

USDA Forest Service Botany in the News

Mishkii Akii -Strength from the Earth

By Jan Schultz, USDA Forest Service Eastern Region Botanist

The Bay Mills Indian Community (BMIC) and Bay Mills Community College hosted our eighth Zaagkii Wings and Seeds Partnership. Entitled “Mishkii Akii,” Strength from the Earth, the gathering occurred in the far eastern upper peninsula of Michigan on September 18 and 19, 2014. This two day native plants environmental workshop was attended by numerous participants from the surrounding community, students of the Bay Mills Community College, members of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC), members of the *Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians*, the Chicago botanic Garden, and numerous Zaagkii partners.

Kathy LeBlanc, Cultural Services Director at Bay Mills Community College, provided welcome and introductory comments. Bucko Teeple, BMIC Councilman provided an opening ceremony. Levi Carrick, Bay Mills Tribal Chairman, and Mickey Parish, Bay Mills Community College President also welcomed us all.

Topics on our agenda included:

- Wild Edibles by Dr. Scott Herron, Odawa, Ethnobotanist, Professor at Ferris State University.
- A discussion of Crop Wild Relatives by Jan Schultz of the Forest Service Eastern Region.
- Dr. Pati Vitt, Curator of the Dixon National Tallgrass Prairie Seed Bank and a Conservation Scientist at the Chicago Botanic Garden spoke about her work in native plant seed preservation and also the activities and opportunities at the Garden.
- Dr. Diana Cryderman, Bay Mills Community College Science Department Chair, discussed Tribal Environmental Justice.
- Larry Jacques of the Bay Mills Community College Agriculture Programs provided information on Hoop Houses and Youth Gardens.



Dr. Diana Cryderman, Bay Mills Community College Science Department Chair and Kathy LeBlanc, Cultural Services Director at Bay Mills Community College, are honored for their development of the workshop.



Dr. Pati Vitt, Curator of the Dixon National Tallgrass Prairie Seed Bank and a Conservation Scientist at the Chicago Botanic Garden discusses seed preservation.

- Karen Anderson, Research Specialist within the KBIC Natural Resources Department, presented information about KBIC Restoration Projects and the Plant Program.
- Ben Bowen, Emily Martin, and Brian Westlock, all of the BMIC Biology Department, shared information about Earth Protection Efforts at Bay Mills and the Anaerobic Food Digester Project.

On the second workshop day, Kathy LeBlanc opened A Sharing Circle and Discussion of the Anishnaabeg. Scott Herron presented a Perspective on Plants as Food and Medicine. Lastly, workshop participants toured the Bay Mills Indian Community including the Mission Hill Overlook, and Spectacle and Monocle Lakes.

The BMIC is situated within a spectacular setting along the eastern- most shore of Lake Superior with views of the nearby Canadian shoreline. A few miles east of this community, Lake Superior hastily flows out into the St. Mary's River to form another Great Lake. Thank you so much Bay Mills Indian Community for your gracious hosting of this wonderful event!

For more information, reference <http://www.wingsandseeds.org>.



Sharing information about Earth Protection Efforts at Bay Mills and the Anaerobic Food Digester Project.