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Deborah Anyaibe makes a presentation about water conservation and global warming during the Miss Navajo Council elemental talks and dialogues forum at the Navajo Department of Education in Window Rock, Arizona, Monday.

Elements forum

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promised to her. Dooley, a renown Diné storyteller and former Miss Navajo Nation, had asked Coelho to scream her name to the air once in the Asian state so that it would live in Mongolia.

Coelho did scream Sunny Dooley's name at least a couple times at different locations, she remembered during a break of a conference organized by the Miss Navajo Council Inc., in Window Rock Tuesday. As she told the story, the women shared a candid smile.

That morning at the conference, Coelho had presented about storytelling, her time in Mongolia and about some of the challenges keeping people from living their own stories. For instance, there are certain words people use in everyday life that may be "blocking the air from coming inside of us to inspire us. Every person has a certain word, and it may be time to retire that word," Coelho said.

"My word is should. It's too strong. I don't want it. I have no use for it," she said.

Coelho's presentation inspired people in the audience to think about their own words and some of them shared



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Sunny Dooley welcomes participants to the Miss Navajo Council elemental talks and dialogues forum at the Navajo Department of Education in Window Rock, Arizona, Monday.

theirs: trying and maybe, were two of the words shared. Coelho was one of 16 presenters at the conference.

The presentations had been arranged in four topics: Air, Water, Fire and Earth. Coelho was among the group presenting on the Air category.

She explained later that in

her travels she has discovered more about herself and her purpose, so she felt her journey in life would fit better in the Air category.

Fire

Perry H. Charley, of Beclabito, is a senior scientist at the Diné Environmental Institute for Research and Outreach at Diné College who was recently appointed to the Diné Uranium Remediation Advisory Commission to represent the Northern Navajo Agency. Charley presented about home heating alternatives to coal burning on the Navajo Nation as part of the Fire segment.

Charley said a study about indoor air pollution was conducted on the Navajo Nation in 2010. Indoor air pollution was identified as a major risk factor for acute and chronic respiratory diseases and, on the Navajo Nation, it was linked to coal burning.

According to the study, in 25 percent of the homes surveyed on the Navajo Nation, coal was burned in stoves not designed for burning that type of fuel. Indoor air quality was frequently found to be of a level of concern

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The study concluded that stoves used for heating were often old, improperly vented, and not designed for the fuel mixture being burned. Homes surveyed had levels of particulate matter that exceeded health based outdoor air standards. Most recently, Charley has been working on a "stove changeout project" to help

people on the Navajo Nation upgrade their heating stoves.

Water and Land

Other presenters included Holly Barton, from Dilkon, who is the tribal climate science liaison with the Southwest Climate Science Center working with tribes on climate change adaptation. Barton, who was the ecologist for the Tohono O'ogham Nation, joined the conference presenting with the Land segment.

Bruce T. Milne, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation endowed chair in sustainable environmental and food systems and professor of biology at the University of New Mexico, was one of the presenter during the Water segment, so was Deborah Anyaibe, Pueblo of Zia director of environmental resources who has been working on water sustainability and monitoring.

Dooley said the conference about Water, Earth, Fire and Air was brought to the Navajo Nation in part to celebrate the beginning of the new year in traditional Navajo culture. The first new moon in October marks the beginning of a new year in Navajo culture and the time to reflect, tell stories and celebrate winter ceremonies.