

Council on American Indian Concerns

Regular Monthly Meeting, September 9, 2009  
DNR Conference Room, Atlanta

Council members in attendance: Nealie McCormick, Ralph Crews, Tom Gresham, Royce McCrary, and Sarah Hill

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Nealie McCormick at 1:37 pm. Ralph Crews led the opening prayer.

The August, 2009 meeting minutes, which had been emailed to members earlier, were approved with the correction of one typographical error in the next to last paragraph (change “of” to “if”).

The treasurer’s report for the current year, FY 2010, was read by Ralph Crews. Since no expenses had yet been posted, the report consisted only of some projected expenses. In response to a question by Nealie McCormick, Frankie Mewborn said the contract between the Office of Planning and Budget and the Department of Natural Resources for the Indian Council for 2010 had not yet been executed.

Sarah Hill reported that we have received only routine email inquiries in the past month. She then updated the Council about the citizen who was refused permission to visit and mark a Cherokee grave on property owned by a winery in north Georgia. The issue was brought to our attention via email at our August meeting, and JB Jones was asked to negotiate with the two parties. Sarah was happy to report that after a flurry of sometimes tense emails, the issue has been resolved to everyone’s satisfaction. She credited the positive result to JB’s intercessions and negotiating skills.

Vonnie McCormick reported for Marilyn McGaughey that the Cherokee Nation has offered \$30,000 to help restore funding and staffing levels at the Chief Vann House and New Echota State Historic Sites. Representatives of the Nation hope the Eastern Band of Cherokees, and perhaps others, will make a similar contribution.

Nalie McCormick introduced Jerome Brown, Coordinator for the Upper Ocmulgee River Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) office, located at 750 South Perry St., Suite 212, Lawrenceville, GA 30045 (phone: 770.339.6071; email: [jerome.brown@ga.usda.gov](mailto:jerome.brown@ga.usda.gov)). Mr. Brown said that his agency can help communities and tribes with many types of projects and could be of benefit to Indian groups in the state. He said his office has already helped the Lower Muscogee Creek Tribe with some development projects. The Upper Ocmulgee RC&D was started in 1964 in Gwinnett County to help manage that county’s growth and planning for parks and green spaces. Mr. Brown explained that his agency is not part of the Regional Development Center (now Regional Commission) system, but instead is a non-profit entity directed by a board of local community leaders.

In response to a question about helping keep open the Native American state historic sites, Mr. Brown identified the RC&D cultural resources person in Athens, R. D. Corley. However, he suggested we first talk with the Northwest Georgia RC&D office, which should be more knowledgeable about the local historic resources. In regard to one especially critical issue, the deterioration of several priceless Native American artifacts in the care of Parks and Historic Sites, Mr. Brown said it is possible that the RC&D program can help, and the first step would be to make a list of needs. Frankie Mewborn and Dave Crass will compile a prioritized list of needs. Frankie said he could name several on the spot, including 1) halting existing deterioration of artifacts, 2) upgrades of Historic Sites museum buildings, especially relating to security and climate control, 3) significant upgrade of DNR's Preservation Lab at Panola Mountain. Frankie said that an assessment report of the museum at Etowah Mounds State Historic Site is due any day, and it will explain the current situation and present needs.

Regarding Rules and Regulations, no progress has been made.

Nealie McCormick reported that Rick Snow, who had recently been appointed to the Council as the physical anthropologist, has moved to Tennessee and is no longer on the Council. Dr. Snow suggested Susie Smith of Kennesaw State University as a replacement, and Nealie has initiated discussions with her.

In current news items about Indians, Sarah mentioned the grassroots Save My State Park program and the Day for Public Land (September 26), on which there will be free admission to state parks in the hope that the public will volunteer some service.

Ryan Kennedy of the State Archaeologist's office had several announcements:

1. The Historic Preservation Division of DNR will move in late October to offices closer to the Capitol (near the intersection of Washington and Trinity).
2. He and Dr. Crass have visited four of the six DNR education centers and learned that the centers highly value the *Frontiers in the Soil* and the associated teachers' manuals we gave them.
3. The HPD office has lost two more positions due to attrition, and these are not likely to be re-filled.
4. HPD director Ray Luce will be retiring at the end of the month; Dave Crass will become interim Director.

Frankie pointed out that November's meeting will fall on Veterans Day, a legal holiday. We agreed to meet on November 18<sup>th</sup> (the third Wednesday) and Frankie confirmed that we can have the meeting room that day.

Ralph Crews announced that his tribe will hold their fall pow wow on October 1, 2 and 3 at their tribal grounds in St. George and that all are invited to attend.

Vonnie McCormick announced that Deborah Thomas of EPA wants help with an Indian program at a state meeting. Dola Davis said she would ask her daughter, who works at EPA.

Sarah Hill asked Frankie for financial figures for the state parks in order to be able to compare them to the financial figures given us last month for state historic sites. Frankie said he would get that to her.

Dola Davis mentioned that the Trail of Tears Association will meet at New Echota this Saturday, September 12, at 10:30 am. The public is invited to attend.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Visitors: Frankie Mewborn, Ryan Kennedy, Jerome Brown, Tim Banks, Vonnie McCormick, Frances Crews, Gisela Gresham, Dan and Dola Davis