

Lessons Learned from Over 20 Years Leading Multicultural Teams in Native American Kansas Communities



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background picture from <http://www.pbpindiantribe.com/>



Abstract

- Case study in cooperation, started by a USDA funded project entitled “Bioengineering and Riparian Buffers—Building Tribal Capacity to Improve Water Quality in Kansas”.
- Continued through several projects funded by the Tribal College Research Grants program, with Haskell Indian Nations University.
- Culminated with a chapter published in “*Pathways for Getting to Better Water Quality: The Citizen Effect*”, by Springer.
- Currently working on a NBTS grant.

First Contact

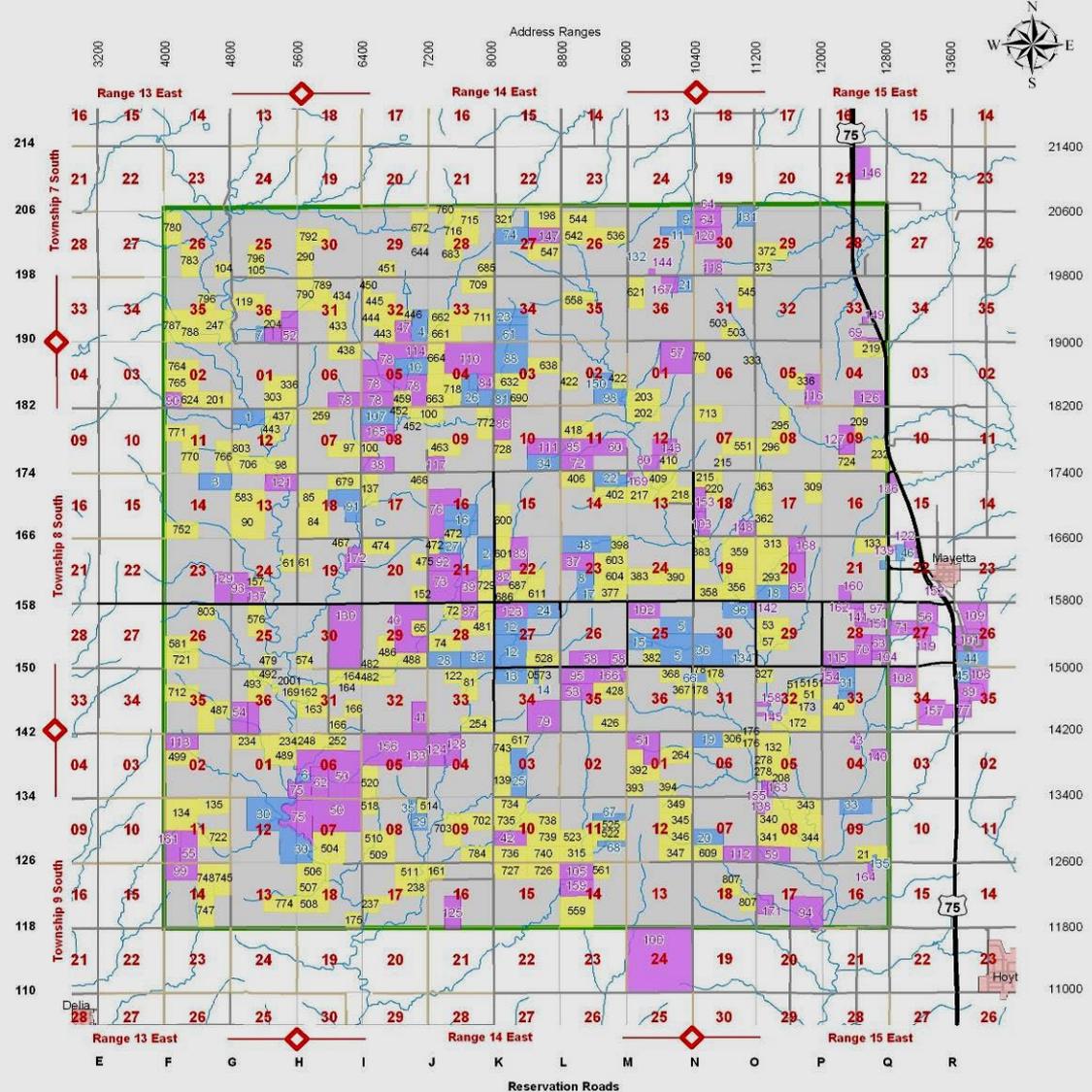
- Approached tribes via Haskell Indian Nations University (Bill Welton).
- Set up meeting at casino in Mayetta.
- The Potawatomi were initially hesitant to begin another project with KSU due to an earlier disappointment.
- They demanded only tribal youth be hired. I disagreed and offered to hire both tribal and KSU students.



- Developed grant proposal, with PBPN tribal biologist (Greg Wold) to install demo riparian buffers and streambank stabilization sites.
- Requested and received a letter of support from the tribal council for the proposal to USDA.

Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation Reservation

20 miles north
of Topeka



**Prairie Band
Potawatomi Nation**



Planning & Environmental Protection
May 9, 2007 Duryea

**BPN Reservation
Tribal Tracts**

- Allotment Trust
- Recent Purchase
- Tribal Trust
- Reservation Boundary
- Streams
- Roads**
- Paved
- Rock / Gravel
- Dirt

- I use the following 3 slides to orient non-Native workers on my projects.
- I apologize in advance if I have over simplified the issues.



Tribal authority

- Federal government grants “sovereign nation” status to tribes.
- Tribes are bound by Federal laws, but not state laws or regulations.
- County government has no authority on tribal lands.
- Leads to disputes and friction at the state, and especially county level.

Tribal Politics

- Volatile.
- Not party, but clan based.
- Tension between Western and Traditional Native values.
- Tribes use their enterprises to raise money for government services, instead of collecting taxes.

Native Vs. Western Values

- Group emphasis
- Time- always with us
- Respect elders
- Cooperation
- Harmony w/ nature
- Mystical
- Patient
- Individual emphasis
- Time- use every minute
- “Worship” Youth
- Competition
- Conquest over nature
- Skeptical
- Aggressive

Adapted from author unknown, cited in Mitchell 1998. The Prairie Band Potawatomi- Chapters in Time.

Tribal Council Appearance

- Basic unit of government within most tribes. May be called “Council of Elders”
- I asked for use of the tribe’s heavy equipment, including a backhoe and a tractor. Council asked, “Did you just *assume* we would provide this equipment for *your* project?”
- I responded, “No, I *hoped* you would provide the equipment for *our* project” ...

Recruiting Workers

- Three KSU students from farm backgrounds
- Two Haskell students and tribal members
- Three Potawatomi high school students

Cultural Exchange

- Farm boys and Potawatomi woodland hunters
- Eventually both sides learned from and respected each other
- Bonded over hard physical work

Crow Creek Revetment Installation



Teaching Stream Bank Renovation Techniques

- Staff from several tribal departments helped install the demonstration sites, which built “tribal capacity”.
- Jackson County Ag Agent invited me to the Potawatomi Natural Resource Council meeting, and purchased local supplies.

Crow Creek Revetment Setting Willow Posts



Invitation to a Tribal Celebration
An Elder (Roy Hale) noticed
our hard work



Crow Creek Revetment After 1 ½ Months



Crow Creek Revetment After 3 Months



Prophecy Meets Bioengineering

- I ask, “Can we get beaver trapped out of stream, to protect tree plantings?”
- I am told no, “When the buffalo, beaver and eagle return, the Potawatomi will be prosperous again.”

Andy Mitchell Revetment Before- March 1990



Mitchell Revetment

Immediately After- March 1990



Project Criticism

- County Extension Board
- Kickapoo Tribe via BIA
 - Jealous of attention and assistance provided to Potawatomi

Called before the State/Tribal Relations Joint Legislative Committee- Wondered if I did something wrong?

- Called by state senator for Manhattan.
- Advised by Sue Peterson from KSU president's office.
- Appeared at the statehouse.

Upon arrival in hearing room

- Felt tremendous tension in the room.
- KSU handler directed me to sit on state agency side.
- I broke through a “force field” to chat briefly with my Potawatomi friends.

I was the good news project, outlining the collaboration I developed with:

- Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation
- K-State Research and Extension
- USDA Water Quality Program
- Kansas Department of Health & Environment
- NRCS
- BIA

Statehouse agenda

- Sandwiched between contentious issues: fuel taxes and spillover effects of gambling.
- Colorful exchange over tribal license plates.
- States have difficulty dealing with tribe's "sovereign nation" status.
- Why can't we compromise on taxation issues?

That ended the first funded project

- I continued to help maintain the riparian buffer tree planting sites.
- Provided additional advice on fruit orchard management, corn, and tobacco growing over the next several years.

Accomplishments

● PBPN

- Four riparian buffer and 6 stream bank stabilization sites have been established.
 - Over 4000 trees have been planted.
 - Over 800m of eroding streambank healed.
 - Surveyed 25 miles of streams in 2009.
- Annual gardening workshops with the Kickapoo and PBPN. Offered on-line to all 4 KS tribes this year.

Objectives of Tribal Projects

- Whether Extension or Research Funded, in addition to the grant deliverables, we strive to:
 - Build tribal capacity
 - Integrate undergraduate education
 - Conduct applied research
 - Improve the reservation

Project Success has led to

- Several consecutive KSU-Haskell-PBPN collaborations.
- Haskell asks me to contact the PBPN.
- National tribal college research program chose Kansas as the site for the first TCRGP conference held in 2007.
- Excellent media coverage.

Tribal College Research Workshop May 2007



Involved Haskell students in field exercises



Surveyed stream cross sections at cedar revetment, control, and rock revetment sites



Multicultural Crew- Stream Survey



My crew management

- I assign who works where.
- Integrate crews by every factor, race, gender, student or non-student.
- Remixed the teams each day.
- Everybody is cross-trained in the techniques.

Estimating canopy cover



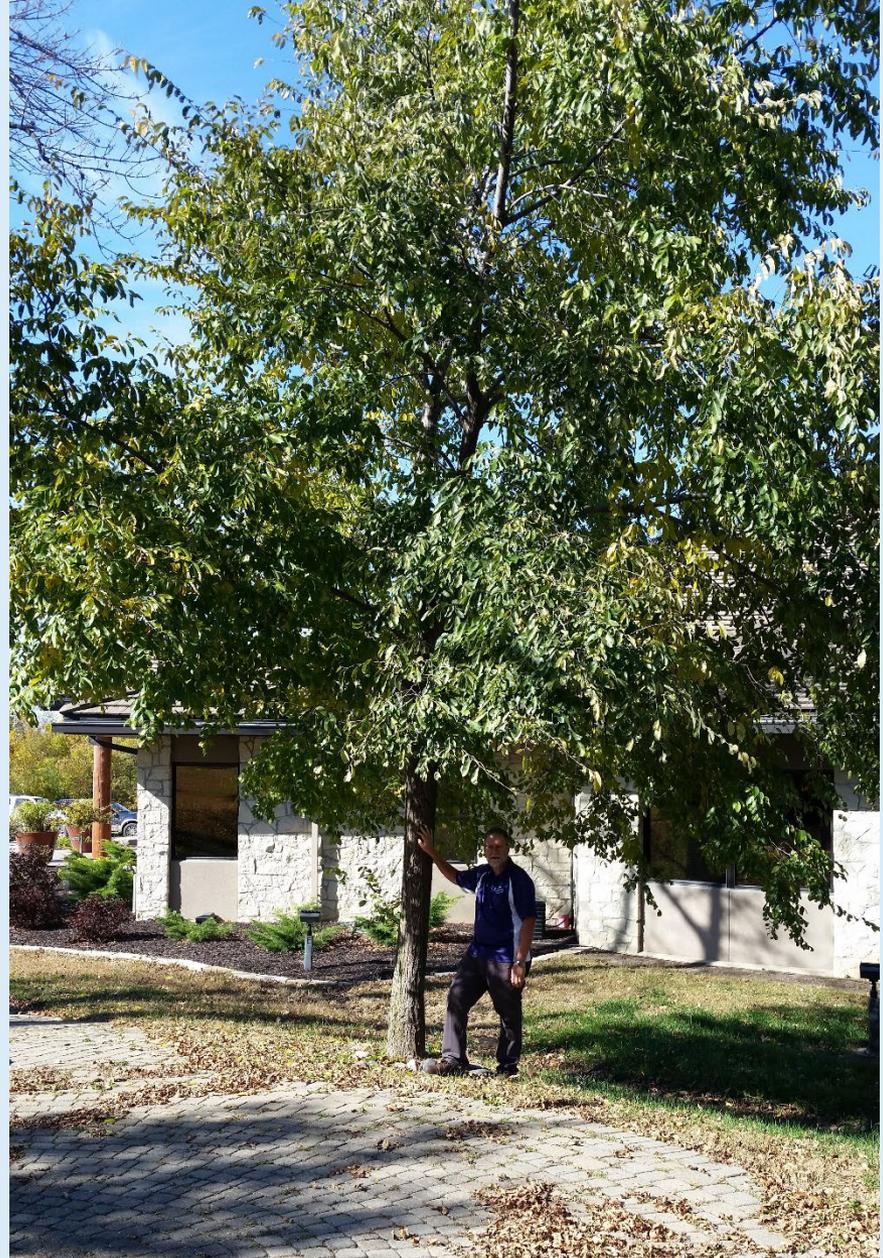
The lower part of one creek was too deep to wade



Ceremonial Red Elm Planting at Tribal Government Center



- The same red elm,
13 years later



Continue to grow red elm seedlings

- Here they are used for speaker gifts at KSU's Indigenous Peoples Day event last week!



Advice

- Learn about the tribe's traditional resource uses.
- Incorporate things the tribe values into the project.
- Be ready to negotiate (frequently) on points of conflict.
- Ask people to work in integrated teams.
- Keep promises!

Quote

- “One of the benefits we’ve gotten (working with Barden) is exposing our community to academia. We’ve shown our community through this relationship that there are resources out there that can help us. He has opened a door to other partnerships and other programs”

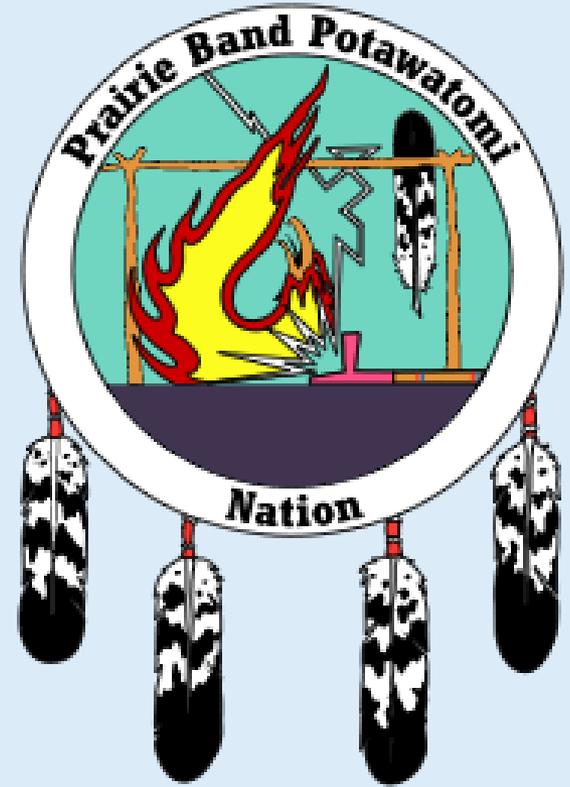
- Virginia LeClere, Director- Potawatomi Environmental Planning Office
October 4, 2010

Citations from tribal work

- Barden, C.J., C.R. Boyer, B.M. Morales, and L. Fisher. 2017. Promoting red elm (*Ulmus rubra* Muhl.) germination with gibberellic acid. *Journal of Forestry*. 115(5): 393-396. <https://doi.org/10.5849/jof.16-045>.
- Barden C.J., L. Fisher, W.M. Welton, and R. Dyer. 2011. Chapter 14 “Cross-cultural Collaboration for Riparian Restoration on Tribal Lands in Kansas” in the book titled *Pathways for Getting to Better Water Quality: The Citizen Effect*, edited by L.W. Morton and S.S. Brown. Springer. pp 171-179.



K-STATE
Research and Extension



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BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
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Lawrence, Kansas

