian Pacific Islander Organization (APIO)

The Asian Pacific Islander Organization, is a non-profit employee organization of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. APIO was founded by Mon S. Yee and Virginia C. Lewis in May 1998. The purpose of our organization is to provide a forum for employees to exchange ideas, network, mentor, train, and add value to the agency by being a linguistic, cultural and ethnic bridge to our communities and other employee organizations.

For more information, please visit our website at www.apio.org. Please contact your APIO Regional Representative if you have questions, suggestions, comments, or concerns.

Our new address is: ***P.O. Box 25936 Eugene, OR 97402***

APIO National Council

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