

Tribes in the Southwest U.S. Prepare for Fish & Wildlife Conference Involving Tribal Youth

Native American Natural Resource Managers to Include Youth in a Unique Way in its 29th Annual Conference

DENVER, CO, U.S., August 7, 2015 /EINPresswire.com/ -- DENVER, CO – The Native American Fish & Wildlife Society's (NAFWS) Southwest Region hosts its 29th annual conference on August 11-13 in Reno, NV at the Silver Legacy Resort Casino, and organizers say they are planning to do things differently this year by engaging tribal youth in all their conference events. This annual conference has become uniquely state of the art, as it draws in tribal natural resource programs and tribal natural resource managers and



Youth panelists from 2014 NAFWS Southwest Regional Conference

students studying for careers in the field of natural resources management, environmental science, and those who are interested in protecting the natural resources.

“What we’re doing differently this year,” said Elveda Martinez, NAFWS Board Director and member of the Walker River Paiute Tribe, “is that we’re asking the young people to step-up and become involved.

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Elveda Martinez

Several youth from our Walker River Paiute Tribe in Nevada recently initiated a tribal feast when they prepared buck berry jam which is one of our traditional foods and it was exciting because they did this on their own and no one asked them to prepare it. So for our conference’s traditional feast next week the youth are going to prepare this tribal food for the conference participants. What it really does involve is the sharing of traditional ecological knowledge because the elders assisted these youth and it was a huge undertaking by them.”

She added, “This is something that we could all learn how to do.”

Martinez mentioned that during these conferences hosted by the Southwest Region it is tribal elders that are asked to give an invocation before the meals and for the opening and closing of the conference but this year she said, “We’ve asked our tribal youth to lead the prayers at these times. We are involving our youth so much more at this conference because we see how amazing our tribal youth are, how smart they are and how much they want to get involved.”

With the youth engagement at this conference, the NAFWS Southwest Region also is awarding scholarships to students that are pursuing careers in natural resources. This year, the Region will announce at the conference four students selected to receive scholarships. Students that Martinez

said were “high caliber in regards to their GPAs and some were on the Dean’s List.”

In conjunction with their purpose for the conference, the NAFWS Southwest Region is co-hosting this year’s conference with the Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission and they have selected the conference theme: “One Choice, One Vision: Engaging Our Youth in this Changing Environment to Strengthen Our Traditional Values”.

The Southwest Region invites tribes, government agencies, and private or non-profit organizations to attend this annual conference. For more information about this conference, visit:

<http://www.nafws.org/events/regional-events>

The NAFWS is a non-profit organization with a tribal membership of 224 Native American tribes and has been in existence since 1982. It is based in Colorado and seven regions of the U.S. tribal nations are represented on its board of directors.

The mission of the NAFWS is to assist Native American and Alaska Native Tribes with the conservation, protection, and enhancement of their fish and wildlife resources.

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