



# Conservation News in Nevada's Indian Country

USDA NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE

NOVEMBER 2003

## Message from NRCS's American Indian Tribal Liaison

November is Native American Heritage Month. To commemorate this event, here is the latest edition of *Conservation News in Nevada's Indian Country* newsletter. It contains articles and items of interest that pertain to American Indians, our conservation work with Tribes in Nevada, and other information I hope you will find useful.

We will also be sending out Native American Heritage Month posters (*right*) to each of the Tribes, tribal organizations, USDA State Offices, and to NRCS Field Offices.

With the loss of our cultural resources coordinator earlier this year, I will be working with Tribes and our NRCS Field Offices to complete the Tribal Cultural Resources Protocol Agreements. If you have questions about these agreements, please give me a call.

**Cub**

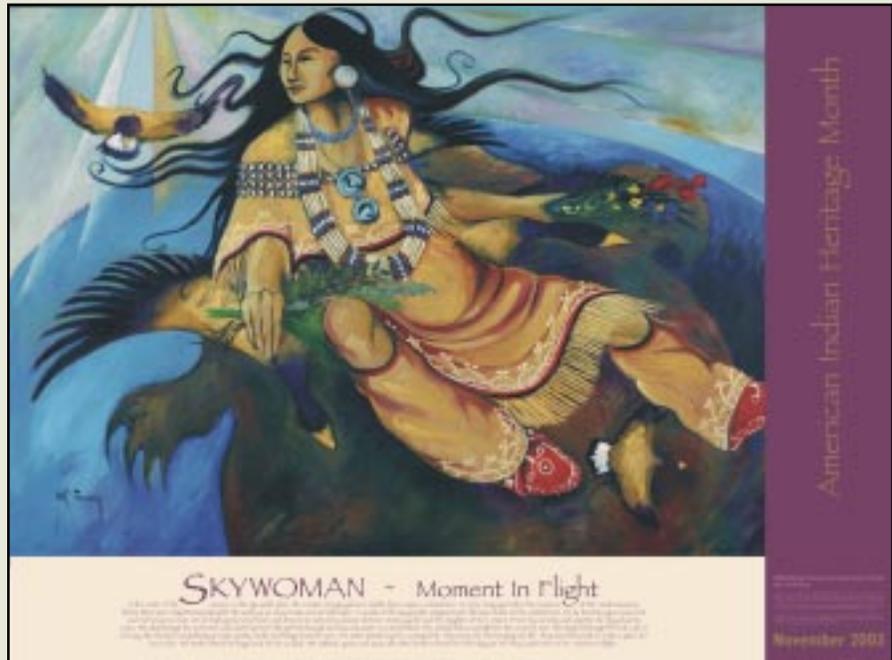


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## 108th CONGRESS Designates November 2003 as National American Indian Heritage Month

### RESOLUTION

Whereas American Indians and Alaska Natives were the original inhabitants of the land that now constitutes the United States;  
Whereas American Indians and Alaska Natives have traditionally exhibited a respect for the finiteness of natural resources through a reverence for the Earth;  
Whereas American Indians and Alaska Natives have served with valor in all of the wars of the United States, beginning with the Revolutionary War and continuing through the conflict in Iraq, and the percentage of Native Americans serving in the United States armed services has significantly exceeded the percentage of Native people in the population of the United States as a whole;

(continued on next page)

Whereas American Indians and Alaska Natives have made distinct and important contributions to the world in many fields, including agriculture, medicine, music, language, and the arts;

Whereas American Indians and Alaska Natives should be recognized for their contributions to the United States, including as local and national leaders, artists, athletes, and scholars;

Whereas such recognition will encourage self-esteem, pride, and self-awareness in American Indians and Alaska Natives of all ages; and

Whereas November is a month during which many Americans commemorate a special time in the history of the United States, when American Indians and English settlers celebrated the bounty of their harvest and the promise of new kinships:

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the Senate—

(1) designates November 2003 as 'National American Indian Heritage Month'; and

(2) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling on the Federal Government and State and local governments, interested groups and organizations, and the people of the United States to observe the month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

October 23, 2003

## New Leader Heads Conservation Agency in Nevada

Livia Marqués is the new state conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Nevada. NRCS, an agency of the US Department of Agriculture, assists landowners with conservation efforts.

Prior to coming to Nevada, Marqués was the NRCS assistant state conservationist for strategic planning and accountability in Florida. She graduated from North Carolina State University with a degree in horticulture, and managed a plant nursery before joining the NRCS in 1992. Since then, she has held several positions in various states, including serving as coordinator for the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative while working as the state plant specialist for the NRCS in Maryland.

As state conservationist, Marqués leads an agency that works directly with landowners to protect soil and water resources. Much of this work is done under provisions of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (the farm bill).



## American Indian Information Added to Nevada NRCS Web Site

You'll soon be able to find the newest and latest information pertaining to American Indians on the NRCS Nevada web site at [www.nv.nrcs.gov](http://www.nv.nrcs.gov). Some of the first topics to be posted include:

- 2002 Farm Bill: Conservation Opportunities on Tribal Land
- November Native American Month
- Third Annual Nevada Indian Summit.

You'll also be able to download this newsletter, and access the national web sites for NRCS and our partners.

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## FORT MOJAVE INDIAN TRIBE

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The Fort Mojave Indian Tribe controls over 33,000 acres in the Mojave Valley located in California, Arizona, and Nevada. The federally designated Tribe has managed the natural resources of their desert homeland in the Lower Colorado River basin for perhaps as long as 8,000 years. There is evidence to suggest that the ancestors of today's Mojave people migrated into the mountains and valleys along the Colorado River soon after the last ice age. This Tribe of people in early time were known as the Pipa Aha Macav, named by their God, Matavilya. In 1859, Camp Colorado was established by the United States Army on the east side of the Colorado River to protect American immigrants traveling from East to West. In later years the camp's name was changed to Fort Mojave. The Tribe's name also changed to the Fort Mojave Tribe.

No one knows the exact time that villages along the river were established, or when the Mojaves began to depend on the Colorado River's cyclical spring floodwaters to deposit a new layer of nutrient rich silt and to saturate the valley bottoms with moisture to sustain crops of corn, beans, and other native crops through the scorching dry days of summer.

The Mojaves have managed their land and water to sustain life and spirit since time immemorial. The plants and animals of the Mohave Desert supplemented their irrigated crops. They cut reeds and willows for baskets and harvested mesquite trees for protein rich seeds and a multitude of medicinal, cosmetic, and ceremonial uses. Leaves from the creosote bush made a bitter medicinal tea. Rabbits and deer provided food and skins.

The Mohave Valley, with its verdant valley floor cut by the sparkling river and its frame of sharp mountains, is home to the Mojaves, the place of their history, their life, their origins. This landscape is suffused with meaning and symbol. From the mountains and bajadas that edge the great river, to the marshes and sloughs of the river valley, to the water and aquatic life in the Colorado River itself, the resources of the Mojave's homeland are spiritual as well as economic.

Before there were dams and flood control levees, the Colorado River was a linear oasis coursing through the desert. Its current supported abundant life: birds, frogs, snakes, butterflies, beaver, coyotes, badgers, and many more species. Fish species unique to the Colorado River depended on its uninterrupted flow. The river banks supported groves of cottonwood and willow, and dense stands of arrowweed. Great bosques of screwbean and honey mesquite grew on the valley floor where their roots could reach the underground flow of the river.

The Colorado River has a very different character today. Its flows respond to the demand for electric power and irrigation, not to storms and droughts. It is called "the most used river in the world." Most of the linear oasis through the desert has vanished.

The Fort Mojave Indian Tribe is proud to be an active partner in restoring or replacing critical riparian habitat on the Reservation. Working with federal and state wildlife agencies, the Tribe has leased areas within the Reservation for wetlands, wildlife travel corridors, and riparian habitat. Rare or endangered species like the Southwestern desert willow flycatcher, the Yuma clapper rail, and the yellow-billed cuckoo will have a home on the Reservation along with more common species like ducks and beaver. The restored natural areas and the wildlife that thrives there provide environmental education opportunities and living laboratories for tribal youth, maintaining the Mojave people's ancient connection to the river's current of life.



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### *AGRICULTURE AND THE FORT MOJAVE TRIBE*

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#### **STATE OF THE ART AVI KWA' AME FARMS**

Avi Kwa' Ame Farms, the Tribe's farming entity, profitably manages more than 6,500 acres in large farm units. The acreage will nearly double in the next few years as old leases expire and the land reverts to tribal control.

Cotton, alfalfa and Sudan grass are staple crops. Bermuda grass seed to supply the turf grass industry, and premium quality large garbanzo beans to meet the salad bar demand are specialty crops planted in response to market opportunities.

The Avi Kwa' Ame Farms applies the latest technologies to reduce costs, protect the environment, and meet changing markets. For example, genetically engineered cotton varieties have proved resistant to pests, dramatically cutting the need for pesticide spraying. Fields are laser leveled for optimum application of irrigation water. No irrigation water is allowed to return to the Colorado River, protecting water quality from possible degradation by agricultural chemicals. Internet connection to global agricultural market data allows the tribal farms to respond quickly to other opportunities.

Avi Kwa' Ame Farms is active in the global economy. The Farms raise Sudan grass for the Japanese beef industry. Sudan grass has very low nutritional value, and its use in growing Japanese beef is to provide essential roughage for cattle which are

fed protein-rich diets based on fish meal and other traditional ingredients that result in the distinctive flavor and texture of the famous Kobe beef. The bales must meet the stringent quality control standards of Japanese inspectors before they can be accepted for shipment. Once passed, the bales are compressed to about one third their original size to save cargo space.

As economies around the Pacific Rim improve, other nations are placing orders for Sudan grass baled by Avi Kwa' Ame Farms for their emerging premium beef industries.

The majority of Fort Mojave's alfalfa supplies dairies in the Los Angeles market, which has lost most of its farmland to urban development.

Fort Mojave is committed to continuing its successful farming activities. Tribal farmland is a valuable resource which will not be converted to other uses as the Tribe continues to develop. In addition to profits, Avi Kwa 'Ame Farms will continue to provide the visual delight of verdant fields and blue ribbons of water flowing through canals and furrows.

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## ***BUSINESS AND THE FORT MOJAVE TRIBE***

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### **AN ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT AND A POSITIVE BUSINESS CLIMATE**

Fort Mojave is an entrepreneurial tribe with a solid record of successful business relationships. It is set up to do business and takes rightful pride in the positive business climate that prevails on the Reservation.

The Tribe owns a number of for-profit corporations which provide service both on and off the Reservation. The Tribal electric utility, Aha Macav Power Service (AMPS) is a service provider to all enterprises on the Reservation. Fort Mojave Telecommunications, Inc. continues to embrace new technologies and provide digital, internet, telephone and cable service in the southern Mohave Valley.

The Fort Mojave Development Corporation is an independent entity which enters into development leases and is responsible for initiating and managing businesses like the JB's Restaurant and the two convenience stores on the Reservation. ASK Mojave Construction is a licensed general contractor which has built the water line to supply Calpine's Southpoint Power Plant, and the new RV Park next to the Mojave Golf Course.

The Tribe's nonprofit corporation, Fort Mojave Tribal Utilities Authority, is the water and wastewater service provider to tribal and non-tribal customers in Nevada and Arizona.

Fort Mojave has a professional tribal staff to facilitate development on the Reservation. It has a full time ICBO qualified building inspector. Its Real Estate Services Department manages land leases and maintains land records on its Geographic Information System (GIS). A uniform Commercial Code lays the groundwork for doing business on the Reservation. The Tribal Tax Commission administers the Tribal Tax Ordinance and meets debt service requirements of various tribal bond issues. It also fulfills gaming related tax responsibilities of the Tribe. In-house legal counsel supports expeditious processing of leases and other legal documents.

All environmental and land use planning work is done internally. For example the Federal Environmental Impact Statement for the Calpine's Southpoint Power Plant was prepared by the Tribe. Coordination with federal agencies such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Bureau of Reclamation is part of the support services available to developers.

Fort Mojave's no nonsense attitude towards the business of doing business has resulted in an impressive client list. The Tribe's successful business relationships include Calpine Corporation, Conesco, United Metro/Kiewit, Kroger Foods, Western Aggregate, Temple Development of Palm Desert, Texaco, JB's Family Restaurants, Phillip Morris, Kid's Quest of Minneapolis, Baskin Robbins Ice

Cream, Subway Restaurants, and International Gaming Technologies.

The Tribe fully exercises its sovereign status in building solid working relationships with other governmental bodies. It has current cooperative projects with the Arizona Department of Transportation, Caltrans, Nevada Department of Transportation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Projects range from a new freeway interchange to habitat conservation.

The Tribe owns a franchise JB's Restaurant in Arizona. Smith's Food and Drugs is the anchor tenant in a new tribal shopping center. A 500 megawatt gas fired electric generating plant operated by Calpine Corporation has become a new landmark on land leases from the Tribe in the southeast Mohave Valley. The Tribe's electric utility company provides service to the expanding number of tribal enterprises.

New roads, and a new bridge across the Colorado River, benefit the Tribe's neighbors while opening the Tribe's Nevada lands to development. The new river crossing shortens travel distances, and saves precious minutes for emergency response vehicles, for all residents of the southern Mohave Valley.

The Tribe is the largest employer in the southern Mohave Valley, with over 3,100 jobs created. Tribal enterprises have made possible full employment for all tribal members who wish to work, and have opened new employment opportunities for people from neighboring communities.

Tribal enterprises account for seven per cent of Mohave County's economy. Income from tribal enterprises provides educational scholarships, cultural heritage preservation, and new recreational and health care facilities for tribal members. Today's Mojave people look forward to expanding cultural and economic opportunities as a result of their diverse and prosperous economy.



## GOATS USED TO DESTROY TAMARISK ON THE WALKER RIVER PAIUTE TRIBE RESERVATION

The Walker River Paiute Tribe is trying out an experimental method of eradicating tamarisk on their reservation. The tribe has been battling tamarisk for decades, putting everything from machines to insects to the task, without much luck. So far, it seems they may have found the best control in a herd of goats.

Tamarisk, or salt cedar, is one of the largest noxious weeds in the West. It is not a native plant, but it has adapted well to Nevada's desert climate. One tree can use up to 200 gallons of water per day. It is a deep-rooted plant that pulls salts out of the soil and exudes it out of its leaves, so nothing else can grow around it. For the Tribe's grazing land, that is bad news.

Chuck O'Rourke with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Ed Biggs and Tracey Jean Wolfe with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, joined the battle to help the Tribe combat the weed and restore native vegetation. Wolfe developed a conservation plan outlining the steps to follow, and O'Rourke was successful in obtaining funding to pay for the goats.

Goats have been used successfully on other weeds in the western U.S. Several years ago, one canyon in Idaho could feed 250 cows per month before leafy spurge was found. Leafy spurge crowded out the native grasses and reduced the grazing capacity to 12 cows per month. Chemicals were sprayed on the land, costing \$150 per acre. The spray killed the leafy spurge as well as every broadleaf plant growing in the area. "When we looked at the canyon, the leafy spurge was four feet tall. The only animals living in it were snakes, mice and skunks. There were no deer or anything else," said Hugh Bunten of Lakeview, Ore. Bunten set up a grazing plan with the Idaho Resource Conservation District and other government agencies. The new technique he was pioneering worked—the goats stayed in their herd, they ate the leafy spurge and, within three years of return visits, had almost cleared the canyon of the noxious weeds.

In addition, the goat's digestive system kills the seeds of the plants that are eaten, so the germination from seed is greatly reduced. "We go back each year, but now we need only a handful of goats. They have become addicted to the leafy spurge. When turned loose, they mount a regular search and destroy attack on the few remaining noxious plants," Bunten said.

The Walker River Tribe is counting on this same success for their land. About 600 goats were brought in and temporary fences were put up to keep the goats in a confined area about 3 acres in size. Once the goats have done their job attacking the tamarisk in that area, they are moved to another area. About 3,000 acres of tamarisk will be treated. So far, they have done a remarkable job stripping the leaves off of the tamarisk and gnawing at the trunks.

The goats will be brought back next summer for the next treatment. Before that, however, the area will be seeded with native grasses and forbs. Then, the goats will trample the seed into the ground and fertilize it while they are attacking the tamarisk.

If everything goes as hoped, a third treatment won't be needed.





## 2003 Nevada Indian Summit

The Third Annual Nevada Indian Agricultural and Environmental Summit was held in Elko, September 10-12. The Summit was hosted by the South Fork Band Council and organized by Staci Emm, Extension Indian Reservation Program Specialist with the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and Cub Wolfe, American Indian Tribal Liaison with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Nevada.

About 30 tribal members and various agency representatives attended the summit. Larson Bill, chairman of the South Fork Band Council, welcomed the participants. Agency leaders, including Livia Marqués, NRCS state conservationist; Karen Hinton, dean and director for Extension; Don Henderson, Nevada Department of Agriculture; and Roger Van Valkenburg, state director for the Farm Service Agency, gave brief presentations on assistance available from their agencies. The afternoon session topics covered the 2002 Farm Bill, riparian area management, noxious weed control, and wildfire reduction.

Twenty students from Owyhee schools participated on two tours that were held on Thursday. Extension educators Kent McAdoo and Sherman Swanson conducted the tour of riparian management on the South Fork Indian Reservation at Lee. Participants learned how to assess riparian health.

The ag production tour started out at Billy Horn's in Clover Valley. Horn, an accomplished horse handler, provided a lively demonstration of his techniques for gentling and breaking horses.

The second stop was at the Ballard Ranch where Steve Ballard, Glen Koch from Fort Dodge Pharmaceuticals, and Extension's Ron Torrell discussed proper vaccination techniques, part of the University's Beef Quality Assurance Program. They

showed how improper vaccinations caused damage to the meat and hide, ultimately decreasing the income generated from the cattle. On this portion of the tour, Summit participants were joined by several local ranchers, including Brad and Dani Dalton, and the agriculture class from the Great Basin College and their teacher, Gary Sundseth.

The final stop on the tour was at the Ruby Mountain Brewery--without the students. There, Steve Safford explained how beer is brewed, while his wife, Maggie, talked about the marketing and distribution aspects of microbrew.

The students rejoined the Summit for the banquet that night, where Bill and Dalles Smales, environmental specialist from the South Fork Band, presented Staci Emm, Extension Indian Reservation Program Specialist, with an original painting by Indian artist Jerry Millot for her work organizing the Summit.

The Nevada Tribal Agriculture Committee met on the final day of the Summit. Jerry Buk, Extension area director, and Emm led a discussion of concerns and problems Tribes are having with agriculture programs.



# SLOAN CANYON PETROGLYPHS PROTECTED INDIAN LEADERS JOIN LAWMAKERS IN DEDICATING 48,438-ACRE CONSERVATION AREA

By **KEITH ROGERS**, Las Vegas Review Journal

Tuesday, February 18, 2003

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With the sound of a rock crusher churning out gravel nearby, Nevada's senators, congressmen and American Indian tribal leaders Monday dedicated the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area.

The ceremony, atop a hill with the canyon's jagged peaks serving as the backdrop, marked the start of a three-year process to develop a plan for managing the conservation area, which surrounds a wilderness rich in the heritage of tribes from Southern Nevada and along the lower Colorado River.

"We hope this will be an education to non-Indians to be respectful. There is history out there that can be learned," said Quechan spiritual leader Wally Antone, of Winterhaven, Calif.

The 48,438-acre public lands area will serve as a buffer between the wilderness area, where motorized vehicles are prohibited, and development at the south end of the Las Vegas Valley. The wilderness area is filled with 1,700 rock-art images etched in stone over the past 800 years, according to archaeologists.

A 500-acre parcel near the conservation area will be auctioned in November to provide funds for planning and managing the conservation area. Most of the proceeds, 95 percent,

will go into a special account for constructing public facilities, operations, protection, research and interpretation of the archaeological and geological resources, according to Bureau of Land Management officials.

During the dedication, Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., credited Review-Journal Publisher Sherman R. Frederick for advocating protection of the fragile petroglyph site in the 1990s. A visit to the canyon by Reid, Frederick and former Pulte Homes-Del Webb consultant Scott Higginson led to establishment of the national conservation area through last year's Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act. The act also created the North McCullough Wilderness Area. "I was struck with awe at what I saw," Reid recalled for the 350 invited guests who attended the ceremony inside a tent on undeveloped land near the Anthem community.

Frederick said he was flattered by the acknowledgment, adding, "I'd like to see every school child in Clark County have an opportunity to walk through the canyon." His comment echoed that of Rep. Jim Gibbons, R-Nev., who said the rumble of the rock crusher during the Indians' prayer service



**LeRoy Spotted-Eagle of the Southern Paiute Veterans Association participates in Monday's dedication ceremony for Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area. In the background are Rep. Jim Gibbons, left, Sen. John Ensign, Sen. Harry Reid and Rep. Jon Porter.**

made him "realize civilization is knocking at the back door and coming our way." "We're not protecting it from civilization but for civilization," said Gibbons, who shepherded the lands act measure through the House. Sen. John Ensign, R-Nev., credited Reid with pursuing protection for Sloan Canyon to make it the valley's second national conservation area along with Red Rock Canyon. During his speech, Ensign dubbed Sloan Canyon "the crown jewel of this legislation" and predicted the sale of the adjacent 500-acre parcel could generate \$50 million to \$75 million. Rep. Jon Porter, R-Nev., said he had a spiritual experience when he visited the Sloan Canyon petroglyphs three years ago. "As you walk the canyon you can sense and feel 800 years of heritage," he said.

BLM district archaeologist Stanton Rolf said his agency's objective

is to "preserve this for all people and all time."

Among the most common images in the rock-art etchings are of bighorn sheep. The petroglyphs, for the most part, center on hunting by Yuman-speaking tribes and Paiutes who visited the canyon in late-summer monsoon seasons, when water was available. Antone said the Quechan name for the canyon is "avi hamaila," short for "white mountain" sheep or goats. One of the Sloan Canyon panels depicts a cowboy and is believed to be American Indian impressions of contact with white settlers and early travelers on the outskirts of the Las Vegas Valley.

Reid and Ensign said the effort to protect Sloan Canyon could be applied to other rich cultural sites, including Gold Butte, east of Lake Mead's Overton Arm, and other areas in central and northern Nevada.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS 60TH ANNUAL SESSION

November 16-21, 2003

Albuquerque, New Mexico

For more information, visit their web site at  
[www.ncai.org](http://www.ncai.org).

### FIRST ANNUAL NATIONAL TRIBAL SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT/ NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION DISTRICT CONFERENCE

December 8-12, 2003

Las Vegas, Nevada

For more information, contact:

Thomas Begay (928) 686-6184; or

Felix Nex (928) 657-3251, e-mail:

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### GRAZING LANDS COALITION

December 7-10, 2003

Nashville, Tennessee

For more information, visit their web site at  
[www.glci.org](http://www.glci.org)

### SOUTHWEST INDIAN AGRICULTURAL ASSOC.

January 27-29, 2004

Laughlin, Nevada

For more information, call (520) 383-2760.

## Twas the Night of Thanksgiving

Twas the night of Thanksgiving, I just couldn't sleep,  
I tried counting backwards, I tried counting sheep.

The leftovers beckoned - the dark meat and white,  
but I fought the temptation with all of my might.

Tossing and turning with anticipation,  
the thought of a snack became infatuation.

So, I raced to the kitchen, flung open the door,  
and gazed at the fridge, full of goodies galore.

I gobbled up turkey and buttered potatoes,  
pickles and carrots, beans and tomatoes.

I felt myself swelling so plump and so round,  
'till all of a sudden, I rose off the ground.

I crashed through the ceiling, floating into the sky,  
with a mouthful of pudding and a handful of pie.

But I managed to yell as I soared past the trees,  
happy eating to all - pass the cranberries, please.

May your stuffing be tasty, may your turkey be plump,  
May your potatoes 'n gravy have nary a lump.

May your yams be delicious, may your pies take the  
prize,

May your Thanksgiving dinner stay off of your thighs!!

**May Your Thanksgiving Truly Be Blessed!**

USDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.



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