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IALC Research Project Produces Documentary on Ancient Plants and Modern Medicine

July 14, 2005 - Las Cruces, NM and Tucson, AZ - Jeanne Gleason of New Mexico State University developed and released "Ancient Roots, Modern Medicine: How Ancient Plants are Revolutionizing the Future of Science," a documentary regarding the socioeconomic impact of desert flora on traditional and modern systems.

Electronic Media Supervisor Jeanne Gleason is the Assistant Department Head of Agricultural Communications at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces. Patrick Holian, the Senior Producer, is a co-investigator, and also affiliated with New Mexico State University. The project was funded with a grant from the International Arid Lands Consortium.

The culmination of the one-year video project resulted in an exceptional documentary that includes three episodes each featuring a different region of the world and how their traditional medicines and cultures interact with those of the modern science. The three regions featured are the Badia Desert region of Jordan and its Bedouin people, the American Southwestern desert and the Navajo people, as well as that of Curaçao.

"Not only is this video presentation fascinating to watch, it also brings complex scientific research to the viewer in an easily accessible manner. The documentary will no doubt serve as a valuable tool for pedagogy around the globe. As such, it will go far to raise awareness about the interplay between past and present, traditional and modern, and its impact on arid societies," said Dr. Colin Kaltenbach, President of the IALC Board of Directors.

The project was made possible by the generosity of USDA CSREES and the strong support of members of Congress. In particular, the support of the IALC by Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), Sen. Pete Domenici (R-NM), Rep. Jim Kolbe (R-AZ), Rep. Ed Pastor (D-AZ) and Rep. Steve Pearce (R-NM) moved this project forward.

The project also resulted in an interactive website to serve as a tool for further resources and information on the subject at <<http://www.rootsandmedicine.com/welcome.html>>.