



Natural Resources Conservation Service

P.O. Box 311 • Auburn, AL 36830 • Phone: (334) 887-4549 • Web: <http://www.al.nrcs.usda.gov>

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Julie Best, Public Affairs Specialist - 334-887-4549

Poarch Creek Indian Tribe Member Provides Artwork for NRCS 2006 American Indian Poster

July 17, 2006 – Auburn, Ala. -- Lori Sawyer, a member of the federally-recognized Poarch Band of Creek Indians, was the winner in an art contest for the 2006 American Indian Poster which will be distributed by USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in November 2006 during American Indian Heritage month. The painting is entitled, “**Gifts of Mother Nature**” and features American Indian children playing in Magnolia Branch near Atmore, Alabama. Each year, artwork from native artists from around the country is used to create the poster. Distribution of the poster is a part of the month-long event to celebrate the uniqueness and import contributions of American Indians and Alaska Natives. Approximately 20,000 copies of the poster will be distributed to NRCS offices and to Native American Tribes throughout the United States.

Sawyer was born in 1965 in Atmore, Alabama, and holds a BS degree in Business Administration from the University of West Florida. Sawyer is the Marketing and Public Relations Manager for the Poarch Creek Indians gaming enterprises in Alabama. Sawyer says, “I am proud to be involved in promoting the good works of the Tribe and creating opportunities for economic development in our rural community.” She previously worked as a Marketing Manager in the telecom industry and as a Management Analyst in Washington DC. She and her husband Tom returned home following the birth of their daughter Sara, in order to raise Sara among close extended family.

Sawyer has always been fascinated with southern culture, traditions, foods and oral histories, and currently serves as President of the Alabama Folklife Association. With the support of a federal grant from the Administration for Native Americans, she documented the history of segregated Indian Schools in Escambia County Alabama for the Poarch Creeks. In 1993, she illustrated the book “**Grandmother Five Baskets**,” named “Most Notable Trade Books in the Field of Social Studies for 1994” by the National Children’s Book Council. Jefferson Davis Junior College exhibited a collection of her black and white photography titled, “If I Tell You My Story, Can You See Through My Eyes?.” In 2004, *Tributaries, the Journal of the Alabama Folklife Association*, published her intergenerational story of family traditions, “Roots Running Deep: Picking Mayhaws.”

Sawyer has traveled extensively in the United States, Western Europe, and Japan, experiencing food and art, and curiously observing and comparing everyday lifestyles and customs. Her favorite activities include cooking, enjoying good conversation with family and friends and listening to their life stories, relaxing at the creek, and enjoying quiet time in a book store with a cup of coffee.

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The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture. NRCS provides free technical assistance to help people conserve, maintain, and improve natural resources and the environment. Alabama landowners have access to NRCS technical assistance through a local county office.

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(l-r) Detra Boutwell, Escambia County NRCS District Conservationist; NRCS State Conservationist Gary Kobylski; NRCS Regional Conservationist Dick Coombe; artist Lori Sawyer; and NRCS American Indian Liaison David Elliott. Magnolia Branch runs through property owned by the Poarch Band of Creek Indians near Atmore, Alabama.

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